

**2015 COUNTY OF MONO
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN,
GENERAL PLAN,
COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT
PLAN, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND
REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN**

FINAL EIR
SCH #2014061029

Prepared for:



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2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN FINAL EIR



SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with Section 15132 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) *Guidelines*, the administrative record for this Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the proposed *2015 Mono County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), General Plan, Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP), and Noise Ordinance Updates; and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan* (herein after the “2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan”) project consists of the following elements:

- The Draft EIR
- Written comments received on the Draft EIR,
- Responses to the comments received,
- The Final EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program,
- Comments Received After Deadline and Responses, and
- Notices of Determination.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

The *2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan* documents and the *Draft EIR (DEIR)* were distributed on 31 July 2015 for review and comment by interested agencies, organizations, residents and the general public. The comment period closed on 29 September 2015 following a 60-day review. By the close of the review period, a total of fourteen comment letters had been received. Two additional comment letters were received following the close of the public review period. Table 1 summarizes all comments received, including comments on the *2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan* and comments on the *Draft EIR*. The responses to comments are presented in the sequence shown in Table 1 (which corresponds to the date and time each comment letter was received).

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Table 1

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE 2015 UPDATES AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN DRAFT EIR

NO.	SOURCE	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON THE 2015 UPDATES AND CONWAY SP REPEAL
1	Phil Kiddoo, Air Pollution Control Officer, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USEPA has proposed redesignating the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ nonattainment area to 'attainment.' The official designation change may occur before the end of 2015. ■ USEPA has also proposed approving the motor vehicle budgets in the Mammoth Lakes Air Quality Management Plan. ■ The motor vehicle emission budgets for Mammoth Lakes includes 179,708 vehicle miles travelled (VMT) for a peak winter day in the Town, and a second budget of 66,452 VMT for a peak winter day on SR 203 and US 395 outside of town boundaries but within the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ planning area. New developments cannot be approved if they would cause an exceedance of these VMT limits. The second budget should be added to the RTP and EIR. ■ DEIR page 4.3-16 refers to a 1998 agreement with LADWP that applied to dust controls at <i>Owens Lake</i> (not Mono Lake); this sentence should be deleted. 	No comments on the <i>RTP/General Plan</i>
2a	Leslie MacNair, Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CDFW recommends deleting 'hunting' as a factor of concern for sustaining healthy deer herds, per research findings that removal of only bucks from the population does not impact deer herd productivity. ■ Please include on Table 4.4-8 the communities of Walker, Coleville and Topaz (along with Paradise and Swall Meadows) as mule deer overwintering areas. ■ Note that Benton is in the winter range boundaries of the Casa Diablo deer herd; deer migrate west of Benton Hot Springs as they move to and from winter range in the McBride Flat and Truman Meadows areas. ■ Assessment of impacts in Paradise should note that this community is in the primary Round Valley herd winter range and supports critical deer winter habitat. Development-related habitat loss will adversely impact winter range forage availability; impacts have been exacerbated by drought, the recent Round Fire fire and other factors. ■ Benton, Coleville and Topaz are located in or immediately adjacent to mule deer winter range; discussion on DEIR page 4.4-51 should be modified to reflect this. ■ Sage-grouse are known to lek, summer, and brood rear on irrigated pastureland in the Bridgeport Valley; discussion on DEIR page 4.4-25 should be modified to reflect this. ■ The Parker Meadows Population Management Unit (PMU) of sage grouse is 	No comments on the <i>RTP/General Plan</i>

		<p>mistakenly identified in the Lee Vining area; it is part of the South Mono PMU, along with the Long Valley and Granite Mountain subpopulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Although discussion on page 4.4-51 indicates that sage grouse are known to migrate, research shows that all Mono County populations except Bodie Hills are nonmigratory; conservation buffer areas should be provided in designated distances from leks. ■ Please include a discussion of impacts to biological resources on private lands between Bridgeport and Sonora Junction on pages 4.4-42 and 43, including Swauger Creek and Burcham Flat (both in deer migration routes and sage grouse habitat) and Twin Lakes. ■ Pygmy rabbit are known to occur in Long Valley and should be included in the list of wildlife species potentially impacted by future development in the communities of McGee Creek and Long Valley. 	
2b	Rose Banks, Environmental Scientist, CDFW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cites incorrect statement in DEIR Appendix D concerning reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout to Witcher and Birch Creeks. Notes that this area is out of the species' natural range, is poor fish habitat, and contains an important population of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. The frog is state-listed as threatened, and this population is one that has not contracted the Chytrid fungus disease but is at risk. 	
2c	Tom Stephenson, Ph.D., Program Leader, CDFW Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EIR §4.1 (Land Use) states an interest in reestablishing sheep grazing in the Mono Basin: this would be inconsistent with efforts to attain species recovery of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep; effective separation between these populations is needed. The EIR should consider the potential impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Notes that Sierra bighorn sheep were uplisted from threatened to endangered in 1999 under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and listed by USFWS as endangered in 2000. As such, they should be considered in the EIR. ■ The listings reflected concerns about very low population size and inadequate regulatory protections. Major threats include mountain lion predation and exposure to a major respiratory disease from contact with domestic sheep. ■ States that Conway and Mattly Ranches are a specific example of the potential for conflict; sheep grazing on the properties undermines bighorn recovery efforts. ■ Measures to prevent contact between bighorn and domestic sheep are provided in the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Plan. The county is asked to consult with the CDFW Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program before expanding domestic sheep & goat grazing in Mono Basin.
3	Cheri Bromberger, Board Vice President, June Lake Public		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ States that JLPUD does have adequate water supply for development and requests that the General Plan text be revised to so state.

	Utilities District (JLPUD)		
4	J. Wehausen, Ph.D., J. Fogg, T. Russi, V. Chadwick, Board Members, Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raises concerns about language in the General Plan discussing sheep grazing practices in Mono County, particularly at Mattly and Conway ranches. ■ Domestic sheep carry bacteria in their respiratory tracts that cause fatal pneumonia in most bighorn sheep; the best preventive measure is to maintain substantial separation of the two populations.
5	Ryan Dermody, Deputy District Director, California Department of Transportation, District 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SR 266 shield should be the same as other SR shields; SRs 158,203 and 120 should be labeled. ■ Comment to "...<i>build upon the 2013 Main Street Revitalization Plan for US 395 through Bridgeport</i>" should be revised to delete "<i>through Bridgeport</i>." ■ Caltrans' Aeronautics Unit has commented on tree heights in the residential area near Bryant Field. ■ Page 4.2-8: Seeks information about programs in June Lake Area Plan to address capacity issues. ■ Requests replacement of statements concerning 'perceptions' about traffic with quantitative data. ■ Provide citation for statements concerning increased truck traffic volumes. ■ Clarify that Caltrans' efforts to restrict large trucks on SR 108 is due to geometric roadway considerations (in lieu of "<i>roadway constraints</i>"). ■ Notes that Caltrans does not have plans to relocate the Caltrans maintenance facilities in Mono Basin. ■ Table 4.2-7: Seeks supporting data for projected 14.5% five-year increase in traffic demand in June Lake. ■ Figure 4.10-1: Notes that it would be more accurate to state '<i>Scenic Roadway</i>' than '<i>Scenic Highway</i>' since there are only 2 official State Scenic Highways in California (US 395 in Mono County, and SR 1 in San Luis Obispo County). 	<p><u>General Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a 'Project Intent' in the Final RTP, along with discussion of how the RTP is consistent with the Inyo-Mono Counties Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, integrates the Wildlife Action Plan, and addresses other programs. • Identify the County's roles and committee relationships in the RTP. • Include RTP cost estimates and private sector involvement. • Address how transportation projects will address climate change. • Explain how life-cycle costs can be part of RTP decision-making. <p><u>Mitigating Policy Table 4.2-10 (RTP & CIRCULATION)^[1]:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Action 20.A.3.a: Please remove this action (to work with Caltrans to reduce red-curbing in Bridgeport). ■ Action 22.A.1.b: Please remove; Caltrans has already done this (post speed limits suited to density & mix of uses along US 395). ■ Action 25.A.4.c: Mono County must be the proponent to start the Scenic designation process (to include SR 158 and North Shore Dr. as Scenic Roadways). ■ Action 25.C.1.c: What is the [June Lake Village] connector road connecting? ■ Action 25.C.4.b: Caltrans will review but not develop these items (June Lake improvement program items). ■ Action 25.J.1.d: Advises Mono County to work with USFS and ESTA, not Caltrans (to develop shuttle bus facilities at major recreation nodes).

^[1] Please see Comment Letter 5, pages 56-63 for Caltrans comments that are specific to the Draft RTP and do not address issues in the EIR or Mitigating Policies tables.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Action 5.A.4: Asks 'What are hazardous rumble strips?' Policy 8.R (s/b 8.D): Notes that sign standards are contained in the <i>California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices Mitigating Policy Table 4.6-13 (HEALTH, SAFETY, HAZARDS)</i>: ■ Action 4.D.2.C (<i>Hazards</i>): States that current sign placement (avalanche warning signs) is appropriate. <i>Mitigating Policy Table 4.8-10 (HYDROLOGY)</i> ■ Action 4.B.4.b: Notes that Caltrans has already done this (achieved the most environmentally sensitive de-icing methods).
6	<p>Jan Zimmerman, Engineering Geologist, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appreciates that Mono County's consideration of LRWQCB comments on the NOP, the inclusion of the Low Impact Development Ordinance, and EIR incorporation of policies and objectives of local and regional watershed management plans. ■ Notes that groundwater protection should be considered a countywide issue, ubiquitous to all General Plan Elements and essential for sustaining communities and growth. Recommends that policies of AB 685 be incorporated into the GPU. ■ Regarding statements under Impact 4.8(b) and Countywide Issue No. 9 (implying that water quality regulations impede development), LRWQCB notes that the intent is to protect groundwater by establishing adequate treatment of septic wastes. Recommends the County consider incentives for development of community/regional wastewater treatment systems. ■ Permit Requirements: Notes that many <i>RTP/GPU</i> activities may require permits from the State Water Board or Lahontan Water Board including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Construction of landfills, landfill cells and changes in waste accepted may require Waste Discharge Requirements [WDRs]. ■ Streambed alteration, discharge of dredge and/or fill material to a surface water (both may require a §401 Water Quality Certification for impacts to federal waters or WDRs for impacts to non-federal waters. ■ Land disturbance of more than 1 acre may require a Clean Water Act §402 storm water permit, including an NPDES General Construction Storm Water Permit or individual storm water permit. ■ Water diversion and/or dewatering may be subject to discharge and monitoring requirements under NPDES General Permit or General Waste Discharge Requirements. ■ Recommends early consultation with LRWQCB on projects subject to these requirements. 	
7	<p>Lynn Boulton, Lee Vining Resident</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appreciates the details and thoughtfulness given to the GPU. ■ Notes that the Pumice Plant in Lee Vining is unsightly; asks whether the General Plan could include a provision for industrial/commercial reuse if and when the plant closes.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asks whether rodenticides can be avoided and only used as a last resort for pest control. ■ Regarding the possibility of a DMV office in Lee Vining, suggests that Mammoth Lakes or Bridgeport may be better locations. ■ Does not see the need for a bus stop in front of the Lee Vining county yard. ■ Suggests that the Caltrans sign in Lee Vining is a bit too large. ■ Two dilapidated homes along US 395 are popular photo sites but in poor condition; suggests that the county assist in restoration if feasible. ■ Suggests the county consider workshops, conferences etc. to support business development under 11.C.3. ■ Recommends the county work with USFS to install low-flow toilets at the Mono Lake Visitors' Center. ■ Encourages zones that are free of electromagnetic fields and transmission towers. ■ Asks whether the GPU contains a process to enforce air pollution standards, including use of noncompliant stoves. ■ Suggests county work with staff at Bodie State Historic Park and BLM to install interpretive signs in Bodie Bowl or Cottonwood Cyn. Rd., and to replace signs at the US 395 overlook north of June Lake Junction.
8	Shawn Ray, Paradise resident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expresses concern that further development in Paradise will change the community character. ■ Does not support additional tourist amenities in the Paradise area.
9	Jon Hafstrom, Coleville resident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concurs with <i>Land Use Element</i> statement that Antelope Valley residents seek to preserve the rural character. ■ Appreciates County efforts to preserve dark night skies. ■ Wonders why outdoor lighting rule and regulations apply everywhere <i>except</i> north of Mountain Gate. Requests clarification of whether the regulations do apply north of Mountain Gate and, if not, an explanation of why this area was exempted. Asks how he can work with the County to include these areas under the night sky regulations.
10	Michael White, Walker resident		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disagrees with a number of General Plan/RTP recommendations including policies in the Safety and Noise Elements, the Land Use Element, the Conservation/Open Space Element, and the RTP.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USFWS believes that Land Use Element Action 24.F.1 is

<p>11</p>	<p>Erin Nordin, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</p>		<p>incorrect in stating that CDFW plans to reintroduce Lahontan cutthroat trout to Witcher and Birch Creeks. The streams are not in the species' native range and not needed for species recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USFWS has concerns about domestic sheep grazing in the Mono Basin (as discussed in Land Use Element pp II-9, II-10, II-79 and II-81) due to proximity to Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep. ■ USFWS encourages the county to review conservation measures in the Service's Migratory Birds Program for measures to avoid or minimize impacts to birds.
<p>12</p>	<p>Lisa Cutting, Eastern Sierra Policy Director, Mono Lake Committee (MLC)</p>	<p><u>§4.1 Land Use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Table 4.1-2 (Community Issues) notes that language regarding boating restrictions to protect critical bird habitat is being eliminated; MLC recommends that boating regulations incorporate provisions to protect bird habitat ■ Table 4.1-2 (Community Issues) notes that most land is publicly owned; MLC asks the County to include specific boundaries for the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. ■ Table 4.1-2 (Community Issues) notes that JLPUD water supply will not meet demands at full build-out; MLC recommends a full water supply evaluation be conducted before further development is allowed. <p><u>§4.2 RTP/Circulation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Page 4.2-9 (Wildlife Collisions): MLC supports efforts to minimize traffic impacts on wildlife; efforts to limit vegetation should continue. Since the vegetation is typically invasive species, Caltrans is urged to clear before the plants go to seed (timing will vary; bird nesting seasons must be considered). ■ Table 4.2-6 (Bicycle System Needs) states that US 395 does not have adequate shoulders for safety, but some groups have opposed efforts to expand; MLC supports such efforts provided the expanded shoulders are of variable width to minimize visual impacts. ■ Table 4.2-6 (Bicycle System Needs): Please consider adding a bike trail west of US 395 to connect Mono City and Lundy Canyon with Lee Vining. <p><u>§4.3 Air Quality/GHG</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Page 4.3-3 (Suspended Particulates) states major PM₁₀ sources include windblown dust; MLC indicates that windblown dust also results from human activities (water diversions, mining, roads etc.). ■ Page 4.3-5 (SIP Compliance) states that PM₁₀ results from windblown dust primarily caused by LADWP water diversions; MLC indicates that 'primarily' should be deleted. <p><u>§4.4 Biological Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Page 4.4-5 statement that precipitation is 30" near Mammoth Pass is contradicted by estimate of 42.5" on page 4.8-10. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Land Use Element should add a clarifying procedure for overlapping authority of the County and USFS in the National Forest Scenic Area. MLC recommends that projects be required to document USFS approval <i>before</i> issuance of county permits.

- Page 4.4-15 states that potentially costly measures are needed to control invasive species; MLC points to a low-cost option (already used for some invasive species such as the tamarisk tree, and utilizing volunteers and local organizations) that can be also be implemented for this purpose.
- Page 4.4-25: Reference to US 395 is missing '395'; please add.
- The term 'yellow flycatcher,' used twice in this section, is a species with which MLC is unfamiliar and may be a typo.
- Page 4.4-50: It is incorrect to characterize Lee Vining Creek as a 'perennial tributary to Owens River'; MLC notes that it is tributary to Mono Lake.
- Some mention should be made in this section of Brown-headed Cowbirds (supported by local bird feeders) and their effect on parasitism of the Willow Flycatcher populations.
- Overall this is a well prepared section and appreciated by MLC.

§4.5 Geology and Soils

- Table 4.5-1 shows Desert Aggregates to have 30-acres approved and 1.7 acres disturbed; Frank Sam mines shows only 0.9 acres disturbed; both mines have far larger disturbance areas. Similarly, Cain Ranch Mines is shown as having only 30 acres disturbed while aerial photos show almost 50% more acreage disturbed.
- Table 4.5-1 does not discuss other mines that closed before 2012 but may influence air and water quality, or the potential for other mines to open, reopen or expand (such as Desert Aggregates, which is permitted to expand). Please discuss the adequacy of existing sources and future potential for conversion of existing uses to mining; potential impacts of these uses should be disclosed.
- Discussion of clay soils, noting some potential for clay soils in northern Owens Valley, is inadequate and should include information from the Inyo County Renewable Energy Plan General Plan Amendment DPEIR, and the 1994-95 Inyo National Forest Soil Survey which references published soil surveys for the rest of Mono County. Soils information should inform decisions concerning capability to support land use planning. Absent complete and current information, there is inadequate basis to conclude that there is little possibility that soils are incapable of supporting septic tanks where sewers are unavailable.
- There is no mention of Known Geothermal Resource Areas and potential for development of this alternate energy source.

§4.6 Health, Safety, Hazards

- Page 4.6-34 states that hazards at Lee Vining and Bryant Field airports include objects that could interfere with airplane flight paths, attract wildlife and draw people into airport safety zones; drone use should also be included in the list.
- Page 4.6-1: Ash fall should be added to the list of hazards due to clogging of vehicle air filters; MLC recommends the county consider retrofitting or converting mission-critical vehicles to electric power to maintain service during such an event.

- Page 4.6-5: statement that no small aircraft are currently based at Lee Vining Airport conflicts with statement on page 4.2-13 that four aircraft are based there.
- Page 4.6-16 should state that the west edge of Lee Vining (as well as the area north of Lee Vining) is at risk of avalanche.
- Page 4.6-17 states that volcanic hazards are not considered a prevalent natural hazard in Mono County due to the uncertainty of such an event; the basis for the uncertainty should be described.
- Page 4.6-17: smoke alarms should not be included as a risk-elimination measure for volcanic risk; General Plan policies (listed as a mitigating factor for volcanic risk) should be detailed.
- Page 4.6-24 (ongoing monitoring of stream flows) states that USGS and the Dept. of Water Resources monitor stream flows and provide alerts when streams reach flood stage; MLC notes that this is true only for Walker Basin and Hot Creek, and DWP (for streams it diverts); most stream flows are not reported in real time.
- Table 4.6-12 (Hazard Vulnerability) notes that some areas in Mono Basin need brush clearing to function as flood overflow channels; the EIR should identify which locations. On natural channels, MLC is particularly concerned about undersized culverts. Such a list would include Mill Creek Cemetery Rd crossing, Mill Creek below Lundy Dam, Mill Creek private driveway and Parker Creek at Cain Ranch Road.
- This section does not address power lines as a wildfire hazard and the cause of the most recent wildfire. General Plan policies should encourage undergrounding of existing power lines, discourage new above-ground power lines, and consider other powerline safety measures to reduce wildfire risk.

§4.6 Health, Safety, Hazards

- Page 4.7-4 states that north Mono Basin is ancestral home to the Kudezika Paiute; 'north' should be deleted since Mono Basin as a whole is the ancestral home of this tribe.

§4.8 Hydrology

- Page 4.8-2 should acknowledge that sediment movement is also a natural and beneficial process, with an added sentence to reflect the important function (that can be impeded by dams) of natural sediment balance.
- Page 4.8-6: mention of SWRCB Water Rights Decision 1631 would ideally include a statement that D1631 designated Mono Lake as an Outstanding Natural Resource Water, with attendant implications for water quality.
- Page 4.8-12 gives incorrect information concerning the dates for certain lake levels and has several typographical errors and missing words that should be corrected.
- Table 4.8-5: the stated capacity of Grant Lake Reservoir (47,500 acre-feet, AF) is outdated; the current capacity is 47,171 AF.
- Page 4.8-21: Discussion of riverine flooding should distinguish between

beneficial riverine flooding and damaging riverine flooding; additionally the stated season for riverine flooding (November through April) may apply to damaging floods, but the more common beneficial snowmelt floods occur in the spring.

- Page 4.8-21 states that the most recent serious flooding occurred in Tri-Valley during 1989; the January 1997 flood event should be acknowledged here or the information clarified.
- Page 4.8-21 (Regulatory Setting) should list the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) since this agency has issued several licenses in Mono County (including 3 in Mono Basin-Rush Creek, Lee Vining Creek and Mill Creek) that set operating and monitoring parameters and other mitigation requirements.
- Page 4.8-32: sentence at the end of the first full paragraph is cut off.
- Page 4.8-41: Text indicates that the annual runoff of Mono Basin is 150,000 AF; 150,000 AF is the annual runoff of the Sierra Nevada (about 80% of total runoff).
- Page 4.8-41 references a Mono Basin Watershed Management Plan finding that current water supplies are adequate for Mono City and Lee Vining; MLC notes that the 2015 drought has reduced spring flows such that it has become necessary to seek additional conservation and back-up water sources.
- Page 4.8-41 incorrectly describes the Mono County water rights on Wilson Creek, and may also incorrectly refer to aquaculture as a permitted use under the MOU for Conway Ranch. Please refer to the Conway Ranch Conservation Easement concerning water rights on Wilson Creek, and to the MOU for verification whether aquaculture is an allowed use. The statement that combined uses on the site are 'relatively insignificant' should be deleted in light of potential water demands.
- Page 4.8-49: Reference to the 'January 2001 Walker River Flood' should be corrected to refer to the 1997 flood.
- Page 4.8-51: Reference to critical facilities 'above June Lake' should be corrected to state 'above Silver Lake.'
- Page 4.8-52 references a *Safety Element* statement that there is no evidence of seiches in Mono County lakes and reservoirs; MLC notes that small seiches are common on Mono Lake and asks that language be revised accordingly.
- Page 4.8-52 again states that volcanic hazards are not considered a prevalent natural hazard in Mono County due to the uncertainty of such an event; please clarify that the uncertainty pertains to the timing rather than location.

§4.9 Recreation

- Page 4.9-1: Reference to the Mono Lake Tufa State 'National' Reserve should be corrected to Mono Lake Tufa State 'Natural' Reserve.

§4.10 Aesthetics, Light and Glare

- Page 4.10-10 (Regulatory Setting) should include discussion, under USFS, of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and associated Comprehensive

Management Plan that details how visual resources should be assessed in Mono Basin and associated compliance thresholds.

- Page 4.10-12 (intrinsic qualities of county communities): Under Lee Vining Iconic or Physical Characteristics, MLC recommends (a) changing language to refer to 'Gateway to Yosemite via Tioga Pass', (b) replacement of 'Long Vistas' and addition of 'Unique Water History', (c) addition of Black Point/Mono Craters, and (d) addition of Migratory Birds. MLC also recommends adding 'Outdoor Recreation Hun' and 'Environmentally-oriented' under the heading Descriptive Adjectives.

§4.14 Noise

- Page 4.14-10: Please explain discrepancy between Table 4.14-9 (which shows Mono Basin with the lowest vehicle trips in Mono County) and §4.2 Table 4.2-1 (which shows annual 2012 traffic volumes at Tioga Pass to be the highest in Mono County after SR 203).

§6.o Alternatives

- MLC supports the county's approach to identifying a preferred alternative. The density reductions in Alternative 2 align well with County goals for open space protection and clustered development in and adjacent to existing communities; MLC also concurs that this alternative should be discussed with RPACs and other groups. MLC also recognizes the merits of some proactive policies under Alternative 3 while agreeing that some may be infeasible or cost-prohibitive. MLC would prioritize wetland and riparian area protection/restoration as well as enhancement of Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse habitat and protection of nesting birds. MLC supports eradication of non-native plant species and new measures to assure decommissioning and restoring the local environment at renewable energy sites.

COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER CLOSE OF THE DRAFT EIR PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

Cheri Bromberger, Board Vice President, June Lake Public Utilities District (JLPUD)

Final EIR Section 5 presents the full comment letter and responses to the comments raised therein.

Edward Koch, Field Supervisor, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Final EIR Section 5 presents the full comment letter and responses to the comments raised therein.

2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN FINAL EIR



SECTION 2 – ERRATA SHEET

INTRODUCTION

New project information has been added and project changes have been made since the Draft EIR was released for public review on 31 July 2015. Changes and new information that apply to the proposed *2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan* project are described below.

In addition, although the project description is complete in the DEIR, the County is choosing to update the project title to include all the approval actions that will be taken on the project. The title of the project is hereby amended to "[2015 County of Mono Regional Transportation Plan, General Plan, Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, and Noise Ordinance Updates; and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan](#)" (herein after the "2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan"), as reflected in the text above and all subsequent project references.

NEW POLICIES AND ACTIONS

1. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a. **LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT:** In response to comments made by Rose Banks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Erin Nordin, US Fish and Wildlife Service; and Ted Koch, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Land Use Element Action 24.F.1.a. has been modified as shown below:

~~"Action 24.F.1.a. CEQA analysis that considers direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources at Witcher and Birch Creeks, including amphibians, will be required have been identified by the CDFW as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout. Require a CEQA analysis for any project that may impact these resources."~~

- b. **BIGHORN SHEEP:** In response to comments made by Tom Stephenson, Ph.D. (Program Director for CDFW Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program), the Bighorn Sheep Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a new Action 24.F.3.f has been added to Policy 24.F.3 in the Land Use Element. "Protect wildlife and native plants, especially rare and endangered species." The new Action 24.F.3.f states:

"Action 24.F.3.f. Consult/engage with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the responsible agency for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep prior to approving any new or renewed grazing use or altering any existing grazing use for domestic sheep."

- c. **BIRD HABITAT IN BRIDGEPORT VALLEY:** In response to comments made by Lisa Cutting (Eastern Sierra Policy Director for Mono Lake Committee), Issue #3 in the Bridgeport Valley section of "Issues/Opportunities/Constraints for Community Areas" is proposed to be modified as follows:

"3. There is an opportunity to enhance the recreational opportunities available at Bridgeport Reservoir and to protect the wetlands and associated natural resources in the surrounding area, including critical bird habitats. These recreational opportunities may include fishing, hunting, kayaking, boating, sailing, and bird watching."

- d. **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:** In response to comments made by Lisa Cutting (Eastern Sierra Policy Director for Mono Lake Committee), a new policy is proposed to reduce impacts to black bear populations resulting from improper trash storage. The new Action 1.A.3.d in the Land Use Element states:

"Action 1.A.3.d. Consider requirements for bear-resistant trash receptacles in applicable community areas."

- e. **ERADICATION OF NON-NATIVE PLANTS:** In response to comments made by Lisa Cutting, (Eastern Sierra Policy Director for Mono Lake Committee), a new action is proposed in the Conservation/Open Space Element for collaborative efforts to control or eliminate invasive non-native plants:

"Action 13.C.4.d. Seek ways to form partnerships that will facilitate mitigative control or eradication of invasive non-native plants in and around town areas. Identify and explore methods of forming collaborations, funding, and facilitating such programs."

- f. **MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT:** In response to comments made by Edward Koch (Field Supervisor for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service), a new Action 2.A.1.r has been added to the Conservation/Open Space Element:

"Action 2.A.1.r. Work with the USFWS to ensure compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act."

- g. **CELL TOWERS:** In response to comments made by Edward Koch (Field Supervisor for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service), a new Action 13.C.3.f has been added to the Conservation/Open Space Element:

"Action 13.C.3.f. Avoid siting cellular towers in Bi-State sage grouse habitat to the extent possible; if no alternatives exist, site towers in lowest quality habitat possible."

2. HYDROLOGY, WATER QUALITY, WATER SUPPLY

- a. **ADEQUACY OF JUNE LAKE WATER SUPPLY:** In response to Cheri Bromerger, June Lake Public Utilities District, Issue #35 in the June Lake section of "Issues/Opportunities/Constraints for Community Areas" in the Land Use Element is proposed to revert to the existing language with the following edit:

"Water rights held by and applied for by the JLPUD should be adequate to meet near future demands, but may be inadequate to meet demands at full buildout. The high cost of expanding water distribution and storage facilities rather than shortfalls in water rights limits the ability of the JLPUD to additionally supply additional water."

In response to comments made by Jan Zimmerman, Engineering Geologist for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, new policies and actions have been added including:

- b. **AB 685, HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER:** Assembly Bill 685 of 2012 recognizes the right of every human to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water, adequate for basic human needs. Under AB 685, state agencies must consider this policy when making administrative decisions about the use of water for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes. LRWQCB recommends that the county incorporate principles of AB 685 into the updated General Plan. In response to this recommendation, the County added a cross-reference to Objective 4.A. in the Conservation/Open Space Element as shown below:

Objective 4.A: To the extent not preempted by State or Federal law, preserve, maintain, and enhance surface and groundwater resources to protect Mono County's water quality and water-dependent resources from the adverse effects of development and degradation of water-dependent resources, including compliance with AB 685."

- c. **INDIVIDUAL SEPTIC SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:** Circulation Element Policy 4.B.5. has been modified to encourage sewer (and other utility) service providers to meet community needs:

“Work with special districts and other appropriate entities to meet community infrastructure needs such as water, sewer, fire protection, etc.”

- d. **IMPACTS OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING:** In response to comments made by Jan Zimmerman, Engineering Geologist for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, Conservation/Open Space Action 5.C.2.i has been amended as shown:

“Action 5.C.2.i. Proactively collaborate with stakeholders to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from livestock and grazing activities, and recognize and support the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sierra Business Council and UC Davis incentives for ranchers to install and monitor the efficacy of grazing management practices in an effort to protect and improve water quality.”

3. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND CIRCULATION

- a. **VEHICLE EMISSIONS:** In response to comments submitted by Phillip Kiddoo, Air Pollution Control Officer, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, the following Objective 7.C.2 has been added to the RTP to specify a cap for vehicle miles travelled, and a cross-reference to Objective 7.C.2 has been added to Action 16.A.1.d of the Conservation/Open Space Element:

“Objective 7.C.2. Work with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the GBUAPCD, as applicable, to ensure the budget of 66,452 VMT for travel on a peak winter day in the unincorporated county within the Mammoth Air Basin is not exceeded. New development proposals must be reviewed and projected increases in peak VMT must be less than the VMT limit.”

“Action 16.A.1.d. Comply with Mammoth Air Basin SIP requirements for vehicle miles traveled – see the Regional Transportation Plan in the Circulation Element and RTP Objective 7.C.2.”

- b. **GRAMMATICAL EDITS AND CLARIFICATIONS:** In response to Ryan Dermody, Planning Director for Caltrans District 9, numerous grammatical edits, clarifications, data corrections and acknowledgements of jurisdictional authority were made, and are not repeated in this errata section. The edits are noted in the response to Caltrans District 9 (see comment letter #5), and a “track changes” version of the RTP is also available by calling the Mono County Community Development Department at 760.924.1800 or online at <http://monocounty.ca.gov/planning/page/mono-county-general-plan-update>.
- c. **JUNE LAKE TRIP GENERATION RATES:** : In response to Ryan Dermody, Planning Director for Caltrans District 9, the methodology for calculating trip generation rates for June Lake is further clarified:

“This rate seems highly unlikely due to the fact that the estimated trip generation from all 820 existing units if occupied at one time could equal 4,920 trips on SR 158. This is three times higher than the AADT of 1,5600 trips from 20143 on SR 158 as shown in Table A-8.

As stated in the methodology section, the ITS methodology of 9.57 trips per detached dwelling unit in rural Mono County results in unrealistic figures. Mono County has adjusted this methodology to a more reasonable, and still conservative, six trips per dwelling unit. This adjustment clearly continues to provide unrealistic numbers as described in the preceding paragraph; however, alternative methodology is lacking at this time. The current methodology does not account for second homeownership (e.g. a high percentage of vacant dwelling units), transient rentals and occupancy, concentrated traffic influx during limited timeframes due to tourist visitation, and a seasonal road closure that eliminates through traffic on SR 158.”

