

INITIAL STUDY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Minor Use Permit (MUP22-0004)
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: Butte County – Department of Development Services
Planning Division
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Tristan Weems, AICP, Associate Planner
530.552.3685; tweems@buttecounty.net
4. Project Location: The subject property is comprised of one parcel totaling approximately 79.47 acres (APN 006-670-003). It is located at 4475 Nord Highway, Chico, CA., Lat 39°46'20.45 N/Long 121°54'27.61"W.
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: Liane Christiansen
4475 Nord Highway
Chico, CA 95973
6. General Plan Designation: Agriculture (AG)
7. Zoning: AG-20 (Agriculture, 20-acre minimums)
8. Description of Project:

The project would approve the use of an existing barn and related improvements and property as a special events facility. The site is zoned AG-20 and is located near the center of an existing 79.47-acre parcel on the south side of Nord Highway between Holster Avenue to the west and Orchard Blossom Lane to the east. The site is primarily used as a walnut orchard. Existing development is comprised of the barn and a single-family residence, various out buildings and related access and parking improvements located proximal to and southeast of the barn. The property is accessed via an existing unpaved driveway. The barn structure is currently served by an on-site septic system for wastewater treatment and a well for potable water. No improvements to the existing septic system and well are required for the special events facility as determined by the Environmental Health Division of the Butte County Public Health Department.
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: (Briefly describe the project's surroundings)

The project site is a walnut orchard with an existing barn and single-family residence as described. Rural residential development is located to the north across Nord Highway. Similar agricultural uses with single-family residences are located to the east, west and south.

Direction	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Existing Land Use(s)
North	Agriculture	AG-20	Single-family residential
South	Agriculture	AG-20	Residential/Agriculture
East	Agriculture	AG-20	Residential/Agriculture
West	Agriculture	AG-20	Residential/Agriculture

The project site is located within unincorporated Butte County, approximately 2,000 feet west of the City of Chico municipal boundary. The parcels are zoned AG-20. The purpose of the AG zone is to support, protect, and maintain a viable, long-term agricultural sector in Butte County. As defined in the Butte County General Plan Land Use Element, the Agriculture designation allows the cultivation, harvest, storage, processing, sale, and distribution of all plant crops, especially annual food crops, as well as roadside stands for the sale of agricultural products grown or processed on the property. The Agriculture designation also allows livestock grazing, animal husbandry, intense animal uses, and animal matter processing. Alternative energy facilities are allowed in the Agriculture designation, subject to permit requirements. Residential uses in the Agriculture land use designation are limited to one single-family dwelling and a second dwelling unit per legal parcel. Farm labor housing is also permitted. The minimum parcel size is between 20 to 160 acres, although existing parcels smaller than the minimum may remain as legal parcels.

The topography in the project site area is gentle and flat, with an elevation of 167 feet above sea level. Vegetation on the project site is primarily cultivated walnut trees and ornamental plants and shrubs. The site is bordered by single-family residential uses to the north and agricultural uses to the south, west and east.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)
 - Butte County Development Services: Minor Use Permit approval.
11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

See Discussion 1.18

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. Where checked below, the topic with a potentially significant impact will be addressed in an environmental impact report.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture and Forest Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology / Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazards / Hazardous Materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology / Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Use / Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Population / Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tribal Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Utilities / Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildfire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

Tristan Weems, AICP

August 17, 2022

Tristan Weems, AICP, Associate Planner

Date

Dan Breedon

August 22, 2022

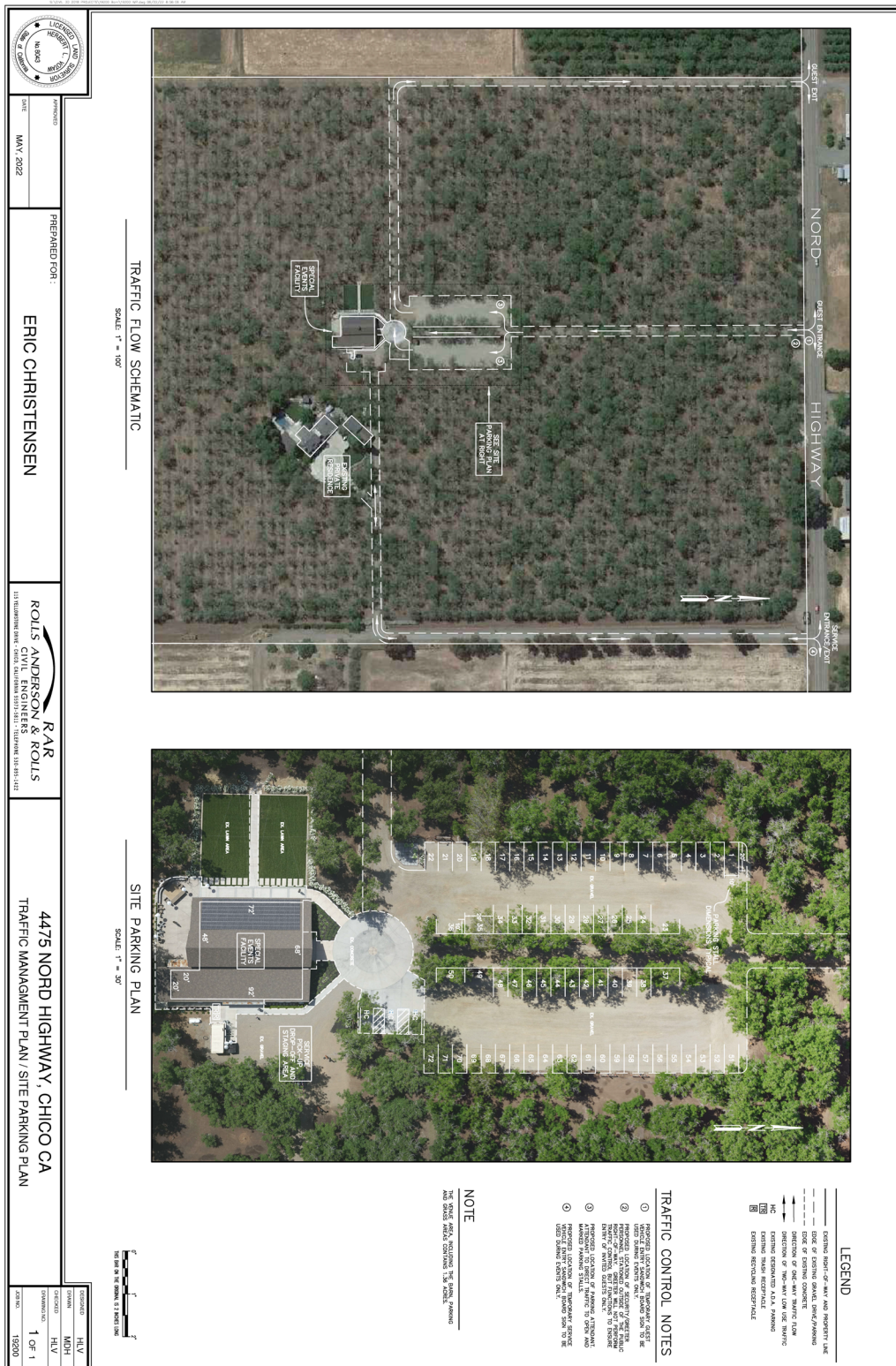
Dan Breedon, AICP, Planning Manager

Date

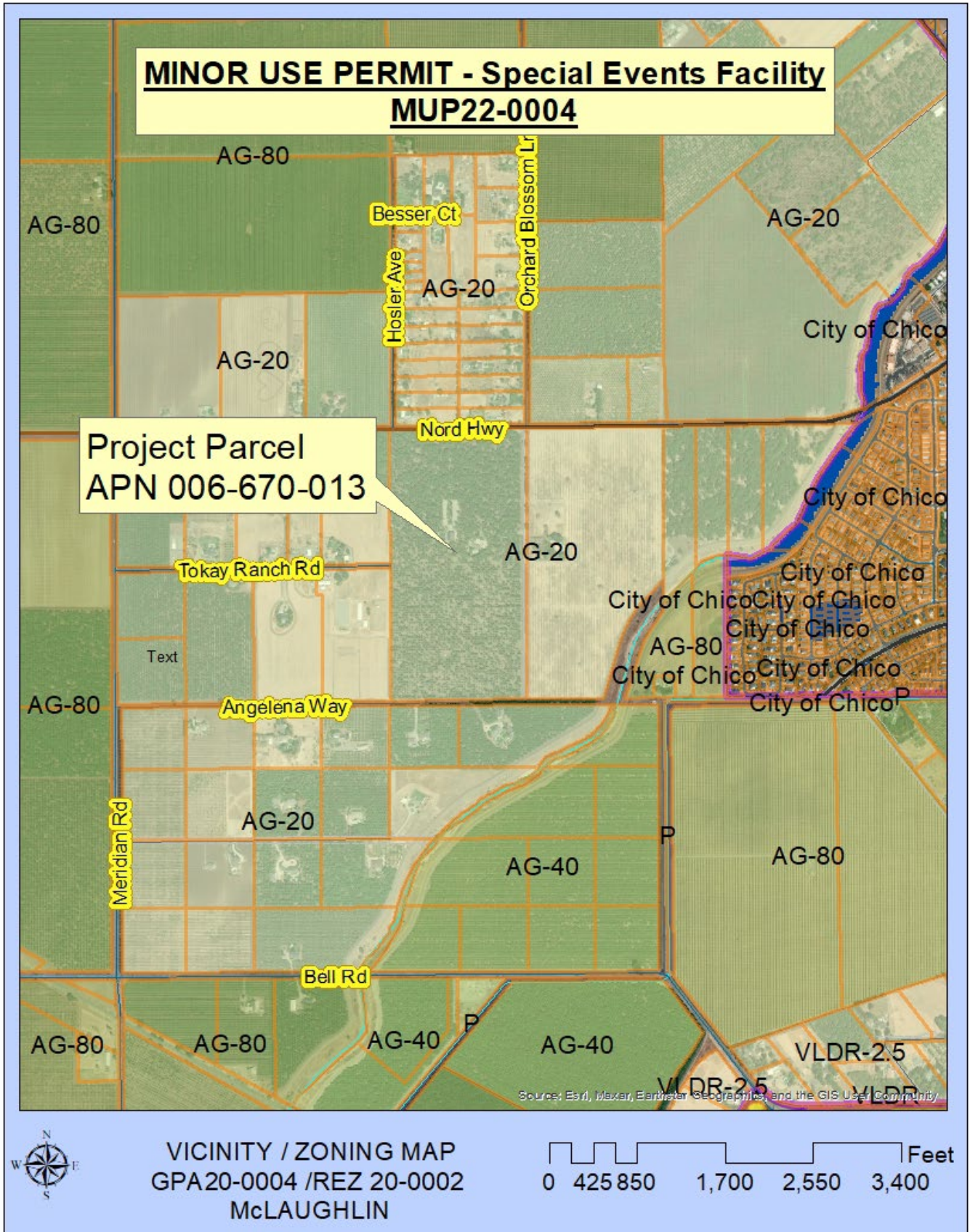
EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Site Map



