



County of Lassen
Department of Planning and Building Services

• Planning • Building Permits • Code Enforcement • Surveyor • Surface Mining

May 3, 2019

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RE: Review of the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the Ward Lake Pit Amendment, State Clearinghouse Number 2018022056, Near the Community of Litchfield, Lassen County

Dear Ms. Henderson:

This letter is in response to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) letter to Ms. Nancy McAllister, dated April 16, 2019. Lassen County thanks CDFW Staff for their review, and for their comments on the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR). County Staff in this Department have considered the CDFW comments and, in light of said comments, reevaluated both the adequacy of the Biological Study conducted by Vestra Resources, and the conclusions disclosed in the DSEIR. This letter includes point-by-point responses to all issues raised in the CDFW letter; however, in summary, Lassen County finds that the Biological Study, together with conclusions in the DSEIR, adequately discloses the potential significant environmental effects to biological resources that could result from the Ward Lake project. The County does not intend to require additional biological surveys or require any additional mitigation to reduce impacts.

CDFW Comments and Lassen County Responses

The conclusion in the SEIR that species will avoid an area because of increased disturbance activities, and the impacts are therefore not significant, is premature without additional studies.

- No special status wildlife species were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. The conclusion that Special Status Wildlife will likely avoid the area (project site) in the future due to additional noise and light from the project is therefore valid. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. If any animal is observed onsite during nighttime operations, direct disturbance will be avoided.

*Species that are active at night typically **rely on sound for catching prey and detecting and reacting to potential threats.** Nighttime foraging occurs in areas with a high prey base and usually within an animal's own territory. Mining operations may result in a substantial amount of noise through road use, equipment, and other Project-related activities. This may adversely affect wildlife species in several ways as wildlife responses to noise can occur at exposure levels of only 55-60 dB (Barber et al. 2009).*

- Again, no special status wildlife species were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. In addition to surrounding public lands and vacant private lands, there appears to be potential suitable habitat on the project site parcel, west of the mine operations; however, noise from operations at the site is not expected to significantly affect wildlife that may be utilizing this land. A noise study was conducted at the site and Lmax noise levels of 65.8 dBA during the daytime (current operations including truck traffic) and 56.3 dBA during the nighttime (no operations) were measured at the mine

operations entrance, which roughly matches (spatially) with the nearest potentially suitable habitat located on the project site parcel. The average L50 noise level (level that was exceeded for 50% of the measurement duration) at the nearest residence, which roughly matches (spatially) the western extent of suitable habitat on the project site parcel, was 33 dBA, and ranged from 28-45 dBA. The L50 measurement assessed only noise produced by on-site materials facilities. Noise from startup operations represents the highest measured L50 levels, however mitigations to construct sound barriers around the batch plant generator and to limit generator startup times have been included in the DSEIR and will reduce any potential impacts from project noise. In addition, night operations are expected to occur infrequently, between 20 and 40 nights per year.

Anthropogenic noise can disrupt the communication of many wildlife species including frogs, birds, and bats (Sun and Narins 2005, Patricelli and Blickley 2006, Gillam and McCracken 2007, Slabbekoorn and Ripmeester 2008). Noise can also affect predator-prey relationships as many nocturnal animals such as bats and owls primarily use auditory cues (i.e., hearing) to hunt. Additionally, many prey species increase their vigilance behavior when exposed to noise because they need to rely more on visual detection of predators when auditory cues may be masked by noise (Rabin et al. 2006, Quinn et al. 2017). Noise has also been shown to reduce the density of nesting birds (Francis et al. 2009) and cause increased stress that results in decreased immune responses (Kight and Swaddle 2011). Habitat degradation caused by increase lighting and noise "exacerbates the direct effects of habitat loss by degrading the quality of the remaining habitat" (Scobie et al. 2016).