- d. **MONO BASIN BIKE TRAILS:** In response to comments offered by Lisa Cutting, Eastern Sierra Policy Director, Mono Lake Committee, a new Policy 8.L has been added to the Bicycle Transportation Plan. The new Policy 8.L states:

“Policy 8.L. Continue community conversations via the RPAC to consider a bike trail connecting Lundy Canyon to US 395 in order to connect major recreational destinations.”

CHANGES TO THE TEXT OF THE RTP AND GENERAL PLAN

Changes to the text of the 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan will be incorporated directly into the text of the General Plan elements and the RTP.

CHANGES TO THE TEXT OF THE EIR

Changes to the text of the 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan *Draft EIR* will be incorporated directly into the text of the comprehensive Final EIR, which will be prepared following a hearing scheduled before the Mono County Board of Supervisors to consider EIR certification and project approval. The comprehensive Final EIR will include all text from the Draft EIR, as amended through the responses to comments, as well as other relevant materials from the Administrative Record for this project (including Findings, the Statement of Overriding Considerations, copies of adopted resolutions or ordinances, staff reports, minutes from hearings of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and any other relevant materials). The comprehensive Final EIR is expected to be completed and available for use early in 2016.

**2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE
UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN
FINAL EIR**



SECTION 3 – COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Phillip L. Kiddoo
Air Pollution Control Officer



RECEIVED
AUG 18 2015
MONO COUNTY
Community Development

GREAT BASIN UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

157 Short Street, Bishop, California 93514-3537
760-872-8211 Fax: 760-872-6109

August 13, 2015

Wendy Sugimura
Mono County Community Development
P.O. Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

RE: Air Quality Amendments to the Mono County General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Ms. Sugimura:

We reviewed the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) and the changes to the Mono County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for matters related to air quality. Although the air quality information in the documents was quite thorough we have comments we would like for you to consider in the final EIR and RTP. These comments generally apply to section 4.3.6 of the DEIR and the RTP (pp. 17-18), but may also be inserted into other sections of these documents.

- On July 30, 2015, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) proposed the redesignation of the Mammoth Lakes PM10 nonattainment area to attainment in a Federal Register notice (80 FR 45477). The comment period will close on August 31, 2015 and the official designation change to attainment may happen before the EIR is finalized.
- The US EPA also proposed approving the motor vehicle emission budgets in the Mammoth Lakes Air Quality Management Plan. They found that the budgets meet the applicable transportation conformity requirements under 40 CFR 93.118(e). See also District Regulation XII.
- The motor vehicle emission budgets for Mammoth Lakes includes a budget of 179,708 vehicle miles travelled for a peak winter day for the area within the town of Mammoth Lakes, and a second budget of 66,452 vehicle miles travelled (VMT) for a peak winter day for travel on SR 203 and US 395 in the area outside of the town boundaries, but inside the boundaries of the Mammoth Lakes PM10 planning area. See enclosed Figure 1-2 for the town and planning area boundaries. (2014 Update to Air Quality Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, May 5, 2014)

In order to comply with Mammoth Lakes' air quality plan and federal transportation conformity regulations new developments or projects cannot be approved if they will cause the peak winter-day traffic to exceed these in-town or out-of-town VMT limits. The second motor vehicle emission budget for SR 203 and US 395 was requested by the US EPA following their review of the plan and is included in the final air quality plan approved by the district. The second motor vehicle budget should be added to the DEIR and the RTP.

Page 4.3-16 of the DEIR refers to a 1998 agreement, which applied to LADWP's agreement to implement dust controls at Owens Lake and not to Mono Lake. This sentence should be deleted.

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the DEIR and RTP. Please call me or Duane Ono at (760) 872-8211 if you have any questions regarding these issues.

Sincerely,

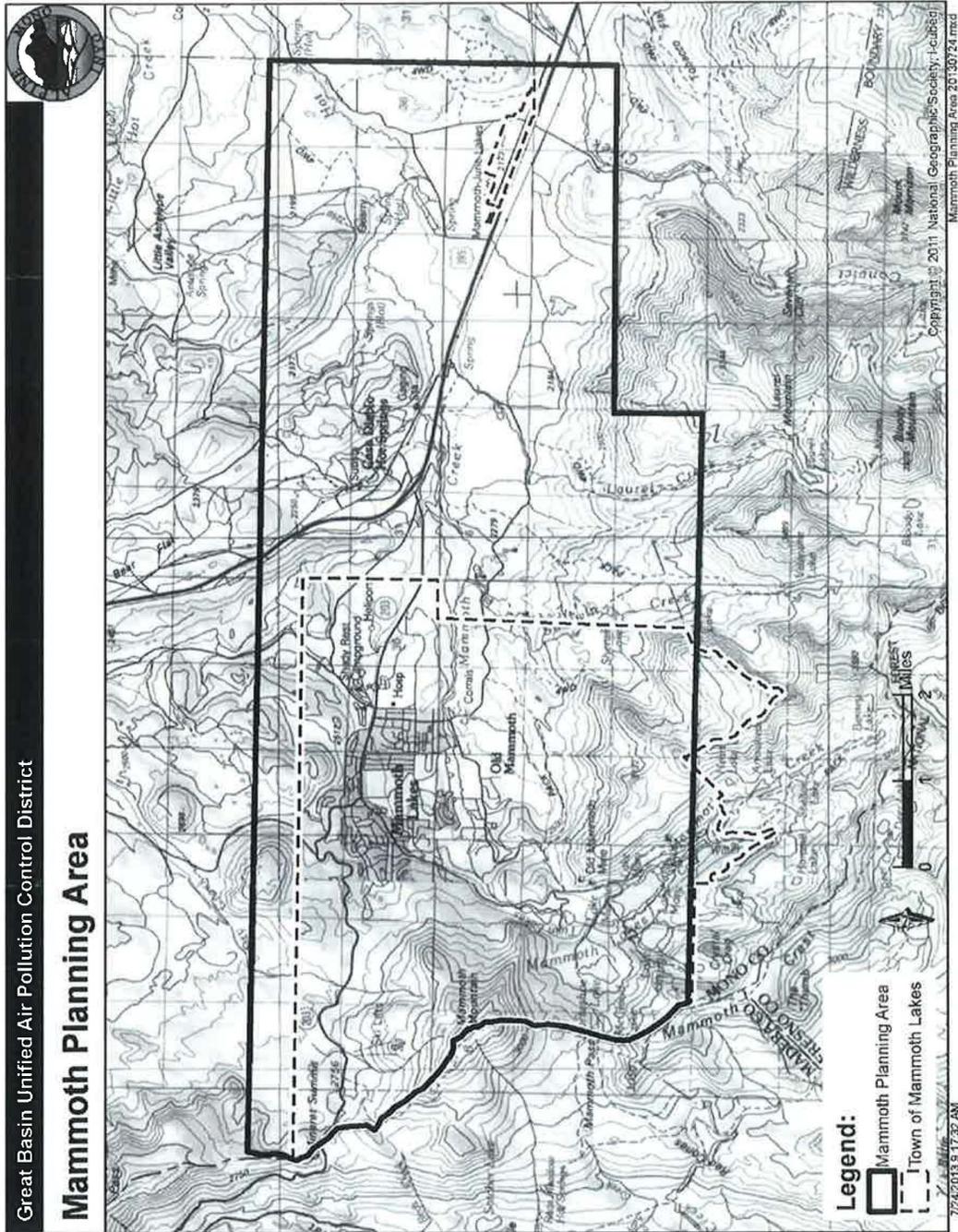


Phillip L. Kiddoo
Air Pollution Control Officer

Enclosure

Mammoth Lakes AQMP

Figure 1-2 Mammoth Lakes Planning Area



#1

RESPONSE TO PHILL KIDDOO, GREAT BASIN UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

Response to comments offered in correspondence by Phillip Kiddoo, Air Pollution Control Officer, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD). Comment letter dated 13 August 2015.

REDESIGNATION OF MAMMOTH LAKES PM₁₀ NONATTAINMENT AREA TO 'ATTAINMENT'

The GBUAPCD notes that the US Environmental Protection Agency has proposed redesignating the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ nonattainment area to 'attainment' status, and that the official designation change may occur before the end of 2015. In response to the comment, page 4.3-5 of the DEIR is hereby modified as follows:

"PM₁₀ concentrations in the Mono Basin have remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2012 with much lower concentrations in Lee Vining and higher concentrations on the north shore (see www.arb.ca.gov, PM₁₀ Trends Summary). PM₁₀ concentrations in Mammoth Lakes have declined significantly since the early to mid-1990s (see www.arb.ca.gov, PM₁₀ Trends Summary). [On 30 July 2015, the EPA proposed the redesignation of the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ nonattainment area to attainment in a Federal Register notice \(80 FR 45477\). The official redesignation was published in the Federal Register on October 5, 2015 \(EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0279\).](#)"

In response to the comment, page 4.3-6 of the DEIR is hereby modified as follows:

"Mammoth Lakes has high levels of PM₁₀ in the winter due to a combination of wood smoke and cinders put on icy roads for traction during the winter. In cooperation with the District, the Town developed an ordinance in 1990 to control both sources. The AQMP for the Town of Mammoth Lakes has been approved by the federal government, and PM₁₀ levels have since dropped significantly. [As previously stated, on July 30, 2015, the EPA proposed the redesignation of the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ nonattainment area to attainment in a Federal Register notice \(80 FR 45477\). The official redesignation was published in the Federal Register on October 5, 2015 \(EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0279\).](#) The Town's Transit Plan and the Mobility Element of the Town's General Plan contain policies that are intended to reduce transportation-related criteria pollutant levels. The policies focus on increased transit ridership and reduced automobile usage, including expansion of winter transit services (peak period) for skiers and commuters, airport shuttle service, increased community transit services, year-round fixed-route services, and dial-a-ride services in Mammoth Lakes. Policies in the Transit Plan and Mobility Element also emphasize restricting automobile parking spaces in favor of expanding the existing transit system and direct ski lift access facilities, and incorporating transit and pedestrian facilities into existing and future developments, in order to reduce vehicle trips and improve air quality."

In response to the comment, page 4.3-17 of the DEIR is hereby modified as follows:

"In Mammoth Lakes, PM₁₀ is largely the result of wood burning and resuspended road cinders during the winter. As profiled in the preceding impact discussion, Mammoth Lakes has implemented numerous plans and policies to address these air quality concerns, including the Mammoth Lakes Air Quality Plan, the Particulate Emissions Regulations, the Mammoth Lakes Revised Transportation and Circulation Element, and the Mammoth Lakes Transit Plan. Through the Draft RTP, these plans and policies are also incorporated by reference into this EIR. As a result, PM₁₀ concentrations in Mammoth Lakes have declined significantly since the early 1990s (see www.arb.ca.gov, PM₁₀ Trends Summary). The

Draft RTP notes, based on available data, that Mammoth Lakes has not exceeded the national standard for PM₁₀ since 1993 except for two times in 2013-2014 due to wildfire, and has sharply reduced the number of days it exceeds the state standard (from 62.4 days in 1993 to 15 days in the 2013-2014 winter season to 3 days in 2014-2015 winter season). In 2013-2014, 10 of the 15 exceedances were due to wildfire events, and in 2014-2015 all were due to wildfire events.¹ As previously stated, on July 30, 2015 the EPA proposed the redesignation of the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ nonattainment area to attainment in a Federal Register notice (80 FR 45477). The official redesignation was published in the Federal Register on October 5, 2015 (EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0279)."

USEPA APPROVAL OF MOTOR VEHICLE EMISSION BUDGETS IN MAMMOTH LAKES AQMP

GBUAPCD notes that the US Environmental Protection Agency has proposed approving the motor vehicle budgets in the Mammoth Lakes Air Quality Management Plan. Please refer to the response to comments related to Mammoth Lakes Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets provided below.

MAMMOTH LAKES MOTOR VEHICLE EMISSION BUDGETS

GBUAPCD notes that the motor vehicle emission budgets for Mammoth Lakes presented in the DEIR includes 179,708 vehicle miles travelled (VMT) for a peak winter day in the Town, and a second budget of 66,452 VMT for a peak winter day on SR 203 and US 395 outside of Town boundaries, but within the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ planning area; that new developments cannot be approved if they would cause an exceedance of these VMT limits; and that the second budget should be added to the RTP and EIR. In response to the comment, DEIR pages 4.3-15 and 4.3-16 are hereby modified as follows:

"The AQMP describes how PM₁₀ levels will be controlled both inside the ~~Town of~~ Mammoth Lakes Town limits boundaries and outside the Town limits within the air basin boundary. In Mono County, transportation-related criteria pollutants occur primarily in Mammoth Lakes (PM₁₀ emissions resulting primarily from resuspended road cinders) and therefore, the AQMP includes measures to address these mobile source pollutants. Identifying the consistency of the Draft 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan with the AQMP is determined by evaluating whether the Draft 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan would substantially increase the rate of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). If it does, then the proposed project would be considered inconsistent with the AQMP, which could delay or preclude attainment of the state PM₁₀ standard.

After the close of the DEIR comment period on October 5, 2015, the EPA approved the redesignation of the Mammoth area, the associated PM₁₀ maintenance plan (also known as the AQMP), and the associated motor vehicle emissions budgets for use in transportation conformity determinations. While this information became available after the comment period and therefore the County is not obligated to include the information, time and resources has allowed for its inclusion in the Final EIR.

The approved AQMP sets peak VMT limits within the Town and in the unincorporated county within the Mammoth Air Basin. In order to comply with the VMT limits, new development proposals must be reviewed and projected increases in peak VMT must be less than the VMT limit. The VMT limit within the Town has been increased from 106,600 per day to 179,708, which is supported by air quality modeling showing that this level of traffic would not cause NAAQS violations. This peak VMT limit has been adopted by the Town and is included in 8.30.100 of the Municipal Code, along with road dust reduction measures. A second VMT limit of 66,452 has been approved for the unincorporated county within the Mammoth Air Basin. The AQMP includes Particulate Emissions Regulations that limit peak VMT to 106,600 per day and direct that the Town review development projects to reduce potential VMT driven PM₁₀ emissions through improvements to circulation, pedestrian systems, transit and street sweeping. The AQMP also recommends amending the VMT limit from 106,600 per day to 179,708, and air quality modeling supporting the AQMP shows that this level of traffic would not cause violations of the NAAQS. While the Draft RTP assumes increased traffic volumes throughout Mono County and notes that emissions will continue to be a problem in Mammoth Lakes, particularly during congested periods in the winter when inversion layers trap the pollutants close to the ground, the Draft RTP also anticipates that improved transit and pedestrian services (including transit and pedestrian facilities included in existing and future development), will help address air quality issues in Mammoth Lakes and maintain the limit of 179,708 VMT per day. "

¹ Source: 2014-2015 Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ and Meteorological Summary, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District. <http://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5292>, cited May 13, 2015.

In addition, the following changes will be made to the Regional Transportation Plan:

Page 4: In ~~2013~~2014, the Town of Mammoth Lakes adopted an Air Quality Maintenance Plan and PM₁₀ Redesignation Request to update the 1990 Air Quality Management Plan for the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The ~~2013~~2014 Plan updated Section 8.30.100B of the town Municipal Code which sets a peak level of VMTs (vehicle miles traveled) at 179,708 per day within the Town, and directs that the Town review development projects in order to reduce potential VMTs. A second budget of 66,452 VMT was established for a peak winter day in the area outside of the town boundaries (unincorporated county), but inside the boundaries of the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ planning area (Mammoth Air Basin). Methods to reduce VMTs include circulation improvements, pedestrian system improvements, and transit improvements. The 2013 Plan also requires the Public Works Director to undertake a street-sweeping program to reduce particulate emissions caused by road dust and cinders on Town roadways.

Page 22: The 2014 plan updated Section 8.30.100B of the town Municipal Code that sets a peak level of VMTs (vehicle miles traveled) at 179,708 per day within the Town, and directs that the Town review development projects in order to reduce potential VMTs. A second budget of 66,452 VMT was established for a peak winter day in the area outside of the town boundaries (unincorporated county), but inside the boundaries of the Mammoth Lakes PM₁₀ planning area (Mammoth Air Basin). Methods to reduce VMTs include circulation improvements, pedestrian system improvements, and transit improvements. The 2014 Plan also requires the Public Works director to undertake a street-sweeping program to reduce particulate emissions caused by road dust and cinders on Town roadways.

Objective 7.C.2. Work with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the GBUAPCD, as applicable, to ensure the budget of 66,452 VMT for travel on a peak winter day in the unincorporated county within the Mammoth Air Basin is not exceeded. New development proposals must be reviewed and projected increases in peak VMT must be less than the VMT limit.

A cross-reference to the Mammoth Air Basin SIP and the VMT cap has also been added to the air quality policies in the Conservation/Open Space Element:

Action 16.A.1.d. Comply with Mammoth Air Basin SIP requirements for vehicle miles traveled – see the Regional Transportation Plan in the Circulation Element and RTP Objective 7.C.2.

1998 AGREEMENT TO IMPLEMENT DUST CONTROLS

GBUAPCD notes that the DEIR refers to a 1998 agreement with LADWP that applied to dust controls at Owens Lake (not Mono Lake). In response to the comment, page 4.3-16 of the DEIR is hereby modified as follows:

"Because PM₁₀-sized particles are extremely small (less than one tenth the diameter of a human hair), they can penetrate deeply into the lungs causing health problems that include bronchitis, heart disease, aggravation of asthma and others. In 1993, EPA designated the California portion of the Mono Lake hydrologic basin a federal PM₁₀ nonattainment area. The Federal CAA required GBUAPCD to produce a Mono Basin SIP in 1997 to describe how the problem would be controlled." ~~and in 1998 the District signed an agreement with the City of Los Angeles that set a schedule for implementing controls."~~



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Inland Deserts Region
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Suite C-220
Ontario, CA 91764
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



September 10, 2015

Wendy Sugimura
Community Development Department
PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
wsugimura@mono.ca.gov

Subject: **Mono County Regional Transportation Plan/General Plan Update
Draft Environmental Impact Report
SCH# 2014061029**

Dear Ms. Sugimura:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 2015 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/General Plan Update (GPU) (Project) (State Clearinghouse No. 2014061029) prepared by Mono County (Lead Agency). Pursuant to The Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et. seq.; hereafter CEQA Guidelines), CDFW has reviewed the DEIR and offers comments and recommendations on those activities involved in the Project that are within CDFW's area of expertise and germane to its statutory responsibilities, and/or which are required to be approved by CDFW (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15086, 15096, and 15204).

CEQA Role

CDFW has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and the habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (i.e., biological resources). CDFW is a Trustee Agency with responsibility under CEQA for commenting on projects that could affect biological resources. As a Trustee Agency, CDFW is responsible for providing, as available, biological expertise to review and comment upon environmental documents and impacts arising from project activities (CEQA Guidelines, § 15386; Fish & G. Code, § 1802).

Project Description

The proposed Project is a comprehensive update of the Mono County General Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the elements of the Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP), and associated actions. The Project includes goals, objectives, policies, actions, implementation programs, regulations and ordinances, and the repeal of a specific plan. The Project will replace the currently adopted General Plan, RTP and IWMP.

Comments and Recommendations

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

CDFW offers the following comments and recommendations to assist Mono County in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, impact on biological resources.

Mule deer

CDFW appreciates the consideration given to mule deer, a species that does not have a formal designation as a species of special concern, but whose population faces a number of threats related to various types of development. CDFW offers the following clarifications regarding mule deer:

- Regarding factors of concern for sustaining healthy deer herds (page 4.4-5), CDFW recommends removing hunting from the list. CDFW offers buck only hunting in Mono County hunting zones X9a and X12 through a limited quota system. Research has demonstrated that the removal of bucks only from the population does not impact deer herd productivity.
- In Table 4.4-8 (page 4.4-25), please include the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz with Paradise and Swall Meadows as overwintering areas for mule deer.
- Please note that Benton (page 4.4-32) occurs within the winter range boundaries identified through radio-telemetry studies for the Casa Diablo deer herd, and deer migrate to the west of Benton Hot Springs as they move to and from winter range in the McBride Flat and Truman Meadows areas.
- In the discussion of potential impacts in Paradise on page 4.4-33, please note that this community is situated within the primary winter range of the Round Valley herd and supports critical deer winter habitat. Construction activities and habitat loss associated with housing and other development will adversely impact winter range forage availability. Due to the recent Swall fire, the long-term drought and other factors, winter forage availability for the Round Valley herd is limited and any loss of winter range habitat will further diminish winter range carrying capacity and herd productivity.
- Page 4.4-51 states that "With the exception of Chalfant Valley, Benton, Coleville, and Topaz, future development within incorporated community areas in Mono County may impact mule deer..." Please note that Benton, Coleville, and Topaz are in fact located within or immediately adjacent to mule deer winter range; potential impacts should be considered for these areas accordingly.

Greater sage-grouse

CDFW appreciates Mono County's participation in the Local Area Working Group charged with the conservation of Bi-state sage-grouse and their habitat, and the County's commitment to adopting policies to maintain existing high quality habitat. CDFW looks forward to future coordination on conservation efforts, and offers the following clarifications to the DEIR's analysis of sage-grouse:

- On page 4.4-25, Crowley Lake, McGee Creek, Long Valley, and Walker are identified as areas that intersect with seasonal use. Please note that sage-grouse are also known to

lek, summer and brood rear on irrigated pastureland in the Bridgeport Valley; this area should be included in the discussion.

- Page 4.4-41 mistakenly identifies the “Parker Meadows PMU [Population Management Unit]” of greater sage-grouse in the Lee Vining area. The Parker Meadows subpopulation is part of the South Mono PMU, along with the Long Valley and Granite Mountain subpopulations.
- Page 4.4-51 refers to sage-grouse as “a species that is known to migrate...” CDFW would like to clarify that this characterization is somewhat inaccurate, since studies of Bi-state greater sage-grouse show that all Mono County subpopulations, with the exception of the Bodie Hills, are nonmigratory, spending most if not all of their life-cycle within an 8 km (5 mile) radius of leks. CDFW recommends that the discussion include conservation buffer areas that restrict disturbing activities within designated distances from leks.

General

- A discussion of impacts to biological resources on private lands situated between Bridgeport and Sonora Junction (Hwy 395 and Hwy 108) should be included on pages 4.4-42-43. These areas include Swauger Creek and Burcham Flat areas, which are situated within mule deer migration routes and critical sage-grouse habitat. The Twin Lakes area, including private land at Lower Summers Meadow, should also be included.
- Pygmy rabbit are known to occur in Long Valley, and should be included in the list of wildlife species potentially impacted by future development (page 4.4-39).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the DEIR for the Mono County Regional Transportation Plan/General Plan Update. Please contact Rose Banks, Environmental Scientist with questions regarding this letter and further coordination at (760) 873-4412 or Rose.Banks@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Leslie MacNair, Regional Manager
Inland Deserts Region

Cc: State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

#2a

RESPONSE TO LESLIE MACNAIR, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Leslie MacNair, Regional Manager, Inland Deserts Region, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), dated 10 September 2015

MULE DEER

FACTORS OF CONCERN FOR SUSTAINING HEALTHY DEER HERDS

CDFW notes that research reviewed by the Department supports the conclusion that buck-only hunting does not impact deer herd productivity in Mono County. The County appreciates the comment, as it comes from the agency that is responsible for management of the local herds, and regards the information as the best available for incorporation in the EIR analysis. Correspondingly, the last paragraph on page 4.4-5 has been amended as shown below:

"The MEA details habitat needs and major threats to deer herds; of particular concern are the impacts of residential and recreational development to deer migration routes, such as the corridor between US 395 and the Sierra escarpment that connects Swall Meadows to Mammoth Lakes. Other factors of concern for sustaining healthy deer herds include dispersed recreational use by people, dogs and packstock; competition for grazing resources with livestock on seasonal ranges; an unknown level of competition with feral horses and burros (e.g., on the Truman Meadow winter range); ~~hunting~~; and vehicle collisions. Other types of development, such as hydroelectric, geothermal energy, and logging projects affect deer herd populations depending on the specifics of the project, such as size, location, number of new roads, etc. Hunting that allows only a limited take of bucks has been a long-standing influence on deer in Mono County Zones X9a through X12, where the practice has been sanctioned by CDFW as having no effect upon herd production and sustainability."

OVERWINTERING AREAS FOR MULE DEER

CDFW offers specific knowledge of wintering mule deer ranges, which CDFW biologists have gained through their experience monitoring local herds. As the best available information, the ranges stated in the DEIR have been amended to incorporate all of CDFW's specific points:

- On page 4.4-25, Table 4.4-8 has been amended as shown below:

Sensitive wildlife	Potentially Occur in	Seasonal Uses	Period
mule deer	Paradise, Swall Meadows, Tom's Place, Little Round Valley, Crowley Lake, McGee Creek, Long Valley, June Lake, Lee Vining	migrating, temporary holding	spring: April 1 – June 15 fall: Sept. 15 – Dec. 1
	Paradise, Swall Meadows, <u>Walker, Coleville, and Topaz</u>	overwintering	Nov. 15 – April 15

- On page 4.4-32, the second paragraph and the discussion under Benton Impacts have been amended as shown:

"Sensitive animal species were identified as having some potential to occur in Benton during the nesting season or as residents. Townsend's big-eared bats and spotted bats are known to use mine shafts on nearby Blind Spring Hill for roosting, but no mines or caves that might be attractive to bats occur in the relatively flat landscape of Benton. While it is unknown where high elevation greater sage grouse relocate to during winter months, the 14 mile distance to the nearest recently documented use in the White Mountains, combined with the lack of sagebrush dominance, make it very unlikely that greater sage grouse use biological resources of the area. Benton's irrigated agricultural lands often include mature trees near areas suitable for foraging that could be chosen for nesting by Swainson's hawk during the period March 15- September 15, and this species may forage in the area. Scrub communities of the Benton area provide marginal habitat for mule deer of the Casa Diablo Herd, which may overwinter there or pass through during annual spring and fall migratory movements.

Benton Impacts: Future development in Benton that substantially modifies the habitat including soil and vegetation disturbance has some potential to impact the sensitive plant species Great Basin onion, Bodie Hills rockcress, pinyon rockcress, Wheeler's dune-broom, sand dune cryptantha, globose cymopterus, Booth's evening primrose, Booth's hairy evening primrose, dwarf monolepis, Suksdorf's broom-rape, naked-stem phacelia, intermountain milkwort, and golden violet, and the sensitive bryophyte Shevock's bristle moss, through direct loss of occurring populations or displacement of the habitat they occupy. Future development similarly has some potential to impact the sensitive wildlife species Swainson's hawk (nesting during the period February 15 to September 15), western white-tailed jackrabbit, and western small-footed myotis. Impacts to the sensitive plant species Great Basin onion, Bodie Hills rockcress, pinyon rockcress, sand dune cryptantha, globose cymopterus, Booth's evening primrose, Booth's hairy evening primrose, dwarf monolepis, Suksdorf's broom-rape, naked-stem phacelia, and golden violet may occur even though pre-construction surveys do not indicate presence, as these species are adapted to be cryptic or remain within the seedbank during years of below-normal precipitation. Removal of existing buildings could impact roosting bats such as western small-footed myotis. Projects that promote spread of the occurring non-native tamarisk, black locust, and Siberian elm trees have some potential to impact the sensitive plant species Great Basin onion, sand dune cryptantha, Booth's evening primrose, Booth's hairy evening primrose, and Suksdorf's broom-rape. Loss of scrub that contains utile browse for mule deer has some potential to negatively affect the Casa Diablo Herd's winter mortality, doe health and reproductive success by reducing the carrying capacity of traditional overwintering and migration habitat."

- In responding to the request that resource use by mule deer in the Paradise area be amended on page 4.4-33, it should be noted that the DEIR agrees with CDFW in describing the upland scrub of the Paradise area as crucial to Round Valley Herd sustainability (during overwintering and migration) on pages 4.4-17, 4.4-25, 4.4-34, and in Table 4.4-9 on page 4.4-27. The potential impacts of loss of this resource are summarized on page 4.4-34 as the second paragraph of the section subtitled "Paradise Impacts." The EIR's discussion as written in the second paragraph on page 4.4-35 depicts the emerging situation of reduced overall browse availability following the Round Fire. The latter passage, shown below, has been amended to emphasize the relatively high value of remaining browse, as suggested by CDFW:

"Large areas of the naturally occurring and historically disturbed vegetation in uplands and wetlands settings were destroyed by catastrophic wildfire in 2015. The fire occurred during a period of notable drought in the area, and living cover was more or less completely destroyed regardless of plant community type, unless prior thinning had been performed (one example survived, in thinned Jeffrey Pine Forest). In the recovering fire zone, the likelihood of occurrence of sensitive plant or animal populations has been substantially decreased, while remaining unburned examples correspondingly gain substantial ecological importance as possible sources of recolonizers. There is evidence that the primarily bitterbrush-dominated former upland scrub type will not readily return, and should not be expected to be as prevalent in the near term seral development. On the other hand, spring-driven wetland zones are likely to recover their former pattern of vegetation in relatively quick order; areas mapped as wetland in 2014-15 can be presumed after 1-2 years to have completely regained their inherent potential to harbor sensitive plants and wildlife. Much of the browse that was previously available in the expansive open rangelands between Paradise and Swall Meadows for overwintering and migrating mule deer of the Round Valley Herd has been lost in the near term. Recovery of this resource should be encouraged, and remaining stands should be considered to have high value for deer survivorship and herd maintenance."

- On page 4.4-51, the communities of Benton, Coleville, and Topaz have been removed from the first sentence of the second paragraph, as requested by CDFW and shown below:

"Mule Deer: With the exceptions of Chalfant Valley, ~~Benton, Coleville, and Topaz~~, future development within unincorporated community areas in Mono County may impact mule deer, a species that in this area is predictably migratory along (often) known pathways that appear to be well defined. Mule deer may be impacted directly through increased vehicle collisions, due to increased traffic during migration or new temporary or permanent barriers that increase road crossing mortality. With the exception of Benton Hot Springs, development that cumulatively restricts, narrows, or closes traditional migration routes may increase crossing-related mortality at US 395. Mule deer may be impacted indirectly through loss of critical browse habitat that may be limiting to health and fecundity, which occurs in areas of concentrated use such as migration corridors and overwintering areas. Loss of bitterbrush-dominated, potentially critical browse in plant alliances comprising the community types Great Basin Mixed Scrub and Jeffrey Pine Forest may become cumulatively significant in Swall Meadows, Tom's Place, Little Round Valley, Crowley Lake, McGee Creek, Long Valley, Lee Vining and Walker. Loss of landscape connectivity may cumulatively affect mule deer daily access to surface waters during migration, because unincorporated community areas locally surround these resources. Loss of forested riparian habitat in June Lake may impact an important fawning habitat through direct loss."