Vicinity Map



1.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics.				
Except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099 (where aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant for qualifying residential, mixed-use residential, and employment centers), would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Setting

The project site is comprised of the existing barn and related improvements. The topography in the project site area is gentle and flat, with an elevation at 167 feet above sea level. Vegetation in the project site area is cultivated agricultural/orchard land and ornamental plants and shrubs. Surrounding uses are single-family residential to the north and agriculture/single-family residential to the west, east and south.

The Butte County General Plan depicts identified scenic resources in Butte County, including land-based and water-based scenic resources (Figure COS-7), County scenic highways (Figure COS-8), and Scenic Highway Zones (Figure COS-9). Based on the information provided in the General Plan, the project site is not located within, or in the vicinity of, identified scenic resources, or along a scenic highway or Scenic Highway Zone.

Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No impact. The proposed project would permit events to occur within an existing barn facility constructed on the subject property. Existing walnut trees block views into the property from Nord Highway and it is not visible from neighboring properties. The event facility will have no effect on scenic views. No impact would occur under this threshold.

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

No impact. The project site and surrounding area is not identified as a scenic resource nor is Nord Highway a designated State or County scenic highway. No impact would occur under this threshold.

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

No impact. The project parcels are located in an AG-20 area east of the City of Chico. The subject parcel is used for agricultural/orchard production and residential. The project is not visible from Nord Highway; thus, use of the barn for events would not change views into the site. The project was designed consistent with standards contained in the Butte County Code. The project would have no impact on the visual character of the area.

- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than significant impact. Outdoor lighting used on the barn is subject to standards in Chapter 24, Article III, General Regulations, Division 4 – Outdoor Lighting, as specified in the Butte County Zoning Code. As stated the site is not visible from Nord Highway or adjacent parcels. All *lighting*, exterior and interior, will be designed and located to confine direct *lighting* to the premises. No light sources will shine upon or illuminate directly on any surface other than the area required to be lighted and is of the type and in a location such that it constitutes a hazard to vehicular traffic, either on private property or the abutting highway or street. Because lighting will be designed and installed per County code, impacts would be less than significant under this threshold.

1.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.				
In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

The subject parcel is zoned AG-20 and designated for this use in the Butte County General Plan. As stated, the majority of the subject parcel is used for agricultural purposes. The residence and accessory structures, including the barn, are allowed by right in the AG-20.

Regulatory Setting

Williamson Act/Land Conservation Act (LCA) Contracts

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, was established based on numerous State legislative findings regarding the importance of agricultural lands in an urbanizing society. Policies emanating from those findings include those that discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural

land to urban uses and discourage discontinuous urban development patterns, which unnecessarily increase the costs of community services to community residents. The Williamson Act authorizes each County to establish an agricultural preserve. Land that is within the agricultural preserve is eligible to be placed under a contract between the property owner and County that would restrict the use of the land to agriculture in exchange for a tax assessment that is based on the yearly production yield. The contracts have a 9-year term that is automatically renewed each year, unless the property owner or county requests a non-renewal or the contract is cancelled.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

To characterize the environmental baseline for agricultural resources, Important Farmland Maps produced by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) were reviewed. Important Farmland maps show categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance (if adopted by the county), Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water. Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance map categories are based on qualifying soil types, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as well as current land use. These map categories are defined by the Department of Conservation's FMMP as follows:

Prime Farmland: Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods.

Farmland of Statewide Importance: Land that is similar to *Prime Farmland* but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture.

Unique Farmland: Land of lesser quality soils used for the production of specific high economic value crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods. It is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Examples of crops include oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers.

Farmland of Local Importance: Land of importance to the local agricultural economy, as determined by each county's board of supervisors and local advisory committees. Examples include dairies, dryland farming, aquaculture, and uncultivated areas with soils qualifying for *Prime Farmland* and *Farmland of Statewide Importance*. Butte County has not adopted a definition of Farmland of Local Importance.

Grazing Land: Land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing or browsing of livestock.

Urban and Built-up Land: Land used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administrative purpose, railroad yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment plants, water control structures, and other development purposes. Highways, railroads, and other transportation facilities are also included in this category.

Other Land: Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

Water: Water areas with an extent of at least 40 acres.

The project site is identified by the Department of Conservation as containing lands classified as *Prime Farmland*.

California Public Resources Code Section 4526

"Timberland" means land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the board as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used

to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Commercial species shall be determined by the board on a district basis.

California Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)

"Forest land" is land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.

Butte County Right to Farm Ordinance

Butte County has adopted a Right to Farm Ordinance (Butte County Code Chapter 35, Protection of Agricultural Land). This ordinance protects properly conducted agricultural operations in the unincorporated County against nuisance lawsuits and requires annual disclosure to all property owners within the County of the right to farm. In addition, the ordinance requires disclosure to buyers of real property and as part of development approvals. While the County Right-to-Farm Ordinance specifically applies to commercial agricultural operations within the unincorporated area, all commercial agricultural operations that comply with agricultural standards currently are protected from nuisance claims under State law (Section 3482.5 of the California Civil Code), whether located within cities or unincorporated areas.

Discussion

The subject property is developed with the existing barn and related improvements as well as a single-family residence; however, it is primarily developed as a walnut orchard. Surrounding uses include single-family residential to the north and agricultural/residential land to the west, east and south. The project parcel is not under a Williamson Act contract. Surrounding parcels are designated AG-20.

- a) **Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?**

No impact. The California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program designates the project site area as Prime Farmland. The proposed project has been constructed for use as a barn with related improvements. The special events facility will involve existing improvements and will not require removal of any walnut trees or otherwise affect use of the parcel for agricultural purposes. The event facility is conditionally allowed in the AG zone and subject to a Minor Use Permit. Use of the barn as an event facility would have no impact under this threshold.

- b) **Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?**

No impact. The proposed project will not convert Prime, Unique or Farmland of Statewide Importance. As stated, the proposed use is conditionally allowed per the AG zoning designation. The project parcels are not restricted by a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- c) **Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?**

No impact. The project site is not located in a timber resource zone. The project site is also not classified as forest land, pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 12220(g). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with, or cause the rezoning of, a timber resource zoning designation. No impact would occur under this threshold.

d) **Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

No impact. The project site is not considered forest land; and therefore, the proposed project would not result in loss or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use.

e) **Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

No impact. Use of the barn for event purposes would not change the AG zoning or otherwise affect use of the subject parcel for agricultural purposes. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Are significance criteria established by the applicable air district available to rely on for significance determinations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Butte County is located within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB), comprising the northern half of California's 400-mile-long Great Central Valley. The SVAB encompasses approximately 14,994 square miles with a largely flat valley floor (excepting the Sutter Buttes) about 200 miles long and up to 150 miles wide, bordered on its east, north and west by the Sierra Nevada, Cascade and Coast Mountain ranges, respectively.

The SVAB, containing 11 counties and some two million people, is divided into two air quality planning areas based on the amount of pollutant transport from one area to the other and the level of emissions within each. Butte County is within the Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin (NSVAB), which is composed of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama, and Yuba Counties.

Emissions from the urbanized portion of the basin (Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, and Placer Counties) dominate the emission inventory for the Sacramento Valley Air Basin, and on-road motor vehicles are the primary source of emissions in the Sacramento metropolitan area. While pollutant concentrations have generally declined over the years, additional emission reductions will be needed to attain the State and national ambient air quality standards in the SVAB.

Seasonal weather patterns have a significant effect upon regional and local air quality. The Sacramento Valley and Butte County have a Mediterranean climate, characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Winter weather is governed by cyclonic storms from the North Pacific, while summer weather is typically subject to a high-pressure cell that deflects storms from the region.

In Butte County, winters are generally mild with daytime average temperatures in the low 50s°F and nighttime temperatures in the upper 30s°F. Temperatures range from an average January low of approximately 36°F to an average July high of approximately 96°F, although periodic lower and higher temperatures are common. Rainfall between

October and May averages about 26 inches but varies considerably year to year. Heavy snowfall often occurs in the northeastern mountainous portion of the County. Periodic rainstorms contrast with occasional stagnant weather and thick ground or “tule” fog in the moister, flatter parts of the valley. Winter winds generally come from the south, although north winds also occur.