- Again, no special status wildlife species were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. In addition to surrounding public lands and vacant private lands, there appears to be potential suitable habitat on the project site parcel, west of the mine operations; however, noise from operations at the site is ***not expected*** to significantly affect wildlife that may be utilizing this land. A noise study was conducted at the site and Lmax noise levels of 65.8 dBA during the daytime (current operations including truck traffic) and 56.3 dBA during the nighttime (no operations) were measured at the mine operations entrance, which roughly matches (spatially) with the nearest potentially suitable habitat located on the project site parcel. The average L50 noise level (level that was exceeded for 50% of the measurement duration) at the nearest residence, which roughly matches (spatially) the western extent of suitable habitat on the project site parcel, was 33 dBA, and ranged from 28-45 dBA. The L50 measurement assessed only noise produced by on-site materials facility. Noise from startup operations represents the highest measured L50 levels, however mitigations to construct sound barriers around the batch plant generator and to limit generator startup times have been included in the DSEIR and will reduce any potential impacts from project noise. In addition, night operations are expected to occur infrequently, between 20 and 40 nights per year.
- Increased nighttime noise that may result from the temporal expansion is expected to occur periodically each year. A long-term noise disturbance may cause a significant loss of breeding or foraging opportunities. Periodic increased noise levels are not likely to inhibit foraging or breeding through an entire season. These impacts would be further reduced through noise mitigation barriers.

The Project may create a situation where a special status species would avoid an area within its territory because of new nocturnal disturbance activities, thus preventing that species from utilizing known foraging or breeding habitat. This exclusion from foraging and breeding habitat may potentially have a significant impact on nocturnal species especially during the breeding season. The Wildlife Survey Report, dated June 2018, and included as Appendix G, states three transects located within the active portion of the mine were walked at night and early morning. The report does not discuss surveying the vegetated areas for special status species adjacent

to the active part of the mine. These vegetated areas would be directly and indirectly impacted by the increase in light and noise from mining operations. The Department had previously recommended surveying all areas directly and indirectly affected by the change in mining operations. According to Figure 5 of the Wildlife Survey Report provided in Appendix G, only three transects within the active part of the mine were surveyed.

The Department again recommends conducting additional surveys in the vegetated portion around the mine footprint in order to account for all species impacted directly and indirectly by Project impacts. The survey distance from the mining footprint should be based off the sensitivity of each species known to occur in the area.

- No special status wildlife species were observed on site, or are known to exist in the project area. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area including special status species. If any animal is observed onsite during nighttime operations, direct disturbance will be avoided. In addition to surrounding public lands and vacant private lands, there appears to be potential suitable habitat on the project site parcel, west of the mine operations; however, noise from operations at the site is not expected to significantly affect wildlife that may be utilizing this land. A noise study was conducted at the site and Lmax noise levels of 65.8 dBA during the daytime (current operations including truck traffic) and 56.3 dBA during the nighttime (no operations) were measured at the mine operations entrance, which roughly matches (spatially) with the nearest potentially suitable habitat located on the project site parcel. The average L50 noise level (level that was exceeded for 50% of the measurement duration) at the nearest residence, which roughly matches (spatially) the western extent of suitable habitat on the project site parcel, was 33 dBA, and ranged from 28-45 dBA. The L50 measurement assessed only noise produced by on-site materials facility. Noise from startup operations represents the highest measured L50 levels, however mitigations to construct sound barriers around the batch plant generator and to limit generator startup times have been included in the DSEIR and will reduce any potential impacts from project noise. In addition, night operations are expected to occur infrequently between 20 and 40 nights per year
- The survey protocol discussed in the June 2018 Wildlife Survey Report was further discussed during the review period to clarify that the vegetated areas adjacent to the mine site were covered during the survey using point-count methods. Transects were walked within the disturbed areas of the mine, as visibility is high within the mine site and the vegetation/topography did not present an obstacle. Vegetated areas to the west side of the mine are densely vegetated, so the survey did not follow transects, but rather consisted of walking through the vegetated area while using a point count method and conducting ground-level observations. This included pausing to listen for auditory observations as well as looking in shrubs and on the ground for active nests or nesting activity.
- An additional biological survey, completed on June 15, 2018, covered the area of undisturbed vegetation that exists to the east of the mine site, and no burrows were observed during vegetation transects or pedestrian search for nests structures on the ground. This study was not included in the DSEIR as the DSEIR addressed the nighttime work addition only, while this study recorded baseline vegetation conditions in adjacent areas for purposes of reclamation planning.