GREATER SAGE GROUSE

AREAS THAT INTERSECT WITH SEASONAL USE BY GREATER SAGE GROUSE

Bridgeport Valley bottomlands outside the developed areas of Bridgeport include expansive pasturelands and meadows that are known to harbor Bi-State greater sage grouse lek, summer, and brood-rearing habitats, as pointed out by CDFW. This Biological Assessment identified the Bridgeport Valley bottomlands generally as grouse habitat, but this was omitted in error from the DEIR analysis. On page 4.4-25, the summary statement regarding greater sage grouse presence has been amended as shown below:

"Community areas along the base of the Sierra Nevada experience spikes in mule deer use in the spring and fall. The arrival of spring migratory mule deer varies between April to early May, the timing depending on snowfall and plant phenology, then peaks in late May to early June, and is completed by mid-June. Fall migration begins in late September or early October, often prior to the first snowfall, and is completed by the end of November. Much of the mass movement actually occurs at night. Potential impacts to survivorship and fecundity that could affect mule deer when they enter areas of human habitation include reduction of critical browse and vehicle collisions. Bi-State greater sage grouse may occur as more or less year-long residents, while others migrate to reach distant brood-rearing and overwintering habitats. Areas of seasonal use are known to intersect Crowley Lake, McGee Creek, Long Valley, Bridgeport, and Walker, and there is relatively marginal potential for presence in the remaining sagebrush-dominated and meadow habitats of Little Round Valley, June Lake, Lee Vining, Coleville, and Topaz during the normal brood-rearing period. ~~Bridgeport Valley's open, expansive pastures and meadows located away from the focused developments of the town of Bridgeport are known lek, summer, and brood-raising areas for greater sage grouse.~~ For other birds, removing or pruning of vegetation during the regional period of breeding and nesting (Table 4.4-8), and new noise and activity associated with construction during this period, have some potential to destroy nests or negatively influence the nest success of birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and federal or state ESA designations, unless surveys to identify active nests and project-specific mitigations such as nest buffering are implemented."

In the subsequent discussion of impacts in Bridgeport, the first full paragraph on page 4.4-43 has been amended as shown below:

"Historical, progressive modification of all naturally occurring wetland resources is very evident in Bridgeport. Lush or diverse growth now occurs only where livestock grazing is excluded. Some springfed outflows are completely devegetated or now support only non-native plant species, and most have been channelized and eventually diverted. Existing housing and infrastructure that is scattered in the low hills of Bridgeport, and the highly traveled US 395, serve to some degree to isolate Bridgeport Valley bottomlands and portions of the East Walker River from Bodie Hills and Masonic Hills upland montane habitats on extensive public lands to the north and east. Bridgeport Valley's open, expansive pastures and meadows located away from the focused developments of the town of Bridgeport are known lek, summer, and brood-raising areas for greater sage grouse."

Additionally, the word "lek" has been added to the statement of "Bridgeport Impacts" as shown below:

"Bridgeport Impacts: Future development in Bridgeport may impact the potentially occurring sensitive plant species Great Basin onion, Long Valley milkvetch, Lavin's milkvetch, broad-keeled milkvetch, Masonic rockcress, Inyo County star-

tulip, western valley sedge, Hall's meadow hawksbeard, Bodie Hills cusickiella, Dugway's wild buckwheat, American manna grass, intermontane lupine, Torrey's blazing star, sagebrush bluebells, alkali tansy sage, prairie wedge grass, Masonic Mountain jewelflower, many-flowered thelypodium, and golden violet, and the sensitive bryophyte Blandow's bog moss, through direct loss of occurring populations or displacement of the habitat they occupy. Future development could similarly impact the potentially occurring sensitive wildlife species Wong's springsnail, greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS), pygmy rabbit, western white-tailed jackrabbit, Mount Lyell shrew, and American badger. Loss of upland scrub vegetation habitat that contains a substantial fraction of big sagebrush, including Black Greasewood Scrub, or emplacement of new structures and activities that subsidize predator abundance or grant predatory advantage in these habitats (for example, new raptor perches) may reduce the habitat available for potentially occurring pygmy rabbit and western white-tailed jackrabbit, and the available habitat for greater sage grouse (Bodie Hills PMU) that potentially may lek, forage or raise broods in the Bridgeport area."

IDENTITY OF PARKER MEADOWS SUBPOPULATION

CDFW correctly points out that the Parker Meadows population is treated as a Subpopulation, and not as a Population Management Unit as stated on page 4.4-41. The first full paragraph on page 4.4-41 has been amended to give the correct descriptor as shown below:

"Loss of upland scrub vegetation habitat that is dominated by dense big sagebrush, or emplacement of new structures and activities that subsidize predator abundance or grant predatory advantage in these habitats (for example, new raptor perches) may reduce the habitat available for potentially occurring pygmy rabbit and western white-tailed jackrabbit, and the (marginally available) habitat for greater sage grouse (Parker Meadows Subpopulation of the South Mono PMU) that potentially may forage or raise broods in the Highlands area. Removal of riparian or nearby upland standing snags or large downed tree boles could impact denning habitat for potentially occurring Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, Sierra marten, and fisher, and for the typical prey species of Sierra marten and fisher, and roosting habitat for potentially occurring bats including western mastiff bat, long-eared myotis, and Yuma myotis, Project-related disturbance to upland habitats containing large conifers could impact nesting bald eagle and osprey, while disturbance to areas near the meadow – riparian forest interface at Silver Lake could impact nesting Swainson's hawk and northern harrier, if this disturbance occurs during the period February 15 to September 15."

GREATER SAGE GROUSE MIGRATION

CDFW refers to a section of the DEIR that discusses the potential impacts upon established patterns of wildlife movement, including annual migratory movements. The DEIR discussion uses the term "migratory" within the context of describing how greater sage grouse movements are anticipated to interact with human developments such as housing and transportation infrastructure. The intent of the passage is to emphasize that the known patterned movement of local grouse is affected – potentially negatively – by impediments such as vehicle collisions, fencing, etc. While patterned, seasonal movements of any distance can be referred to as "migratory," the potential confusion of using this term is appreciated. Therefore, the word "migrate" has been replaced with "move" in the last paragraph on page 4.4-51, as shown below:

"Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse: With the exceptions of Chalfant Valley, Paradise, Swall Meadows, and Tom's Place, future development within unincorporated community areas in Mono County may impact greater sage grouse, a species that in this area is known to move as far as five miles~~igrate~~ between summer breeding and nesting grounds, late summer chick-rearing habitats that include naturally occurring and irrigated meadows, and overwintering sagebrush-dominated areas. Greater sage grouse may be impacted directly, through increased collisions with new fencing, trampling of nests or activities that cause nest abandonment, and increased predation by free-roaming domestic pets. Loss of habitat connectivity or access to critical chick-rearing resources in plant alliances comprising the community types Big Sagebrush Scrub, Great Basin Mixed Scrub, Transmontane Freshwater Marsh, Montane Freshwater Marsh, Wet Montane Meadow, Dry Montane Meadow, Dry Alkaline Meadow, or Creeping Wildrye Meadow may cumulatively impact migration to and use of chick-rearing habitat, leading to a significant increase in chick mortality. Mortality of adults and reproductive success may also be significantly impacted if natural predators and nest predator presence is increased by human activities that are attractive to predators, or if predatory advantage is significantly increased by erection of predator perches."

CDFW adds a recommendation that lek buffering be adopted as policy. Details regarding the goals of buffering or means that should be employed are not suggested, but it is assumed that policies either in place or that result from the present DEIR analysis include all feasible and needed elements to effect avoidance of disturbance that would negatively affect breeding. For Mono County, the stated goal in Conservation/Open Space Element Policy 2.A.3 "Protect and restore sensitive plants, wildlife and their

habitat, and those species of exceptional scientific, ecological, or scenic value” includes greater sage grouse avoidance measures as stated in Action 2.A.3.e:

“Projects within key sage grouse habitat shall not be permitted unless a finding is made that potential impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a level of non-significance or a statement of overriding considerations is approved. Potential mitigation measures may include:

- Minimizing site disturbance and limiting it to the poorest quality habitat on the parcel (e.g., near trees, away from leks and water, etc.);
- Siting structures taller than 6 feet or above the sagebrush average height outside the line of sight of a lek;
- Minimizing the installation of fencing and all fencing shall be of a wildlife friendly design, which may include the following specifications: not taller than 42”, three strands, bottom strand a minimum of 16” from the ground, top wire marked for visibility, lay down and let-down fencing, and avoidance of posts serving as avian predator perches. Other designs may be warranted depending on the wildlife concerns of the areas, and the BLM, USFWS and/or CDFW should be consulted;
- Installing perch deterrents on structures taller than 6 feet or above the sagebrush average height;
- Controlling domestic animals on the property;
- Designating seasonal use restrictions;
- Restoring native vegetation or otherwise improving vegetative habitat, including removal of invasive trees and annual grasses, and reducing fire risk on nearby public lands;
- Contributing financially to an established program undertaking habitat restoration within Mono County; and
- Including other measures developed in consultation with key Bi-State sage grouse partners (e.g., USFWS, CDFW, BLM, USFS), including considerations to mitigate impacts to reduced connectivity and fragmentation.”

The current policy does not include a set buffer distance, which has no inherent sensitivity to variations in lek setting; rather it requires consideration of potential impact findings that are comprehensive and project-specific. Its application thus will bring about avoidance of sensitive lek habitats, and specifically the types of habitat alteration or disturbance that may cause lek abandonment or otherwise negatively affect breeding, to the extent possible within Mono County’s purview. The County believes this sets a higher standard for lek avoidance than would the establishment of policy that defines a one-size-fits-all buffer distance. In addition, a one-size-fits-all buffer distance has the potential to unilaterally eliminate economic use of a parcel, exposing the County to legal liability.

GENERAL COMMENTS

IMPACTS TO PRIVATE LANDS BETWEEN BRIDGEPORT AND SONORA PASS

CDFW requests a discussion of the potential impacts to wildlife, mentioning deer migration and Bi-State greater sage grouse habitat, for the areas 1) Swauger Meadows to Burcham Flat, and 2) Twin Lakes to Lower Summers Meadow. These areas currently include housing, resort areas, agricultural fields, and roads, but lie well outside the more densely developed community of Bridgeport. Like other areas of Mono County where development is not expected to occur with any regularity or substantial scale, they were not included in the resource inventory studies of 2013-2014.

The area plan policies proposed for these outlying areas address potential impacts to deer migration and greater sage grouse habitat. The policies are conservation-oriented at the landscape level, invoking measures such as clustered development, development credits to preserve agriculture, low density development limited to single-family housing, and enforced limits on lot coverage. Also, the actions mandated in the Conservation/Open Space Element Policy 2.A.3, for example Action 2.A.3.e protections for sage grouse as quoted in the above response (see “Greater Sage Grouse Migration”), will apply equally to discretionary projects in these areas. Action 2.A.3.f applies to ministerial permits (such as building permits), invoking additional County review within the limits of legal authority, where previously there had been none. Furthermore, mitigations prescribed in Action 2.A.1.b (a through l) that are or will be mandated in the revision to Mono County policy 2.A.1 will apply equally to discretionary projects in these areas. In adopting these policies, the same set of possible impacts and mitigations that was analyzed in the DEIR for Bridgeport and other Mono County communities has been extended to projects that may infrequently be proposed in outlying areas such as Swauger Meadows to Burcham Flat and Twin Lakes to Lower Summers Meadow.

In order to clarify the application of these policies to outlying areas, the end of the first paragraph in §4.4.2.2 on page 4.4-7 was amended as shown below:

“Working in close concert with local RPACs, the County Planning Department has completed Area Plans for most of the unincorporated communities in Mono County. All of these Plans anticipate population growth and some foresee increases in recreational facilities and tourist visits, which over time will have the potential to cause significant adverse impacts on biological resources. The various Area Plans all seek to minimize these unavoidable impacts through preservation and protection measures. The analysis detailed in §4.5.4 updates previously identified impacts of population growth and increased recreational usage, and adds issues that were identified in a recent biological assessment of current resource conditions (Paulus, 2015). Based upon this information it is possible to address specific impacts to sensitive species and habitats, ecosystem function, and overall landscape integrity that may be associated with implementation of the [2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan. In adopting County-wide policies based upon this assessment, the same set of possible impacts that were identified and the same mitigations that were developed for Bridgeport and other Mono County communities have been extended to projects that may be proposed with relatively lower frequency in outlying areas, and includes a review action for ministerial permits within the County’s legal authority.](#)”

These areas include Swauger Meadows to Burcham Flat and Twin Lakes to Lower Summers Meadow.

PYGMY RABBIT IN LONG VALLEY

CDFW indicates that pygmy rabbit occurs in habitats that are present in the Long Valley area. Research in support of the 2014-2015 Biological Assessment did not uncover any reported Long Valley sightings of pygmy rabbit in the published or grey literature. However, inquiry subsequent to receiving this comment confirms that pygmy rabbit have been recently sighted by CDFW and BLM biologists in the northern portion of Long Valley (T. Taylor, personal communication 10/7/15). The Department is thanked for sharing this information and “pygmy rabbit” has been added to two sentences in the first paragraph on page 4.4-39 under the subtitle “McGee Creek and Long Valley Impacts”. The passage has been revised as shown below:

“McGee Creek and Long Valley Impacts: Future development in McGee Creek and Long Valley may impact the potentially occurring sensitive plant species Long Valley milkvetch, Lemmon’s milkvetch, Mono milkvetch, Masonic rockcress, pinyon rockcress, upswept moonwort, scalloped moonwort, Inyo County star-tulip, western single-spiked sedge, subalpine fireweed, Booth’s evening primrose, Booth’s hairy evening primrose, pine fritillary, Inyo hulsea, dwarf monolepis, small-flowered grass of Parnassus, scalloped-leaved lousewort, naked-stem phacelia, slender-leaved pondweed, foxtail thelypodium, and marsh arrow-grass, and the sensitive bryophyte Blandow’s bog moss, through direct loss of occurring populations or displacement of the habitat they occupy.

Future development could similarly impact the potentially occurring sensitive wildlife species Wong’s springsnail, Owens sucker, Owens speckled dace, Long Valley speckled dace, Owens tui chub, Mount Lyell salamander, Swainson’s hawk, greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS), willow flycatcher, [pygmy rabbit](#), Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, western white-tailed jackrabbit, Mount Lyell shrew, American badger, and Sierra Nevada red fox. Impacts to upland scrub vegetation habitat that contains a substantial fraction of bitterbrush may reduce the local carrying capacity for mule deer that migrate through the area. Loss of upland scrub vegetation habitat that is dominated by dense big sagebrush, or emplacement of new structures and activities that subsidize predator abundance or grant predatory advantage in these habitats (for example, new raptor perches) may reduce the available habitat for [pygmy rabbit or for](#) greater sage grouse that potentially may forage or choose to nest in the area. Removal of riparian tree canopies could impact Wong’s springsnail, Owens sucker, Owens speckled dace, Long Valley speckled dace, and Owens tui chub due to loss of the shaded habitat, bank stabilization, and flow attenuation they provide.”

This revision adds pygmy rabbit to the list of wildlife species potentially impacted by future development, as requested by CDFW.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Banks, Rose@Wildlife <Rose.Banks@wildlife.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 11:07 AM
To: Wendy Sugimura
Subject: Additional comment on the RTP/General Plan update

Hi Wendy,

CDFW submitted a comment letter regarding the DEIR for the Mono County RTP/General Plan Update on September 10, 2015. We would like to add the following comment:

Action 24.F.1.a on page 72 of Appendix D incorrectly states that “Witcher and Birch creeks have been identified by the CDFW as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout” (LCT). CDFW would like to clarify that this area has not been identified for reintroduction of LCT because it is out of the species’ native range and is poor fish habitat. Furthermore, this area contains an important population of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (*Rana sierrae*), a species state-listed as threatened. This population is one of the last remaining eastern Sierra populations considered to be negative of the Chytrid fungus disease. Due to the nature of the habitat, population numbers, access by recreational users, drought, and potential to become infected with Chytrid, this population is highly at risk. CDFW requests that the table on page d-72 is revised.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the plan and for coordinating with CDFW. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Rose Banks
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California Department of Fish and Wildlife—Inland Deserts Region
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#26

RESPONSE TO ROSE BANKS, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Response to comments offered in supplemental email correspondence from Rose Banks, Environmental Scientist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, dated 28 September 2015.

LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT

REINTRODUCTION TO WITCHER AND BIRCH CREEKS

CDFW correctly notes that Witcher and Birch Creeks are not suitable for Lahontan cutthroat trout introductions, due the constraints imposed by the current resources of the area. The policy that was cited is an old (1993) and outdated recommendation that has since expired. The wording of Action 24.F.1.a. in the Land Use Element and on page 72 of Appendix D has been modified as shown below:

~~“CEQA analysis that considers direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources at Witcher and Birch Creeks, including amphibians, will be required have been identified by the CDFW as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout. Require a CEQA analysis for any project that may impact these resources.”~~



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Inland Deserts Region
407 W. Line Street
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



September 29, 2015

Wendy Sugimura
Mono County Community Development
PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

**MONO COUNTY RTP AND GENERAL PLAN UPDATE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT [July 31, 2015 Draft]**

Dear Ms. Sugimura and Mono County Supervisors:

The Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program at California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is submitting comments on the Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report that was released July 31, 2015. As a trustee agency responsible for the State's fish and wildlife resources (California Fish and Game Code §711.1), CDFW has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of such species. Furthermore, CDFW is the lead agency for implementation of recovery efforts for federally endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (hereafter Sierra bighorn). It is the goal and responsibility of CDFW to protect and maintain viable populations of fish and wildlife resources throughout the State. The purpose of this letter is to request that federally endangered Sierra bighorn be included in Section 4.4 as a biological resource and that the DEIR include an analysis of potential impacts to this species.

Sierra bighorn have been listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) since 1974, but were uplisted from threatened to endangered in 1999 by the California Fish and Game Commission. In the same year, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) temporarily listed the subspecies as endangered on an emergency basis under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). Final listing as endangered under ESA occurred early in 2000. The status of Sierra bighorn warrant their inclusion in the Biological Resources Section of the DEIR under Section 4.4.2.1 Biological Resource in Mono County and Section 4.5.2.6 Wildlife Resource.

Federal endangered status was sought for these bighorn because of a dangerously low population size and the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms. Two concerns were identified: the negative effects of mountain lion predation and the threat of a major respiratory disease epizootic that could result from contact with domestic sheep grazed on lands adjacent to bighorn ranges. Contact between bighorn and domestic sheep and goats typically causes fatal pneumonia in bighorn that can persist in populations for decades and cause large-scale population declines.

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Section 4.1 Land Use and Planning states an interest in the Mono Basin in reestablishing sheep grazing (Table 4.1-2). Sheep grazing in areas near occupied bighorn habitat is not consistent with Sierra bighorn, a biological resource in Mono County, protection and management. Several publications at both the local and federal level provide guidelines that indicate effective separation (both temporal and spatial) of bighorn and domestic sheep and goats should be the goal of agencies responsible for wildlife management (Disease, Population Viability, and Recovery of Federally Endangered Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep, Journal of Wildlife Management 2011; A Review of Disease Related Conflicts between Domestic Sheep and Goats and Bighorn Sheep, USFS 2008; Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Grazing in Wild Sheep Habitat, WAFWA 2012; A Process for Identifying and Managing Risk of Contact between Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep and Domestic Sheep, USFS 2009). We ask that these potential impacts be considered in this DEIR.

One specific example of this land use conflict occurs on the Conway and Mattly Ranches. The severe consequences of contact and the proximity of the Conway and Mattly ranches to the Mt. Warren herd unit (less than half a mile) make current practices of domestic sheep and goat grazing on these properties inconsistent with recovery efforts for federally endangered Sierra bighorn. Grazing on Conway and Mattly ranches currently presents the highest risk of disease transmission to Sierra bighorn throughout the range. The Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Plan identifies successful implementation of measures to prevent contact between domestic sheep and goats as one of the downlisting criteria (Criterion A2 in the Recovery Plan). The present threat at the Conway and Mattly ranches would likely prevent downlisting and delisting of the species. Because of concerns like these, consultation with CDFW should occur prior to expanding domestic sheep and goat grazing in the Mono Basin. The Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program at CDFW looks forward to working together with Mono County to develop alternative uses for pastures in the Mono Basin that will allow Sierra bighorn to be removed from the endangered species list.

Thank you for allowing CDFW to comment on the Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report. CDFW is hopeful that Mono County will incorporate these considerations into the DEIR. If you have any questions or concerns regarding wildlife issues, please contact me at (760) 937-0238 or tom.stephenson@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Stephenson, Ph.D.
Program Leader for Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery

cc: Alisa Ellsworth, CDFW Environmental Scientist
Alex Few, CDFW Environmental Scientist
David Elms, CDFW Environmental Program Manager

Erin Nordin, USFWS, Bishop Office
Jeff Starosta, BLM, Bishop Office
Leeann Murphy, USFS, Inyo National Forest
Jora Fogg, Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation
John Wehausen, Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation
Sarah Stock, Yosemite National Park

#2C

RESPONSE TO TOM STEPHENSON, CDFW BIGHORN SHEEP RECOVERY PROGRAM

Response to comments offered in supplemental email correspondence from Tom Stephenson, Ph.D., Program Director, CDFW Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program, dated 10 September 2015.

BIGHORN SHEEP

NEED TO SEPARATE DOMESTIC SHEEP AND BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATIONS

The County recognizes that the Department is responsible for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep in Mono County. Community areas in the County do not intersect the high elevation, rocky cliffs and alpine meadow habitats of the species, and the conclusion of the biological assessment was that impacts upon the species or its critical habitat were very unlikely. Domestic sheep grazing, which does not occur in the analyzed community growth areas and thus was not addressed in the biological assessment, has admittedly greater potential to cause impact. Most notably, as pointed out by CDFW, the transmission of disease to bighorn sheep from domestic sheep may significantly impact herd viability and the ultimate recovery of the species.

In response to this comment, Action 24.F.3.f has been added to Policy 24.F.3 in the Land Use Element. "Protect wildlife and native plants, especially rare and endangered species." The new Action 24.F.3.f. has been added on page 73 of Appendix D as shown below:

"Action 24.F.3.f. Consult/engage with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the responsible agency for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep prior to approving any new or renewed grazing use or altering any existing grazing use for domestic sheep."

Thus, the County will seek input from the Department on a case-by-case basis. Naturally-occurring or other landscape-level barriers to interaction between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep will also be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Potential impacts will include, but not be limited to, disease transmission, which may be a function of distance to the known occupied range of the nearest bighorn sheep herd.

In order to clarify the need to engage with the responsible agency prior to actions that may impact Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, an additional paragraph has been added after the final paragraph on page 4.4-5 of DEIR § 4.4.2.1 on page 4.4-5, as shown:

"The MEA details habitat needs and major threats to deer herds; of particular concern are the impacts of residential and recreational development to deer migration routes, such as the corridor between US 395 and the Sierra escarpment that connects Swall Meadows to Mammoth Lakes. Other factors of concern for sustaining healthy deer herds include dispersed recreational use by people, dogs and packstock; competition for grazing resources with livestock on seasonal ranges; an unknown level of competition with feral horses and burros (e.g., on the Truman Meadow winter range); hunting; and vehicle collisions. Other types of development, such as hydroelectric, geothermal energy, and logging projects affect deer herd populations depending on the specifics of the project, such as size, location, number of new roads, etc.

Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis sierrae*) is listed as Endangered under the Endangered Species Acts of both the State of California and the federal government. Impacts to the alpine-dwelling herds of this species within the areas where growth is most likely to occur are very unlikely. The CDFW considers mountain lion predation and disease

introduced through interaction with domestic sheep herds to be the greatest threats to the recovery of this species. Preventing the intermingling of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep in Mono County can be achieved only where naturally occurring and constructed barriers as well as distance of separation would prevent bighorn sheep from leaving their normal alpine habitat to mingle with domestic sheep grazing at lower elevations.

Also, the final full paragraph on page 4.4-22 of DEIR §4.5.2.6 has been amended as shown below:

"The CDFW ranks sensitive wildlife according to Heritage Program standards that reflect the degree of imperilment the species faces within California. CDFW may additionally assign Species of Special Concern status for declining species that are considered to be in greatest need of conservation (Table 4.4-6). Owens tui chub, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, and willow flycatcher (*E. t. ssp. extimus*) are listed under the federal ESA as Endangered. Greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS) was proposed under the federal ESA to be listed as Threatened, and the proposal was withdrawn in 2015. Owens tui chub, willow flycatcher (all ssp.), Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, and bald eagle are listed under the State of California's ESA as Endangered. Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Swainson's hawk, bank swallow, and Sierra Nevada red fox are State listed as Threatened. Fisher (West Coast DPS) is a Candidate species for listing as threatened under both federal and state ESA law. Critical Habitat designations pursuant to the ESA for listed species in Mono County do not currently intersect any of the 16 unincorporated communities, or any County roads or other facilities."

The County would like to clarify that policies supporting interest in sheep grazing by Mono Basin communities defer to management and recovery efforts of the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep under the ESA and do not conflict. These policies (10.D.4 and 10.E.4 and associated actions in the Land Use Element) recognize that a use such as sheep grazing must be compatible with allowable uses and resource sensitivities. These policies are primarily intended to recognize that the Mono Basin communities identify with sheep grazing as part of their historical character, and to encourage consideration of relocation of sheep grazing activities rather than outright elimination. In addition, the Land Use Element contains Action 24.F.3.e to "...support the CDFW's continuing program to reintroduce native game species (bighorn sheep)," and Policy 1.A.11 and associated actions recognizing Conway Ranch shall be managed to protect its Conservation Values in accordance with the Conservation Easement. The following policy and actions from the Conservation/Open Space Element are also applicable:

Policy 2.A.2. Protect and restore threatened and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats.

Action 2.A.2.a. If a project is likely to have significant impacts on any state or federally listed threatened or endangered species, the County will consult fully with appropriate agencies and organizations, such as the CDFW, the USFWS, and the CNPS, concerning project alternatives and mitigation measures.

Action 2.A.2.b. Support the acquisition of areas with threatened or endangered species by federal or state land management agencies or land conservation organizations.

Action 2.A.2.c. Work with appropriate agencies and organizations to investigate the feasibility of establishing preservation areas to protect and restore threatened and endangered species.

Action 2.A.2.d. Work with the USFWS and other appropriate agencies to protect and restore listed species and their habitats while also minimizing impacts to county residents and visitors.

Mono County appreciates the offer to collaborate, and looks forward to working with CDFW and other entities through appropriate opportunities. In addition, management of Conway and Mattly Ranches is subject to a conservation easement and other plans, some of which are currently under development, that provide operational details beyond the General Plan.

The Section 4.5.2.6 designation is a typographic error. This section has been re-designated to 4.4.2.6.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Wendy Sugimura
Sent: Friday, November 06, 2015 9:26 AM
To: Wendy Sugimura
Subject: FW: June Lake 2015 General Plan Draft

-----Original Message-----

From: Cheri Bromberger [mailto:cheribromberger@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 3:48 PM
To: Courtney Weiche
Cc: jlpudnfire@qnet.com
Subject: RE: June Lake 2015 General Plan Draft

Hi Courtney,

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about the error in the Draft for the June Lake General Plan.

In the draft, for the General Plan for June Lake 2015 the section for water, the original statement " there is enough water for development" has been crossed out and replaced with "not enough water for development". This is not correct and should revert back to the original text. The June Lake PUD General Plan of a few years back, states that we do have enough water for development. In the past 4 for years we have been in a drought situation, but June Lake PUD has only been in a stage 2 conservation mode. Governor Brown has mandated that the entire state be at stage 3. We had to comply. With the rains and shower of this summer, our water situation did soften some.

There has been a conflict with the PUD and June Lake Advocates for years. While Patty Heinrich is our Board president she has no authority to make such a statement at the June Lake CAC meeting. The statement of our water conditions should have come from our General Manager, of which it did not. He was unaware of the change until the meeting of the June Lake PUD Board in September. Ms. Heinrich stated that she made the change.

I am asking you to please revert back to the original statement in the draft. If you want clarity on any of the water issues, please contact Julie Baldwin at the June Lake PUD.

Thank you,
Cheri Bromberger
Vice President of the Board
June Lake Public Utility Department

#3

RESPONSE TO CHERI BROMBERGER, JUNE LAKE PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Cheri Bromberger, Vice President, June Lake Public Utilities District (JLPUD), dated 18 September 2015.

ADEQUACY OF JLPUD WATER SUPPLY

The General Plan language in question is assumed to be Issue #35 in the June Lake section of "Issues/Opportunities/Constraints for Community Areas." The proposed text revision will be discarded, and will revert to the previous language in the existing General Plan/June Lake Area Plan, with the indicated edit:

"Water rights held by and applied for by the JLPUD should be adequate to meet near future demands, but may be inadequate to meet demands at full buildout. The high cost of expanding water distribution and storage facilities rather than shortfalls in water rights limits the ability of the JLPUD to ~~additionally~~ supply additional water."

The revised language in Issue #35 does not impact either General Plan policies or the EIR analysis. The JLPUD is the water purveyor and therefore has authority over the water supply system; Mono County's jurisdiction is limited to the approval of new development and, in some cases, water quality.

The General Plan, through Land Use Element policies 16.A.1, 18.C.2 through 18.C.4, and associated actions, requires new development in June Lake to demonstrate adequate water supply prior to approval through JLPUD will-serve letters and the specific plan process. New developments in specific plan areas are required to develop additional water sources if needed to meet the development's water demand at buildout without impacting natural resources and recreation. The policies also provide direction for the County to work with and encourage the JLPUD to diversify and develop the water system to meet demands at buildout (including drought years) without undue impact to the environment, develop comprehensive water management plans, and promote water conservation. In addition, the following policy and actions in the Conservation/Open Space Element apply:

Policy 3.B.7. Limit development to a level that can be reasonably supported by available local water resources.

Action 3.B.7.a. Require development projects to obtain "will serve" letters from applicable service agencies.

Action 3.B.7.b. For areas not served by an existing water system, require future development projects to demonstrate, prior to permit issuance, that sufficient water exists to serve both domestic and fire-flow needs of the development and that use of that water will not deplete or degrade water supplies in the area, or adversely impact natural resources.

Action 3.B.7.c. Deny development projects that have not demonstrated the availability or entitlement to a supply of water adequate to meet the needs of the proposed project and as required by SB 610 and SB 211.

Page 4.8-41 of the DEIR indicates the JLPUD water supply is adequate to meet existing demand, but that water supply for future growth in the June Lake area is uncertain. This analysis is consistent with the existing language in General Plan Issue #35, as referenced above.

P. O. Box 1183
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snbsf@qnet.com
sierrabighorn.org
760 872-2928



Wendy Sugimura
Mono County Community Development
PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

September 22, 2015

Re: Mono County General Plan Update

Dear Ms. Sugimura,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mono County General Plan Update. The Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation was established in 1995 to help coordinate the recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (SNBS). In 1999, our Foundation successfully petitioned state and federal governments to list this animal as an endangered species. Today our foundation works closely with a variety of state and federal resource management agencies and other organizations as part of the recovery efforts for these sheep. Among our roles is the development and analysis of all genetic data used in managing SNBS to conserve genetic diversity.

The purpose of this letter is to raise concerns about the language currently used in the Plan Update regarding domestic sheep grazing practices in Mono County. In the past we have submitted comments on the problematic nature of the Mattly and Conway Ranch parcels managed by Mono County relative to SNBS. This subspecies is morphologically and genetically distinct and occurs only in the southern and central Sierra Nevada. A lack of adequate governmental regulatory mechanisms relative to domestic sheep grazing was one of two reasons these sheep received federal endangered status in 1999.

It is well documented that healthy domestic sheep carry bacteria in their respiratory tracts that cause fatal pneumonia in most bighorn sheep following contact. In addition to the many documented pneumonia die-offs of wild bighorn sheep populations following contact with domestic sheep, this has repeatedly been investigated experimentally in captive situations with the consistent result of bighorn sheep dying of pneumonia. Contact between these two sheep species in the wild can occur through stray domestic sheep entering bighorn sheep habitat or through bighorn sheep rams finding and intermingling with domestic sheep then returning to the bighorn sheep herd. It has long been recognized that the best approach to preventing disease transmission from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep is the maintenance of a substantial distance between them. Numerous domestic sheep grazing operations in Mono County occur dangerously close to existing bighorn sheep.