Diminished air quality within Butte County largely results from local air pollution sources, transport of pollutants into the area from the south, the NSVAB topography, prevailing wind patterns, and certain inversion conditions that differ with the season. During the summer, sinking air forms a “lid” over the region, confining pollution within a shallow layer near the ground that leads to photochemical smog and visibility problems. During winter nights, air near the ground cools while the air above remains relatively warm, resulting in little air movement and localized pollution “hot spots” near emission sources. Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matters and lead particulate concentrations tend to elevate during winter inversion conditions when little air movement may persist for weeks.

As a result, high levels of particulate matter (primarily fine particulates or PM_{2.5}) and ground-level ozone are the pollutants of most concern to the NSVAB Districts. Ground-level ozone, the principal component of smog, forms when reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) – together known as ozone precursor pollutants – react in strong sunlight. Ozone levels tend to be highest in Butte County during late spring through early fall, when sunlight is strong and constant, and emissions of the precursor pollutants are highest (Butte County CEQA Air Quality Handbook 2014).

Air Quality Attainment Status

Local monitoring data from the BCAQMD is used to designate areas a nonattainment, maintenance, attainment, or unclassified for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The four designations are further defined as follows:

Nonattainment – assigned to areas where monitored pollutant concentrations consistently violate the standard in question.

Maintenance – assigned to areas where monitored pollutant concentrations exceeded the standard in question in the past but are no longer in violation of that standard.

Attainment – assigned to areas where pollutant concentrations meet the standard in question over a designated period of time.

Unclassified – assigned to areas where data are insufficient to determine whether a pollutant is violating the standard in question.

Table 1.3-1. Federal and State Attainment Status of Butte County

POLLUTANT	STATE DESIGNATION	FEDERAL DESIGNATION
1-hour ozone	Nonattainment	-
8-hour ozone	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Carbon monoxide	Attainment	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment	Attainment
24-Hour PM ₁₀	Nonattainment	Attainment
24-Hour PM _{2.5}	No Standard	Attainment
Annual PM ₁₀	Attainment	No Standard
Annual PM _{2.5}	Nonattainment	Attainment
Source: Butte County AQMD, 2018		

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are frequently occupied locations where people who might be especially sensitive to air pollution are expected to live, work, or recreate. These types of receptors include residences, schools, churches, health care facilities, convalescent homes, and daycare centers. The project site is located in a rural area with scattered residential uses associated with AG-20 zoning surrounding the property. Table 1.3-2 lists sensitive receptors that were identified in the project vicinity and the distances from the center of the project site.

Table 1.3-2. Sensitive Receptors in the Project Vicinity

SENSITIVE RECEPTORS	DISTANCE FROM PROJECT SITE TO RECEPTOR
Residence (4610 Tokay Ranch Road)	1,200 feet to the west
Residence (4471 Nord Highway)	1,000 feet to the east
Residence (4550 Angelina Way)	2,000 feet to the south
Residence (4520 Nord Highway)	1,000 feet to the north
Source: Google Earth imagery	

Butte County Air Quality Management District

The Butte County Air Quality Management District (BCAQMD) is the local agency with primary responsibility for compliance with both the federal and state standards and for ensuring that air quality conditions are maintained. They do this through a comprehensive program of planning, regulation, enforcement, technical innovation, and promotion of the understanding of air quality issues.

Activities of the BCAQMD include the preparation of plans for the attainment of ambient air quality standards, adoption and enforcement of rules and regulations concerning sources of air pollution, issuance of permits for stationary sources of air pollution, inspection of stationary sources of air pollution and response to citizen complaints, monitoring of ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, and implementation of programs and regulations required by the FCAA and CCAA.

According to the State CEQA Guidelines, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make significance determinations for potential impacts on environmental resources. BCAQMD is responsible for ensuring that state and federal ambient air quality standards are not violated within Butte County. Analysis requirements for construction and operation-related pollutant emissions are contained in BCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook: Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts for Projects Subject to CEQA Review*. Established with these guidelines are screening criteria to determine whether or not additional modeling for criteria air pollutants is necessary for a project. The CEQA Air Quality Handbook also contains thresholds of significance for construction-related and operation-related emissions: ROG, NOx and PM10. The screening criteria listed in Table 1.3-3 were created using CalEEMod version 2013.2.2 for the given land use types. To determine if a proposed project meets the screening criteria, the size and metric for the land use type (units or square footage) should be compared with that of the proposed project. If a project is less than the applicable screening criteria, then further quantification of criteria air pollutants is not necessary, and it may be assumed that the project would have a less than significant impact for criteria air pollutants. If a project exceeds the size provided by the screening criteria for a given land use type, then additional modeling and quantification of criteria air pollutants should be performed (Butte County Air Quality Management District 2014).

Table 1.3-3. Screening Criteria for Criteria Air Pollutants

LAND USE TYPE	MAXIMUM SCREENING LEVELS FOR PROJECTS
Single-Family Residential	30 Units
Multi-Family (Low Rise) Residential	75 Units
Commercial	15,000 square feet
Educational	24,000 square feet
Industrial	59,000 square feet
Recreational	5,500 square feet

Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No impact. The applicable air quality plan for the project area is the *Northern Sacramento Valley Planning Area 2015 Triennial Air Quality Attainment Plan*. In adopting this plan, BCAQMD assumes that growth within its jurisdiction will be in accordance with city and county general plans, for which air quality effects associated with build-out have been analyzed.

A project is deemed inconsistent with an air quality plan if it would result in population or employment growth that exceeds the growth estimates in the applicable air quality plan (i.e., generating emissions not accounted for in the applicable air quality plan emissions budget). The proposed project would be a commercial use which is conditionally allowed in the AG zone per the Butte County zoning ordinance. The use would not result in population growth in the County greater than that anticipated in the General Plan. Further, the project would not result in an increase in criteria air pollutants to the extent that it would cause significant impacts to regional air quality.

Table 4-1 (Screening Criteria for Critical Pollutants) lists the established thresholds based on land use, including residential. The threshold for commercial uses is 15,000 square feet. The existing barn exterior footprint is 5,008 square feet. Use of the barn for events would not exceed the screening criteria referenced above. Thus, the project would not conflict with or obstruct the air quality plan. No impact would occur under this threshold.

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Less than significant with mitigation. Use of the barn as an event facility has the potential to impact air quality primarily by generating mobile source emissions associated with vehicle trips during events. Because the facility is currently developed and no construction would be required, the facility would not generate construction emissions.

As referenced, commercial use of the facility was evaluated per the screening criteria shown in Table 1.3-3. The commercial use square footage would not exceed the screening criteria. A less than significant impact operational would occur under this threshold.

Use of the unpaved driveway may generate dust emissions before and after events. There are a number of feasible control measures that can be reasonably implemented to reduce dust emissions to a less than significant level. These measures as well as other common air pollution control measures are recommended in *Appendix C of BCAQMD's CEQA Handbook (2014)* and are to be implemented as **Mitigation Measure AIR-1**, listed below.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than significant impact. Sensitive receptors in the project area and their distances from the project site area shown in Table 1.3-2. Based on the information provided in section b.), above, approval of the project for use as an event facility would not generate emissions that would exceed BCAQMD standards. Impacts would be less than significant under this threshold.

d) **Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?**

No impact. Future use of the barn for an event center is not expected to create objectionable odors. The event facility would not manufacture material, process agricultural crops or otherwise support uses that create odors. No construction would occur; thus, activities that could generate objectionable odors from tailpipe diesel emissions and from solvents in adhesives, paints, caulking materials and new asphalt would not occur. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure AIR-1

The following best practice measures to reduce impacts to air quality shall be incorporated by the project applicant, subject property owners as part of site management activities. These measures are intended to reduce dust emissions that may be generated during use of the unpaved access driveway before and after events.

Fugitive Dust

Dust complaints could result in a violation of the Butte County Air Quality Management Control District's "Nuisance" and "Fugitive Dust" Rules 200 and 205, respectively. The following measure would be implemented as a condition of approval:

- All disturbed soil areas not subject to re-vegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, or other methods approved in advance by the Butte County Air Quality Management District; and
- Vehicle speeds shall be limited to 15 mph on any unpaved surfaces.

Plan Requirements: These conditions shall be included as conditions of approval.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to throughout operation of the project.

Monitoring: The Butte County Department of Development Services and the Public Works Department shall ensure that these measures be shown as conditions of approval. Butte County Air Pollution Control District inspectors shall respond to nuisance complaints.

1.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The project site is situated in the Nord Hwy / Meridian Road area within a primarily agricultural area west of the City of Chico. There are agricultural parcels to the north, west, east and south. The land use designation in this area is Agriculture. The project site is designated Agriculture and is used for agricultural production.

Agriculture

The agricultural natural community is comprised of several land cover types including orchards and vineyards, rice, irrigated cropland, irrigated pasture, and non-native woodland. Agriculture occurs where the soils and topography are most suitable for production, which are generally the flat and well-drained areas located in the valley region of the County. Conversion of lands to an agricultural use has resulted in the removal of most of the historical native habitat.

Agriculture natural community areas generally do not support the wildlife compared with most native habitats; however, these areas continue to support abundant wildlife and provide essential breeding, foraging and roosting habitat for many resident and migrant wildlife species.