*The Department recommends that during the nesting season of Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), no new disturbances, habitat conversions, or other Project-related activities that may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging occur within 1/2 mile of an active nest between March 1 and September 15. Thus, the Department would recommend surveys extend at least 1/2 mile from the Project activity to ensure that no Swainson's hawk are disturbed within that buffer area. A similar exercise for determining survey distance from the Project site should be completed for each species known to occur in the area.*

*A typical mitigation measure recommended by the Department for special status species are buffers; as mentioned above, the size of the buffer will differ depending on the species and its location relative to the potential disturbance. Without the additional survey information collected from areas adjacent to the mining footprint, it is difficult to understand the Project impacts and to develop feasible and effective mitigation. Great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*), for example, were observed in an abandoned water tower in the undisturbed portion of the mine area. The SEIR states the owls appear to tolerate associated noise levels. The Department concurs; however, these existing noise levels occur during the day when the owls are not actively foraging for food, which they do by sound and sight at night. Increasing the noise level at night may cause the owls to abandon their nest or possibly cause impacts to reproductive behavior in general.*

The Department would typically call for a 150- to 300-foot buffer during the breeding season or until the young have fledged depending upon the type of disturbance. Currently, the Department considers the breeding season for most bird species to begin February 1 and continue until August 31. To avoid impacts to birds during the nesting season, additional seasonal restrictions may need to be developed. Seasonal restrictions would depend on species use of areas surrounding the mine and their tolerance to nocturnal disturbance. Upon conclusion of additional surveys, the Lead Agency and Project applicant should consult with the Department on appropriate buffers for each species identified.

- No special status wildlife species were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. If any animals, including Great Horned Owls, are observed onsite during nighttime operations, direct disturbance will be avoided. In addition, it is unclear what a buffer zone would preclude (i.e. the proposed project impacts of noise and light; or mine operations as currently permitted), and buffers may be infeasible, as currently permitted operations are unaffected by this temporal expansion and cannot be further conditioned as a result of approval of this project
- Swainson's Hawks are diurnal species and, with the incorporation of sound and light mitigation measures, nighttime operations are not expected to present a disturbance to their current nesting or foraging behaviors. It is likely that the current mine activities have already been a factor in the established range for any Swainson's Hawks in the area. This species is known to forage over a wide range, particularly in the northeastern portion of California. The undisturbed vegetation and agricultural land in the surrounding area is typical of foraging habitat. Additionally, the nighttime operations will occur periodically (20-40 nights per year), so noise increase will not occur continuously through the breeding season.

A preliminary survey did not observe any burrowing owls; however, the burrowing owl survey protocol was not used. The Department recommends that a burrow survey be conducted in the vegetated portion of the mining area to determine if burrowing habitat exists. Underlined portions conflict. A game camera could be set up at the burrows to determine if they are being used and which species is utilizing them. If burrowing owls are observed, a focused protocol-level survey should be conducted to determine the population size, and avoidance and minimization measures developed.

- No special status wildlife species, including Burrowing Owls, were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. Although, burrowing owl habitat was determined to occur in the project area, the survey the Biological Study concluded that there are no owls or suitable habitat on site. The Protocol referenced above states in part that, "Burrows are the essential component of burrowing owl habitat: both natural and artificial burrows provide protection, shelter, and nests for burrowing owls. Burrowing owls typically use burrows made by fossorial mammals, such as ground squirrels or

badgers... The Phase II burrow survey is required if burrowing owl habitat occurs on the site.” It should be noted that the “mining area” does not include vegetated portions of the project parcel, which are outside of the boundaries established in the current use permit and reclamation plan. The “mining Area” roughly coincides with the existing disturbance area. That said, the project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. If any animal is observed onsite during nighttime operations, direct disturbance will be avoided. In addition, it is unclear what a buffer zone would preclude (i.e. the proposed project impacts of noise and light; or mine operations as currently permitted), and buffers may be infeasible, as currently permitted operations are unaffected by this temporal expansion and cannot be further conditioned as a result of approval of this project.