The General Plan update is an opportunity for Mono County to address the recovery of SNBS in the context of economic development for the county. Instead of encouraging the use of domestic sheep grazing, we ask the county to acknowledge the economic role this iconic animal plays in the Eastern Sierra. Thousands of visitors learn about SNBS through the migrating murals

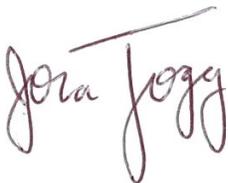
project, visitor center information and interpretive displays, and the signage at local trailheads that enter SNBS herd units. We believe that it is the responsibility of Mono County to acknowledge the threat domestic sheep pose to SNBS and desert bighorn sheep, and to address this issue openly and honestly in the plan update, drawing on a large body of published science. We see this as an opportunity to help educate the public on this important issue.

The effort to recover populations of SNBS has necessarily been an interagency effort involving numerous governmental agencies. Local agencies, including Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Bureau of Land Management, and the local National Forests, have terminated domestic sheep grazing allotments that pose a threat to SNBS based on the scientific evidence defining that threat. Among the criteria listed in the Recovery Plan for downlisting or delisting this subspecies is the elimination of all threats of contact with domestic sheep. Unlike most endangered species, SNBS can reach recovery goals and be delisted. Steady progress towards recovery goals is ongoing. Within a decade the management of domestic sheep in Mono County is likely to stand out as a major impediment to the downlisting of SNBS. We strongly encourage Mono County to join this recovery effort for this local endangered species and change its position on domestic sheep grazing in the General Plan to one based on science and a full and unbiased analysis of impacts.

Sincerely,



John D. Wehausen Ph.D. Board President



Jora Fogg, Board Member



Virginia Chadwick, Board Member

Terry Russi, Board Member

#4

RESPONSE TO SIERRA NEVADA BIGHORN SHEEP FOUNDATION

Response to comments offered in correspondence from J. Wehausen, Board President, and J. Fogg, V. Chadwick, and T. Russi, Board Members, Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation, dated 22 September 2015.

DOMESTIC SHEEP AND BIGHORN SHEEP

This comment is essentially identical to Comment #2c with regard to the potential disease threat posed to Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep by domestic sheep herds if the two are allowed to intermingle. As described in the response to Comment #2C, the County will seek input from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (the responsible agency) on a case-by-case basis. In response to this comment, Action 24.F.3.f has been added to Policy 24.F.3 in the Land Use Element. "Protect wildlife and native plants, especially rare and endangered species." The new Action 24.F.3.f. (also presented earlier in the response to Comment #2c) is as shown below:

"Action 24.F.3.f. Consult/engage with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the responsible agency for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep prior to approving any new or renewed grazing use or altering any existing grazing use for domestic sheep."

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Serious Drought.
Serious drought.
Help save water!*

September 28, 2015

Scott Burns
Executive Director
Mono County LTC
P.O. Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

SCH #2014061029

**Mono County Local Transportation Commission (MCLTC) - Draft Regional
Transportation Plan (DRTP) 2015 and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Mr. Burns:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review the MCLTC DRTP and DEIR. This letter contains both general and specific comments concerning these documents. We commend Mono County for its efforts in drafting a comprehensive RTP that covers all the goals of the CTP 2040. We support Mono County's collaborative regional transportation planning process with Kern, Inyo and San Bernardino counties to develop high-priority southern California access projects.

DRTP general comments:

- Please include a Project Intent (i.e. Plan Level Purpose and Need Statements) in the final RTP.
- Please describe how the RTP integrates the California State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Please explain further how the RTP was coordinated and is consistent with Mono County Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.
- It would be helpful to the reader if the RTP identified which committees MCLTC chairs, and further explain how the committees relate to the RTP.
- Please include a discussion on how the RTP contains a statement regarding consistency between the projects in the RTP and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).

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- It is unclear what the private sector involvement efforts consisted of during the development of the RTP. In the final RTP, please include detailed information about the communication process with the private sector.
- Please include the cost estimates for implementing the projects identified in the RTP and the year of expenditure dollars.
- Please add a policy or additional explanation to the climate change section to address adaptation or resiliency of future transportation projects to climate change threats in the next 20 years.
- Please add a policy or additional explanation of how to incorporate life cycle cost analysis in project decision making to better prioritize investments for the greatest good.
- The RTP is referenced as both the RTP 2015 and RTP 2014, please correct as needed.

D RTP specific comments:

- Second page (no page number) under Caltrans District 9 this should read:

Caltrans District 9

Brent Green, District 9 Director

Ryan Dermody, Deputy District 9 Director Planning, Modal Programs, and Local Assistance
Dennee Alcalá, Transportation Planning Branch Supervisor

- **Page 2 - Summary of Transportation System, first paragraph** - The system is not the vehicles but the roadways, trails, paths, sidewalks etc. that multi-modes use. Include transit service and air travel too.
- **Page 2 - Summary of Transportation System, last sentence, and second paragraph** - Highway 203 does not connect to central California.
- **Page 3 - First sentence** - Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) should be included.
- **Page 8 - State Plans and Programs** – Update the California Transportation Plan 2025 to 2030.

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- **Page 8 - State Plans and Programs** - The Smart Mobility Framework 2010 should not be on the same line as the Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan. They are separate documents.
- **Page 10 - Planning Analysis** – The Caltrans Transportation System Development Program no longer exists.
- **Page 14 - Table 3 top of table** - The third line should state Unincorporated.
- **Page 19 - Last sentence of first paragraph** - Should replace “increase capacity” with “improve mobility.”
- **Page 19 – Table 4** – Use most recent Transportation Concept Reports (TCR) for Concept Level of Service (LOS).
- **Page 19 – Table 4, Source** – Use the current District System Management Plan from March 2015. Use the current US 395 TCR from November 2014.
- **Page 22 - Emergency Response, sixth sentence** - Strike out "primarily to the existing street and highway system."
- **Page 22 - Emergency Response, last sentence** - Should be “responders” and “locations.”
- **Page 22 - Highway Safety** - Suggest changing this title to “Roadway Safety.” The use of “Highway” may imply State highways (Caltrans jurisdiction) only. Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) database includes local roadways.
- **Page 23 - Figure 1 and Figure 2 & Page 24 – Figure 3** - The Animal Mortality incident maps are just for the State Highway System, therefore they do not reflect issues on other roadways. This should be clarified.
- **Page 24 - Second bullet point** – Use 2013 truck traffic data. Avoid using the term “hazardous;” use quantifiable data instead.
- **Page 25 – Last bullet, last sentence** - Reword to: “Access to certain areas of the County may be limited seasonally or due to weather, fire, other such events.”
- **Page 25 - Highway System, SR 120** – Add “(at Yosemite National Park)” after Tioga Pass.

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- **Page 25 - SR 203** - After Mammoth Lakes change to, “(serving as Main Street), Mammoth Mountain Ski/Bike Park area, ending near Minaret Vista Point at the Madera County Line.”
- **Page 26 - SR 270** – “. . . US 395 to near Bodie State Historic Park. . .”
- **Page 26 - End of second paragraph.** – Add (SR 108) after Sonora Junction.
- **Page 26 - Fourth paragraph** – Use 2014 AADTs.
- **Page 26 - Last paragraph** – Add Tioga Pass (SR 120), Sonora Pass (SR 108), Monitor Pass (SR 89).
- **Page 27 - Figure 4** - “Existing” as a qualifier is unnecessary.
- **Page 27 – Figure 4** - Change US 270 to SR 270.
- **Page 28 - US 395** - Shoulders are not added during maintenance projects.
- **Page 28 - US 6** - Mention on-going shoulder widening projects.
- **Page 28 – Average Daily Traffic Volumes** – Use 2014 data.
- **Page 30-31** – Suggest “. . . from vehicle speed differentials.”
- **Page 31 - Goods Movement** – Verify that there are “no air freight services.”
- **Page 32 - State Route 203** – After Mammoth Mountain Ski Area add, “to Forest Service Road” to Reds Meadow.
- **Page 32 - State Route 158 second sentence** – Remove “safety.”
- **Page 32 - County Roads, first paragraph** – There is no need for the last sentence here; delete it.
- **Page 33 - Roads on Native American Lands** – The State Highway System needs to be included.

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- **Page 33 - Demand Management Strategies** - Active Transportation Demand Management (ATDM) is a more dynamic approach that may be considered. For more information, refer to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Publication #FHWA-HOP-12-047.
- **Page 34 - End of second paragraph** – “. . . park-and-ride facility at Tavern Road/Old Mammoth Road;” delete “in the town.”
- **Page 34 - End of fourth paragraph** - Use “could” decrease rather than “should” decrease.
- **Page 36 - Community Needs and Issues** – Recommend adding, “These issues are documented as presented to the County and may not necessarily be feasible.”
- **Page 38 - First bullet point** – Relocating the Caltrans facility is not envisioned. Additionally, recent projects at the facility have enhanced the visual appearance, such as painting and new fencing.
- **Page 38 - Middle of page** – Speed limits on State highways are set based on very specific laws and procedures. Cannot simply “Post and enforce slow speed limits. . .”
- **Page 38 - Middle of page** - Shoulders are not added during maintenance projects.
- **Page 38 - Bottom of page** - There are no plans to relocate the Caltrans maintenance yard.
- **Page 38 - Second to last bullet point** - Should use “development” instead of “expansion.”
- **Page 39 - Second to last bullet point** – Sidewalks are 4' to 7' on both the east and west sides.
- **Page 41 - First bullet point** - There is no documentation of a safety issue.
- **Page 41 - Last paragraph** – Route Development Plans (RDP) are no longer used.
- **Page 42 - Scenic Routes/Scenic Highway Designation** - Should be “Many” instead of “Most.”
- **Page 44** - SR 266 shield should be green.

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- **Page 46 – Dial-A-Ride Service** – The service provider’s name should be included.
- **Page 47 - Non-Motorized Facilities, Aviation** - It seems these topical sections should not be indented.
- **Page 60 - First paragraph after bulleted points** – Replace with “. . .has facilities, which bicyclists can and do use, but few specifically dedicated only for bicycles.”
- **Page 61 - Existing Rest Facilities** – “Caltrans maintains the Crestview Safety Roadside Rest Area (US 395).”
- **Page 61 - Changing Facilities** - Clarify that this is for a rider to change clothes, not bicycle changing.
- **Page 61 - Mono County Bicycle Users** – Replace with “. . . has facilities, which bicyclists can and do use, but few specifically dedicated only for bicycles.”
- **Page 62 - Types of Bikeways, first paragraph** – “. . . feasible for safety, which also facilitates bike use...”
- **Page 65 - Lee Vining Airport, second paragraph** - It states that currently no aircraft are based there; however, Table 10 on page 66 says there are 4 Based Aircrafts.
- **Page 68 - Last bullet point** - Ensure that issues to be corrected per the annual Caltrans Aeronautics inspections are addressed. Some airports have continuing issues.
- **Page 69 - Last sentence** - Although this page mentions that the planning efforts are directly compatible with the CTP 2040, it does not mention how these concepts are considered.
- **Page 70** - Update the CTP 2040 vision to: “California’s transportation system is safe, sustainable, universally accessible, and globally competitive. It provides reliable and efficient mobility for people, goods, and services, while meeting the State’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and preserving the unique character of California’s communities.”
- **Page 72 - Objective 1.B.3** - Replace with, “Collaborate with a consultant or Caltrans in any prospective 10-year origin and destination survey.”

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- **Page 73 - Last bullet point under objective 2.A.1** - Note that this is not in place at this time.
- **Page 73 - Objective 2.B.1** - Consider adding collaboration with the Bishop Airport for air service continuity and efficiency.
- **Page 78 - Objective 6.B.2** – It is recommended to delete this objective. Both the County and Caltrans Maintenance yards have been improved with paint, fencing, landscaping, etc.
- **Page 80 - Objective 8.B.2** - Define “vertical curbs.”
- **Page 80 - Objective 8.B.2** – “Crosswalks at appropriate intervals that meet warrants and provide logical pathways” instead of “regular and frequent.”
- **Page 82 - Objective 9.A.5** – Include “and providing traveler information.”
- **Page 82 - Objective 9.A.7** - Remove “mule deer” and replace with “wildlife.”
- **Page 83 - Objective 10.A.1** - Clarify.
- **Page 86 - Objective 14.A.2** – It is preferable to specify the fiscal years (example: FY 2016-2018).
- **Page 91 - Policy 18.A.3** – This policy should be reconsidered as these trees have caused traffic hazards and road closures.
- **Page 91 - Action 18.B.1.c** - Change “deer” to “wildlife” throughout document.
- **Page 92 - Action 18.B.1.d** - Clarify. Already, there are right and left turn pockets at this location. There is no documented accident concentration at this location.
- **Page 93 - Action 20.A.3.a** –Red curb is already set at the standard.
- **Page 100 - Action 22.C.1.e** - Parallel parking exists in Lee Vining.
- **Page 102 - Policy 22.G.1** – Relocating the Caltrans maintenance facility is not envisioned.

- **Page 103 - Policy 23.A.3** – The primary factor should be safety for workers and travelers.
- **Page 105 - Policy 24.D.5** - SR 120 ends at the entrance to Yosemite National Park at Tioga Pass. Some of these items do not seem physically possible due to geographic constraints.
- **Page 105 - Policy 24.E.1** - Correction needed. SR 120 ends at the entrance to Yosemite National Park at Tioga Pass. Beyond that, it is owned and operated by the National Park Service.
- **Page 106 - Action 25.A.4.d** - Tapes are no longer a standard medium. Digital files should be considered.
- **Page 106 - Action 25.A.4.f** - SR 158 is eligible for Scenic Designation. Mono County can follow the scenic corridor process and apply for official designation.
- **Page 111 - Action 25.C.1.c** - Define “major thoroughfare exaction moneys.”
- **Page 112 - Policy 25.C.5** - Remove "if desirable."
- **Page 117 - Action 25.K.8a** - Add “and/or California Highway Patrol (CHP).”
- **Page 118 - Action 25.M.3.b** - Be aware that on a state highway, the driveway slope maximum is 10%.
- **Page 118 - Action 25.M.5.b** - Define “improve.”
- **Page 118 - Policy 26.A.1** - Use “wildlife” instead of “deer.”
- **Page 123 - M.1** - This goals/policy section looks very similar to those of the Mammoth Mobility Element, which Caltrans District 9 commented on in December 2011.
- **Page 125 - M.4.1.3** – Need definition of “effective.”
- **Page 127 - M.8.3.1** – Further define “safety measures” as there is no documented accident concentration of any kind in the Town of Mammoth Lakes.
- **Page 133 - US 395** - US 395 is an interregional route.

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- **Page 133 - US 395** - Shoulders are not added as part of maintenance, they are a capital improvement.
- **Page 134, seventh bullet point** – If the overlay project is in Yosemite National Park, it is no longer on SR 120.
- **Page 135 - Eighth bullet point** - Scenic Byway Program is on hiatus.
- **Page 140 - First paragraph under Interregional Connections** – Replace “Systems” with “System.”
- **Page 148 - Under Interregional Connections** – Consider listing staff time as an associated cost.
- **Page 153 – California Department of Transportation. District 9** – Route Development Plans are no longer produced; the reference should be removed.
- **Page 153 - California Department of Transportation. District 9** - Use updated 395 Transportation Concept Report (November 2014).
- **Page 159 - First bullet point** – The cumulative effect of interregional growth should also be considered.
- **Page 162 – Tri-Valley** – May be worthwhile to mention raw land development potential.
- **Page 169 – Potential Local Transportation Projects by Area/Road** – Should clarify that not all items listed are eligible for transportation funding.
- **Page 169 - Under SR 182 Walker River Bridge Project** - There is no bikeway on SR 182.
- **Page 169 - US 395 Four-Lane Project Between Lee Vining and June Lake number 2** - It would not be prudent to attract deer closer to the highway.
- **Part 170 - US 395 Four Lane Project - Sand House Grade Segment** - US 395 is a four-lane facility at this location.
- **Page 172** - Last three projects are funded through the STIP.

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- **Page 173 - 3R Rehabilitate Pavement** - State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) only, no STIP.
- **Page 174 - 2014 SHOPP PROJECTS** – These projects are not all 2014 SHOPP Projects; retitle table. Also, 2016 SHOPP projects should be included.
- **Page 185 - Unprogrammed LTC Priorities - Tier 1, fifth bullet** - Caltrans is currently conducting a study.
- **Page 185 - Projects of Interest - Tier 2, sixth bullet** - There are rules in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) about destination signage. Since Mammoth is on SR 203, not US 395, there should be no destination signs until the junction.
- **Page 219** - There is no DRAFT watermark.
- **Page 228 - Bottom of page under Changing Facilities** - Phrase should be “No changing facilities for bicyclists exist.”

DEIR specific comments:

- **Page 3-2** - SR 266 shield should be the same as other SR shields. Also, SRs 158, 203 and 120 (west) are not labeled.
- **Page 3-6 - Main Street Revitalization Efforts last sentence** – “. . . build upon the 2013 *Main Street Revitalization Plan for U.S. 395 Through Bridgeport.*” “Through Bridgeport” should be removed.
- **Page 4.1-11 - Clear Zone Issues** – The Aeronautics Unit at Caltrans Headquarters has written letters about tree heights in the residential area near Bryant Field.
- **Page 4.2-8 - Local Capacity Issues** - What are the programs to address that issue?
- **Page 4.2-8 - Highway Safety last sentence** – “There is a perception of high collision rates in North County . . .” Perception should be excluded in favor of quantitative data.
- **Page 4.2-9 - Truck Traffic Volumes first sentence** – Denote the figure that supports an increase in truck traffic and what caused it.

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- **Page 4.2-9 - Truck Traffic Volumes third to last sentence** – “. . . SR 108 due to road constraints.” Change to “geometric roadway constraints.”
- **Page 4.2-11 - Mono Basin sixth row** - Relocation of Caltrans maintenance facilities is not envisioned.
- **Page 4.2-24 – Table 4.2-7, June Lake (Estimated % increase over current ADT)** – Provide supporting data for the 14.5% increase.
- **Page 4.10-3 - Figure 4.10-1** - “Adopted Scenic Roadways . . .” rather than Adopted Scenic Highways would be more accurate since there are only two official State Scenic Highways. Also, Scenic Highways should be labeled Scenic Roadways.
- **Table 4.2-10 - Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 20.A.3.a.** – Remove this action.
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 22.A.1.b** - Caltrans has done this; Action should be removed.
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 25.A.4.c** - Mono County must be the proponent to start the Scenic Process.
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 25.C.1.c** – What is the connector road connecting?
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 25.C.4.b** – Caltrans will review these items but not develop them.
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 25.J.1.d** - Work with USFS and ESTA, not Caltrans.
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Action 5.A.4** – What are hazardous rumble strips?
- **Table 4.2-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Regional Transportation Plan & Circulation, Policy 8.R** - There are sign standards for California in the MUTCD.
- **Table 4.6-13 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Health, Safety, Hazards, Hazardous Materials, Action 4.D.2.C** – Current sign placement is appropriate.

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Mr. Scott Burns
September 28, 2015
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- **Table 4.8-10 Mitigating Goals, Policies & Actions For Hydrology, Flooding, Water Quality & Supply, Action 4.B.4.b – Caltrans has done this.**

Please contact me at (760) 872-0691, with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan A. Dermody". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

RYAN A. DERMODY
Deputy District 9 Director
Planning, Modal Programs, and Local Assistance
c: State Clearinghouse

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to enhance California's economy and livability"*

#5

RESPONSE TO RYAN DERMODY, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Ryan Dermody, Deputy District 9 Director, California Department of Transportation, dated 28 September 2015.

RESPONSES TO GENERAL COMMENTS

1. **INCLUDE A PROJECT INTENT IN THE FINAL RTP:** The “Purpose of the Plan” is stated beginning on page 7, and transportation directives consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines are on page 1. A summary of “Needs and Issues” is located on page 1.
2. **DESCRIBE HOW THE RTP INTEGRATES THE CALIFORNIA STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN:** The California State Wildlife Action Plan examines the health of wildlife and prescribes actions to conserve wildlife and vital habitat before they become rarer and more costly to protect. The plan also promotes wildlife conservation while furthering responsible development and addressing the needs of a growing human population. The Mono County General Plan, particularly the Conservation/Open Space Element, more specifically addresses this focus. The Regional Transportation Plan is a direct component in the County’s General Plan and addresses wildlife collisions and resource management related to transportation infrastructure; further analysis of these issues is provided through the accompanying Environmental Impact Report.
3. **EXPLAIN HOW THE RTP IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MONO COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN:** A description of consistency between the RTP and Inyo-Mono Counties Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is provided on pages 5, 10, 56, 58, 85, 140. The planning document is also incorporated by reference into the RTP on pages 8 and 11, and noted as a consulted document on page 154.
4. **IDENTIFY COUNTY’S ROLES AND HOW COMMITTEES RELATE TO THE RTP:** These relationships are explained in the RTP on page 8. For Caltrans’ information, the Regional Planning Advisory Committees are convened by Mono County and chaired by a citizen, and are charged with serving as advisory committees to the LTC on transportation-related issues. The Town used a similar format in the past, forming a Transit Technical Advisory Committee. The Collaborative Planning Team is traditionally chaired by Mono County for logistical reasons; however, it is a multi-agency planning team formed under a Memorandum of Understanding and includes Caltrans District 9. The result is a fully integrated public participation process that achieves the directives of the California Transportation Plan and RTP guidelines without becoming mired in the minutiae of jurisdictional issues.
5. **DISCUSS HOW RTP ADDRESSES CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PROGRAMS:** Please see pages 5, 7, 144 and Objective 16.b.2. for discussion of the consistency between projects in the RTP and the STIP, ITIP, and FTIP.
6. **IN THE FINAL RTP, DISCUSS PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN RTP DEVELOPMENT:** Caltrans’ request is noted herein. No major development is reasonably foreseeable at this time, and the private sector and general public were able to engage in the development of the RTP through the Regional Planning Advisory Committees.
7. **INCLUDE COST ESTIMATES FOR IMPLEMENTING RTP PROJECTS:** Please see Appendix D, see pages 171-191. In addition, projects are programmed every two years through the STIP/RTIP cycle, not the RTP, and costs are adjusted as

may be needed.

8. **ADDRESS HOW TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS WILL ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS:** The RTP currently far exceeds mandates and guidelines by including a greenhouse gas emission inventory and reduction plan, which is not required for a Regional Transportation Planning Agency and should be acknowledged as an effort above and beyond the standard. Adaptation planning is not a requirement even for Metropolitan Planning Organizations subject to SB 375 at this time. In addition, since interregional travel and safety is primarily dependent on the State highway system under Caltrans' jurisdiction, the majority of information would rely on Caltrans climate change policies. Please provide Caltrans policies or explanations specific to climate adaptation for the Eastern Sierra and a cross-reference can be included in the RTP.
9. **EXPLAIN HOW LIFE-CYCLE COSTS CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO PROJECT DECISION-MAKING:** The LTC adopted a Pavement Management System for Mono County in 2013 to identify and quantify potential future rehabilitation projects on local road systems. The Town of Mammoth Lakes uses a slightly different system. Both efforts are ongoing, work is programmed through the annual Overall Work Program, and the systems are cross-referenced in the RTP.
10. **REFERENCE THE RTP YEAR CONSISTENTLY:** The dates have now been corrected to refer to the RTP 2015.

RESPONSES TO DRTP SPECIFIC COMMENTS

11. **PROPER DIRECTOR NAME, TITLE AND ADDRESS FOR CALTRANS DISTRICT 9:** Amended as requested.
12. **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMPONENTS, P. 2, 1st PARAGRAPH:** The text has been amended to read as shown herein:

"The transportation system in Mono County includes roadways, trails, paths, sidewalks, etc. for multi-modal use, and serves transit service and air travel, as well as private cars and commercial trucking ~~and a transit system that operates within and between local communities, as well as regularly.~~"
13. **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, HIGHWAY 203, P. 2:** The reference to SR 203 has been removed.
14. **INCLUDE YOSEMITE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, P. 3, 1st SENTENCE:** The text is hereby amended to read as:

"...provided by the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) and the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)."
15. **UPDATE THE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN REFERENCE, P. 8:** The reference has now been updated accordingly.
16. **SEPARATE STATE PLANS AND PROGRAMS FROM SMART MOBILITY FRAMEWORK, P. 8:** The documents have now been separated by a return.
17. **DELETE CALTRANS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, P. 10:** This reference has now been deleted.
18. **ADD 'UNINCORPORATED' TO TABLE 3, P. 14:** The text is hereby amended to read as "County (Unincorporated)."
19. **REPLACE 'INCREASE CAPACITY' WITH 'INCREASE MOBILITY', P. 19:** The text is hereby amended to state:

"Caltrans has been working to ~~increase capacity~~ improve mobility on US 395..."
20. **PAGE 19 - TABLE 4 - USE MOST RECENT TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT REPORTS (TCR) FOR CONCEPT LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS):** Table 4 has been amended as recommended.
21. **PAGE 19 - TABLE 4, SOURCE - USE THE CURRENT DISTRICT SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN FROM MARCH 2015. USE THE CURRENT US 395 TCR FROM NOVEMBER 2014:** Table 4 has been amended as recommended.
22. **DELETE PORTION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE DISCUSSION, P. 22, 6th SENTENCE:** Caltrans' comment is noted

herein; however, this information is accurate.

23. **EMERGENCY RESPONSE, P. 22, LAST SENTENCE:** The text has been amended as “route awareness for emergency responders ~~response~~ and incident locations.”
24. **REPLACE ‘HIGHWAY SAFETY’ WITH ‘ROADWAY SAFETY’, P. 22:** The text is hereby amended to read as “Roadway Safety.”
25. **CLARIFY ANIMAL MORTALITY INCIDENT MAPS, P. 23 FIG. 1 & FIG. 2, P. 24 FIG. 3:** Figures 1-3 have been amended to note that the mortality data is only for the State Highway System.
26. **USE 2013 TRUCK TRAFFIC DATA, P. 24:** The 2006 Katz citation is titled “Goods Movement Study for US-395 Corridor” and was prepared specifically for Caltrans District 9 (see http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/planning/docs/us395_goods_movement_study.pdf); the study provided local data rarely available through other sources. Mono County is unaware of updated information; please send the most recent data (e.g., document or web link) and it can be incorporated accordingly.
27. **REWORD DISCUSSION OF ACCESS, P. 25, LAST BULLET, LAST SENTENCE:** Assuming the accurate citation is the first bullet, last sentence, the text was amended as requested with grammatical corrections.
28. **ADDITION TO HIGHWAY SYSTEM DISCUSSION, P. 25:** The text has been amended to read: “provides access from US 395 west to Tioga Pass at Yosemite National Park...”
29. **AMEND DISCUSSION OF SR 203 ACCESS POINTS, P. 25:** The requested amendment is grammatically confusing. Text has been amended as follows:

“SR 203 provides access west from US 395 to Mammoth Lakes to Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, serving a portion of the town as Main Street and ending near Minaret Vista Point at the Madera County line. ~~and is also Main Street in Mammoth Lakes.~~”
30. **US 395-SR 270 ACCESS TO BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK, P. 26:** The text has been amended to read as “...provides access east from US 395 to near Bodie State Historic Park...”
31. **ADD SR 108 AFTER SONORA JUNCTION, P. 26, END OF 2nd PARAGRAPH:** The text has been amended as requested.
32. **USE 2014 AADTs, P. 26, FOURTH PARAGRAPH:** The data have been updated as recommended by Caltrans.
33. **ADD SR 120, SR108 AND SR 89 TO FINAL PARAGRAPH ON P. 26:** The text has been amended as requested.
34. **‘EXISTING’ IS AN UNNECESSARY QUALIFIER IN FIG. 4 ON P. 27:** Caltrans’ comment is noted herein.
35. **CHANGE US 270 TO SR 270 ON P. 27, FIG. 4:** The map label has now been corrected.
36. **SHOULDERS ARE NOT ADDED DURING US 395 MAINTENANCE PROJECTS, P. 28:** The text has been amended to read as follows: “...adding adequate shoulders ~~during US 395 maintenance projects as a priority~~ to enable safe pedestrian...”
37. **MENTION ONGOING US 6 SHOULDER WIDENING PROJECTS, P. 28:** The text has been amended to state: “with some improvements planned for the future as traffic volumes increase and for multi-modal safety, including ongoing shoulder widening projects.”
38. **USE 2014 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES, P. 28:** The data has been updated as recommended.
39. **REVISED LANGUAGE SUGGESTION, P. 30-31:** Caltrans’ comment is herein noted.
40. **GOODS MOVEMENT STATEMENT VERIFICATION, P. 31:** Mono County has verified the accuracy of the statement that there are no air freight services.

41. **ADDITION CONCERNING SR 203, P. 32:** The text has been amended to read as:
 "...to Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and continues as a road owned and operated by the USFS to Reds Meadow and Devils Postpile..."
42. **REMOVE 'SAFETY' FROM SR 158 DISCUSSION, P. 32, 2nd SENTENCE:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted.
43. **DELETE LAST SENTENCE, P. 32, 1st PARAGRAPH:** Comment noted; however, this sentence relays a fundamental fact relevant to system needs.
44. **INCLUDE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM, DISCUSSION OF ROADS ON NATIVE AMERICAN LANDS, P. 33:** The text has been amended to read as: "...include the State Highway System, County roads"
45. **CONSIDER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT, P. 33:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted.
46. **REVISION TO DISCUSSION OF PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITY, P. 34, END OF 2nd PARAGRAPH:** Comment noted; however, this is clarifying language to distinguish between the popular informal park-and-ride facility outside of the town at the 203 intersection and the formal park and ride lot within the town urbanized area.
47. **REPLACE 'SHOULD DECREASE' WITH 'COULD DECREASE', P. 34, END OF 4th PARAGRAPH:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted.
48. **RECOMMENDED ADDITION TO DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS, P. 36:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted. These issues are documented as presented to the County and may not necessarily be feasible.
49. **NO PLANS TO RELOCATE THE RECENTLY-ENHANCED CALTRANS FACILITY, P. 38, 1ST BULLET AND PAGE BOTTOM:** Caltrans' comment is acknowledged in the Mono Basin section of the RTP Needs Assessment. The enhancements have improved the visual appearance of the facility, and are appreciated.
50. **PROCESS FOR SETTING SPEED LIMITS ON STATE HIGHWAYS, P. 38:** The text has been amended to "In accordance with state laws and procedures, Post and enforce..."
51. **SHOULDERS NOT ADDED DURING MAINTENANCE, P. 38:** The text has been amended to remove "maintenance."
52. **SUGGESTED USE OF 'DEVELOPMENT' INSTEAD OF 'EXPANSION' ON P. 38, SECOND TO LAST BULLET:** Comment noted. The term "expansion" refers to expansion of the private land base for future development, rather than development in general.
53. **SIDEWALK WIDTHS, P. 39, 2ND TO LAST BULLET:** The text has been amended to state: "...approximately 4' to 7' on both sides..."
54. **SAFETY ISSUE, P. 41, 1ST BULLET:** Caltrans' comment is noted. The text accurately captures that residents are concerned about safety.
55. **CALTRANS NO LONGER USES ROUTE DEVELOPMENT PLANS, P. 41, LAST PARAGRAPH:** RDP reference eliminated.
56. **REPLACE 'MOST' WITH 'MANY' IN DISCUSSION OF SCENIC ROUTES, P. 42:** The text has been amended as requested by Caltrans.
57. **SR 266 SHIELD SHOULD BE GREEN, P. 44:** The map label has been corrected.
58. **IDENTIFY DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE PROVIDER, P. 46:** The text has been amended to read as: "ESTA provides DAR services ~~are provided~~..."
59. **FORMATTING OF TOPICAL SECTIONS, P. 47:** The format has now been corrected.
60. **REVISION TO DISCUSSION OF BICYCLE FACILITIES, P. 60, 1ST PARAGRAPH FOLLOWING BULLETS:** The text has been amended to state: "...has few existing dedicated bicycle facilities..."