Jurisdictional Waters of the United States, including Wetlands

Waters of the United States (U.S.), including wetlands, are broadly defined to include navigable waterways, and tributaries of navigable waterways, and adjacent wetlands. Although definitions vary to some degree, wetlands are generally considered to be areas that are periodically or permanently inundated by surface water or groundwater, supporting vegetation adapted to life in saturated soil. Jurisdictional wetlands are vegetated areas that meet specific vegetation, soil, and hydrologic criteria defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The USACE holds sole authority to determine the jurisdictional status of waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Jurisdictional wetlands and Waters of the U.S. include, but are not limited to, perennial and intermittent creeks and drainages, lakes, seeps, and springs; emergent marshes; riparian wetlands; and seasonal wetlands. Wetland and waters of the U.S. provide critical habitat components, such as nest sites and reliable source of water for a wide variety of wildlife species.

Special-Status Species

Many species of plants and animals within the State of California have low populations, limited distributions, or both. Such species may be considered "rare" and are vulnerable to extirpation as the state's human population grows and the habitats these species occupy are converted to agricultural and urban uses. A sizable number of native species and animals have been formally designated as threatened or endangered under State and Federal endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as "Candidates" for such listing and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have designated others as "Species of Special Concern". The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has developed its own lists of native plants considered rare, threatened or endangered. Collectively, these plants and animals are referred to as "special status species."

Various direct and indirect impacts to biological resources may result from the small amount of development enabled by the project, including the loss and/or alteration of existing undeveloped open space that may serve as habitat. Increased vehicle trips to and from the project site can result in wildlife mortality and disruption of movement patterns within and through the project vicinity. Disturbances such as predation by pets (e.g., cats and dogs) and human residents may also occur at the human/open space interface, while conversion of land from lower to higher density residential use can lead to a predominance of various urban-adapted wildlife species (e.g., coyotes, raccoons, ravens and blackbirds) that have been observed to displace more sensitive species.

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15065 requires a mandatory finding of significance for projects that have the potential to substantially degrade or reduce the habitat of a threatened or endangered species, and to fully disclose and mitigate impacts to special status resources. For the purposes of this Initial Study, the California Environmental Quality Act (Sections 21083 and 21087, Public Resources Code) defines mitigation as measure(s) that:

- Avoids the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizes impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifies the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- Reduces or eliminates the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the project.
- Compensates for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was reviewed to determine if any special-status species have the potential to occur on the project site or in the vicinity. Table 4.4-1 lists the regulatory status and habitat requirements for each special-status species identified within a two-mile radius of the project site.

Table 4.4-1. Special-Status Species in the vicinity of the project site

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CNPS/DFG List	Habitat
PLANTS					
<i>Fritillaria pluriflora</i>	Adobe lily	None	None	1B.2	This wildflower is mainly limited to northern California. It grows in adobe clay soils of the Coast Ranges and low hills in the Central Valley from Tehama and Mendocino Counties south to Solano County.
<i>Astragalus tener var. ferrisiae</i>	Ferris' milk-vetch	None	None	1B.1	Ferris's milk-vetch grows in vernal mesic meadows and mildly alkaline flats in valley and foothill grassland, usually on dry, heavy clay or adobe soil at elevations ranging from 6 to 46 meters.
MAMMALS					
<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	North American porcupine	None	None		Native to the coniferous and mixed-forest habitats of the northeastern and western regions of the United States and northern Mexico.
Source: California Natural Diversity Database, Version 5, February 2021					

Vegetation on the project site area is primarily comprised of cultivated walnut trees and ornamental landscape species.

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No impact. The project parcel is disturbed and primarily used for orchard cultivation. Approval for use of the barn as an event facility would not require the removal of any trees or otherwise disturb vegetation. Thus, the proposed project would not degrade or reduce sensitive habitat values on the project site that would cause significant impacts to sensitive species. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No impact. The project site is not identified as containing a Sensitive Natural Community (SNC). There is no riparian habitat on the project site. No impact would occur under this threshold.

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

No impact. The project site based on the existing topography, does not have any wetlands that would be impacted by existing and any future development. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- d) **Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**

No impact. Wildlife movement corridors are routes frequently utilized by wildlife that provide shelter and sufficient food supplies to support wildlife species during migration. Movement corridors generally consist of riparian, woodlands, or forested habitats that span contiguous acres of undisturbed habitat. Wildlife movement corridors are an important element of resident species home ranges, including deer and coyote.

The project site is not located within a Butte County migratory deer corridor. No major migratory routes or corridors have been designated through the project site, and the existing developed components of the project area (i.e., roads, agriculture, barn and residential uses; fenced parcels) preclude use of the area as a migratory wildlife corridor for large mammals. The project site is vacant and supports periodic agriculture cultivation. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- e) **Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?**

No impact. The project would result in the use of an existing barn and related improvements (i.e., parking area and outdoor landscaped areas) as an event facility. The use would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources and is consistent with goals and policies identified in Butte County General Plan 2030. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- f) **Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?**

No impact. The Draft Butte Regional Conservation Plan (BRCP) is a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)/National Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) for the western half of the Butte County. The project site is located within the proposed plan area of the BRCP. However, as the plan has not been adopted, the proposed project will not conflict, nor interfere with, the attainment of the goals of the proposed plan. Thus, no impact to sensitive biological resources that would require mitigation under the future habitat conservation plan would occur. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Butte County contains a rich diversity of archaeological, prehistoric and historical resources. The General Plan 2030 EIR states that the "archaeological sensitivity of Butte County is generally considered high, particularly in areas near water sources or on terraces along water courses" (Butte County General Plan EIR, 2010, p. 4.5-7).

A substantial adverse change upon a historically significant resource would be one wherein the resource is demolished or materially altered so that it no longer conveys its historic or cultural significance in such a way that justifies its inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or such a local register (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, subd. (b)(2)). Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic period archaeological sites; historical features, such as rock walls, water ditches and flumes, and cemeteries; and architectural features. Cultural resources consist of any human-made site, object (i.e., artifact), or feature that defines and illuminates our past. Often such sites are found in foothill areas, areas with high bluffs, rock outcroppings, areas overlooking deer migratory corridors, or near bodies of water.

Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No impact. Historic use of the project site for agricultural purposes has resulted in ground-disturbing activities, including installation of the orchard, construction of an existing residence, outbuildings, the barn and related improvements. This has likely destroyed any cultural resources that may have been located on the surface. The project site does not contain known historic resources. No impact would occur under this threshold

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No impact. No prehistoric or historic resources are known to be located on the project site; however, prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic cultural resources may occur within the general area. Native Americans used the region for seasonal and/or permanent settlement, as well as for the gathering of plants, roots, seeds, and seasonal game. Historically, Euro-Americans also utilized the region for mining farming, and cattle ranching. Approving the barn for use as an events facility would have no impact on cultural resources because all the required improvements have been made. No impact would occur under this threshold.

c) **Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?**

No impact. Indications are that humans have occupied Butte County for over 10,000 years and it is not always possible to predict where human remains may occur outside of formal cemeteries. Therefore, excavation and construction activities, regardless of depth, may yield human remains that may not be interred in marked, formal burials.

Under CEQA, human remains are protected under the definition of archaeological materials as being "any evidence of human activity." Additionally, [*Public Resources Code section 5097.98*](#) has specific stop-work and notification procedures to follow in the event that human remains are inadvertently discovered during project implementation.

The Butte County Conservation Element has established two policies that address the inadvertent discovery of human remains. COS-P16.3 requires human remains discovered during construction to be treated with dignity and respect and to fully comply with the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and other appropriate laws. COS-P16.4 requires work to stop if human remains are found during construction until the County Coroner has been contacted, and, if the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the North American Heritage Commission and most likely descendant have been consulted.

As stated, no disturbance would be required to all use of the barn as an events facility. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.6 Energy

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?**

Less than Significant impact. Use of the barn to host events would require long-term energy consumption from electricity and propane gas consumption, energy used for water conveyance, and vehicle operations to and from the project site. As stated, the improvements have been constructed so no energy consumption would be required for project construction. Long-term energy consumption would occur after build-out of the project. The barn and outbuildings would consume electricity for lighting, heating and well operation. Propane would likely also be used an energy source. The project would generate additional vehicle trips because guests and vendors would drive to/from the facility. This would result in the consumption of transportation fuel. State and federal regulatory requirements addressing fuel efficiency are expected to increase fuel efficiency over time as older, less fuel-efficient vehicles are retired. This would reduce vehicle fuel energy consumption rates over time. Therefore, energy impacts related to fuel consumption/efficiency during project operation would be less than significant.

- b) **Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency**

Less than significant impact. Many of the state and federal regulations regarding energy efficiency are focused on increasing building efficiency and renewable energy generation, as well as reducing water consumption and Vehicles Miles Traveled. The project was designed and constructed consistent with Title 24 and CalGreen building code standards in place at the time of project approval. Therefore, the proposed project has implemented energy reduction design features and complied with the most recent energy building standards. The project would not result in wasteful or inefficient use of nonrenewable energy sources. Impacts would be less than significant under this threshold.

1.7 Geology and Soils

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Geology and Soils.				
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

- i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)

No impact. No new construction or ground disturbing activities are proposed. There are no known active faults underlying, or adjacent to, the project site. The nearest active fault is located a considerable distance from the project site, and the likelihood of a surface rupture at the project site is very low.

- ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

No impact. No new construction or ground disturbing activities are proposed. Ground shaking at the project site could occur due to the earthquake potential of the region's active faults. However, active faults are relatively distant from the project site. As a result, ground shaking due to seismic events is expected to have low to moderate intensities at the project site.

- iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No impact. The project site is identified as being located within an area considered "Generally Moderate" in respect to liquefaction potential. No new construction activities are proposed that would result in an unstable structure.