- Wildlife may be utilizing the expanses of undisturbed vegetation that exists to the west of the mine site as foraging or nesting habitat. If a burrowing owl were to nest to the west of the site and is nocturnally foraging, then the project may present an increased foraging opportunity onsite, as their insect prey could become concentrated under the onsite lighting.
- Biological survey completed on June 15, 2018 covered the area of undisturbed vegetation that exists to the east of the mine site, and no burrows were observed during vegetation transects or pedestrian search for nests structures on the ground.

No specific surveys, other than visual observation, were done for bat species. At a minimum, acoustic surveys should have been done to determine if any bat species were utilizing the area within and adjacent to the mining area.

- The field methods section of the wildlife survey report discusses auditory observations made, with pauses along transects at points 0.15 to 0.25 miles apart (more frequent with a site feature presented a barrier to the surveyor’s perception and when an animal’s behavior required further observation. No special status wildlife species were observed on site or are known to exist in the project area. The project does not involve spatial expansion of the mine site, and undisturbed land surrounding the project site will continue to provide suitable habitat for any wildlife in the area, including special status species. If any animals are observed onsite during nighttime operations, direct disturbance will be avoided. Additionally, the occurrence of bats at the project site would likely be a result of the currently permitted mine, rather than in spite of mine activity, due to the settling ponds and morning/evening lighting, which may attract insects and enhance feeding opportunities.
- The concern that bats will colonize within the mine area due to the possible increased prey availability due to nighttime lighting was considered. This is not likely because the bat species are known to utilize open, cave-like habitat and current daytime mine activities are not conducive to roosting or hibernating within the mine quarry, stockpiles, or any other cave-like habitat.

The Department acknowledges and concurs that the mitigations listed in Mitigation Measure 4.4.5.2 will benefit pronghorn antelope and mule deer. In the event vehicular collisions increase despite the mitigation measures, a measure stating that the Project or Lassen County will consult with the Department to determine additional measures to protect pronghorn antelope and mule deer from additional collisions should be developed.

- The only additional vehicles resulting from the proposed project would be those occurring from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., April 1 through December 31. It may not be feasible to obtain baseline data for vehicular collisions occurring only within this timeframe. Increased collisions occurring outside of 7:00

p.m. to 6:00 a.m., April 1 through December 31, would not be relevant to this project, and any mitigations would have to be specific to the current proposed project and not retroactively put limitations on previously approved projects. Additionally, without more specific recommendations for the potential mitigations and thresholds for triggering these mitigations, the County has determined that the inclusion of deferred mitigations would not be appropriate.

Although the SEIR does not go into detail about the actual mining activities, the Department would like to recommend, if it is not already in the Reclamation Plan, a mitigation measure to prevent animal entrapment in the mine pit. If the mine pit becomes deep and the slopes are steep, having benching or some other mechanism to allow wildlife safe passage out of the mine pit should be developed.

- This recommendation is not applicable to the changes proposed by the project at hand and the County is unable to require new mitigations or conditions related to previously approved projects. However, the current reclamation plan includes benching of the rock quarry slopes, stating that the area shall be regraded to a maximum overall slope of 2H:1V and shall be benched with minimum 10 foot wide benches at vertical intervals not greater than 15 feet. Also, animal entrapment would be very unlikely due to topography of the mine site. Current excavation activity primarily follows the contour of the hillside, rather than creating an actual depressed pit.

Please contact this office at (530) 251-8269 or the address listed above if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Maurice L. Anderson,
Environmental Review Officer

MLA:mccr:njm



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
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Lassen County Department of
Planning and Building Services

April 16, 2019

Nancy McAllister
Natural Resources Technician
Lassen County Department of Planning and Building Services
707 Nevada Street, Suite 5
Susanville, CA 96130

**Subject: Review of the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the
Ward Lake Pit Amendment, State Clearinghouse Number 2018022056,
Near the Community of Litchfield, Lassen County**

Dear Ms. McAllister:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) dated February 2019, for the above-referenced project (Project). As a trustee for the State's fish and wildlife resources, the Department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants and their habitat. As a responsible agency, the Department administers the California Endangered Species Act and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that conserve the State's fish and wildlife public trust resources. The Department offers the following comments and recommendations on this Project in our role as a trustee and responsible agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.