61. **CALTRANS MAINTAINS CRESTVIEW ROADSIDE REST AREA ON US 395, P. 61:** The text has been amended as requested.
62. **BICYCLE CHANGING FACILITIES, P. 61:** The text has been amended to state: "No facilities specifically exist for bicycle riders to change specific clothing (changing facilities) exist except for restrooms adjacent to the bike racks mentioned above."
63. **DEDICATED BICYCLE FACILITIES, P. 61:** The text has been amended to read as: "...has few existing dedicated bicycle facilities..."
64. **SHOULDERS FOR SAFETY AND CYCLING, P. 62:** The text has been amended to state: "Caltrans District 9 generally pursues 8-foot shoulders on highways when feasible for safety, which also facilitates ~~to facilitate~~ bike use..."
65. **AIRCRAFT BASED AT LEE VINING AIRPORT, P. 65:** The inconsistency is noted. As stated in a later response to the Mono Lake Committee (see Comment 3 under EIR §4.6, Health, Safety and Hazards), the number of aircraft based at the Lee Vining Airport generally varies between one and four; currently, one aircraft is based at this site.
66. **ADDRESS AIRPORT ISSUES PER ANNUAL CALTRANS AERONAUTICS INSPECTIONS, P. 68, LAST BULLET:** Mono County is aware of current safety issues and a related update to airport Capital Improvement Plans is currently underway. The County anticipates updating the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans within the next several years, pending funding, and will incorporate the most recent information at that time into the General Plan to ensure consistency between plans. In addition, Appendix D of the RTP includes current the current list of airport improvement projects.
67. **DISCUSS HOW PLANNING EFFORTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH CTP 2040, P. 69, LAST SENTENCE:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted. Providing a detailed analysis of the RTP compared with every cross-referenced plan is impractical, nor do the 2010 RTP Guidelines require such an analysis. The CTP's vision and six goals are mirrored in the goals and policies of the RTP, specifically the Complete Streets focus and the Interregional Blueprint.
68. **UPDATE DISCUSSION OF CTP 2040 VISION, P. 70:** The text has been amended as requested.
69. **RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION TO OBJECTIVE 1.B.3, P. 72:** Comment noted.
70. **NOTE THAT OBJECTIVE 2.A.1, LAST BULLET IS NOT YET IN PLACE:** Comment noted. The policy language inherently recognizes not all efforts are currently underway.
71. **OBJECTIVE 2.B.1, CONSIDER ADDING COLLABORATION WITH BISHOP AIRPORT, P. 73:** Caltrans' suggestion is herein noted.
72. **RECOMMENDED DELETION OF OBJECTIVE 6.B.2, P. 78 - Objective 6.B.2:** Caltrans' recommendation is noted.
73. **OBJECTIVE 8.B.2, DEFINE VERTICAL CURBS, P. 80:** The text has been amended to state: "Curbs and gutters."
74. **OBJECTIVE 8.B.2, DESCRIPTION OF CROSSWALK INTERVALS, P. 80:** The text has been amended as requested by Caltrans.
75. **OBJECTIVE 9.A.5, INCLUDE PROVISION OF TRAVELER INFORMATION, P. 82:** The text has been amended to read as:
"Support CMS (Changeable Message Signs), HAR, and/or curve warning systems (i.e. ITS) deployments where effective in reducing accidents and providing traveler information."
76. **OBJECTIVE 9.A.7, REPLACE 'MULE DEER' WITH 'WILDLIFE', P. 82:** The County's contract biologist reviewed the language noted in Caltrans' comment, and recommends retaining the existing language. Modification as suggested would create vague policy language altering the intent of reducing deer collisions. A focus on preventing deer collisions has the larger benefit of generally reducing wildlife collisions across the board.
77. **OBJECTIVE 10.A.1, PLEASE CLARIFY, P. 83:** To clarify, Caltrans' role is related to approval of the Overall Work Program (OWP), not the pavement management system for County roads.

78. **OBJECTIVE 14.A.2, SUGGESTED USE OF FISCAL YEARS, P. 86:** Fiscal years are not applicable to Objective 14.A.2. as specific timeframes have not been identified for potential future parking garages.
79. **POLICY 18.A.3, RECONSIDER SINCE TREES HAVE CAUSED TRAFFIC HAZARDS, P. 91:** The policy has been amended to read as: "Support preservation of the existing heritage trees along US 395 in a manner that ensures roadway safety."
80. **ACTION 18.B.1c, REPLACE 'DEER' WITH 'WILDLIFE', P. 91:** As noted in response to Comment #78 above, the County's contract biologist recommends retaining the existing language. Modification as suggested would create vague policy language altering the intent of reducing deer collisions. A focus on preventing deer collisions has the larger benefit of generally reducing wildlife collisions across the board.
81. **ACTION 18.B.1.d, PLEASE CLARIFY, P. 92:** The text has been amended to state:
 "Study potential ~~support~~ operational and safety improvements at the intersection of Eastside Lane and US 395." Comment regarding accident concentration noted.
82. **ACTION 20.1.3.a, RED CURB ALREADY SET AT STANDARD, P. 93:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted; the County's action requests continued study as ground conditions change (curb cuts, parking alignments etc.) thus resulting in adjustments based on standards.
83. **ACTION 22.C.1.e, PARALLEL PARKING IN LEE VINING, P. 100:** This action has been amended to read: "Through a public process, and in coordination with Caltrans, consider the feasibility of reducing travel lanes and adding additional diagonal and/or parallel parking on US 395 through Lee Vining."
84. **POLICY 22.G.1, RELOCATION OF MAINTENANCE FACILITY NOT ENVISIONED, P. 102:** Caltrans' comment is acknowledged in the Mono Basin section of the RTP Needs Assessment.
85. **POLICY 23.A.3, SAFETY SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY FACTOR FOR OPENING TIOGA PASS, P. 103:** This policy is not intended to replace safety as a factor in the opening and closing dates for Tioga Pass, but rather to elevate the importance of economic impacts to local communities and stress that conditions, not a calendar, should dictate operation of the road.
86. **POLICY 24.D.5, SR 120 ENDS AT YOSEMITE ENTRANCE, P. 105:** Comment noted.
87. **POLICY 24.E.1, SR 120 ENDS AT YOSEMITE; ROAD IS OWNED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE INSIDE YOSEMITE, P. 105:** Caltrans' comment is noted. The policy does not refer to jurisdiction, and the purpose is to collaborate on decisions with relevant entities to open/close the road based on conditions rather than calendar date.
88. **ACTION 25.A.4.d, CONSIDER DIGITAL FILES, P. 106:** The text has been amended to state: "...audio files tapes and literature..."
89. **ACTION 25.A.4.f, SR 158 IS ELIGIBLE FOR SCENIC DESIGNATION, P. 106:** Comment noted.
90. **ACTION 25.C.1.c, DEFINE MAJOR THOROUGHFARE EXACTION MONEYS, P. 111:** The text has been amended to read as:
 "Seek public/private funding and partnerships to investigate the availability of major thoroughfare exaction moneys, Caltrans and County funding, and private/public partnership funds, for financing finance the connector road."
91. **POLICY 25.C.5, REMOVE 'IF DESIRABLE', P. 112:** Amended as requested.
92. **ACTION 25.K.8.a, ADD AND/OR CHP, P. 117:** The text has been amended to state: "Work with Caltrans, June Mountain Ski Area, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and other relevant entities..."
93. **ACTION 25.M.3.b, MAXIMUM SLOPE ON A STATE HIGHWAY IS 10%, P. 118:** The text has been amended to read as follows: "Limit the slope of private driveways to a maximum of 16%; driveways accessing state highways are subject to Caltrans standards."
94. **ACTION 25.M.5.b, DEFINE 'IMPROVE', P. 118:** The County has used a standard definition of 'improve': "to bring into a more desirable or excellent condition" (dictionary.com). Note that the intention of this policy is to

ensure that snow storage and management are included in site plans for project approval purposes, and to encourage local business owners to adequately manage snow to provide access during winter months.

95. **POLICY 26.A.1, REPLACE 'DEER' WITH 'WILDLIFE', P. 118:** As noted above in response to Caltrans' comments #78 and #82, the County's contract biologist reviewed the language and recommends retaining the existing language. Modification as suggested would create vague policy language altering the intent of reducing deer collisions. A focus on preventing deer collisions has the larger benefit of generally reducing wildlife collisions across the board.
96. **M.1, POLICIES ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE MAMMOTH MOBILITY ELEMENT, P. 123:** Caltrans is correct: these policies have been directly incorporated from the Town's Mobility Element.
97. **M.4.1.3, DEFINE 'EFFECTIVE', P. 125:** Comment noted. Caltrans has previously reviewed these policies.
98. **M.8.3.1, DEFINE 'SAFETY MEASURES', P. 127:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted. Caltrans has previously reviewed these policies.
99. **US 395 IS AN INTERREGIONAL ROUTE, P. 133:** The text has been amended to state:

"US 395 is an interregional route, and will remain ~~over the long term 20 year time frame of this RTP~~, the major access to and through Mono County and the major transportation route in the area over the long-term 20-year time frame of this RTP."
100. **US 395 SHOULDERS ARE A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT, NOT MAINTENANCE, P. 133:** Amended to state: "adding adequate shoulders ~~during to~~ US 395 ~~maintenance projects~~ to enable safe bike use."
101. **OVERLAY PROJECT, P. 134, 7TH BULLET:** The comment appears to indicate that SR 120 does not pass through Yosemite National Park. The County is unaware that the route number changes, and cannot find a map that verifies a change.
102. **SCENIC BYWAY PROGRAM ON HIATUS, P. 135, 8TH BULLET:** Comment noted.
103. **REPLACE 'SYSTEMS' WITH 'SYSTEM', P. 140, 1ST PARAGRAPH:** Comment noted; this edit would cause incorrect grammar.
104. **CONSIDER LISTING STAFF TIME AS AN ASSOCIATED COST, P. 148:** Amended to state: "...associated hard costs."
105. **CALTRANS NO LONGER PRODUCES ROUTE DEVELOPMENT PLANS, P. 153:** The reference has been removed in keeping with the information provided by Caltrans.
106. **USE UPDATED 395 TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT REPORT, P. 153:** The reference has been updated accordingly.
107. **CONSIDER CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF INTERREGIONAL GROWTH, P. 159, 1ST BULLET:** Comment noted; incorporating interregional growth outside the Mono County LTC's jurisdiction is beyond the scope of this planning document. In addition, the most highly impacted roadways would be state highways serving as thoroughfares under Caltrans' planning authority.
108. **CONSIDER MENTIONING RAW LAND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN TRI-VALLEY, P. 162:** Raw development potential is a mathematical calculation based on Land Use Designation, and is highly unrealistic. "Buildout" is a worst-case, but not a reasonable, scenario in Mono County. The General Plan and DEIR address buildout issues in more detail (please see DEIR §4.12, Population & Housing, particularly the discussion under Impact 4.12(a) starting on p. 4.12-5). The dwelling units used to calculate trip generation are based on more reasonable assumptions related to past development patterns and local development constraints.
109. **CLARIFY THAT NOT ALL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING, P. 169:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted; funding eligibility is determined at the federal level and changes over time, especially recently.
110. **NO BIKEWAY UNDER SR 182 WALKER RIVER BRIDGE, P. 169:** The text has been amended to state:

"Improve ~~portion of~~ SR 182 to include a bikeway to the state line."
111. **WILDLIFE AND DEER ON US 395 BETWEEN JUNE LAKE AND LEE VINING, P. 169:** Amended to read as: "Improve wildlife habitat."

112. **US 395 4-LANE PROJECT IS THE SAND HOUSE GRADE SEGMENT, P. 170:** The text has been amended to state: "US 395 Project – Sand House Grade Segment"
113. **PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH STIP, P. 172:** The funding source has been amended as noted by Caltrans.
114. **3R PAVEMENT REHABILITATION FUNDING, P. 173:** The funding source has been amended on this table (that was provided by Caltrans).
115. **CLARIFICATIONS TO LIST OF SHOPP PROJECTS, P. 174:** SHOPP projects are programmed by Caltrans and are included in the RTP as a courtesy. Caltrans is welcome to provide an updated, accurate list for inclusion. For the time being, the table has been retitled as "SHOPP PROJECTS."
116. **UNPROGRAMMED LTC PRIORITIES, P. 185, TIER 1, 5TH BULLET:** Comment noted. Caltrans' initiation of a study is appreciated.
117. **PROJECTS OF INTEREST, P. 185, TIER 2, 6TH BULLET:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted. Retained as unconstrained project.
118. **NO DRAFT WATERMARK, P. 219:** Comment noted.
119. **BICYCLE CHANGING FACILITIES, P. 228:** The phrase has been amended to read as:
- "No facilities specifically exist for bicycle riders to change specific clothing (changing facilities) exist except for restrooms adjacent to the bike racks mentioned above."

RESPONSES TO DEIR-SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

120. **266 SHIELD SHOULD BE LIKE OTHER SR SHIELDS; LABEL SR 158, 203 & 120, P. 3-2:** Figure 3.2 (Mono County Boundaries and Communities) is hereby amended to reflect that the shield for State Route 266 is the same as for other state routes.
121. **MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION, P. 3-6:** The citation is the formal title of this Main Street Plan, and the suggested text deletion would create an inaccurate document reference. In addition, Caltrans honored this project with a 2015 Excellence in Transportation Award for a highway as a Main Street, and deletion of 'through Bridgeport' from the discussion of Main Street Revitalization Efforts on DEIR page 3-6 would overlook an important aspect of the evolving revitalization effort in (specifically) Bridgeport.
122. **TREE HEIGHTS NEAR BRYANT FIELD CLEAR ZONE, P. 4.1-11:** Mono County thanks Caltrans for this information; the County is aware of the information provided by the Caltrans Aeronautics Unit concerning tree heights among the Clear Zone issues near Bryant Field, and will include it with the forthcoming update to the Airport Land Use Plans.
123. **PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS LOCAL CAPACITY ISSUES, P. 4.2-8:** Please see RTP Chapter 5 (the Action Element) and Appendix D (pages 176-180) for a list of transportation programs to be undertaken. Appendix D includes a specific list of short- and long-term County and Town roadway projects.
124. **WILDLIFE COLLISION RATES IN NORTH COUNTY, P. 4.2-8:** Caltrans indicates that quantitative data should be provided in place of perceptions about high accident rates in the North County area. It is, however, relevant that improvements have been proposed by the local LTC (but never implemented) to address this very issue. Mono County will continue to work with Caltrans to verify whether and to what extent this perception is evident in the recorded data.
125. **REFERENCE FOR AND CAUSE OF FOR INCREASED TRUCK TRAFFIC, P. 4.2-9:** The data is from the Goods Movement Study for US-395 Corridor Study by Katz (2006) that was prepared specifically for Caltrans District 9 (see http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/planning/docs/us395_goods_movement_study.pdf); the study provided local data rarely available through other sources. The County is not aware of more recent data to provide a comparison of truck traffic; therefore, the DEIR text on page 4.2-9 is modified as follows:

Truck Traffic Volumes. ~~Increased levels of t~~ Truck traffic on highways are a safety concern. US 395 and US 6 are designated interstate truck routes and both experience heavy truck traffic. ~~Whereas m~~ Medium and heavy-duty trucks comprised 25% of all traffic in the corridor during 2006, ~~with~~ five-axle single unit trucks ~~now comprising~~ approximately 80% of all truck traffic. The majority of southbound trucks use US 395 (61%) instead of US 6 (31%). The majority of northbound trucks use US 395 (59%) instead of US 6 (33%). Truck volumes are generally higher in the southbound direction and the average peak period for truck traffic is the midday period. Concerns focus on the impact of oversized trucks on the safety of two-lane highway sections and the lack of paved shoulders and adequate sight distances. As an example, the LTC is supportive of Caltrans' recent efforts to restrict large trucks from passage over SR 108 due to road constraints. Narrow shoulders create hazardous conditions for bicyclists and vehicles (particularly when vehicles pull over for emergencies). US 395 improvement to four lanes has mitigated safety issues in parts of the county, but concerns about truck traffic remain significant on US 6 (a two-lane road with no shoulders) in the Tri-Valley area."

126. **TRUCK TRAFFIC CONSTRAINTS, P. 4.2-9:** The third to last sentence on page 4.2-9, under Truck Traffic Volumes, is hereby amended to read as follows: "As an example, the LTC is supportive of Caltrans' recent efforts to restrict large trucks from passage over SR 108 due to geometric roadway constraints."
127. **NO PLANS TO RELOCATE CALTRANS MAINTENANCE FACILITIES IN MONO BASIN, P. 4.2-11:** The discussion of Mono Basin provided on page 4.2-11 of Table 4.2-4 (Circulation and Parking Issues in Mono County Communities, Mono County Issue 6) is hereby amended to read as follows: "The Caltrans and Mono County road maintenance facilities detract from the appearance of the Lee Vining commercial district. There is an opportunity, if these facilities are relocated, to redevelop those properties in a manner that contributes to an attractive Main Street appearance. There is also opportunity to coordinate road maintenance facility needs of other entities, such as Mono County and the USFS, with the relocation of the Caltrans shop. If these facilities are not relocated, which Caltrans indicates is infeasible in its comments on the Draft EIR, there is a need to continue enhancing their appearance through landscaping, solid fencing, painting, etc. and provide connectivity to public facilities to the north and east."
128. **SUPPORTING DATA FOR JUNE LAKE TRAFFIC INCREASES, P. 4.2-24:** As noted in Appendix A of the RTP under the discussion of June Lake, this trip generation rate is highly unrealistic and limited by the model. The RTP analysis is included below, with an added paragraph for further clarification:
- "This rate seems highly unlikely due to the fact that the estimated trip generation from all 820 existing units if occupied at one time could equal 4,920 trips on SR 158. This is three times higher than the AADT of 1,560 trips from 2014~~3~~ on SR 158 as shown in Table A-8.
- As stated in the methodology section, the ITS methodology of 9.57 trips per detached dwelling unit in rural Mono County results in unrealistic figures. Mono County has adjusted this methodology to a more reasonable, and still conservative, six trips per dwelling unit. This adjustment clearly continues to provide unrealistic numbers as described in the preceding paragraph; however, alternative methodology is lacking at this time. The current methodology does not account for second homeownership (e.g. a high percentage of vacant dwelling units), transient rentals and occupancy, concentrated traffic influx during limited timeframes due to tourist visitation, and a seasonal road closure that eliminates through traffic on SR 158."
129. **REPLACE 'ADOPTED SCENIC HIGHWAY' WITH 'ADOPTED SCENIC ROADWAY', P. 4.10-3:** Terminology used in the DEIR (i.e., 'Scenic Highway') is consistent with California Law enacted by the Legislature in 1963 as well as terminology used in CEQA. The County will continue to use this terminology until and unless the state adopts a formal change in the terminology used in preparing General Plan elements and describing scenic resources.
130. **ACTION 20.A.3.a, TABLE 4.2-10, DELETE ACTION TO REDUCE RED-CURBING:** Mono County recognizes Caltrans' jurisdiction in determining the placement of red curbs; this action would apply only where needed to reflect a change in street configuration and in pursuit of Complete Streets goals. Please also note that this reflects an existing RTP policy.
131. **ACTION 22.A.1.b, TABLE 4.2-10, CALTRANS HAS ALREADY ADDRESSED APPROPRIATE SPEED LIMITS:** Mono County acknowledges Caltrans' request. Efforts to assure appropriate speed limits are drawn from and consistent with goals of the 'Complete Streets' program, as well as the California Transportation Plan. For this reason, the County will

continue to support actions (such as Action 22.A.1.b) that facilitate compliance with speed limits and other established goals.

132. **ACTION 25.A.4.c, TABLE 4.2-10, MONO COUNTY IS PROPONENT TO START THE SCENIC PROCESS:** Mono County has long recognized its role as the proponent responsible for initiating the process leading to a Scenic designation, and is acting in this capacity for the current effort.
133. **ACTION 25.C.1.c, TABLE 4.2-10, WHAT IS THE CONNECTOR ROAD LINKAGES:** Please see RTP Figure 9, which depicts the links for this connection road (i.e., a route paralleling SR 158 that would enhance connections and reduce congestion within June Lake Village).
134. **ACTION 25.C.4.b, TABLE 4.2-10, CALTRANS WILL REVIEW BUT NOT DEVELOP THE JUNE LAKE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:** Caltrans' comment is herein noted. Caltrans' review will be appreciated, and Mono County understands that Caltrans will not participate in improvement items that are outside of Caltrans' right-of-way.
135. **ACTION 25.J.1.d, TABLE 4.2-10, WORK WITH USFS AND ESTA, NOT CALTRANS:** The County will work with ESTA and USFS (and other entities as appropriate) to develop transit improvements (including shuttle buses) at major recreation nodes, with Caltrans' participation only for improvements that may impact State Routes and Caltrans rights of way.
136. **ACTION 5.A.4, TABLE 4.2-10, WHAT ARE HAZARDOUS RUMBLE STRIPS?:** The term 'hazardous rumble strips' refers to raised pavement markers or roadway grooves that may create a hazard for cyclists due to encroachment into a bicycle lane or shoulder used by bicyclists, reduced maneuverability, or other factors.
137. **POLICY 8.R, TABLE 4.2-10, THE MUTCD CONTAINS SIGN STANDARDS FOR CALIFORNIA:** Mono County appreciates Caltrans' reference to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which is published by the Federal Highway Administration and defines the standards used by road managers nationwide (including California) to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel.
138. **ACTION 4.D.2.c, TABLE 4.6-13, CURRENT AVALANCHE HAZARD SIGN PLACEMENT IS APPROPRIATE:** Caltrans' comment (that the current placement of Avalanche Hazard signs is appropriate) is noted.
139. **MITIGATING GOALS FOR HYDROLOGY, TABLE 4.8-10, Action 4.B.4.b:** Caltrans' comment on Action 4.B.4.b (that current road de-icing methods are appropriate) is herein noted.

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

September 28, 2015

File: Environmental Doc Review
Mono County

Wendy Sugimura
Mono County Community Development Department
437 Old Mammoth Rd., Suite P
Minaret Village Mall
Post Office Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
Email: wsugimura@mono.ca.gov

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE MONO COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2014061029

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region (Water Board) staff received the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the above-referenced project (Plan) on August 3, 2015. The DEIR was prepared by Bauer Planning & Environmental Services, Inc. on behalf of Mono County Community Development Department (County) and submitted in compliance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Water Board staff, acting as a responsible agency, is providing these comments to specify the scope and content of the environmental information germane to our statutory responsibilities pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 14, section 15096. We are pleased that the County integrated "Low Impact Development" (LID) strategies into various elements of the Plan and encourage the County to take this opportunity to also integrate strategies that promote watershed management and groundwater sustainability and to consider working with stakeholders in the development of standards for grazing and livestock management. Our comments on the DEIR are outlined below.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update is an overarching policy document that will guide decisions of future growth and development, transportation and infrastructure, and conservation of natural resources throughout the 3,132 square mile planning area. Given the conceptual, long-term nature of the Plan, the DEIR provides a general overview of the potential impacts of proposed projects; subsequent and focused environmental review will occur as individual projects are proposed to implement elements of the Plan.

KIMBERLY COK, CHAIR | PATTY Z. KOUYOUMDJIAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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e-mail Lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov | website www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan



COMMENTS ON THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

1. We are pleased that the County considered our prior comments on the Notice of Preparation and developed the Mono County LID ordinance as part of the General Plan Update. We also recognize the effort put forth by the County to incorporate the policies and objectives of various local and regional watershed and management plans into the General Plan.
2. Groundwater protection should be considered a countywide issue, ubiquitous to all elements of the General Plan. Water quality and water quantity are fundamental to sustaining communities and promoting development. With the passage of California Assembly Bill 685 in 2012, it is now the policy of the State of California that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes. The County is encouraged to incorporate the principles of this policy into the General Plan Update.
3. DEIR Impact 4.8(b) and Countywide Issue No. 9 (page II-4) of the Land Use Element imply that State-mandated water quality regulations, particularly minimum lot size and dwelling unit density requirements for community water systems and individual septic systems are too restrictive and impeding development in the County. The requirements established for individual septic systems that pertain to minimum lot size, dwelling density, and minimum separation to high groundwater are not intended to be restrictive to development, rather these requirements are established to ensure adequate treatment of the wastewater in the vadose zone in order to be protective of groundwater resources. Water Board staff encourage the County to consider incentives for development of community or regional wastewater treatment systems to facilitate development at densities greater than the one-half acre minimum lot size required for individual septic systems, should that be desired.
4. The intent of Objective 4.B of the Conservation/Open Space Element is to protect surface water and groundwater from chemical or bacterial impacts. Water Board staff recommend proactive policies and activities be incorporated into the General Plan that are intended to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from grazing and livestock activities. We also encourage the County to take a lead role in coordinating with stakeholders, including Water Board staff, to develop standards for grazing and livestock management and to incorporate these standards into a County-specific ordinance.

PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

A number of activities that will be implemented by individual projects under the General Plan have the potential to impact waters of the State and, therefore, may require permits issued by either the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) or Lahontan Water Board. The required permits may include the following.

1. The construction of additional landfills, landfill cells, or changes in waste accepted at currently operating landfills may require a revision to existing Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) or coverage under new WDRs, pursuant to California Code of Regulation, title 27. Please note that should the County propose changes to the

operations at existing landfills pursuant to the Integrated Waste Management Plan, no changes are authorized until and unless the current WDRs for those landfills are also revised.

2. Streambed alteration and/or discharge of dredge and/or fill material to a surface water, including water diversions, may require a CWA, section 401 water quality certification for impacts to federal waters (waters of the U.S.), or dredge and fill WDRs for impacts to non-federal waters, both issued by the Lahontan Water Board.
3. Land disturbance of more than 1 acre may require a Clean Water Act, section 402(p) storm water permit, including a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Storm Water Permit, Water Quality Order (WQO) 2009-0009-DWQ, obtained from the State Water Board, or an individual storm water permit obtained from the Lahontan Water Board.
4. Water diversion and/or dewatering activities may be subject to discharge and monitoring requirements under either NPDES General Permit, Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Waters, Board Order R6T-2014-0049, or General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges to Land with a Low Threat to Water Quality, WQO-2003-0003, both issued by the Lahontan Water Board.

Project proponents should consult with Water Board staff early on should project implementation result in activities that trigger these permitting actions. Information regarding these permits, including application forms, can be downloaded from our web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIR. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (760) 241-7376 jan.zimmerman@waterboards.ca.gov or Patrice Copeland, Senior Engineering Geologist, at (760) 241-7404 patrice.copeland@waterboards.ca.gov. Please send all future correspondence regarding this Project to the Water Board's email address at Lahontan@waterboards.ca.gov and be sure to include the State Clearinghouse No. and Project name in the subject line.



Jan M. Zimmerman, PG
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2014061029) (state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)
Heidi Calvert, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Heidi.Calvert@wildlife.ca.gov)
Cindy Wise, Lahontan Water Quality Control Board(cindy.wise@waterboards.ca.gov)

#6

RESPONSE TO JAN ZIMMERMAN, LAHONTAN REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Jan Zimmerman, PG, Engineering Geologist, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB), dated 28 September 2015.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE:

1. **CONSIDERATION OF NOP COMMENTS:** The NOP comments offered by LRWQCB were helpful in developing the scope of the EIR assessment, and appreciated by the County.
2. **GROUNDWATER PROTECTION:** Following the comment from LRWQCB, Mono County undertook a preliminary review of Assembly Bill 685 (AB 685). AB 685 establishes the "human right to clean and accessible water for the health and well-being of the individual and family." Specific provisions include a state policy affirming this right, a requirement that state agencies employ means to implement the policy, and clarification that the policy applies to individuals and not to new development. AB 685 prohibits policy implementation from infringing on public water system rights and responsibilities, and does not expand any state obligation to provide water or expend funds for water infrastructure except as needed to meet the basic human right provision.

Based on this review, the County added a cross-reference to Objective 4.A. in the Conservation/Open Space Element:

"To the extent not preempted by State or Federal law, preserve, maintain, and enhance surface and groundwater resources to protect Mono County's water quality and water-dependent resources from the adverse effects of development and degradation of water-dependent resources, including compliance with AB 685."

The County is not a water purveyor and therefore has limited authority; however, the intent of AB 685 is addressed through compliance with California Building Code requirements and General Plan water supply policies and requirements. As a result, new development is required to provide an adequate water supply prior to County approvals, and County policies support clean and accessible water to all individuals by water purveyors.

3. **INDIVIDUAL SEPTIC SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:**

In general, the County incentivizes the use of community treatment systems by allowing higher density development in areas that are served by such systems. Where lands have already been subdivided into parcels too small to meet septic system requirements and community systems do not exist, the reality is that minimum lot size requirements may contribute to constraints that may impede development. However, the County understands the intent and need for these parcel size standards. The updated regulations in 04.080 Lot Area and 04.090 Lot Dimensions of the Land Use Element clearly indicate minimum lot sizes and reference appropriate authorities, including LRWQCB. In addition, Conservation/Open Space Element Action 4.B.2.b. states "Where feasible, replace septic systems with community package treatment systems" to encourage treatment systems in future subdivisions.

Although water and sewer services in Mono County are provided under the authority of special districts (or, in some cases, private entities) and outside the county's jurisdiction, Mono County actively encourages these districts to provide community or

package treatment plants wherever feasible. To encourage these providers to meet community needs, including wastewater treatment, the proposed Circulation Element contains Policy 4.B.5 (as modified):

“Work with special districts and other appropriate entities to meet community infrastructure needs such as water, sewer, fire protection, etc.”

4. **CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT OBJECTIVE 4.B (Chemical and Bacterial Impacts to Surface and Groundwaters):**

In 2015, the County was awarded a California State Strategic Growth Council grant to support the development of a Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy Plan, which will include management practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. Since the majority of grazing occurs on lands that are not private and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the County, and other entities such as LRWQCB have concerns about grazing practices, the County anticipates a highly collaborative project with input from these various stakeholders, including private ranchers. At project initiation, the County looks forward to inviting LRWQCB to participate in the project to help craft best management practices to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from grazing and livestock activities. Any resulting policies can be incorporated into a future General Plan Update; however, in the current update, Action 5.C.2.i. (in the Conservation/Open Space Element) is hereby modified as follows:

“**Action 5.C.2.i.** Proactively collaborate with stakeholders to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from livestock and grazing activities, and rRecognize and support the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sierra Business Council and UC Davis incentives for ranchers to install and monitor the efficacy of grazing management practices in an effort to protect and improve water quality.”