- iv) Landslides?

No impact. No new construction or ground disturbing activities are proposed. The project area is primarily level with 0-2% slopes. As a result, the landslide potential for the project site and surrounding area is low.

- b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

No impact. No new construction activities are proposed that would result in soil erosion and loss of topsoil.

- c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

No impact. No new construction activities are proposed that would result in the destabilization of natural or constructed slopes. There is no recorded occurrences of subsidence in within this area.

- d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

No impact. No new construction activities or permanent structures are proposed that would result in the foundations of structures to become exposed to expansive soils.

- e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Less than Significant impact. Wastewater disposal for events would be provided by the existing septic systems on the property or by portable toilets temporarily brought into the site. The existing system was designed to accommodate events with up to 225 people in attendance. No new systems are proposed. Impacts would be less than significant.

- f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No impact. Use of the barn as an events facility would not require any ground disturbance. Thus, no impacts to unique paleontological resources would occur. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.				
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Discussion

- a) **Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?**

Less than significant impact. The project would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during use of the barn as an events facility. The long-term regional emissions associated with the project would mainly be generated by new vehicle trips and indirect sources emissions, such as electricity consumption, water use, and solid waste disposal.

The Butte County Climate Action Plan (CAP) was adopted in February 2014 and updated and adopted in December 2021. The Butte County CAP includes strategies and associated actions related to public education and outreach efforts regarding reducing GHG emissions, administrative actions to monitor progress, and encouraging participation in programs. The strategies either apply to existing buildings that have already completed the environmental analysis, address operational characteristics of the county, or encourage options for actions that would reduce GHG emissions.

The proposed project's construction activities and operations are consistent with the Butte County General Plan. GHG emissions associated with the build-out of the project site have been analyzed and mitigated with the adoption of the Butte County CAP and the continued implementation of its strategies. Electricity consumed during operation is provided primarily by the area service provider regulated by state renewable energy plans. Vehicles used to transport vendors and guests to/from the facility would conform to state regulations and plans regarding fuel efficiency. Therefore, the project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, to the extent that a significant environmental effect would occur. Impacts are less than significant.

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

Less than significant impact. The project's consistency with the Butte County General Plan would ensure compliance with the GHG emission reduction strategies in the Butte County CAP, which in turn, support County-wide efforts to meet statewide GHG emission reduction goals. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

1.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

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

Less than significant impact. It is not anticipated that large quantities of hazardous materials would be permanently stored or used within the project site. Chemicals would be comprised of household cleaners, petroleum-based products for vehicle fuel and equipment operation, paints, solvents and other common items. These materials would not be present in sufficient strength or quantity to create a substantial risk of fire or explosion, or otherwise pose a substantial risk to human or environmental health. A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

Less than significant impact. The project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials. Small quantities of publicly-available hazardous materials (e.g., paint, maintenance supplies) would be routinely used within the project site for maintenance and cleaning and these materials will not be used in sufficient strength or quantity to create a substantial risk of fire or explosion, or otherwise pose a substantial risk to human or environmental health. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not create a permanent significant hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

- c) **Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?**

No impact. No existing or proposed schools have been identified within one-quarter mile of the project site.

- d) **Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

No impact. A review of regulatory agency databases (i.e., Geotracker website- <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>), which includes lists of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5, did not identify any sites at or adjacent to the project site that have used, stored, disposed of, or released hazardous materials. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- e) **For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?**

No impact. The project site is located approximately 3 miles southwest of Chico Municipal Airport. Per the Butte County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, the project site is located outside the Chico Municipal Airport Influence Area. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- f) **Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

No impact. The proposed project would maintain the driveway in accordance with applicable standards associated with vehicular access allowing for adequate emergency access and evacuation. Development of the project per the AG zoning designation, would not include any actions that physically interfere with emergency response or emergency evacuation plans. Development of the project would add trips to Nord Highway before and after events. However, events would occur primarily on weekends and would not adversely affect traffic operations. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- g) **Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?**

Less than significant impact. The project is not located in a moderate or very high fire hazard severity zone as shown in Figure HS-9 in the Butte County General Plan Health and Safety Element and designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The project site is within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA), which means that the City of Chico and Butte County has fiscal responsibility for preventing and suppressing fires. Oversight by the City of Chico Fire Department and Butte County Fire/Cal Fire, would ensure

the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk or loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

1.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. Hydrology and Water Quality.				
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) **Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?**

No impact. The proposed project would not generate wastewater requiring treatment in a municipal system. All wastewater would be treated using individual septic systems. As stated, the wastewater system has been constructed in conformance with Butte County Code, Chapter 19, as well as the Butte County Onsite Wastewater Manual to avoid violations of water quality standards. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) **Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?**

Less than significant impact. The Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin supplies a portion of the municipal and agricultural water demands for the City of Chico and surrounding unincorporated areas. The project site is located over the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin which underlies the majority of eastern Butte County. Water for the project is provided by an existing well.

According to the Butte County Groundwater Management Plan (2005), groundwater supplies approximately 31% of potable water demand county-wide. Water demand for the unincorporated areas of the county was projected to grow from 8,322.3 million gallons in 2000 to 9,736.4 million gallons in 2030, an increase of 17 percent. Development of the barn and other impervious surfaces increased the impervious surfaces on the site; however, stormwater runoff is directed to pervious areas during precipitation events. The additional impervious area associated with the barn is negligible and would not cause a measurable reduction in surface infiltration or a decrease in deep percolation to the underlying aquifers. The project site is not located in a groundwater recharge area for the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin. Impacts to groundwater supplies and recharge would be less than significant.

- c) **Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:**

- i) **Result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation;**

Less than significant impact. Use of the barn for events would not alter existing site drainage with the construction of impervious surfaces. Implementation of post-construction BMPs include specific erosion control and surface water protection methods. The project would not cause or contribute to conditions that would result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation. Impacts would be less than significant.

- ii) **Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;**

No impact. No new construction or ground-disturbing activities are proposed that would substantially alter existing drainage patterns on the site or surrounding area, or substantially increase the rate of surface runoff.

- iii) **Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or**

No impact. No new construction or ground-disturbing activities are proposed that would substantially alter existing drainage patterns on the site or surrounding area, or substantially increase the rate of surface runoff.

- iv) **Impede or redirect flood flows?**

Less than Significant Impact. The floodplain mapping of the project area identifies the portion of the site where the barn is located as being in flood zone X (FEMA Map 06007C0320E, January 6, 2011). Areas designated Flood Zone X are not subject to inundation by 100-year flood events. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- d) **In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?**

No impact. As stated, the project is located within Flood Zone X. The proposed action would not result in a risk of pollutant release during a flood hazard, tsunami or seiche event. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- e) **Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?**

Less than Significant Impact. The project site is located within the Sacramento Valley – Vina sustainable groundwater management plan subbasin for California. The project site is located in an area that requires a sustainable groundwater management plan, the subbasin is listed as *High Priority*. However, due to the nature of the water draw from the on-site well, being less than significant within the context of the entire subbasin, and its alignment with similar uses in the area, (i.e., not subject to discretionary review): residential, accessory structure development, landscaping, and the maintenance watering of the existing walnut orchard (crop cultivation), there is no conflict or obstruction of a sustainable groundwater management plan. The sustainable groundwater management plan reviews six categories of criteria that include: lowering ground water levels, reduction of storage, seawater intrusion (not applicable in Butte County), degraded quality, land subsidence, or surface water depletion, none of which are significantly affected by the proposed special events facility. The proposed use would use the existing well to provide water to restroom facilities intermittently as events occur. Given the type of proposed use, the proposed project would not result in significant water quality or groundwater quality impacts that would conflict or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Impacts would be less than significant under this threshold.

1.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. Land Use and Planning.				
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Butte County General Plan

The General Plan represents the basic community values, ideals and aspirations with respect to land use, development, transportation, public services, and conservation policy that will govern Butte County through 2030. The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the land use of areas within the county and includes a description of the characteristics and intensity of each land use category. The land use designation for the project parcel is *Agriculture 20 – acre minimum (AG-20)*.

Butte County Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance implements the goals and policies of the Butte County General Plan by regulating the uses of the land and structures within the County. Per Butte County Code Chapter 24 (Zoning Ordinance) - 175.2 Special events facilities, C. Applicability, the use is permitted in the AG-20 zone with an approved discretionary, Minor Use Permit. The zoning designations of the project site and their intended use are as follows:

Agriculture

The purpose of the AG zone is to support, protect, and maintain a viable, long-term agricultural sector in Butte County. As defined in the Butte County General Plan Land Use Element, the Agriculture designation allows the cultivation, harvest, storage, processing, sale, and distribution of all plant crops, especially annual food crops, as well as roadside stands for the sale of agricultural products grown or processed on the property. The Agriculture designation also allows livestock grazing, animal husbandry, intense animal uses, and animal matter processing. Alternative energy facilities are allowed in the Agriculture designation, subject to permit requirements. Residential uses in the Agriculture land use designation are limited to one single-family dwelling and a second dwelling unit per legal parcel. Farm labor housing is also permitted. The minimum parcel size is between 20 to 160 acres, although existing parcels smaller than the minimum may remain as legal parcels.

a) Physically divide an established community?