Project Description

The Project as described in the SEIR is to *"allow for 24-hour mining operations Monday through Saturday (currently 6:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday), extend the life of the mine from 2020 to 2030, and allow annual site production in excess of the permitted 100,000 tons during declared emergencies."*

The mine has been an active rock quarry since 1980. The quarry is on a 442-acre parcel with 160 acres being actively mined. Due to adverse impacts to both wintering mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) herds, a condition of the mine's permit is a partial closure of the site from January 1 through March 31 of each year. This condition will remain in effect. No additional ground disturbance is proposed by the Project.

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

Comments and Recommendations

The Department commented on this Project during early consultation on March 15, 2018, as well as during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) on July 16, 2018. The Department has reviewed the SEIR and has the following comments and recommendations as they pertain to biological resources.

Special Status Wildlife Species

The SEIR states habitat is present for many special status species. The SEIR also states the increase in nighttime mining activities will not have a significant effect on nocturnal species because there is no "*spatial expansion*" being proposed. Additionally, the SEIR says that expanding the Project operating period to nighttime hours will cause additional disturbance in the form of light and noise but that nighttime foraging species will likely avoid the area.

The Department believes that the conclusion in the SEIR that species will avoid an area because of increased disturbance activities, and the impacts are therefore not significant, is premature without additional studies. Species that are active at night typically rely on sound for catching prey and detecting and reacting to potential threats. Nighttime foraging occurs in areas with a high prey base and usually within an animal's own territory. Mining operations may result in a substantial amount of noise through road use, equipment, and other Project-related activities. This may adversely affect wildlife species in several ways as wildlife responses to noise can occur at exposure levels of only 55-60 dB (Barber et al. 2009).

Anthropogenic noise can disrupt the communication of many wildlife species including frogs, birds, and bats (Sun and Narins 2005, Patricelli and Blickley 2006, Gillam and McCracken 2007, Slabbekoorn and Ripmeester 2008). Noise can also affect predator-prey relationships as many nocturnal animals such as bats and owls primarily use auditory cues (i.e., hearing) to hunt. Additionally, many prey species increase their vigilance behavior when exposed to noise because they need to rely more on visual detection of predators when auditory cues may be masked by noise (Rabin et al. 2006, Quinn et al. 2017). Noise has also been shown to reduce the density of nesting birds (Francis et al. 2009) and cause increased stress that results in decreased immune responses (Kight and Swaddle 2011). Habitat degradation caused by increase lighting and noise "*exacerbates the direct effects of habitat loss by degrading the quality of the remaining habitat*" (Scobie et al. 2016). In some instances, the prey base will leave the area experiencing disturbance.

The Project may create a situation where a special status species would avoid an area within its territory because of new nocturnal disturbance activities, thus preventing that species from utilizing known foraging or breeding habitat. This exclusion from foraging and breeding habitat may potentially have a significant

impact on nocturnal species especially during the breeding season. The Wildlife Survey Report, dated June 2018, and included as Appendix G, states three transects located within the active portion of the mine were walked at night and early morning. The report does not discuss surveying the vegetated areas for special status species adjacent to the active part of the mine. These vegetated areas would be directly and indirectly impacted by the increase in light and noise from mining operations. The Department had previously recommended surveying all areas directly and indirectly affected by the change in mining operations. According to Figure 5 of the Wildlife Survey Report provided in Appendix G, only three transects within the active part of the mine were surveyed.