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS:

In acknowledgement of the information provided concerning State Water Board or Lahontan Regional LRWQCB permits that may be required to implement individual projects under the General Plan, the discussion of approvals by Responsible Agencies provided under EIR §3.6.1 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“3.6.2 APPROVALS BY RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

“According to CEQA Guidelines §15381, the term “responsible agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency that may have discretionary actions associated with the implementation of the Mono County RTP and General Plan Update, or aspects thereof. Since future implementation decisions may occur over the span of a decade or longer (the time during which the RTP and General Plan may remain in common use), Responsible Agencies cannot be known with certainty over the life of the project. However, the Mono County Local Transportation Commission (LTC, which has approval authority over the RTP) is expected to be the principal Responsible Agency for the project. In addition to the Lead Agency approvals listed above, the EIR may be used by other public agencies that will consider separate permits and approvals required to implement various General Plan/RTP components. Additional Responsible Agencies under CEQA may include:

- Caltrans (to monitor the RTP planning process and approve actions that would impact State Highway rights of way),
- The California Resources Agency (for activities involving natural, historical and cultural resources),
- US Forest Service (for actions that would impact public lands managed by the USFS),
- Bureau of Land Management (for actions that would impact public lands managed by the BLM),
- Town of Mammoth Lakes (for actions that would impact lands inside the Town boundaries),
- The California Housing & Community Development Department (for activities that may impact housing supply, affordability and condition)
- The Public Utilities Commission (for activities that may involve privately owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, railroad, rail transit, and passenger transportation companies),
- The California Department of Conservation and related divisions (for activities pertaining to the state’s geology, seismology and mineral resources),
- The California Energy Commission (for activities that may impact energy demands, conservation and energy efficiency, energy technology, renewable energy resources and technologies, thermal power plants and energy emergencies),

- California Highway Patrol (for activities that may affect public safety, traffic & emergency response, and public property and infrastructure integrity and safety),
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (for activities that may impact fire protection, emergency response, and stewardship of wildlands for fire safety),
- State Water Resources Control Board and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (for activities that may impact water quality, the beneficial use of water resources, and management of water quality problems associated with human activities), including (a) new or revised Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for the construction of additional landfills, landfill cells, or changes in waste accepted at currently operating landfills; (b) a Clean Water Act (CWA) §401 water quality certification (for impacts to federal waters) or dredge and fill WDRs (for impacts to non-federal waters) for streambed alteration and/or discharge of dredge and/or fill material to surface waters; (c) a CWA §403(p) stormwater permit (including a NPDES General Construction Storm Water Permit, Water Quality Order (WQO) 2009-009-DWQ) for land disturbance of more than 1 acre; and (d) discharge and monitoring requirements under either NPDES General Permit, Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Waters, or General WDR for Discharges to Land with a Low Threat to Water Quality for water diversion and/or dewatering activities. Early consultation with Water Board staff is advised for any activities that trigger these permitting actions.
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for activities involving resources that may have historic significance),
- US Federal Highway Administration (for actions pertaining to the Scenic Byway designation),
- City of Los Angeles (for actions that would impact lands owned by the City),
- Great Basin Air Pollution Control District (for actions that would require consistency with the adopted air quality management plans),
- US Fish & Wildlife Service (for special species and habitat studies),
- Local special districts (fire, water, public utility) for activities that may impact service capacities/ resources or require district permits, and
- Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for activities related to boundary adjustments and change of organizations related to agencies such as special districts and incorporated areas, including municipal service reviews and spheres of influence.”

From: Lynn Boulton [<mailto:amazinglynn@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 6:51 PM
To: Wendy Sugimura <wsugimura@mono.ca.gov>
Subject: Mono Co. General Plan Update

Wendy,

This is a great plan and shows a lot of thought went into it. The devil is in the details and this has many good details. I was impressed that it included height restrictions for structures in Sage Grouse habitat. Poles and tall things make it easy for ravens to predate on the Sage Grouse and their nests. I didn't get through all of the new plan, but I liked what I saw. I appreciate all the environmental controls put in place, the emphasis placed on keeping the rustic, small town character of our communities. I like living here pretty much the way it is. I do have a few thoughts, comments that I'd like to share. They won't all translate into changes for the plan.

1. The Pumice Plant in LV across from the turn-off to Hwy 120: very ugly. You can't see it from Hwy. 395, but you sure can from any elevation such as from the Mobil/Tioga Gas Mart. Could the General Plan include something that says the county will rezone it from industrial to commercial/residential use and/or reclaim it, if it ever closes down? The plan says it strives to eliminate eye-sores in LV and along the highway. That is one that is visible coming down Tioga Pass. Maybe the plan could say no eye-sores from the highway or from vista points and higher elevations where tourists travel.
2. Could rodenticides be included--that they will be a last resort if other pest controls have been tried first, similar to the statements that say pesticides should be avoided?
3. There is a comment about LV having a DMV. I would think Mmth or Bridgeport would be better locations for a DMV office. LV people go to Mmth for errands all the time so not inconvenient. Bishop is, yes, but not Bridgeport of Mmth.(10.F.6.a)
4. Why do we need a bus stop in front of the county yard in LV? what bus, the ESTransit to/from Reno? the YARTS bus? -not a priority/need for me. (10.E.6.G)
5. The old General Plan talked about sign size limitations. I didn't find it in the new one, but the Caltrans sign in LV is a bit much. I can read it from where I live above the Mobil!
6. There are two dilapidated houses along Hwy 395 south of Williams Butte that are popular photo spots. It helps with our tourism to have them there, but they are close to falling down. I spoke with the Historical Society President and he said they were owned by a Native American and they hoped to shore them up. Maybe the county could help restore them with some funding or in some way as part of the goal of 10.D.2.c.
7. Another example of business development for 11.C.3 is to have workshops, conferences, educational seminars, and chautauquas.
8. Help USFS VC to have low-flow toilets 11.B.2.c to conserve water. The MBNF Scenic Area had 365,000 visitors last year. Many used the bathrooms at the VC.
9. I personally would like to see EMF free zones or limited transmissions/towers in the area. I had a friend who died from living in a valley where three towers transmitted over her house and they exceeded the transmission legal limits at night when companies were doing downloads. We already have 9 or so towers of different strengths in the Mono Basin last I checked a few years ago.
10. My rental unit has an non-EPA approved wood-burning stove. Is there a process in the General Plan to catch violations and enforce the EPA/Great Basin air pollution standards?
11. May I suggest that before the county works with Bodie HSP and BLM staff to put up interpretive signs in the Bodie Bowl or Cottonwood Canyon Road that they work on replacing the completely unreadable interpretive signs at the scenic overlook off of Hwy 395, north of the June Lake Junction, near West Portal road?

Sincerely,
Lynn Boulton
Lee Vining resident

#7

RESPONSE TO LYNN BOULTON, LEE VINING RESIDENT

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Lynn Boulton, Lee Vining Resident, dated 29 September 2015.

Mono County appreciates Ms. Boulton's thoughtful review of and comments on the General Plan, and offers the following responses:

1. Ms. Boulton's concern about this viewshed was also raised during the development of the Mono Basin Community Plan, and the junction of US 395 and SR 120 is specifically identified as an important viewshed. This issue raises potentially controversial topics about viewsheds, changing the existing land use designation of a privately-owned parcel, and the need/location for light industrial lands. Given these complex interactions, the policies support minimizing impacts to this viewshed, limiting the footprint of new industrial locations to previously disturbed land, and offering suggestions about new locations. The best avenue for seeking further refinements to these policies would be through participation in the RPAC process; all RPAC meetings are open to the community at large and they offer a good forum for discussion and debate as well as the opportunity for future change if supported by a change in community preferences. RPAC meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Mono County website (please see <http://www.monocounty.ca.gov/rpac>) and county staff are a very good source of information and assistance (please contact Scott Burns at 760.924.1800).
2. Policies in the Conservation/Open Space Element encouraging reduced use of pesticides are related to water quality protection and optimal agricultural practices. To the extent rodenticides may be applicable, they would be covered under "other chemicals" in Policy 4.B.5 to protect water quality. Unapproved chemicals or inappropriate application of chemicals causing public health violations are prohibited and regulated by the Mono County Environmental Health Department and Inyo-Mono County Agricultural Commissioner, among others.
3. DMV services are referenced only as an example; the purpose of Policy 10.F.6 is to support access to necessary life services for Lee Vining residents.
4. While specific individuals may not utilize the transit lines and bus stop, many others do and therefore these are important community facilities and services.
5. The County does not have approval authority over signs on roadways and in the Caltrans right of way.
6. Restoration of historic buildings is outside the scope of the General Plan and County services. However, in a future effort to identify historic resources, this property could be considered for inclusion.
7. Policy 11.C.3. is specific to new development. Local events and programs are addressed by Objectives 12.B. and 12.C. The County appreciates the suggested ideas and events, all of which are compatible with Objectives 12.B and 12.C, and could readily be considered by the appropriate organizations and individuals. Ultimately, private parties, communities and other groups organize these events (not the County), and there are many inspiring examples such as the highly successful Bird Chautauqua that is hosted by the Mono Lake Committee each year during the early summer; over 300 people gathered for the 2014 event.
8. The General Plan contains water conservation policies; however, the US Forest Service Visitor's Center is outside the County's jurisdiction. The County will convey the comment to the Forest Service for consideration.

9. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates Radio Frequency emissions. The General Plan requires all cell tower operators to verify compliance with these federal emission standards, which is the limit of the County's authority.
10. The installation of new wood-burning appliances requires a building permit, and the County's General Plan requires these new appliances to be EPA Phase II certified. No regulations by the EPA or the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District apply to existing wood stoves; however, recently several rounds of funding have been available to offset the cost of replacing older stoves with EPA certified models.
11. Maintenance of these interpretive signs is outside the County's jurisdiction. However, the County will convey the comment to the partners that helped establish the site, and consider it in the County's Scenic Byway project.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Rob Delmas <shawnkray@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 8:46 AM
To: Wendy Sugimura; Gerry LeFrancois
Subject: Paradise RTP

Good Morning,

It has been brought to my attention that today is the last day to make any comments on the proposed planning efforts by Mono County for Paradise. I was not able to attend the meeting to hear all options as well as share my concerns as a resident of Paradise. If I may, I do not think that there is any way to maintain the character of Paradise if we change it. My concern being that "if we build it they will come". I have decided to reside in Paradise to avoid the increase of tourist. Adding more recreational facilities, bike climbing lanes, infrastructure, more foot paths, or tourist attractions to our area does not retain OUR Residential Character. I think Paradise is fine just the way it is and I do not support any changes to invite tourists roaming our streets, hillsides, or neighborhood. We need our privacy. I do not support the potential to turn this neighborhood into an extension of Mammoth. Mammoth is the "resort" please don't change our neighborhood.

Thank you for your time,
Shawn Ray
103 Glen Ct
Bishop,ca (paradise)
760-582-6543

#8

RESPONSE TO SHAWN RAY, PARADISE RESIDENT

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Shawn Ray, Paradise Resident, dated 29 September 2015.

COMMUNITY OF PARADISE

The comments offered by Mr. Ray, seeking protection of the existing character of Paradise and avoidance of increased tourism, are acknowledged. Please note that the policies proposed for Paradise place primary emphasis on serving existing residents, activities and land uses. Mr. Ray's comments will be considered by the Mono County Board of Supervisors as part of its deliberations concerning approval of the proposed Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update. Thank you for taking the time to provide your input in this process.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Jon Hafstrom <noluffingmatter@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 2:09 PM
To: Gerry LeFrancois; Wendy Sugimura; Brent Calloway; Scott Burns
Cc: dandieaneanthonny@msn.com; Munz Kim; Hafstrom Jon
Subject: General Plan Update Concerns and Questions

Gerry Le Francois, Wendy Sugimura, Brent Calloway, Scott Burns:

My name is Jon Hafstrom and for the past 5 years I have lived with my girlfriend, Kim Munz, just outside of Walker, CA. She has owned her property for over 10 years.

I am going to get more involved in the Mono County planning process and have been trying to get up to speed with a number of Mono County land use and development planning documents.

These are the documents I have found online and read:

- * Mono County General Plan Update Land Use Element (Draft)
- * 2015 Regional Transportation Plan / General Plan Update
- * Character Inventory and Design Guidelines for Highway 395 Scenic Byway Corridor Communities

I agree wholeheartedly with item #2 in the Antelope Valley section of the Land Use Element which states: "Residents in the Antelope Valley are interested in preserving the existing rural character of the communities and the Valley as a whole."

My main area of interest is addressing the proper and sensible use of outdoor nighttime lighting in Mono County which follows the guidelines and regulations already in the Mono County General Plan Update in Chapter 23: Dark Sky Regulations.

After reading through the Mono County General Plan Update, Chapter 23: Dark Sky Regulations, my first thought was one of pleasure that the authors of the General Plan Update are cognizant of good outdoor lighting practices and Dark Sky Regulations that are currently being used throughout the United States, especially out here in the western states.

Of consternation however, is Section A of 23.010 Purpose.

A. The purpose of this chapter is to provide rules and regulations for outdoor lighting within Mono County **except North of Mountain Gate** in order to accomplish the following:

1. To promote a safe and pleasant nighttime environment for residents and visitors;
 2. To protect and improve safe travel for all modes of transportation;
 3. To protect nuances caused by unnecessary light intensity, direct glare, and light trespass;
 4. To protect the ability to view the night sky by restricting the unnecessary upward projection of light;
 5. Through new building permits phase out existing nonconforming fixtures that violate this chapter;
- and
6. to promote lighting practices and systems to conserve energy.

All of these items focus on safety, esthetics, enjoyment, and the economic benefits which ALL residents of Mono County should enjoy.

My question is, do these lighting regulations in the Draft Update apply North of Mountain Gate, and if not, why not? And if not, who can I work with to help effect a change in the Update to include them for all of Mono County, including the areas North of Mountain Gate. Certainly the residents and visitors to Walker and Coleville, as do their counterparts South of Mountain Gate, deserve to enjoy the night sky in all its beauty.

Jon Hafstrom
235 Patricia Lane
Coleville, CA 96107
760-616-4203

#9

RESPONSE TO JON HAFSTROM, COLEVILLE RESIDENT

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Jon Hafstrom, Coleville Resident, dated 22 September 2015.

LIGHTING REGULATIONS NORTH OF MOUNTAIN GATE

In response to the observant comments offered by Mr. Hafstrom, the lighting regulations in the Draft Update are not proposed to apply to lands north of Mountain Gate. The proposed exclusion reflects community consensus that was expressed in meetings with the Antelope Valley RPAC when the Chapter 23 (Dark Sky) regulations were being developed. This issue was not raised during revision of the Antelope Valley area plan policies, and community discussions anecdotally continue to support the current language. This particular issue will be highlighted as a policy discussion for Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor consideration.

Ultimately, the best avenue for seeking a change in this provision would be through participation in the RPAC process. All RPAC meetings are open to the community at large and offer a good forum for discussion and debate as well as the opportunity for future change if supported by community preferences. RPAC meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Mono County website (please see <http://www.monocounty.ca.gov/rpac>) and county staff are a very good source of information and assistance (please contact Gerry LeFrancois at 760.924.1800).

Wendy Sugimura

From: Margaret White <mnmwhite@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 12:51 PM
To: Wendy Sugimura
Subject: Regional Transportation Plan/ General Plan

I Michael White who is a landowner at 123 Eastside Lane. in Walker Calif.. I have read the General Plan Update that was giving out at the RPACK MEETING. I do not agree with a lot of things that R.T.P has this plan. Just to name a few, Safety and noise elements. I guess it depends on where you live. Land Use, Historic values, Who is the historian? Who is the stewardship that you talk about that has to do with sensitive habitats??Conservation/Open Space Element,You talk about focus on species and habitats and to preserve open space. I'm letting you you know that I Michael White do not agree with the R.T.P.plan. I would also like to add that I would like to be advised of any development plans, now or in the futher, of Hwy. 395 & Eastside ln. Maybe Jerry in planning might about the corner of Hwy. 395 & Topaz Ln for a better fishing and trails concept!!!! Thank you Mr.Michael White mnmwhite@gmail.com

#10

RESPONSE TO MICHAEL WHITE WALKER RESIDENT

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Michael White, Walker Resident, dated 29 September 2015.

The comments offered by Mr. White, including concerns about the RTP, the Safety Element, the Noise Element and the Conservation/Open Space Element, are acknowledged. Mr. White's comments will be considered by the Mono County Board of Supervisors as part of its deliberations concerning approval of the proposed Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update.

The County also acknowledges Mr. White's request to be advised of any development plans affecting US 395 and Eastside Lane, and has accordingly added Mr. White's email address to the distribution list for the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) and the County Planning Commission. (Please note, upon adding Mr. White's name to the email database, the system sends Mr. White an email with verification instructions that must be completed in order for notifications to be activated.) Community notification is an important part of the county's development review process and occurs through several avenues including regular RPAC meetings, posting on the county website (please see the 'News and Announcements' section as well as meeting agendas for the RPACs, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, and the 'Document Center' provided under the Online Services section), and direct mailings to residents living within 300 feet of any proposed discretionary development activity. Thank you for taking the time to provide your input in this process.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Nordin, Erin <erin_nordin@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 3:16 PM
To: Wendy Sugimura
Cc: Lee Carranza; Chad Mellison
Subject: Mono County General Plan Update and Draft EIR

Wendy,

We are still reviewing the draft EIR and other associated documents as it pertains to the Bi-State sage-grouse. We hope to provide our comments in the next couple of weeks. However, since you are working on a short timeline, we are offering the following comments via email. These comments will also be provided in a letter at a later date.

In the Land Use Element section (p. II-133), Action 24.F.1.a states that Witcher and Birch Creeks were identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout. We are unaware of any discussions regarding the introduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout to Witcher and Birch Creeks. These two streams are located outside of the native range of Lahontan cutthroat trout and not considered streams needed for recovery of the species. The Service works collaboratively with CDFW to introduce Lahontan cutthroat trout into locations that contribute to the recovery of the species. If you have any questions about Lahontan cutthroat trout recovery efforts, please contact Chad Mellison of the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office at (775) 861-6327 or Chad_Mellison@fws.gov.

In the Land Use Element section (pp. II-9, II-10, II-79, II-81), there is discussion about supporting historic uses in the Mono Basin, specifically domestic sheep grazing. As we mentioned before, we have concerns about domestic sheep grazing in close proximity to habitat occupied by Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep. We read the letter submitted by CDFW and support their position on this issue.

Finally, we encourage you to review the Service's Migratory Birds Program's conservation measures for avoiding or minimizing impacts to birds. These conservation measures can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php>.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call or send me an email.

--

Erin Nordin
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
351 Pacu Lane
Bishop, California 93514
(760) 872-5020

#11

RESPONSE TO ERIN NORDIN U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Erin Nordin, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), dated 29 September 2015.

REINTRODUCTION OF LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT TO WITCHER AND BIRCH CREEKS

USFWS correctly notes that Witcher and Birch Creeks are not suitable for Lahontan cutthroat trout introductions, due the constraints imposed by the current resources of the area. The policy that was cited is an old (1993) and outdated recommendation that has since expired. The wording of Action 24.F.1.a on page 72 of Appendix D has been modified to state, "[CEQA analysis that considers direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources at Witcher and Birch Creeks, including amphibians, will be required have been identified by the CDFW as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout. Require a CEQA analysis for any project that may impact these resources.](#)" Also see the response to Comment #2b.

NEED TO SEPARATE DOMESTIC SHEEP AND BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATIONS

The County recognizes that the Service is responsible for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep. As noted above in the response to similar points raised in Comment #2c, transmission of disease to bighorn sheep from domestic sheep may significantly impact herd viability and the ultimate recovery of the species. USFWS summarily notes support for the position expressed in Comment #2c.

The County believes that the addition of Action 24.F.3.f, the addition of a new descriptive paragraph after the final paragraph on page 4.4-5 of EIR Section 4.4.2.1, and the amending of the final full paragraph on page 4.4-22 of DEIR Section 4.5.2.6 (see response to Comment #2c for text of these changes), are proactively responsive to the real potential for disease transmission. Furthermore, these changes will clarify the County's responsibility to aid wherever possible in the recovery of the species and are supportive of the position expressed in Comment #2c.

MIGRATORY BIRD PROGRAM CONSERVATION MEASURES

USFWS encourages review of their webpage for the Migratory Bird Program. Upon review of the conservation measures described in this material, the final paragraph on DEIR page 4.4-28 under the subheading "Migratory Bird Treaty Act" has been amended by adding the sentence as shown below:

["The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has formulated a list of suggested conservation measures for migratory birds as part of their Migratory Bird Program \(USFWS, 2015\)."](#) The citation for this program's website has been added to the listing of referenced materials.



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September 29, 2015

Mono County Community Development Department
PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Submitted electronically: Wendy Sugimura (wsugimura@mono.ca.gov)

Subject: Comments on Mono County 2015 Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms. Sugimura:

The Mono Lake Committee (MLC) would like to provide comments on the Mono County 2015 Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report. Since the Committee's focus is the Mono Basin watershed we will focus our comments to items specific to the Mono Basin and to areas where we have expertise such as water quality and supply and visitor services.

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizen's group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas. Supported by 16,000 members, the Committee has been active in the Mono Basin since 1978.

MLC supports Mono County's approach related to identifying the preferred alternative. The Committee agrees that that density reductions described in Alternative 2 are best aligned with the County's long-standing goals of open space protection and clustered development within and adjacent to existing communities. MLC also agrees that density reductions and other components of Alternative 2 should be discussed and vetted with the RPACs and other community groups.

Section 4.0 – Environmental Analysis

4.1 Land Use

1. P. 4.1–5, Table 4.1–2: Issues, Opportunities & Constraints in Mono County Communities – 2001 and 2015. For Bridgeport Valley 2001 Issues states: “Recreational opportunities at Bridgeport Reservoir should be enhanced; wetlands should be protected, and boating restricted in some areas to protect critical bird habitats. 2015 Issues: Boating restrictions are no longer recommended to protect critical bird habitat.”

The Bridgeport Valley and Reservoir are designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by National Audubon because of the important habitat and species that live in and use the area. Shorebirds, ducks, and recently, nesting Sandhill Cranes,

utilize Bridgeport Reservoir and the surrounding wetlands. MLC supports enhancement of recreational opportunities at Bridgeport but we urge Mono County to balance recreational use with protection of bird habitat. For example, there are restrictions at Mono Lake that allow for recreational boating but protect certain areas at key times for birds.

2. P. 4.1–6, Table 4.1–2: Issues, Opportunities & Constraints in Mono County Communities – 2001 and 2015. For Mono Basin 2015 Issues states: “Most land in the basin is publicly owned; regulations and use limits are a concern but also welcomed.”

MLC urges Mono County to include two important land Mono Basin management designations on the GIS maps that accompany this plan—Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. Currently, the map identifies these areas as RM only and does not show the specific designations. Since each area has its own management plan and associated regulations it would be more accurate and helpful to the public to call out the specific boundaries by designated area.

3. P. 4.1–7, Table 4.1–2: Issues, Opportunities & Constraints in Mono County Communities – 2001 and 2015.

For June Lake 2015 Issues states: “According to the June Lake Public Utility District (JLPUD) the sole public water supply agency on the June Lake Loop, the current water supply will not meet demands at full build out.”

MLC recommends a full water supply evaluation be conducted before significant additional development is approved.

4. The Land Use element should add a clarifying procedure for the overlapping authority of the County and the US Forest Service regarding private land use within the boundary of the National Forest Scenic Area. MLC urges the addition of language similar to other General Plan policies where agency jurisdiction overlaps. In this case, the County should require that, prior to issuance of County permits; projects shall be required to provide documentation that the project has been approved by the USFS as compatible with the National Forest Scenic Area guidelines.

4.2 Regional Transportation Plan and Circulation

1. P. 4.2–9: Wildlife Collisions: MLC supports efforts to minimize transportation impacts on all wildlife. Limiting vegetation on highway shoulders increases visibility and should continue. Since invasive plants are often the primary component of this vegetation, MLC urges Caltrans to do the clearing before these plants go to seed (each species has slightly different seed dispersal time periods) which will minimize the spread of them the following season. Caltrans should also avoid nesting bird season.
2. P. 4.2–16, Table 4.2–6: Existing Needs of the Mono County Bicycle System.

For Mono Basin: “US 395 along the west side of Mono Lake does not have adequate shoulders in some areas for safety. Past efforts to expand shoulders were opposed by some, and then the project has since been abandoned by the LTC and Caltrans.”

MLC did not oppose the expansion of all shoulders included in the Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project. To accomplish shoulder widening, the proposed project straightened the highway and relocated the centerline, resulting in massive fill slopes and/or retaining walls. The

result would have been significant visual impacts within the Mono Basin Scenic Area. Instead, MLC called for a variable width shoulder expansion that would widen the shoulder where feasible which would address a significant portion of the problem shoulder area. This is still possible.

3. P. 4.2–16 Table 4.2–6: Existing Needs of the Mono County Bicycle System.

For Mono Basin: Please consider adding the following need to the table that has been discussed repeatedly in Mono Basin RPAC meetings: Other than US 395 there is currently no way that Mono City and Lundy Canyon are connected to Lee Vining. The RPAC has discussed and will be exploring further the potential for a bike trail west of US 395 on the SCE right-of-way for the power lines. This route would not only allow local residents to easily connect between the two but recreational visitors could connect from Lee Vining and Lee Vining Canyon to Lundy Canyon and Mono Lake County Park. We note that this recommendation meets all four Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) categories listed on page 4.2–31. We urge you to include this recommendation in Table 4.2–9: BTP-Recommended Bicycle Improvements in Mono County Communities for the Mono Basin.

4.3 Air Quality, Climate Change, and Greenhouse Gases

1. P. 4.3–3: Suspended Particulates states “Major human sources of PM10 include agricultural operations, industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion, construction, demolition, and highway dust. Natural sources include windblown dust, wildfire smoke, and sea spray salt.”

This characterization of windblown dust as a natural source is misleading with the notable exception of the dust produced from flash flood deposits in the Tri Valley as noted on p. 4.6-18. In the Mono Basin, the vast majority of windblown dust is from anthropogenic sources. On a windy day in the Mono Basin, usually the only visible natural sources of windblown dust are recently-burned areas. The anthropogenic sources far outweigh natural sources and include:

- Mono Lake’s artificially-exposed lakebed due to historic water diversions by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (Mono and Owens produce the worst particulate dust storms in the nation)
- gravel pits and other mining areas
- roads
- other disturbed-soil areas

2. P. 4.3–5: Under State Implementation Plan Compliance Status section remove the word “primarily” from “The PM10 nonattainment problem in the Mono Basin is caused by windblown dust from the exposed lakebed of Mono Lake, primarily caused by City of Los Angeles water diversions from 1941 through 1989.”

Without those diversions Mono Lake would have been very close to its prediversion level (we estimate within 1 foot, see Winter–Spring 2015 *Mono Lake Newsletter* p.3) and there would be no exposed lakebed.

4.4 Biological Resources

1. P. 4.4–5 states precipitation is 30 inches near Mammoth Pass, yet that contradicts 42.5 inches stated on 4.8–10.

2. P. 4.4–15 states regarding invasive species eradication, “To meet project-by-project prescriptive goals for eradication, potentially expensive post-control monitoring and reporting (with remediation if necessary) is unfortunately the only way to assure that success criteria are met, and that some reversal of the widespread and likely accelerating trend of new species introductions is being achieved.”

We agree this is potentially expensive, but there is a low-cost model for this important measure. MLC currently participates in a multi-agency effort in the Mono Basin that has targeted tamarisk, bouncing bet, and white sweet clover on LADWP, USFS, and State Reserve lands. The loosely-coordinated tamarisk removal effort around Mono Lake’s shoreline, in which each organization participates on its own initiative, and some utilize volunteers, is an example of the type of post-control monitoring and reporting described. Each organization shares information with the others about eradication efforts and the locations of newly discovered plants in a timely manner. This effort has successfully kept tamarisk in the Mono Basin under control for over a decade, yet only requires minimal resources from each organization. For in-town areas Mono County could partner with Caltrans and other agencies and groups to accomplish a similarly-successful post-control monitoring and reporting and remediation program.

3. P. 4.4–25: insert “395” as follows: “US 395 and many other roads intersect these high use areas”
4. “Yellow flycatcher” occurs twice in this section, yet this is a common bird name we are not familiar with. It is likely this is a typo and another bird species was meant to be inserted here.
5. P. 4.4–50: Characterizing Lee Vining Creek as “a perennial tributary to Owens River” is incorrect; it is a tributary to Mono Lake.
6. At least some mention of Brown-headed Cowbirds and their effect on Willow Flycatcher populations should be included in this section. Studies by Point Blue in the Mono Basin found that cowbird parasitism was largely responsible for the Willow Flycatcher population decline on Rush Creek after brief but significant population increase in the early 2000s. The cowbird population is subsidized by bird feeders in nearby communities. Also, in dry years bears come into Mono City and Lee Vining and feed on improperly-stored garbage. Objectives and mitigation measures related to feeding wildlife and proper storage of garbage should be considered, such as requiring all dumpsters to be bear proof.
7. Overall the discussion in this section is really well done and the Committee applauds Mono County and its consultant for producing a very accessible and readable and informative document.

4.5 Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

1. P. 4.5–8: Table 4.5–1 shows Desert Aggregates to have 30 acres approved and 1.7 acres disturbed. Frank Sam Mine shows only .9 acres disturbed. Either the table is wrong or the column headings need definition and elaboration in a caption, since both mines have far more disturbed area than is shown in the table. In fact, the State Mining and Geology Board reported here <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb/StaffReports2012/Documents/RBM%201011-6%20EO%20Report%20Mono%20County%2045-Day%20Notice.pdf> that the 2008 acreage reported for Desert Aggregates was 64 acres while 79.8 acres of disturbance was measured from an aerial photo, and Frank Sam Mine reported .9 acres whereas 380 acres of disturbance was documented by aerial photo. Similarly, the Cain Ranch Mine reported 30 acres disturbed, yet almost 50% more area was found by aerial photo.

2. P. 4.5–8: Table 4.5–1 does not discuss other mines that have closed prior to 2012 but that may influence air and water quality. This section does not discuss the potential for new mines to open, old mines to reopen, or current mines to expand. One example of a major expansion and change in land use is the Desert Aggregates pit, which was permitted to greatly enlarge in size in the late 1990s. This enlargement provided aggregate material for development in Mammoth and the Hwy 395 Rush Creek Project in 2000. Discussion of the adequacy of existing sources and future sources of aggregate for future construction due to the planned build-out should be included. The potential for conversion of existing land uses near gravel pits to mining should also be discussed. While there is acknowledgement of the importance of locally-sourced sand and gravel on p. 4.5–22, there is little additional information about this impact disclosed.
3. P. 4.5–16: The discussion of the presence of clay soils is inadequate, as indicated by the statement “recent studies for Inyo County indicate that clay soils may also be present in surficial and underlying deposits of the northern Owens Valley.”

The Toiyabe National Forest Soil Survey is mentioned as a source of information, as well as the Inyo County Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment DPEIR. No mention of the 1994–1995 Inyo National Forest Soil Survey is made. NRCS reports an update of a portion of that survey is needed, however an NRCS map indicates there are published soil surveys for the rest of Mono County. There is no need to infer information from adjacent studies when the information is directly available. Soils information can be the basis for much land use planning, especially determining the capability of supporting various listed uses such as those on p. 933–958 of the Benton-Owens Valley Soil Survey, or the engineering properties on p. 655. Knowing that Mono County did not use soil surveys other than the Toiyabe National Forest survey in this General Plan Update is concerning and does not inspire confidence in the statement on p. 4.5–19 that General Plan goals and policies and State Water Board prohibitions “effectively preclude the possibility that project structures will be located on 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 or creating substantial risks to life or property.”

4. There is no mention of Known Geothermal Resource Areas (KGRAs) and the potential for development of this alternative source of energy.

4.6 Health, Safety, Hazards, and Hazardous Materials

1. P. 4.6–34: Safety hazards associated with Lee Vining and Bryant Field airport include “objects that could interfere with airplane flight paths (primarily topographic and structural), features that attract wildlife (lakes, wetlands, waste disposal areas), and land uses that draw people into airport safety zones.”

This summer we have experienced an increase in drone use in the Mono Basin especially at key visitation locations. Drones should be included in the list of airport safety hazards. Drones also interfered with aircraft fire suppression during the Walker Fire. The Committee anticipates drone use to increase and we are working with state and federal land managers to understand current and potential regulations.

2. P. 4.6–1: Ash Fall: Add to the list of hazards from ash fall the clogging of vehicle air filters, disabling motorized transportation over large areas of the county. Converting fleets of mission-critical vehicles to electric power or having the ability to retrofit their air filtration systems or

have backup air filters on hand would be a wise mitigation measure to keep emergency services running during such an event.