No impact. The project site is located in a rural area of Butte County proximal to and west of the City of Chico municipal boundary. Surrounding uses are comprised of single-family residential and agricultural uses. Use of the barn as an events facility is allowed per the Butte County zoning ordinance subject to approval of a Minor Use Permit. The barn is developed; thus, approval of the proposed land use action would not physically divide an established community. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No impact. The barn is allowed by right under the zoning. Use of the barn as a special events facility is allowed with approval of a Minor Use Permit per the zoning designation. With approval of the land use action, the project would not be in conflict with any land use plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effect. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Mineral Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) **Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**

No impact. There are no known economically viable sources of rock materials in the immediate vicinity of the project site. No mining operations have occurred on the project site or surrounding area and the project would not preclude future extraction of available mineral resources. Mineral resource extraction is not proposed with this project. Use of the barn as an events facility would not require the use of mineral resources; thus, it would not contribute to the loss of available resources. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) **Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?**

No impact. The project site is not within or near any designated locally important mineral resource recovery site. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.13 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII.Noise.				
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

According to the Butte County General Plan 2030, noise is a concern throughout Butte County, but especially in rural areas and in the vicinity of noise-sensitive uses such as residences, schools, and churches. Noise is discussed in the Health and Safety Chapter of the Butte County General Plan 2030. Tables HS-2 and HS-3 in the County General Plan (included as Tables 1.13-1 and 1.13-2 below) outline the maximum allowable noise levels at sensitive receptor land uses.

Table 1.13-1. Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure Transportation Noise Sources

LAND USE	Exterior Noise Level Standard for Outdoor Activity Areas ^a		Interior Noise Level Standard	
	L _{dn} /CNEL, dB	L _{eq} , dBA ^b	L _{dn} /CNEL, dB	L _{eq} , dBA ^b
Residential	60 ^c	-	45	-
Transient Lodging	60 ^c	-	45	-
Hospitals, nursing homes	60 ^c	-	45	-
Theaters, auditoriums, music halls	-	-	-	35
Churches, meeting halls	60 ^c	-	-	40
Office Buildings	-	-	-	45
Schools, libraries, museums	-	70	-	45
Playgrounds, neighborhood parks	-	70	-	-

Source: Table HS-2, Butte County General Plan 2030

^a Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the exterior noise-level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving land use.

^b As determined for a typical worst-case hour during periods of use.

^c Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 60 dB Ldn/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dB Ldn/CNEL may be allowed, provided that available exterior noise-level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

Table 1.13-2. Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure Non-Transportation Noise Sources

NOISE LEVEL DESCRIPTION	Daytime 7 am - 7 pm		Evening 7 pm - 10 pm		Night 10 pm - 7 am	
	Urban	Non-Urban	Urban	Non-Urban	Urban	Non-Urban
Hourly Leq (dB)	55	50	50	45	45	40
Maximum Level (dB)	70	60	60	55	55	50

Source: Table HS-3, Butte County General Plan 2030

Notes:

1. "Non-Urban designations" are Agriculture, Timber Mountain, Resource Conservation, Foothill Residential and Rural Residential. All other designations are considered "urban designations" for the purposes of regulating noise exposure.
2. Each of the noise levels specified above shall be lowered by 5 dB for simple tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g. caretaker dwellings).
3. The County can impose noise level standards which are up to 5 dB less than those specified above based upon determination of existing low ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site.
4. In urban areas, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving property. In rural areas, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied at a point 100 feet away from the residence. The above standards shall be measured only on property containing a noise sensitive land use. This measurement standard may be amended to provide for measurement at the boundary of a recorded noise easement between all affected property owners and approved by the County.

Table 1.13.1, above, identifies the maximum allowable noise exposure to a variety of land uses from transportation sources, including from roadways, rail and airports. Table 1.13-2 identifies the maximum allowable noise exposure from non-transportation sources. In the case of transportation noise sources, exterior noise level standards for residential outdoor activity areas are 60 dB (Ldn/CNEL). However, where it is not possible to reduce noise in an outdoor activity area to 60 dB Ldn /CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise-reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dB may be allowed, provided that available exterior noise-level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with applicable standards.

Butte County Noise Ordinance

Chapter 41A, Noise Control, of the Butte County Code of Ordinance applies to the regulation of noise. The purpose of the noise ordinance is to protect the public welfare by limiting unnecessary, excessive, and unreasonable noise. Section 41A-7 specifies the exterior noise limits that apply to land use zones within the County, which are provided in Table 1.13-2.

The Butte County Noise Ordinance provides the County with a means of assessing complaints of alleged noise violations and to address noise level violations from stationary sources. The ordinance includes a list of activities that are exempt from the provisions of the ordinance.

Discussion

- a) **Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?**

Less than significant impact with mitigation. Noise impacts related to operation of the events facility were evaluated in an Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment prepared by Bollard Acoustical Consultants (August 2022). As stated in the report, based on the estimated trip generation, changes in ambient noise levels off-site resulting from project-generated traffic within the adjacent roadway network would be below a 5 dB increase.

Noise levels generated by on-site activities associated with operation of the events center are addressed herein. The primary noise sources associated with the proposed event center activities would be on-site vehicle circulation, parking area movements, amplified music/speech and crowd noise. For noise generated by on-site activities, the County's exterior noise level standards were applied to the project at a point 100 feet away from residences located closest to the project site. An impact would occur if on-site noise sources would noticeably increase ambient noise levels above background levels. The threshold of perception of the human ear is approximately 3 to 5 dB – a 5 dB change is clearly noticeable. For the following analyses of on-site noise sources, a noticeable increase in ambient noise levels is assumed to occur where noise levels increase by 5 dB or more over existing ambient noise levels at existing nearby residences.

On-Site Event Vehicle Circulation Noise. Event traffic will enter the property from the north end of the project parcel via Nord Highway. Once on site, vehicles will travel south towards the event facility building and parking area on a private road. All event traffic will exit the facility via a one-way private road that leads back out to Nord Highway (north) along the western project property line. The Federal Highway Administration Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA RD-77-108) was utilized to determine worst-case on-site event vehicle circulation noise generated by a maximum capacity event (225-person) event at the nearest identified residential receivers. Assuming an on-site vehicle speed of less than 25 mph and 100 vehicle passby trips in a worst-case busy daytime or evening hour (conservative estimate), the FHWA Model was used to predict event-generated on-site traffic noise levels at the nearest 10 off-site residences. The worst-case on-site event traffic noise exposure is estimated to be well below the applied significance criterion of 5 dB.

The project utilizes one primary parking area for events which is centrally located on the project parcel north of the barn building. As a means of determining potential noise exposure from event parking lot activities, specific parking lot noise level measurements were conducted. The noise measurement results show noise levels of approximately 70 dB Single Event Level (SEL) at a reference distance of 50 feet. The maximum noise level associated with parking lot activity typically did not exceed 65 dB Lmax at 50 feet.

Worst-case event parking area noise exposure is predicted to comply with the applicable Butte County daytime and evening hourly average (Leq) and maximum (Lmax) exterior noise level standards at the nearest residential receivers. Noise exposure from worst-case event parking area movements are predicted to satisfy applicable Butte County daytime and evening exterior noise level standards at the nearest existing residential uses. Further, noise exposure from those activities is not predicted to significantly increase ambient daytime or evening noise levels at the nearest residences.

Event Amplified Music/Speech. The project proposes to have amplified music/speech during events held on the property. According to the project applicant, the event sound system setup would be located within the barn building and within an outdoor area during ceremonies. To quantify the noise levels generated from project-generated amplified music/speech, baseline noise measurements were conducted on June 9, 2022, during a simulated event with amplified music. The measurement locations were intended to quantify event

music noise exposure in the directions of the nearest existing off-site residences. The sound system was set to produce sound levels typical of what would be produced by amplified music playing within the barn at an event. The simulation utilized a reference music level of 80 dB (average) at a distance of 50 feet from the speakers. While music was being played, short-term noise level measurements were conducted at a reference position 50 feet in front of the speakers and six other locations. To predict amplified event noise levels at the closest residences, measured noise levels were those receivers attenuated to distances 100 feet from the residential receivers assuming a decrease of 6 dB per doubling of distance from the noise source (consistent with accepted sound propagation algorithms).

Based upon the Noise Analysis, amplified event music is projected to exceed the adjusted Butte County daytime and evening hourly average (Leq) and maximum (Lmax) exterior noise level standards at several of the residential receivers. Observations indicate that amplified music/speech ranged from completely inaudible to barely audible (not measurable above ambient) at the measurement sites during the amplified simulation and noted that other noise sources significantly contributed to baseline noise levels the data (e.g., traffic, birds and sprinklers). However, impacts from amplified music could be **potentially significant**. Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

Event Crowd Noise at Existing Off-Site Residences. To quantify event-generated crowd noise at nearby residential receivers, the analysis utilized reference file data for persons speaking in casual, normal and raised voices (casual = 52 dB per person at 3 feet; normal voice = 57 dB per person at 3 feet; raised voice = 64 dB per person at 3 feet) and persons clapping (light clap = 55 dB per person at 10 feet; normal clap = 65 dB per person at 10 feet; enthusiastic clap = 75 dB per person at 10 feet). Based on the reference data and conservatively assuming 50 percent of a 225-person crowd is conversing simultaneously (113 people speaking, 112 people listening), that clapping would occur 2% of the hour and standard spherical spreading loss (6 dB per doubling of distance), data were projected from the effective noise center of the identified crowd areas to the nearest existing off-site residences. Worst-case event crowd noise exposure is predicted to comply with the applicable Butte County daytime and evening hourly average (Leq) and maximum (Lmax) exterior noise level standards at the nearest residential receivers.

Cumulative Event Noise Levels. The cumulative noise level exposure from on-site event noise sources at the nearest existing off-site residences, assuming implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 was estimated. Cumulative noise levels associated with on-site vehicle movement, amplified music/speech and crowd noise would satisfy applicable Butte County daytime and evening exterior noise level standards at the nearest existing residential uses.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than significant impact. The project consists of the operation an event facility. As stated in the Noise Report, these uses do not typically have equipment that generates appreciable vibration. Further, the project will not use equipment that will produce appreciable vibration. Impacts related to vibration would be *less than significant*.