The Department again recommends conducting additional surveys in the vegetated portion around the mine footprint in order to account for all species impacted directly and indirectly by Project impacts. The survey distance from the mining footprint should be based off the sensitivity of each species known to occur in the area. For instance, the Department recommends that during the nesting season of Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), no new disturbances, habitat conversions, or other Project-related activities that may cause nest abandonment or forced fledging occur within 1/2 mile of an active nest between March 1 and September 15. Thus, the Department would recommend surveys extend at least 1/2 mile from the Project activity to ensure that no Swainson's hawk are disturbed within that buffer area. A similar exercise for determining survey distance from the Project site should be completed for each species known to occur in the area.

A typical mitigation measure recommended by the Department for special status species are buffers; as mentioned above, the size of the buffer will differ depending on the species and its location relative to the potential disturbance. Without the additional survey information collected from areas adjacent to the mining footprint, it is difficult to understand the Project impacts and to develop feasible and effective mitigation. Great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*), for example, were observed in an abandoned water tower in the undisturbed portion of the mine area. The SEIR states the owls appear to tolerate associated noise levels. The Department concurs; however, these existing noise levels occur during the day when the owls are not actively foraging for food, which they do by sound and sight at night. Increasing the noise level at night may cause the owls to abandon their nest or possibly cause impacts to reproductive behavior in general.

The Department would typically call for a 150- to 300-foot buffer during the breeding season or until the young have fledged depending upon the type of disturbance. Currently, the Department considers the breeding season for most bird species to begin February 1 and continue until August 31. To avoid impacts to birds during the nesting season, additional seasonal restrictions may need to be developed. Seasonal restrictions would depend on species use of areas

surrounding the mine and their tolerance to nocturnal disturbance. Upon conclusion of additional surveys, the Lead Agency and Project applicant should consult with the Department on appropriate buffers for each species identified.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Habitat for this species is found onsite. A preliminary survey did not observe any burrowing owls; however, the burrowing owl survey protocol was not used. The Department recommends that a burrow survey be conducted in the vegetated portion of the mining area to determine if burrowing habitat exists. A game camera could be set up at the burrows to determine if they are being used and which species is utilizing them. If burrowing owls are observed, a focused protocol-level survey should be conducted to determine the population size, and avoidance and minimization measures developed. The survey protocol for burrowing owl can be found here: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/survey-protocols#377281284-birds>

Any survey results for burrowing owl or any other species should be sent to the Department at the following address: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, ATTN: CEQA, 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001.

Bats

No specific surveys, other than visual observation, were done for bat species. At a minimum, acoustic surveys should have been done to determine if any bat species were utilizing the area within and adjacent to the mining area.

The Department recommended a complete assessment for all special status species in our letter dated July 16, 2018.

Wintering Habitat for Pronghorn Antelope and Mule Deer

The Department acknowledges and concurs that the mitigations listed in Mitigation Measure 4.4.5.2 will benefit pronghorn antelope and mule deer. In the event vehicular collisions increase despite the mitigation measures, a measure stating that the Project or Lassen County will consult with the Department to determine additional measures to protect pronghorn antelope and mule deer from additional collisions should be developed.

Lighting

The Department appreciates the inclusion of lighting fixtures that are downward facing, fully-shielded, and designed and installed to minimize photo-pollution.

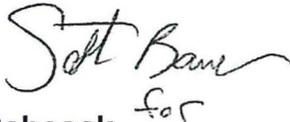
Nancy McAllister, Natural Resources Technician
Lassen County Department of Planning and Building Services
April 16, 2019
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Mining Area

Although the SEIR does not go into detail about the actual mining activities, the Department would like to recommend, if it is not already in the Reclamation Plan, a mitigation measure to prevent animal entrapment in the mine pit. If the mine pit becomes deep and the slopes are steep, having benching or some other mechanism to allow wildlife safe passage out of the mine pit should be developed.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Henderson, Environmental Scientist, at (530) 225-2779, or by e-mail at Amy.Henderson@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Curt Babcock for
Habitat Conservation Program Manager

cc: Nancy McAllister, Natural Resources Technician
County of Lassen Department of Planning and Building Services
nmcallister@co.lassen.ca.us

State Clearinghouse
state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

Amy Henderson
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
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References

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