3. P. 4.6–5 states that “currently no aircraft are based” at the Lee Vining Airport, however that is inconsistent with p. 4.2–13, which states that 4 aircraft are based there.
4. P. 4.6–16 states “the area north of Lee Vining” is at risk of avalanche, however it should also say the west edge of Lee Vining in addition since there are properties at the west edge of town (esp. Lee Vining Elementary School) in and adjacent to potential avalanche runout zones.
5. P. 4.6–17: Note previous comment in the geology section regarding “due to the uncertainty of such an event” language relating to volcanic hazards also applies on this page. What the uncertainty is regarding should be described.
6. P. 4.6–17 Smoke alarms cannot eliminate volcanic risk, and shouldn’t be listed as a primary risk-elimination measure. “General plan policies” are also listed as reducing risk and this would be a great place to mention those policies since purpose of this EIR is to analyze the General Plan policies.
7. P. 4.6–24 under “Ongoing Monitoring of Stream Flows and Flood Stages” states that “USGS and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) monitor streamflows in Mono County and maintain online sites with real-time stream flow data. They also provide alerts when streams reach flood stage.”

This is true only for the Walker Basin and Hot Creek. LADWP reports real-time data for streams it diverts, however most streamflows in Mono County are not reported in real time.

8. P. 4.6–38: Table 4.6–12: a Mono Basin community concern is that “Some areas in Mono Basin need brush clearing in order to fully function as overflow channels in the case of flooding.” The locations of concern should be identified. Storm drains and gutters should be maintained, however if the concern is regarding natural channels it is unclear where those locations are and those locations should be disclosed here. The main concern we have on natural channels is undersized culverts, mainly on county roads. A list of undersized culverts in danger of washing out would include, but not be limited to the Mill Creek Cemetery Road crossing, Mill Creek below Lundy Dam, Mill Creek private driveway, and Parker Creek at Cain Ranch Road (Old Hwy 395).

This section fails to address the cause of the most recent wildfire. Power lines as a wildfire hazard during wind events should be discussed and addressed. General Plan policies should encourage the undergrounding of existing power lines, discourage the building of new above-ground lines, and consider other safety measures that could prevent a future disaster or reduce the potential damage from a powerline-sparked wildfire.

4.7 Cultural and Paleontological Resources

P. 4.7–4: “North” should be removed from the first sentence under “Mono Basin” since the sentence applies to the entire Mono Basin.

4.8 Hydrology, Water Quality, and Water Resources

1. P. 4.8–2: It should be acknowledged that sediment movement is also a natural and beneficial process. We recommend that an additional sentence be added to the “Sediments” paragraph to reflect the important functions of a natural sediment balance: “Sediment movement is also a natural process that is important for the proper geomorphic functioning of rivers and streams. It can be impeded by dams, causing negative impacts downstream.”
2. P. 4.8–6: Where SWRCB Water Rights Decision 1631 is mentioned, this would be an appropriate place to note that D1631 designated Mono Lake an Outstanding National Resource Water. There are two important regulatory water quality thresholds. To quote D1631 “the SWRCB finds that Mono Lake constitutes an Outstanding National Resource Water having exceptional ecological significance. As such, the water quality which existed in November 1975 when the federal antidegradation regulation was enacted must be maintained and protected. To maintain the salinity of Mono Lake at 85 g/l or lower would require that the water level of the lake be raised and maintained at 6,379.3 feet or higher. The Water Quality Control Plan for the South Lahontan Basin was adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, and approved by the SWRCB in 1975. The beneficial uses for Mono Lake designated for protection by the plan include saline water habitat, wildlife habitat, and water contact recreation. The water quality objective for salinity set by the 1975 plan is 76 g/l... would correspond to a lake level of approximately 6,386 feet... The adopted water quality objective of 76 g/l is reasonably necessary to protect the designated beneficial uses of Mono Lake.”
3. P. 4.8–12, third sentence: “The report notes that from 1941 through 1990, most flows from the main tributaries were, and the lake level fell from an elevation of 6,417 feet to 6,372 feet.” should say 1989 instead of 1990 and “were diverted to Los Angeles,” and should say “6,372 feet in 1982.” Next sentence should say “6,385 feet in 2006” instead of 6,484. There is also a typo in the next sentence “be” should be “been.” Later in the paragraph, “Grant Lake” should read “Grant Lake Reservoir.”
4. P. 4.8–20: Table 4.8-5 lists Grant Lake Reservoir’s old capacity of 47,500 acre-feet. The current capacity is 47,171 acre-feet.
5. P. 4.8–21: The riverine flooding section should distinguish between beneficial riverine flooding, an important natural process to maintain and enhance downstream from dams, and damaging riverine flooding where structures have been built in the path of the otherwise-beneficial natural hazard. The first sentence could be modified to say “Riverine flooding is the most common type of damaging flood event.” And later it erroneously says “In Mono County, riverine flooding typically occurs from November through April.” This may be true for damaging rain-on-snow floods, but the most common type of flooding is the spring (after April) snowmelt flood that occurs on all snowmelt-fed Mono County streams almost every year and is a beneficial ecological process.
6. P. 4.8–21: The sentence “The most-recent serious flooding in the county occurred” needs to be updated to reflect the January 1997 flood event discussed two sentences prior, or qualify it with “south county”.
7. P 4.8–23: Under section 4.8.4 Regulatory Setting, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) should be listed with respect to several FERC licenses in Mono County, especially the Mono Basin which has three: Rush Creek, Lee Vining Creek, and Mill Creek. These licenses

describe certain parameters that SCE must operate within and also outline monitoring and other mitigation requirements.

8. P. 4.8–32: Sentence at the end of the first full paragraph is cut off.
9. P. 4.8–41: The Mono Basin: annual runoff of 150,000 acre-feet (AF) is estimated to be the runoff from the Sierra Nevada, or about 80% of the total runoff, which is higher.
10. P. 4.8–41: “The *Mono Basin Watershed Management Plan* indicates that current water supplies for Mono City and Lee Vining appear to be adequate to meet all anticipated demands.”
During the 2015 drought the Lee Vining spring-flow declined so much that the PUD began earnestly considering additional conservation measures and backup sources of water such as building a pipeline to the wells serving the Mobil Station and turning off irrigation to large lawn areas such as Hess Park.

11. P. 4.8–41 “Mono County owns a water right on Wilson Creek, which flows through Conway Ranch in the northern section of the basin. The County has entered into an MOU with an aquaculture business to operate a fish-rearing facility at Conway Ranch, where the County also leases land for the grazing of sheep. The combined uses are relatively insignificant within the watershed context.”

This statement contains incorrect language and should be corrected. The Conway Ranch Conservation Easement should be referenced for correct language regarding the water right owned by Mono County; the water right is not associated with Wilson Creek but rather with Mill Creek. There are no water rights “on Wilson Creek”; it is a conveyance method to deliver water rights to Conway Ranch. Additionally, in contrast to the draft language, MLC understands that the MOU “with an aquaculture business” has been terminated and the current project scope of fish rearing is unknown. Lastly, the statement that “the combined uses are relatively insignificant” is not supported by the document and should be removed. For example, these uses depend on Mono County’s water right which allows for diversion of 44% of the average annual flow of Mill Creek, hardly an insignificant impact.

12. P. 4.8–49 refers to the “January 2001 Walker River flood” when it means the 1997 flood.
13. P. 4.8–51 refers to critical SCE facilities “above June Lake” when it should say “above Silver Lake.”
14. P. 4.8–52: Since seiches (one to two tenths of a foot in amplitude aren’t out of the ordinary) occur every time a windstorm whips the waters of Mono Lake, p. 4.8–52 should be revised as follows: “The *Mono County Safety Element* states that there is no available evidence that large and damaging seiches have occurred in Mono County lakes and reservoirs.” Also lower on the page, the word “seiche” should be removed from the sentence “Seiche and tsunami events do not occur in Mono County”.
15. P. 4.8–52: “the uncertainty of such an event” is used to reference volcanic hazards, however this vague statement should probably more specifically reference uncertain timing and long periods between events. Uncertainty could be interpreted to mean uncertain locations, however timing should probably be emphasized since a large proportion of the county is covered in volcanic material, and the locations where volcanic hazards exist (or at least previously occurred) aren’t uncertain.

4.9 Recreation

P. 4.9–1: Typo: Change Mono Lake Tufa State “National” Reserve to “Natural” Reserve.

4.10 Aesthetics, Light & Glare, and Scenic Resources

1. P. 4.10–10, Section 4.10.4: Regulatory Setting: the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and the associated Comprehensive Management Plan should be called out specifically under the United States Forest Service section. This plan provides specific detail on how to assess visual impacts in the Mono Basin and thresholds for compliance in the Mono Basin Scenic Area.
2. P. 4.10–12 Table 4.10–2: Intrinsic Qualities of Mono County Communities along US 395.

MLC recommends the following changes under the heading for Lee Vining Iconic or Physical Characteristics:

- Change “Connection to Yosemite NP” to “Gateway to Yosemite via Tioga Pass”
- Remove “Long Vistas” (since you have “Scenic” as the primary intrinsic quality below) and add “Unique Water History”
- Add Black Point/Mono Craters
- Add Migratory Birds

MLC recommends adding “Outdoor Recreation Hun” and “Environmentally-oriented” under the heading Descriptive Adjectives.

4.11 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

No comment.

4.12 Population and Housing

No comment.

4.13 Public Services and Utilities

No comment.

4.14 Noise

P. 4.14-10: Table 4.14-9 lists Mono Basin vehicle trips as the lowest in the county, however table 4.2-1 on p. 4.2-5 (as well as table 4.14-1 on p. 4.14-3 for 2008) shows the annual 2012 traffic volume at the Tioga Pass junction to be the highest in the county after Hwy 203. This discrepancy—how the area with the lowest vehicle trips has the second-highest traffic volume—should be explained.

6.0 Alternatives

MLC supports Mono County’s approach related to identifying the preferred alternative. The Committee agrees that that density reductions described in Alternative 2 are best aligned with the County’s long-standing goals of open space protection and clustered development within and adjacent

to existing communities. MLC also agrees that density reductions and other components of Alternative 2 should be discussed and vetted with the RPACs and other community groups.

MLC also recognizes the merits of some of the proactive policies outlined within Alternative 3. Although some may not be feasible at this time and/or are cost prohibitive, MLC supports all the goals outlined in Table 6-2: Proactive Policies Associated with Alternative 3. As a water conservation organization MLC would prioritize wetland and riparian area protection and restoration. Enhancement of Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse habitat and the protection of nesting birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are another priority. The Committee supports the eradication of non-native plant species and also supports new measures to assure decommissioning and restoring the local environment at renewable energy facility sites.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mono County General Plan. Please contact me if you have any questions or need any clarification.

Sincerely,



Lisa Cutting
Eastern Sierra Policy Director

#12

RESPONSE TO LISA CUTTING MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Lisa Cutting, Eastern Sierra Policy Director, Mono Lake Committee (MLC), dated 29 September 2015.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.1 LAND USE

1. **P. 4.1-5, TABLE 4.1-2 (ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS IN MONO COUNTY COMMUNITIES 2001 & 2015) CONCERNING CRITICAL BIRD HABITAT IN BRIDGEPORT VALLEY:** The text on p. 4.1-5, Table 4.1-2: Issues, Opportunities & Constraints in Mono County Communities – 2001 and 2015, Bridgeport Valley, is hereby modified to read as follows:

"Recreational opportunities at Bridgeport Reservoir should be enhanced; wetlands should be protected, and boating restricted in some areas to protect critical bird habitats. 2015 Issues: Language regarding boating restrictions has been removed due to considerations that are outside the purview of the General Plan. ~~are no longer recommended to protect critical bird habitat.~~"

There was no intention to indicate reduced conservation of critical bird habitat (to the extent Mono County is directly involved) in Issue #3 in the Bridgeport Valley section of "Issues/Opportunities/Constraints for Community Areas" in the Land Use Element. The language change indicates it was not an issue raised during community review, and the current proposed language references protecting associated natural resources. The regulation of boating is provided through the Mono County Code (not the General Plan) and the County would defer to resource management agencies to identify critical bird habitat. In addition, the land underneath the water is owned by the Walker River Irrigation District, the shoreline is a mix of private and public ownership, and the shoreline fluctuates due to water storage/release, further complicating the issue. Since a variety of these elements are outside the purview of the General Plan, the issue was generalized to protect "wetlands and associated natural resources." However, the issue will be further amended to retain an emphasis on critical bird habitat as follows:

"There is an opportunity to enhance the recreational opportunities available at Bridgeport Reservoir and to protect the wetlands and associated natural resources in the surrounding area, including critical bird habitats. These recreational opportunities may include fishing, hunting, kayaking, boating, sailing, and bird watching."

2. **P. 4.1-5, TABLE 4.1-2 (ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS IN MONO COUNTY COMMUNITIES 2001 AND 2015) CONCERNING MONO BASIN:** The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve are indeed consistent with the planning purpose of this mapset. This map was initially designed to display information required for the General Plan (such as Land Use Designations), and information required by State law (such as safety hazards). However, the County intends to expand this online map resource to include other information that may be relevant to, and helpful for, land use and development planning. To that end, the County is now working to incorporate the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve layers into the General Plan maps. Note that the maps can be viewed online at (<https://monomammoth.maps.arcgis.com/home/>), and that the addition of the requested map layers may not occur until after the adoption of the General Plan Update.
3. **P. 4.1-7, Table 4.1-2 (ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS IN MONO COUNTY COMMUNITIES 2001 AND 2015) CONCERNING JLPUD WATER SUPPLY:** Mono County does not have the authority to require independent public

agencies (such as June Lake Public Utilities District [JLPUD]) to undertake water supply evaluations. However, the County does require that development applications submitted for County approvals must demonstrate that adequate water supplies are available to serve the proposed uses. In addition, it is County policy to work with independent service providers to regularly update information on service capacities, to encourage improvements where needed, and to assist in obtaining grants and other funds to support needed system upgrades. Please also see the response to the June Lake Public Utilities District (comment letter #3).

4. **LAND USE ELEMENT CLARIFYING PROCEDURES FOR PRIVATE LANDS IN THE NATIONAL FOREST SCENIC AREA:** County regulations often overlap with state and federal regulations, and the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area is one example. In these cases, the County's practice is to direct parties to the appropriate jurisdiction as the County has no authority in the matter; see Policy 10.C.6 in the Land Use Element. For discretionary permits, the County works with other jurisdictions with authority during the project approval process to help assure requirements are known and met. In the case of ministerial permits, the County does not have the authority to withhold permit issuance due to requirements by a different jurisdiction. The County is limited to informing the applicant that it is their obligation to work with the other jurisdiction(s).

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.2 RTP/CIRCULATION

1. **P. 4.2-9 (WILDLIFE COLLISIONS):** Mono County concurs with the comment offered by MLC that invasive plants are a primary component of roadside vegetation, and supports the MLC recommendation that vegetation should be removed before the plants go to seed. Although the county has no authority over the clearing process, it will pass the suggestion along to the Inyo-Mono Agricultural Commissioner, who does have jurisdiction, and to Caltrans for their consideration when scheduling roadside vegetation removal.
2. **P. 4.2-16, TABLE 4.2-6 (EXISTING NEEDS OF THE MONO COUNTY BICYCLE SYSTEM) CONCERNING ADEQUATE SHOULDERS FOR BICYCLE SAFETY:** Mono County thanks MLC for the clarification offered in this comment. To reflect the information provided, Table 4.2-6 is hereby amended as shown below:

TABLE 4.2-6: Existing Needs of the Mono County Bicycle System	
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Identified Needs</i>
INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY BICYCLE NEEDS	
MONO BASIN	Mono Basin has a number of dirt roads within the boundaries of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. Use of those roads is governed by the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Scenic Area, which allows bicycling on existing roads.
	US 395 along the west side of Mono Lake does not have adequate shoulders in some areas for safety. Past efforts to expand shoulders were controversial opposed by some , and the project has since been abandoned by the LTC and Caltrans.
	Major recreational destinations include Mono Lake, the USFS Visitor Center, <u>Lundy Canyon</u> , and SR 120/ in Lee Vining Canyon. <u>Consider connecting</u> Bike routes exist to all of these destinations via bike routes.
	Most children at the schools in Lee Vining are bussed to school or walk. Commuting routes for school children are limited.

3. **P. 4.2-16, Table 4.2-6 (EXISTING NEEDS OF THE COUNTY BICYCLE SYSTEM) CONCERNING A NEW TRAIL CONNECTING MONO CITY AND LUNDY CANYON WITH LEE VINING:** In response to this MLC comment, Mono County has added the suggested bike trail to the Bicycle Transportation Plan to ensure future discussion of a potential project. Since it has not yet been vetted in a community discussion, however, details such as a suggested trail alignment are not included. Table 4.2-6 has been revised to include these destinations (see Table 4.2-6 modifications in the response to comment 2 above), and the following new Policy 8.L has been added to the Bicycle Transportation Plan:

"Policy 8.L. Continue community conversations via the RPAC to consider a bike trail connecting Lundy Canyon to US 395 in order to connect major recreational destinations."

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON §4.3 AIR QUALITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, GHG

1. **P. 4.3-3 (SUSPENDED PARTICULATES) CONCERNING ANTHROPOGENIC PM₁₀ SOURCES IN MONO BASIN:** The DEIR states that major PM₁₀ sources in the county include windblown dust; MLC asserts that windblown dust primarily results from human activities (e.g., water diversions, mining, roads). In response to the comment, page 4.3-3 of the DEIR is hereby modified as follows:

"Suspended Particulates. Atmospheric particulate matter ('PM') is comprised of finely divided solids and liquids such as dust, soot, aerosols, fumes, and mists. Particulates of special concern include PM₁₀ (no more than 10 microns in diameter) and PM_{2.5}, (a very fine particulate measuring no more than 2.5 microns in diameter). Major human sources of PM₁₀ include agricultural operations, industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion, construction, demolition, and ~~highway windblown dust resulting from human activities (e.g., water diversions, mining, roads)~~. Natural sources include ~~windblown dust~~, wildfire smoke, and sea spray salt. The finer PM_{2.5} particulates are generally associated with combustion and also formed in the atmosphere as a secondary pollutant through chemical reactions. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are both inhalable, but PM_{2.5} is more likely to penetrate deep into the lungs and thus poses a serious health threat, particularly to the elderly, children, and those with respiratory problems."

1. **P. 4.3-5 (STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMPLIANCE) CONCERNING PM₁₀ FROM EXPOSED LAKEBED OF MONO LAKE:** The DEIR states that PM₁₀ results from windblown dust from the exposed lakebed of Mono Lake, primarily caused by LADWP water diversions; MLC states that 'primarily' should be deleted. In response to the comment, pages 4.3-5 and 4.3-6 of the DEIR are hereby modified as follows:

"The PM₁₀ nonattainment problem in the Mono Basin is caused by windblown dust from the exposed lakebed of Mono Lake, ~~primarily~~ caused by City of Los Angeles water diversions from 1941 through 1989. In 1994, SWRCB approved Decision 1631, which limited diversions from the Mono Basin until the lake reaches 6,391 feet above mean sea level (msl). This lake level would submerge most of the shoreline areas that are causing windblown dust. By July 1999 (and again in August 2006), the lake had risen to a high level of 6,385.1 feet; PM₁₀ concentrations at that level decreased to a point where a previously noncompliant monitor site on the north shore of Mono Lake showed compliance with the federal PM₁₀ standard. Since the initial rise, measurements show that the lake level has fluctuated around 6,383 feet msl: the lake level increased during periods of above average runoff, and decreased during periods with below average runoff."

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. **P. 4.4-5 CONCERNING ANNUAL PRECIPITATION NEAR MAMMOTH PASS:** MLC has identified an inconsistency in the average annual precipitation reported for the Mammoth Pass area. The correct amount is 42.5 inches. The amount reported as 30 inches in the last paragraph on page 4.4-4 (to 4.4-5) has been corrected to 42.5 inches, as reported on DEIR page 4.8-10.
2. **P. 4.4-15 CONCERNING INVASIVE SPECIES MONITORING AND REMOVAL EFFORTS:** MLC agrees that post-control monitoring, reporting, and remediation is crucial to the success of any weed control program that targets eradication of invasive species, and goes on to suggest that local partnerships can reduce the cost while maintaining effectiveness. The County considers the proffered example from the Mono Basin to be persuasive evidence that local partnerships in Mono County's community areas can succeed to some degree. Since the availability of partners, costs of the ongoing collaborative program, and expectable degree of control (as opposed to eradication) of this approach are currently unknown and would be presumably variable based upon location, species, and infestation size, the County reasonably could embark on such a program in an exploratory manner only. A significant complication differing from the experience of the Mono Lake Committee that would be anticipated is the private ownership of many adjoining parcels where infestations typically occur. It would not be reasonable to expect that typical weed populations would be confined to a single parcel, so adjoining parcels would tend to serve as sources for weed re-introduction unless the landowners become partners in the program. Work on private lands may also be complicated by liability issues. Given the degree of uncertainty at this time, it is feasible only to begin exploring the possible partnerships and identify potential opportunities for such programs.

The County thanks the MLC for the thoughtful suggestion, and in response has added Action 13.c.4.d to Policy 13.c.4, "Promote revegetation and reforestation programs along County roadways, including designated scenic highways". The new Action 13.C.4.d is

"Action 13.C.4.d. Seek ways to form partnerships that will facilitate mitigative control or eradication of invasive non-native plants in and around town areas. Identify and explore methods of forming collaborations, funding, and facilitating such programs."

If such opportunities are found to be available, it would be in the interest of the County to pursue a pilot project at the earliest possible date.

3. **TYPOGRAPHIC ERROR CONCERNING US 395:** Thank you for noting the omission. The sentence with the omission in the last paragraph on page 4.4-25 has been amended to read as follows:

"A total of 2,445 acres vegetation dominated by bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), or 28% of all undeveloped acreage now remaining within the 16 unincorporated communities of Mono County, remains more or less available for use by mule deer for migration and rearing of fawns. Communities such as Paradise, Swall Meadows, Tom's Place, Little Round Valley, Crowley Lake, McGee Creek, and Long Valley will progressively occupy or isolate in-town locations of substantial water, riparian forage and critical bitterbrush browse resources for migrating deer. Paradise and Swall Meadows are also within the longer-term winter holding range of the Round Valley herd. Concentrated deer use and the inflexibility of their migratory behavior in these areas can combine to exacerbate browse depletion to below what is needed to sustain the current population and maintain doe health for successful fawning. US 395 and many other roads intersect these high use areas, leading to a substantial number of collisions."

4. **MISLABELING OF YELLOW WARBLER:** MLC has correctly identified "yellow flycatcher" as a typographic error. The intended species name is yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*). The term "yellow flycatcher" has been changed to "yellow warbler" in the last paragraph on page 4.4-40 as shown:

"June Lake Impacts: Future development in June Lake may impact the potentially occurring sensitive plant species mountain bentgrass, Long Valley milkvetch, Mono milkvetch, Masonic rockcress, Tulare rockcress, scalloped moonwort, common moonwort Liddon's sedge, western single-spiked sedge, western valley sedge, tall draba, subalpine fireweed, Booth's evening primrose, Booth's hairy evening primrose, Mono Lake lupine, Torrey's blazing star, bog sandwort, Robbins' pondweed, Oregon campion, Masonic Mountain jewelflower, slender-leaved pondweed, and golden violet, the sensitive bryophyte Bolander's candlemoss, and the sensitive aquatic felt lichen, through direct loss of occurring populations or displacement of the habitat they occupy. Future development could similarly impact the potentially occurring sensitive wildlife species Mount Lyell salamander, Swainson's hawk, greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS), northern harrier, yellow ~~warblerflycatcher~~, willow flycatcher, bald eagle, osprey, Brewer's sparrow, yellow-headed blackbird, Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, pygmy rabbit, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, western white-tailed jackrabbit, Sierra marten, fisher (West Coast DPS), long-eared myotis, Yuma myotis, Mount Lyell shrew, American badger, and Sierra Nevada red fox."

The term "yellow flycatcher" has also been changed to "yellow warbler" in the first paragraph on page 4.4-42:

"Lee Vining Impacts: Future development in Lee Vining may impact the potentially occurring sensitive plant species Great Basin onion, Mono milkvetch, Masonic rockcress, scalloped moonwort, common moonwort Wheeler's dune-broom, Bodie Hills cusickiella, Booth's evening primrose, Mono Lake lupine, intermontane lupine, Torrey's blazing star, Robbins' pondweed, Oregon campion Masonic Mountain jewelflower, slender-leaved pondweed, dune horsebrush, and golden violet, and the sensitive aquatic felt lichen, through direct loss of occurring populations or displacement of the habitat they occupy. Future development could similarly impact the potentially occurring sensitive wildlife species Mount Lyell salamander, long-eared owl, greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS), yellow ~~warblerflycatcher~~, willow flycatcher, osprey, bank swallow, Brewer's sparrow, Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, pygmy rabbit, western mastiff bat, western white-tailed jackrabbit, long-eared myotis, Yuma myotis, American badger, and Sierra Nevada red fox.. Loss of upland scrub vegetation habitat that is dominated by dense big sagebrush, or emplacement of new structures and activities that subsidize predator abundance or grant predatory advantage in these habitats (for example, new raptor perches) may reduce the habitat available for potentially occurring pygmy rabbit and western white-tailed jackrabbit, and the available

habitat for greater sage grouse (Parker Meadows PMU) that potentially may forage in the Lee Vining area. Removal of riparian or nearby upland standing snags or large downed tree boles could impact denning habitat for potentially occurring Sierra Nevada mountain beaver, and roosting habitat for potentially occurring bats including western mastiff bat, long-eared myotis, and Yuma myotis. In addition, removal of existing buildings could impact roosting bats such as western mastiff bat. Disturbance of the gorge-like habitat associated with Lee Vining creek could impact colonially nesting bank swallow.”

5. **TRIBUTARY DESIGNATION FOR LEE VINING CREEK:** MLC correctly notes that Lee Vining Creek is tributary to Mono Lake, and thereby appears to agree in part with the passage as written on page 4.4-50. This passage also draws a tributary connection to the Owens River via a diversion located upstream of the town of Lee Vining that delivers a substantial portion of the Lee Vining Creek flow to the constructed aqueduct. In order to clarify the passage, it has been re-written as shown below:

“Lee Vining: Future development in Lee Vining may impact Aspen Forest and Aspen Riparian Forest at Lee Vining Creek, which is a perennial tributary to Mono Lake. Future development within the watershed above the existing Owens River (via the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power aqueduct has some potential to affect the biogeochemistry of the Owens River, which is a receiving water of the aqueduct.) and to Mono Lake. As such, riparian plant communities or disturbed areas adjacent to Lee Vining Creek within and near the town, and elsewhere above the aqueduct diversion point, likely would be considered within jurisdictional waters and wetlands as defined by CWA law.”

6. **SUBSIDIZING BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD AND BEAR POPULATIONS:** The County agrees with MLC that scientific evidence has clearly established the ecological relationship between nest parasitic brown-headed cowbirds and the host species willow flycatcher at Rush Creek. Significant and attributable decline of this willow flycatcher population may be driven in part by subsidies (feeders, water sources, etc.) that are provided by the human population of the area. Lee Vining is 11 miles north of the Rush Creek population. Bears are known to adapt to town habitats when foraging resources such as improperly stored food and trash are made available. Whether these subsidies are intentional or not, they are likely to be diffusely pervasive.

The provision of bear-resistant trash receptacles could be considered assuming the cost would be borne by customers and pending approval by the Board of Supervisors. The following policy is proposed for addition to the Land Use Element:

“Action 1.A.3.d. Consider requirements for bear-resistant trash receptacles in applicable community areas.”

The County is concerned about the potential conflict between feeder use in Lee Vining and the ongoing sustainability of the Rush Creek population of willow flycatcher; however, a regulation on common household items such as bird feeders is highly impractical for the County. The issue may be best addressed through educational campaigns, a specific focus of the Mono Lake Committee. In addition, the County can include this information in an update of educational materials, such as the Living Light Guide, at a future date.

The biological assessment that was prepared in support of this update includes a description of brown-headed cowbirds as a “primary threat” to willow flycatcher in the region. In order to clarify the known threats to willow flycatcher, the second full paragraph on page 4.4-42 of the DEIR under the subheading “Lee Vining Impacts” has been amended as shown below:

“Any substantial alterations to the hydrologic function, water quality, or seasonal dynamics of Lee Vining Creek could impact the potentially occurring sensitive plant species scalloped moonwort, common moonwort, Robbins’ pondweed, and slender-leaved pondweed, and the sensitive aquatic felt lichen. Such alterations could also directly impact the potentially occurring sensitive wildlife species Mount Lyell salamander which is dependent on aquatic habitat for part of its life cycle, or could cumulatively impact population dispersal of this species. Impacts identified for habitats containing surface flows may extend downstream to its terminus at Mono Lake. Project-related disturbance to vegetation within or near the Lee Vining Creek corridor could impact nesting yellow warbler and willow flycatcher, if the disturbance occurs during the period February 15 – September 15. Recent decline in the willow flycatcher breeding population size at Rush Creek (11 miles to the south) has been attributed to the presence of the nest parasite brown-headed cowbird (Molothrus ater), which is a species that also may become resident in urbanized habitats.”

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

1. **P. 4.5-8, TABLE 4.5-1 CONCERNING DISTURBED ACREAGE OF SURFACE MINES:** The numbers for approved and disturbed acres in Table 4.5-1 based on a 2012 report of the State Mining and Geology Board are inaccurate and thus the table is hereby amended as shown below, based on the most recent mining inspection logs on file with the County for each mine. Note that the status of mines that have been closed and fully reclaimed has been changed to "closed/reclaimed."

TABLE 4.5-1: Surface Mining Operations in Mono County as of September 2012 (Updated 2015)				
Mine Name	Operator	Status	Approved Acres	Disturbed Acres
Black Point Cinder, Inc.	Sierra Aggregate Co.	Active	330	15 0
Hot Creek Kaolin Mine	Standard Industrial Minerals	Active (abandoned)	15	20
Pacific Sericite Mine	Standard Industrial Minerals	Active (idle)	5	5
Frank Sam Mine	U.S. Pumice Company	Active (idle)	856.249	335.0-90
#117 Pole Line Sites	Caltrans	Closed	40	0
#190 Baseline	Caltrans	Closed	120.37	39.6 0
#250 Rickey Ditch	Caltrans	Active	40	1.7
Desert Aggregates	Caltrans	Active	112.30	72.0
Cain Ranch	Marzano & Sons General Engineering Contractor	Active	39.6 ±4	35.330
Sonora Pit	Mono Co. Public Works Dept.	Active	3	4
Long Valley MMS	Mono County	Active	10	40
Facilities that have Closed Since 2012				
#24A North Benton	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	4	0
#116-12 Baseline	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	0	0
#135 Convict Creek	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	40	0.90
#189 Sweetwater	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	2.3	0
#205 Green Lakes	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	4.40	0
#210 Milner Fan	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	32	2
#213 Benton Hill	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	7	0
#273 Burcham Flats	Caltrans	Closed/Reclaimed	2.7	0
Harris Flat	Kiewit Pacific Company	Closed/Reclaimed	25	0

2. **P. 4.5-8, TABLE 4.5-1 CONCERNING MINING IMPACTS ON AIR AND WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATED WITH CLOSED MINES, NEW MINES, REOPENED AND EXPANDED MINES:** Closed mines, and particularly abandoned mines that pre-date surface mining laws, may indeed have water and air quality impacts. Thorough investigation of the magnitude of these impacts is beyond the scope and ability of the County's regulatory structure. Currently, there are no closed or abandoned features that have been brought to the attention of the County as significantly impacting air and water quality. The impacts associated with the potential development of new aggregate mines or the expansion of existing mines beyond already approved acreages will require additional environmental review and are not analyzed as part of this EIR. The County believes that there is existing approved aggregate capacity (including at mining locations outside the county) for anticipated construction and roadway improvements identified in the General Plan/RTP. At this broad general plan level of review, however, the County offers the information provided below concerning water quality and air quality impacts associated with mining activities.