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No impact. No public use airports have been identified to be located within two miles of the project site. The closest airport is Chico Municipal Airport, which is located approximately 3.1 miles to the northeast. The proposed project is located outside the airport compatibility zone; and therefore, airport operation would not result in noise impacts to people residing on the project site. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure NOI-1. Average sound levels from amplified music/speech within the barn building shall not exceed 70 dBA at a point 50 feet in front of the speakers. The applicant shall implement the following:

- Speakers located within the barn building shall be located and oriented as configured in the sound level simulation conducted on June 9, 2022, i.e., set back within the barn with north-facing speakers;



Legend:

Photos: BAC sound system setup within barn –proposed location of sound system setups during events.

- Average sound levels from amplified music/speech within the outdoor ceremony area (lawn) shall not exceed 65 dBA at a point 50 feet in front of the speakers;
- All amplified event music/speech on the property shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., except on Saturdays and Sundays where the operational time frame is 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.;
- A maximum of one subwoofer shall be used during amplified music events; and
- Event staff shall monitor sound levels hourly at the 50-foot reference distance during each event to ensure compliance with the recommended average noise level requirements for sound system.

Plan Requirements: These conditions shall be included as conditions of approval.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to throughout operation of the project.

Monitoring: The Butte County Department of Development Services and the Public Works Department shall ensure that these measures be shown as conditions of approval. Butte County Code Enforcement officers would respond to nuisance complaints.

1.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Population and Housing.				
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No impact. Use of the barn for events would be allowed per the zoning ordinance with approval of a Minor Use Permit. It would not result in the development of any new housing or otherwise contribute to an increase the population of Butte County. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No impact. The project would not displace existing individuals or housing. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Public Services.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

No impact. Fire protection services are provided by the City of Chico, CalFire/Butte County Fire Department. Approval of the proposed land use action will not require additional fire protection services. Occupancy of all structures was reviewed by Butte County Fire/CAL-FIRE and the Building Division of the Butte County Development Services Department. Improvements to all structures to satisfy occupancy standards will be conditions of the Minor Use Permit. No reduction in response time for fire and medical services is expected as a result of the proposed project. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Police protection?

No impact. The Butte County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement service to the site. The proposed action is unlikely to increase service calls. No reduction in response time for law enforcement services is expected as a result of the proposed project. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Schools?

No impact. The project site is located within the Chico Unified School District. Use of the barn as an events facility would have no effect on school services. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Parks?

No Impact. Increase in the demand for recreational facilities is typically associated with increases in population. As discussed in Section 1.14 - *Population and Housing*, the proposed project will not generate growth in the local population. No increase in recreational demand would occur with approval of the proposed land use action. No impact would occur under this threshold.

Other public facilities?

No impact. No other public facilities would be impacted by the proposed project. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.16 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Recreation.				
Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) **Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

No impact. Approval of the proposed land use action would have no effect on demand for recreational facilities. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

No impact. Approval of the proposed land use action would not require expansion of existing recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any adverse physical effects on the environment from construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.17 TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. Transportation.				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Setting

Roadway Network

Regional and local access to the project site is provided by Nord Highway. Access to the barn and existing residential area is provided by a two-lane hard-packed gravel driveway. The service entrance / exit is located on the eastern side of the property and accesses the barn structure directly. Guest access is provided through the center access road / driveway. This road runs due south to the barn structure. Upon entering the drive, guests will pass walnut trees and enter the parking area. Upon exit of the facility guests will travel west within the parcel to the western side, whereupon they turn right and exit the property traveling north back onto Nord Highway.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Bicycle facilities include bike paths (Class I), bike lanes (Class II), and bike routes (Class III).

Class I Bike paths provide a completely separated facility designed for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians within minimal cross flows by motorists. Caltrans standards call for Class I two-way bike paths to have 8 feet of pavement width with 2-foot wide graded shoulders on either side, for a total right-of-way width of 12 feet. Designated one-way bike paths are allowed 5 feet of minimum pavement width. Class I bike paths must also be at least 5 feet from the edge of a paved roadway, 8 feet from an obstruction, and meet specified minimum horizontal and vertical curve requirements for the speeds anticipated.

Class II Bike lanes provides restricted on-street right-of-way designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with vehicle parking and crossflows by pedestrians and motorists permitted. Caltrans standards generally require a minimum 4-foot bike lane with 6-inch white strip separating the roadway from the bike lane. Where raised curbs without permitted parking or designated marked parking exists, a minimum 5-foot bike lane adjacent to the traffic lane is required. Where parking is permitted, but unmarked, the 6-inch white stripe separating the traffic lane from the bike lane must be a minimum of 12 feet from the raised curb.

Class III Bike routes provides a preferred shared route with motorists on the street, or to a more restricted extent, with pedestrians on sidewalks where designated by signs or permanent markings. The main purpose of designated bike routes is to provide continuity to the bikeway network by connecting discontinuous segments of Class I and II bikeways and may also be used to direct bicyclists to a route of higher degree of service or use. Roadways designated as Class

III bike routes should have sufficient width to accommodate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Other than a street sign, there are no special markings required for a Class III bike route.

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and paved shoulders adjacent to rural roads. The County of Butte's Development Standards typically require proposed residential developments located in the County's urban areas to construct curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements within the County roadways fronting development.

Discussion

a) **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?**

Less than significant impact. The project site is located in a primarily agricultural and low-density residential area. The proposed action would only generate trips prior to and after events which as stated would occur primarily on weekends. There are no designated bicycle facilities or improved shoulders along Nord Highway. Operation of the project will have no effect on bicycle facilities, paved roadway shoulders or the paved surfaces that could be used by pedestrians and cyclists. A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

b) **Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?**

Less than significant impact. As stated, the events facility would operate primarily on weekends. It would not operate daily; and thus, would not generate daily trips. To assist in SB 743 implementation, the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released a *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory) in December 2018. This includes technical recommendations regarding the assessment of VMT, thresholds of significance, VMT mitigation measures and screening thresholds for certain land use projects. Lead agencies may consider and use these recommendations at their discretion. The Technical Advisory contains recommendations related to assessing VMT impacts. Those projects that meet specific screening criteria have been determined to generate too few trips to warrant evaluation. With respect to the "small project" criteria, projects consistent with a Sustainable Community Strategy, the local general plan and that generate or attract fewer than 110 vehicle trips per day may be presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact. The proposed project may generate more than 110 trips during an event; however, it would not generate 110 daily trips. Thus, it would not meet that screening criteria and would be consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

c) **Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

No impact. The proposed project would utilize an existing driveway. It would not change the configuration (alignment) of area roadways and would not introduce types of vehicles that are not already traveling on area roads. No impact would occur under this threshold.

d) **Result in inadequate emergency access?**

No impact. Emergency vehicles access the site along Nord Highway via the existing gravel driveways. Based on the traffic management plan prepared for the proposed project, the main guest access driveway to the barn facility is located on the south side of Nord Highway between Orchard Blossom Lane to the East and Hosler Avenue to the West. The entrance has [2] 100watt LED posts lights on either side of the 18' gate. The approach, which was previously permitted and approved, is approximately 45' long consisting of asphalt that transitions to a hard packed gravel road. This road can support vehicles, buses and fire trucks. The project would have no effect on Nord Highway or the project driveway or otherwise impact emergency access. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.				
Has a California Native American Tribe requested consultation in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1(b)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Tribal Cultural Resources are defined as a site feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place or object, which is of cultural value to a Tribe and is either on or eligible for the California Historic Register, a local register, or a resource that the lead agency, at its discretion, chooses to treat as such (Public Resources Code Section 21074 (a)(1)).

Butte County contains a rich diversity of archaeological, prehistoric and historical resources. The General Plan 2030 EIR observes that the "archaeological sensitivity of Butte County is generally considered high, particularly in areas near water sources or on terraces along water courses" (Butte County General Plan EIR, 2010, p. 4.5-7).

A substantial adverse change upon a historically significant resource would be one wherein the resource is demolished or materially altered so that it no longer conveys its historic or cultural significance in such a way that justifies its inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or such a local register (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, sub. (b)(2)). Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic period archaeological sites; historical features, such as rock walls, water ditches and flumes, and cemeteries; and architectural features. Cultural resources consist of any human-made site, object (i.e., artifact), or feature that defines and illuminates our past. Often such sites are found in foothill areas, areas with high bluffs, rock outcroppings, areas overlooking deer migratory corridors, or near bodies of water.

A letter was sent to the Mechoopda Community on August 4, 2022 as required per AB 52. To date, no response has been received.

Discussion

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

- a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?

No impact. Per Assembly Bill AB 52 (Statutes of 2014) Notification Request, Public Resources Code Section 21080.3(b), the County sent one letter to the Mechoopda Community on August 4, 2022. As stated, to date, no response was received. The project site is developed with a walnut orchard, single family dwelling, a barn and associated accessory structures; thus, no impact to historic resources would occur under this threshold.

- b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

No impact. See discussion 4.17(a) – *Tribal Cultural Resources*. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. Utilities and Service Systems.				
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) **Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

No impact. Wastewater disposal for the barn and related special event facility is provided by a private, on-site septic system. The system was designed and constructed to accommodate an events facility; thus, approval of the land use action would not require the expansion of a wastewater system. Potable water would be provided by an existing well. The project site is currently served by electric power (PG&E) and wireless phone service. The project would not result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded infrastructure including water services, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities. No impact would occur under this threshold.

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

No impact. See response to 1.19 (b). No impact would occur under this threshold.

- c) **Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

No impact. As stated, wastewater disposal for the special event facility is provided by a private, on-site septic system. Therefore, approval of the land use action would have no impact on any wastewater treatment facilities because septic systems would be utilized. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- d) **Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?**

No impact. Construction and operation of the project would result in a minor increase of solid waste that would require disposal at the Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility. The Neal Road Facility has a maximum permitted throughput of 1,500 tons per day, and an estimated current daily average throughput of 466 tons per day. The events facility would only generate solid waste when an event occurs. It would not generate solid waste daily like commercial facilities. The Neal Road Landfill would have adequate capacity to accommodate solid waste generated by the project. A less than significant impact would occur under this threshold.

- e) **Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?**

No impact. The proposed project would comply with statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Waste generated by events held at the barn would consist domestic refuse, which would be collected in approved trash bins and removed from the project site by a waste hauler or by the facility operator. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.20 WILDFIRE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. Wildfire.				
Is the project located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones?				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The project site is located in a Local Responsibility Area for fire protection. The project site is located outside a high fire hazard severity zones as identified by the State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Discussion

- a) **Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

No impact. The project site would be accessed via an existing driveway on the south side of Nord Highway; a county-maintained road. There would be no lane closure or other action that would impact emergency access or interfere with an emergency evacuation plan. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- b) **Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

No impact. The project site is not located in an area that is susceptible to wildland fires. No conditions or factors have been identified in the project area that would exacerbate wildfire risks.

- c) **Require the installation of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

No impact. The project site is located outside of a high fire hazard severity zone. However, due to the heightened risk of wildfire and increased potential for damage or loss, development must meet Butte County Code requirements which establish standards for access, signage, maintenance of defensible space and vegetation management. These standards were included as conditions of approval for the barn. Approval of the land use action would not require any infrastructure improvements that would exacerbate fire risks or generate temporary impacts to the project site or surrounding area. No impact would occur under this threshold.

- d) **Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

No impact. The project site area is located within a developed area and the topography is flat. The project area does not exhibit flooding potential (see discussion Section 1.10.d – Hydrology and Water Quality) or landslide potential (see discussion Section 1.7.a – Geology Soils). Therefore, no impacts from post-fire instability or drainage changes would occur. No impact would occur under this threshold.

1.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XXI. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than significant impact. Potential impacts to biological resources and cultural resources associated with future development of the proposed project were analyzed in this Initial Study. Approval of the land use action would have a less than significant impact to biological and cultural resources. No special status species or their habitat was identified on the site. No development would occur that would affect previously unknown cultural resources. Approval of the land use action would not cause fish or wildlife populations to drop below self-sustaining levels or restrict the movement/distribution of a rare or endangered species.

- b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less than significant impact with mitigation. Development of the proposed project would have no impact, a less than significant impact or a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated with respect to all environmental issues pursuant to CEQA. Due to the limited scope of direct physical impacts to the environment associated with the project, potential impacts are project specific.

As stated, activities occurring on the project site may generate fugitive dust during operation. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure AIR-1** would reduce potential impacts to less than significant. As stated, noise from operation of amplified music/speech has the potential to cause a potentially significant and adverse impact on adjacent residences. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure NOI-1** would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

The cumulative effects resulting from build out of the Butte County General Plan 2030 were previously identified in the General Plan EIR. The type, scale, and location of the type of action proposed for the site is consistent with County’s General Plan and zoning designation with approval of a Minor Use Permit. Thus, the potential cumulative environmental effects of the proposed project would fall within the impacts identified in the County’s General Plan EIR. Approval of the land use action would be subject to required “fair share” development impact fees, which will be paid at the time operating permits are issued.

- c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than significant impact with mitigation. There have been no impacts discovered through the review of this application demonstrating that approval of the Minor Use Permit and future use of the barn as an events facility would cause substantial adverse effects to human beings either directly or indirectly. However, use of the facility has the potential to cause short-term air quality (fugitive dust) and noise (amplified music/speech) impacts during operation. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures AIR-1 and NOI-1** included in this Initial Study, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

Authority for the Environmental Checklist: Public Resources Code Sections 21083, 21083.5.

Reference: Government Code Sections 65088.4.

Public Resources Code Sections 21080, 21083.5, 21095; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Environmental Reference Materials

1. Bollard Acoustical Consulting, Inc., *Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment, The Barn at Pheasant Trail Ranch*, August 2022
2. Butte County. *Butte County Climate Action Plan*. December 14, 2021. Available at <https://www.buttecounty.net/dds/bccapupdate2020>
3. Butte County. *Butte County General Plan 2030 Final Environmental Impact Report*. April 8, 2010. Available at http://www.buttegeneralplan.net/products/2010-08-30_FEIR/default.asp.
4. Butte County. *Butte County General Plan 2030*. October 26, 2010. Available at <http://www.buttecounty.net/dds/Planning/GeneralPlan/Chapters.aspx>
5. Butte County. *Butte County General Plan 2030 and Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report*. June 17, 2015. Available at http://www.buttegeneralplan.net/products/2012-05-31_GPA_ZO_SEIR/default.asp
6. Butte County. *Butte County General Plan 2030 Setting and Trends Report Public Draft*. August 2, 2007. Available at <http://www.buttegeneralplan.net/products/SettingandTrends/default.asp>.
7. Butte County. *Butte County Code of Ordinances, Chapters 19, 20, 24 & 41A*. Available at https://www.municode.com/library/ca/butte_county/codes/code_of_ordinances/
8. Butte County. *Butte County Department of Development Services GIS Data*. April 2022.
9. Butte County Air Quality Management District. *CEQA Air Quality Handbook – Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impacts for Projects Subject to CEQA Review*. October 23, 2014. Available at <https://bcaqmd.org/planning/air-quality-planning-ceqa-and-climate-change/>
10. Butte County Public Works Department, Division of Waste Management. Joint Technical Document-Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility, Butte County, California. November 2017.
11. California Department of Conservation. *Fault-Rupture Hazard Zones in California. Altquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act with Index to Earthquake Fault Zone Maps*. Special Publication 42. Interim Revision. 2007.
12. California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. *A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. 2014.
13. California Department of Toxic Substance Control. 2009. *Envirostor Database*. Accessed on April 2022. <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>.
14. California Department of Water Resources, Northern Region Office. *Geology of the Northern Sacramento Valley, California*. September 2014.
15. Kopple & Gruber, Public Finance, Inc., *Chico Unified School District 2020 School Fee Justification Study*, March 2020. http://www.chicousd.org/documents/Business%20Services/Developer%20Fee%20Studies/CUSD_FeeJustificationStudy_2020_FINAL.pdf
16. Traffic Management Plan, June 2022

Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements

MINOR USE PERMIT / CHRISTENSEN (MUP22-0004)

Project Sponsor(s) Incorporation of Mitigation into Proposed Project

I/We have reviewed the Initial Study for the Minor Use Permit for Christensen (MUP22-0004) application and particularly the mitigation measures identified herein. I/We hereby modify the applications on file with the Butte County Planning Department to include and incorporate all mitigations set forth in this Initial Study.


Project Sponsor/Project Agent _____ Date August 22, 2022

Project Sponsor/Project Agent _____ Date _____

Butte County Department of Development Services – Planning Division

7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95928
530.552.3700

Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements

MINOR USE PERMIT / CHRISTENSEN (MUP22-0004)

Mitigation Measure NOI-1. Average sound levels from amplified music/speech within the barn building shall not exceed 70 dBA at a point 50 feet in front of the speakers. The applicant shall implement the following:

- Speakers located within the barn building shall be located and oriented as configured in the sound level simulation conducted on June 9, 2022, i.e., set back within the barn with north-facing speakers;



Legend:

Photos: BAC sound system setup within barn -proposed location of sound system setups during events.

- Average sound levels from amplified music/speech within the outdoor ceremony area (lawn) shall not exceed 65 dBA at a point 50 feet in front of the speakers;
- All amplified event music/speech on the property shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., except on Saturdays and Sundays where the operational time frame is 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.;

Butte County Department of Development Services – Planning Division

7 County Center Drive

Oroville, CA 95928

530.552.3700

Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements

MINOR USE PERMIT / CHRISTENSEN (MUP22-0004)

- A maximum of one subwoofer shall be used during amplified music events; and
- Event staff shall monitor sound levels hourly at the 50-foot reference distance during each event to ensure compliance with the recommended average noise level requirements for sound system.

Plan Requirements: These conditions shall be included as conditions of approval.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to throughout operation of the project.

Mitigation Measure AIR-1

The following best practice measures to reduce impacts to air quality shall be incorporated by the project applicant, subject property owners as part of site management activities. These measures are intended to reduce dust emissions that may be generated during use of the unpaved access driveway before and after events.

Fugitive Dust

Dust complaints could result in a violation of the Butte County Air Quality Management Control District's "Nuisance" and "Fugitive Dust" Rules 200 and 205, respectively. The following measure would be implemented as a condition of approval:

- All disturbed soil areas not subject to re-vegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, or other methods approved in advance by the Butte County Air Quality Management District; and
- Vehicle speeds shall be limited to 15 mph on any unpaved surfaces.

Plan Requirements: These conditions shall be included as conditions of approval.

Timing: Requirements of the condition shall be adhered to throughout operation of the project.

Monitoring: The Butte County Department of Development Services and the Public Works Department shall ensure that these measures be shown as conditions of approval. Butte County Air Pollution Control District inspectors shall respond to nuisance complaints.