WATER QUALITY: In response to MLC comments concerning potential impacts of mining activities on water quality, the following information is hereby incorporated into the discussion under EIR §4.5.3:

"The Lahontan Basin Plan establishes beneficial uses and water quality objectives to protect the designated beneficial uses for all surface waters (including wetlands) and ground waters in California. The LRWOCB regulates mining activities under the "IND" (Industrial Service Supply) beneficial use designation, which also includes cooling water supply, geothermal energy production, hydraulic conveyance, gravel washing, fire protection, and oil well repressurization. Basin Plan Chapter 7 (Monitoring and Assessment) indicates that

elevated metals levels have been detected in fish from streams affected by past mining activity. The discussion (on page 7-1) notes that "because of the small sample numbers and (in some cases) lack of water quality criteria, the results do not necessarily indicate impairment of beneficial uses...[but] do indicate a need for more specific study of possible problems and their causes."² These findings are echoed in a preliminary report by the Department of Water Resources stating that "The monitoring and cleanup of chromium in groundwater and the cleanup of sites contaminated by mining wastes are additional water quality needs for this region" (referring to the South Lahontan Hydrologic Region).³

AIR QUALITY: In response to MLC comments concerning potential impacts of mining activities on air quality, the following information is hereby incorporated into the discussion under EIR §4.5.3:

"With respect to air quality, surface mining operations can be a substantial source of fugitive dust as a result of specific activities such as quarrying (generally within the Quarry pit), drilling, blasting, grading, material handling, and wind erosion from disturbed areas. Fugitive dust from overburden operations occurs from grading, material handling, and wind erosion from disturbed areas. Fugitive dust also occurs as a result of haul truck traffic on unpaved roads. Surface mining operations typically implement mitigation measures in order to reduce air pollutant emissions to the greatest extent possible. Common emission reduction measures employed to reduce fugitive dust emissions include:

- Application of water and/or soil binding chemical onto unpaved roads;
- Development and adherence to a dust mitigation plan approved by a local air quality district;
- Use overland conveyor systems, powered by electric motors, to move material.

Surface mining operations typically employ the use of a substantial amount of diesel equipment. The use of on- and off-road diesel-powered equipment results in the generation of diesel particulate matter (diesel PM) emissions, which is a known carcinogen. Health-related risks associated with diesel-exhaust emissions are primarily linked to long-term exposure and the associated risk of contracting cancer. The amount to which the receptors are exposed (a function of concentration and duration of exposure) is the primary factor used to determine health risk (i.e., potential exposure to TAC emission levels that exceed applicable standards).

Surface mining operations typically implement mitigation measures in order to reduce air pollutant emissions to the greatest extent possible. Such measures could include the requirement that all construction equipment employ the use of the most efficient diesel engines available, which are able to reduce NO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} emissions by 60–90 percent (e.g., EPA-classified Tier 3 and/or Tier 4 engines⁴), and/or that construction equipment be equipped with diesel particulate filters."

3. **P. 4.5-16 CONCERNING CLAY SOILS 395:** An analysis of soil characteristics at a site-planning scale is beyond the scope of this EIR. Generally, soils within existing community areas without sewage treatment facilities are adequate for standard septic systems. Occasionally, typically due to high groundwater levels, unsuitable soils or other factors, engineered systems are required and regulated by the Mono County Health Department, Environmental Health Division. Detailed site level soils reports are required before obtaining development permits from the Mono County Health Department, Environmental Health Division and Building Division and include an analysis of percolation capacity, bearing pressure and geological hazards. However, it is noted that MLC's comment echoes a theme raised in the Draft EIR comment letter sent by the LRWQCB, which emphasizes that the requirements for individual septic systems are intended to ensure "adequate treatment of the wastewater in the vadose zone in order to be protective of groundwater resources." Please see comment letter #6, comments 2 and 3 and the County's responses, for a discussion of General Plan policies and regulations that ensure adequate waste water disposal where sewers are not available. In addition,

² LRWQCB, *Basin Plan, Chapter 7 (page 7-1)*.

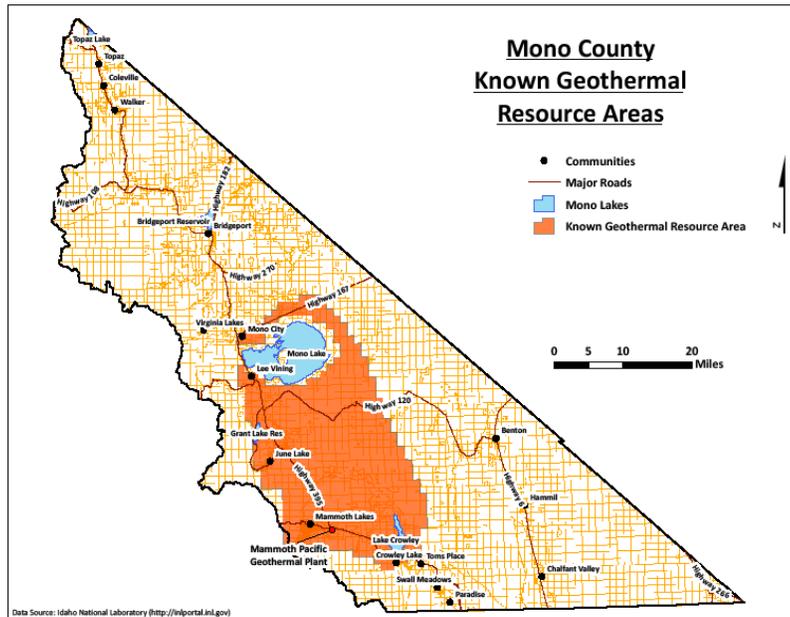
³ California Dept. of Water Resources, Prelim. Admin. Draft, *North-of-the Delta Offstream Storage Project EIR/EIS, December 2013*.

⁴ NO_x emissions are primarily associated with use of diesel-powered equipment (e.g., graders, excavators, rubber-tired dozers, tractor/loader/backhoes). The Clean Air Act of 1990 directed the EPA to study, and regulate if warranted, the contribution of off-road internal combustion engines to urban air pollution. The first federal standards (Tier 1) for new off-road diesel engines were adopted in 1994 for engines over 50 horsepower and were phased in from 1996 to 2000. In 1996, a Statement of Principles pertaining to off-road diesel engines was signed between the EPA, CARB, and engine makers (including Caterpillar, Cummins, Deere, Detroit Diesel, Deutz, Isuzu, Komatsu, Kubota, Mitsubishi, Navistar, New Holland, Wis-Con, and Yanmar). On August 27, 1998, the EPA signed the final rule reflecting the provisions of the Statement of Principles. The 1998 regulation introduced Tier 1 standards for equipment under 50 horsepower and increasingly more stringent Tier 2 and Tier 3 standards for all equipment with phase-in schedules from 2000 to 2008. As a result, all off-road, diesel-fueled equipment manufactured in 2006 or later has been manufactured to Tier 3 standards. On May 11, 2004, the EPA signed the final rule introducing Tier 4 emission standards, which are currently phased-in over the period of 2008-2015. The Tier 4 standards require that emissions of PM and NO_x be further reduced by about 90 percent. All off-road, diesel-fueled equipment manufactured in 2015 or later will be manufactured to Tier 4 standards.

septic systems are permitted and inspected by the Mono County Health Department, Environmental Health Division in compliance with the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region (Basin Plan), which provides for a detailed, site-specific analysis of a proposed septic system.

4. **MENTION OF KNOWN GEOTHERMAL RESOURCE AREAS (KGRA) AND POTENTIAL USE AS AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE:** Chapter XIV of the 2010 Master Environmental Assessment (a supporting document to the EIR) provides detailed information regarding known geothermal resources, including state designated KGRAs. Provided below is a map showing known geothermal resource areas in Mono County, taken directly from MEA Chapter XIV:

FIGURE XIV.2 GEOTHERMAL RESOURCE AREAS OF MONO COUNTY



Expansion of geothermal development on lands under the land use authority of the county would require a subsequent general plan amendment, and would be analyzed as part of the associated EIR. The General Plan Conservation/Open Space Element promotes environmentally sound development of geothermal resources, but there are no active plans to require use of this alternative energy source.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.6 HEALTH, SAFETY, HAZARDS

1. **P. 4.6-34, AIRPORT SAFETY HAZARDS (CONCERNING DRONES):** Drones appear to be an emerging issue to be analyzed and potentially included on the list of airport safety hazards. Mono County indicates that the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans for Lee Vining and Bryant Field Airports will be updated in the next few years, and the impacts of drones can be an issue that is considered. This issue crosses a number of jurisdictional boundaries, and will require substantial collaboration. The Mono Basin RPAC is actively considering this topic, and Mono County intends to work with its agency and community partners (including the Mono Basin RPAC) to develop appropriate management policies.
2. **P. 4.6-1, ASH FALL IMPACTS TO VEHICLE AIR FILTERS (CONCERNING POTENTIAL TO DISABLE EMERGENCY VEHICLES):** Mono County appreciates the ash fall mitigations suggested by MLC to ensure the ability to operate critical emergency vehicles during a volcanic event, particularly the low cost mitigation of maintaining an emergency supply of air filters. The measures will be incorporated into upcoming countywide emergency operations planning. Please note that the RTP already contains policies promoting increase efficiency of county vehicles, which could include electric vehicles.
3. **P. 4.6-5 AIRCRAFT BASED AT LEE VINING AIRPORT:** The information provided on page 4.2-13 (drawn from the Draft RTP) is correct, and the outdated information provided on page 4.6-5 is hereby amended to state:

“Lee Vining Airport: Mono County owns and operates the Lee Vining airport which is located in Lee Vining (elevation 6,802 ft.) and designated as a “Limited Use-Recreational Access” facility serving general aviation uses. The airport has three hangars and seven tie-downs; the number of single-engine aircraft based there varies generally between 1 and 4 (1 aircraft is based there presently).~~currently, no aircraft are based there.~~ The airport has a pilot-activated lighting system and a navigational beacon but no aviation fuel. In 2012, the airport reported 2,000 aircraft operations; all 2,000 were general aviation itinerant flights. Although no commercial air service is currently available, the Lee Vining airport is considered to have potential for future commercial service due to its proximity to Yosemite National Park. Future improvements include a full length parallel taxiway, lighting enhancements, perimeter fencing and a card access control gate, and an automatic weather observation system.”

4. **P. 4.6-16 CONCERNING AVALANCHE RISK NORTH AND WEST OF LEE VINING:** A closer review of the county’s GIS mapping indicates that the avalanche risk zone does include the northwestern edge of Lee Vining as indicated in the comment from MLC. The text on page 4.6-16, under the discussion of Avalanches, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“The MEA notes that avalanche hazards are one of the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County. Most avalanches occur in the backcountry, on USFS lands in western Mono County, but several community areas along the eastern mountain slopes have also experienced avalanches. There are no critical facilities or structures or at-risk populations in these areas. However, roughly 670 privately owned parcels are at risk including properties in or near Bridgeport Valley, Virginia Lakes, June Lake, Long Valley, Mammoth vicinity, the northwestern edge of Lee Vining, and the area north of Lee Vining.”

5. **P. 4.6-17 CONCERNING UNCERTAINTY OF VOLCANIC RISK:** The uncertainty pertains to several factors including the timing of volcanic activity, the type and intensity of activity, ambient conditions during an event, and the fact that monitored changes that are indicative of potential volcanic activity do not always lead to eruptions and, alternatively, may not always reliably indicate when an eruption will occur. For added clarity, the first sentence of paragraph 2 under the discussion of Volcanos (page 4.6-17) is hereby amended to state:

“Volcanic hazards are not considered to be among the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County due to the uncertainty by timing and frequency and intensity of such ~~an~~ events...”

6. **P. 4.6-17, SMOKE ALARMS AND VOLCANIC RISK:** The county concurs that smoke alarms would not eliminate (or reduce) volcanic risk. Of the factors cited on page 4.6-17 as measures to reduce or eliminate volcanic hazard risks, the 2013 State Hazards Mitigation Plan⁵ (SMHP) identifies ‘robust volcano monitoring networks and effective warning schemes’ as essential mitigation measures, and indicates that a no-cost, email based Volcano Notification Service is available to agencies, businesses and the public by registering online at <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vns/help.php>. The report also cites communication protocols, wise land-use decisions (informed by up-to-date, scientifically sound hazard zone maps), and identification of at-risk infrastructure, operations, resources, cultural assets, and populations as critical first steps in mitigation. Paragraph 2 under the discussion of Volcanos on page 4.6-17 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Volcanic hazards are not considered to be among the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County due to the uncertain timing of such an event and the ongoing Long Valley Caldera monitoring system established through the USGS Long Valley Observatory. Measures used to reduce ~~or eliminate~~ volcanic risk include: increasing awareness of the USGS volcano monitoring networks and warning programs, as well as communication protocols; facilitating wise land-use decisions by sharing hazard zone maps with private landowners; and identification of at-risk infrastructure, operations, resources, cultural assets, and populations as critical first steps in risk reduction. USGS offers a no-cost, email based Volcano Notification Service to agencies, businesses and the public by registering online at <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vns/help.php>.”

- ~~Alarms (the Building Code requires smoke and carbon monoxide alarms for any project greater than \$1000 value);~~
- ~~Regulations, Laws & Standards (used by the County to ensure technical study requirements and development standards that minimize or avoid risk, mitigate existing hazards, and protect environmentally sensitive areas);~~
- ~~General Plan policies (to reduce risks and inform the public);~~

⁵ California Office of Emergency Services, 2013 *State Hazard Mitigation Plan*, California Disaster History 1950-2012. (http://hazardmitigation.calema.ca.gov/docs/SHMP_Public_Review_Draft_ForRelease_29July2013-commenting-final.pdf).

- ◆ ~~State and Local Laws to develop mitigation for potentially hazardous structures;~~
- ◆ ~~Monitoring (conducted by USGS to detect activity, conduct research and improve emergency response)."~~

The Mono County Emergency Operations Plan, rather than the General Plan, contains implementation procedures that are relevant to volcanic risk (please refer to EIR §4.6, Health, Safety and Hazards).

7. **P. 4.6-24 MONITORING OF STREAM FLOWS (CONCERNING MONITORING LOCATIONS):** The information provided by MLC is appreciated and hereby incorporated into the discussion of Ongoing Monitoring of Stream Flows and Flood Stages on page 4.6-25:

"Ongoing Monitoring of Stream Flows and Flood Stages. USGS and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) monitor streamflows [for the Walker Basin and Hot Creek](#) in Mono County and maintain online sites with real-time stream flow data. They also provide alerts when streams reach flood stage. [LADWP reports real-time data for streams it diverts.](#)"

8. **P. 4.6-38, BRUSH CLEARING TO MAINTAIN OVERFLOW CHANNELS DURING FLOODING:** After consulting with the County floodplain manager, it has been determined that there are few channels specifically designed for flood control in the Mono Basin that are maintained by Mono County. When channels are steep, the presence of brush reduces erosion. During flood conditions roadside swales can function as overflow channels and sometimes brush clearing is required to maintain this function. The concern will be investigated in future community-based hazard mitigation planning. Regarding natural channels and undersized culverts, the county agrees that some culverts may be undersized. Of the locations listed above, two are located on County-maintained roads (Cemetery Road and Lundy Dam Road). As the flow of Mill Creek is heavily controlled and no residences exist beyond the identified culverts, or there is another way around, their replacement is not currently a high priority. However, the ongoing maintenance and evaluation of all culverts and roadway structures on the County road system will be a continued priority.
9. **POWER LINES AND WILDFIRE RISK:** Chapter 11 of the Land Use Element requires utility distribution lines to be installed underground unless a Director Review permit with Notice or Use Permit is obtained or, in the case of a subdivision, a variance. Findings are required for these various permits, and the proposed language includes consideration of public safety, wildfire hazard, and Bi-State sage grouse habitat impacts. (See Land Use Element, 11.010 D-F.) Cross-references to the Chapter 11 regulations are located in several policies in the Land Use Element, and Policy 13.C.3. of the Conservation/Open Space Element. In addition, the area policies in the Land Use Element for Swauger Creek, Mono Basin, June Lake, Upper Owens, and Wheeler Crest address underground installation of utility distribution lines as well.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.7, CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. **P. 4.7-4, MONO BASIN AS ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE KUDEZIKA PAIUTE:** The first sentence under the discussion of Mono Basin on page 4.7-4 is hereby amended to reflect the information provided by MLC:

"Mono Basin. ~~North~~ Mono Basin is ancestral home of the Mono Lake Paiute Indians ('Kudezika Paiute') and has been occupied continuously for 10,000 years."

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.8, HYDROLOGY

1. **P. 4.8-2, SEDIMENT MOVEMENT AS A NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL PROCESS:** MLC is correct, and the discussion of key terms under 'Sedimentation' on page 4.8-2 is amended below to include the language suggested in the MLC comment letter. The discussion is augmented by additional data from an EPA study of suspended and bedded sediments,⁶ which found that "Sediment starvation caused by structures such as dams and levees is ... a problem in some ecosystems, ranging from the loss of native fish species and native riparian ecosystem structure in many dammed Western rivers ... to the subsidence and loss of wetlands."

⁶EPA. *What are Suspended and Bedded Sediments (SABS)?* March 2012. http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards_criteria/aqlife/sediment/upload/2004_08_17_criteria_sediment_sab-discussion-paper.pdf

“Sediments. Sediments include particulate organic and inorganic matter that is suspended or dissolved in, and carried by or accumulated in water. In common terms, sediments and solids are frequently referred to as dirt, soils or eroded materials. Sediments and solids are associated with a wide range of adverse effects: they serve as binding agents and thereby host the transport of other contaminants (particularly heavy metals) to downstream sites; they block light penetration, increase turbidity, interfere with spawning and juvenile fish rearing activities, hasten infilling of impoundments, alter substrates, compromise beneficial uses and diminish aesthetic values. Sedimentation is considered to be a dominant process determining the fate of many contaminants in urbanized areas. Sediment movement is also a natural process that is important for the proper geomorphic functioning of rivers and streams. It can be impeded by dams, causing negative impacts downstream. EPA⁷ has found that “Sediment starvation caused by structures such as dams and levees is ... a problem in some ecosystems, ranging from the loss of native fish species and native riparian ecosystem structure in many dammed Western rivers ... to the subsidence and loss of wetlands.”

2. **P. 4.8-6, DESIGNATION OF MONO LAKE AS AN OUTSTANDING NATIONAL RESOURCE WATER:** The information provided by MLC concerning the designation of Mono Lake as an Outstanding National Resource Water, and associated regulatory water quality thresholds, is appreciated and is hereby incorporated into the text discussion directly following Table 4.8-2 on page 4.8-6 as shown below.

“There are no Mono County surface waters listed under Category 4A (Water Quality Limited Segments that are being addressed through approved TMDLs). However, several Mono County surface waters are on the 4B list (Segments being addressed by actions other than TMDLs), including Buckeye Creek, East Walker River and Robinson Creek -- all of which are listed for pathogens and being addressed through a livestock grazing management program under LRWQCB), and Mono Lake which is listed for chlorides, TDS and salinity, and being addressed through SWBCB Water Rights Decision 1631. Water Rights Decision 1631 designated Mono Lake an Outstanding National Resource Water having exceptional ecological significance; the designation carries two important regulatory water quality thresholds as outlined in Decision 1631: “The water quality which existed in November 1975 when the federal antidegradation regulation was enacted must be maintained and protected. To maintain the salinity of Mono Lake at 85 g/l or lower would require that the water level of the lake be raised and maintained at 6,379.3 feet or higher. The Water Quality Control Plan for the South Lahontan Basin was adopted by LRWQCB and approved by the SWRCB in 1975. The beneficial uses for Mono Lake designated for protection by the plan include saline water habitat, wildlife habitat, and water contact recreation. The water quality objective for salinity set by the 1975 plan is 76 g/l...would correspond to a lake level of approximately 6,386 feet... The adopted water quality objective of 76 g/l is reasonably necessary to protect the designated beneficial uses of Mono Lake.”

3. **P. 4.8-12, MONO BASIN WATERSHED ASSESSMENT (CONCERNING WATER QUANTITY):** Discussion drawn from the Mono Basin Watershed Assessment concerning Mono Basin water quantity and aquatic habitat (Page 4.8-12, 1st sentence, “a” and “c”), is hereby amended to incorporate the information provided by MLC:

“(a) **Water Quantity:** This primary issue concerns how much water flows into hypersaline Mono Lake and how this influences the rise and fall of the lake level. The report notes that from 1941 through 1989, most flows from the main tributaries were diverted to Los Angeles, and the lake level fell from an elevation of 6,417 feet to 6,372 feet in 1982. When diversions were curtailed, the lake level rose to 6,~~385484~~ feet in 2006. More recently, concern has been expressed over the distribution of water between Mill Creek and Wilson Creek in the northwestern part of the basin; (b) **Water Quality:** Although comparatively little concern has been expressed regarding water quality in Mono Basin streams, a few issues have surfaced such as sedimentation of Silver Lake, contamination of drinking water supplies in Mono City, and microbial pollution of backcountry streams. (c) **Aquatic Habitat:** aquatic habitat degradation below the LADWP diversions was a key reason for curtailing diversions; many stream reaches were wholly without water, causing extreme impacts to habitat. Efforts have since been made to restore affected channels. (d) **Recreation:** Water-related recreation issues in Mono Basin are associated with recreational fishing in Rush and Lee Vining creeks and management of the water level in Grant Lake Reservoir.”

4. **P. 4.8-20, TABLE 4.8-5, CAPACITY OF GRANT LAKE:** EIR Table 4.8-5, drawn from the Mono County Local Hazards

⁷EPA. *What are Suspended and Bedded Sediments (SABS)?* March 2012. http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/aqlife/sediment/upload/2004_o8_17_criteria_sediment_sab-discussion-paper.pdf

Mitigation Plan (page 29) is hereby amended to reflect the updated information provided by MLC:

Reservoir	Dam	AF Impounded	Stream/River	Owner	Location
Agnew Lake	Agnew	810	Rush Creek Black	SCE	June Lake Antelope
Black Reservoir	Black	185	Creek E. Walker	Settlemeyer	Valley Bridgeport
Bridgeport Reservoir	Bridgeport	42,500	River Owens	WRID LADWP	Long Valley
Crowley Lake	Long Valley	183,000 749	River Lee Vining	SCE	Lee Vining
Ellery Lake	Rhinedollar	17,298	Ck Rush Creek	SCE	June Lake
Gem Lake	Gem	47,171 500	Rush Creek	LADWP	June Lake Antelope
Grant Lake <u>Reservoir</u>	Grant	640	Desert Creek	Day & Weaver	Valley Bridgeport
Lobdel Lake	Lobdel	2,000	Robinson Creek	Plymouth	Mono Basin
Lower Twin Lake	Lower Twin	4,113	Mill Creek	SCE	Mammoth Mammoth
Lundy Lake	Lundy	125	Mammoth Ck	USFS	Antelope Valley Rock
Lake Mamie	Lake Mamie	125	Mammoth Ck	USFS	Creek Canyon Lee
Lake Mary	Lake Mary	1,200	Poore Creek Rock	Park Livestock	Vining
Poore Lake	Poore	NA	Creek	USFS	Mono Basin
Rock Creek Lake*	Rock Creek	10,077	Lee Vining Ck	SCE	Lee Vining Mammoth
Saddlebag Lake	Saddlebag	385	Walker Creek Lee	LADWP	Long Valley
Sardine Lake	Sardine	1,254	Vining Ck	SCE	Bridgeport
Tioga Lake	Tioga	150	Mammoth Ck	USFS	June Lake
Twin Lakes	Twin Lakes	26	Owens River	LADWP	Mono Basin
Power Plant Pond	Upper Gorge	1,500	Robinson Creek	Plymouth	
Upper Twin Lake	Upper Twin	5,277	Rush Creek	SCE	
Waugh Lake	Rush Ck Mdws	540	Walker Creek	LADWP	
Walker Lake	Walker				

Day & Weaver = E. Day and W.M. Weaver Jr.; SCE = Southern California Edison; LADWP = Los Angeles Department of Water and Power; Settlemeyer = Settlemeyer Ranches Inc. et. al.; Park Livestock = Park Livestock Company; USFS = US Forest Service-Inyo NF; Plymouth = Plymouth Land and Stock Co., et. al.; WRID = Walker River Irrigation District; Rock Creek Lake and Dam are located in Inyo County but would impact Mono County. For more technical information on dams and their drainage areas see: Dams Within Jurisdiction of the State of California (Bulletin 17-93), California Department of Water Resources. AF= acre feet.

5. **P. 4.8-21, BENEFICIAL AND DAMAGING RIVERINE FLOODING:** The distinction drawn by MLC between damaging and beneficial riverine flooding is valid, and has implications for planning that are of equal importance to the adverse effects of damaging riverine floods. The discussion on page 4.8-21 under paragraph 2 ('Riverine Flooding') is hereby amended to read as shown below:

"Riverine Flooding. Riverine flooding is the most common type of damaging flood event. It occurs when a watercourse exceeds its 'bank-full' capacity, often as a result of prolonged rainfall or snowmelt in combination with saturated soils. Riverine floods may last from a few hours to many days, and are directly affected by the amount and intensity and distribution of precipitation as well as soil moisture content, channel capacity, seasonal variation in vegetation, snow depth and water-resistance of surface materials. In Mono County, damaging rain-on-snow riverine flooding is most likely to typically occurs from November through April. In its comments on the Draft EIR, Mono Lake Committee noted that the most common type of flooding in Mono County occurs in the form of spring snowmelt floods that occur on all snowmelt-fed Mono County streams almost every year. The LHMP indicates that riverine flooding occurs along West Walker River and East Walker River, June Lake Loop and Old Mammoth Creek."

As an added noted, USGS has identified runoff from snowmelt (not necessarily snowmelt flooding, however) as "a major component of the global movement of water ...mountain snowfields act as natural reservoirs for many western United States water-supply systems... As much as 75 percent of water supplies in the western states are derived from snowmelt."⁸ Other sources note that snowmelt shapes riparian succession, dictates reproductive timing cues for in-stream biota, directly affects the habitat of in-stream aquatic species, creates feedbacks between riparian vegetation, in-stream habitat, and terrestrial food webs, and how sediments are transported, sorted, and ultimately deposited in

⁸USGS, "Snowmelt – The Water Cycle," August 2015, from <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclesnowmelt.html>

stream channels.⁹

6. **P. 4.8-21, MOST RECENT SERIOUS FLOOD EVENT:** The discussion contained in the penultimate paragraph on page 4.8-21 is hereby amended to incorporate the more recent flooding event identified in the comment letter from MLC, as shown below:

“The Walker River Basin flood of 1997, the most-recent serious flooding to occur in Monothe County, occurred just 8 years after another damaging flood that occurred in the Tri-Valley area during the summer of 1989, when rains carried heavy sediment loads from the alluvial fan slopes of the White Mountains into community and agricultural areas.”

7. **P. 4.8-23, ADDITION OF FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION TO REGULATORY SETTING:** The discussion contained in EIR Section 4.8.4 (Regulatory Setting), subsection 4.8.4.1 (Federal Regulations) on pages 4.8-23 to 4.8-26, is hereby modified to incorporate discussion of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as shown below:

“The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is an independent federal agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. FERC also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines as well as licensing hydropower projects. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 gave FERC additional responsibilities (outlined in an updated Strategic Plan) including the regulation, review and/or approval of (a) transmission and wholesale sales of electricity in interstate commerce; (b) certain mergers and acquisitions and corporate transactions by electricity companies; (c) transmission and sale of natural gas for resale in interstate commerce; (d) transportation of oil by pipeline in interstate commerce; (e) the siting and abandonment of interstate natural gas pipelines and storage facilities; (f) siting applications for electric transmission projects under limited circumstances; (g) the safe operation and reliability of proposed and operating LNG terminals; (h) private, municipal, and state hydroelectric projects; (i) high voltage interstate transmission system through mandatory reliability standards; and (j) energy markets. FERC also oversees a variety of associated environmental matters, and administers accounting and financial reports regulations governing the conduct of regulated companies. Regulatory requirements are enforced through use of civil penalties and other means.¹⁰ In its comments on the Draft EIR, the Mono Lake Committee noted that FERC has issued a number of licenses in Mono County, including 3 in the Mono Basin that apply to Rush Creek, Lee Vining Creek and Mill Creek; these licenses establish parameters that SCE must operate within and also outline monitoring and other mitigation requirements.”

8. **P. 4.8-32, INCOMPLETE SENTENCE, END OF PARAGRAPH 2:** The incomplete sentence is hereby deleted from the text of paragraph 2, page 4.8-32.

9. **P. 4.8-41, MONO BASIN ANNUAL RUNOFF:** The amount of runoff is hereby corrected as follows:

“Total average inflow to Mono Lake from all sources is ~~239,000~~ about 187,500 AF, with ~~annual~~ runoff from the Sierra Nevada estimated at around 150,000 AF.”

10. **P. 4.8-41, ADEQUACY OF WATER SUPPLIES SERVING MONO CITY AND LEE VINING:** In consideration of the information provided by MLC concerning current water supply in Mono City and Lee Vining, the discussion contained on page 4.8-41, paragraph 5 (Lundy Mutual Water Company) is hereby amended as shown below:

“Lundy Mutual Water Company draws water from supply wells near Mono City, using about 160 afy. The Mono Basin Watershed Management Plan indicates that current water supplies for Mono City and Lee Vining appear to be adequate to meet all anticipated demands. However, the Mono Lake Committee in its comments on the Draft EIR notes that during the 2015 drought, the Lee Vining spring-flow declined so much that the PUD began earnestly considering additional conservation measures and back-up sources of water such as building a pipeline to the wells serving the Mobil Station, and turning off irrigation to large lawn areas such as Hess Park.”

11. **P. 4.8-41, MONO COUNTY WATER RIGHT ON WILSON CREEK:** The MLC is correct that the County's water right is

⁹Yarnell, S., Viers, J., Mount, J., *Ecology and Management of the Spring Snowmelt Recession*, BioScience Magazine February 2010 / Vol. 60 No. 2 from https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/pdf/Yarnell_etal_BioScience2010.pdf;

¹⁰ FERC Website: <http://www.ferc.gov/>

associated with Mill Creek. Wilson Creek is the established name for an historic ephemeral drainage that was enhanced by Mill Creek diversions and now delivers water to Conway Ranch, Dechambeau Ranch and ultimately, Mono Lake. The aquaculture operation was technically conducted under a license agreement and not an MOU. A significant amount of infrastructure that has been developed specifically for aquaculture purposes is in place. Fish rearing is not occurring at this time, and any future aquaculture would be subject to the Conservation Easement and Conway Ranch management plan under development, in addition to the General Plan. The proposed General Plan redesignates the Conway Ranch Specific Plan area to Open Space, and commercial aquaculture activities are a permitted use under this designation.

To clarify the impacts of water diversion, Mono County is not proposing an increase in water diversion and therefore the existing rights are the current baseline for EIR analysis. In addition, Mono County currently has rights to a maximum of 16 cubic feet per second (cfs) of a total of 74.6 cfs diversion, or 22%. A portion of this water right been used in the past for non-consumptive purposes such as aquaculture, allowing for a portion of the right to return to Wilson Creek and proceed to Dechambeau Ranch and Mono Lake. The EIR analysis is based on the watershed context of 187,500 AF per year average inflow to Mono Lake from all sources, of which no more than 16 cfs is diverted by the County.

12. **P. 4.8-49, WALKER RIVER FLOOD DATE:** MLC is correct – the Walker River Flood occurred during 1997, and the listed date (2001), taken from the 2006 Mono County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (page 39) is in error. The discussion contained in Table 4.8-9 on page 4.8-49 is hereby amended as shown:

TABLE 4.8-9. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING FLOOD HAZARD MITIGATION IN MONO COUNTY
The County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through its Floodplain Regulations. The regulations limit development in the floodplain, establish a floodplain administrator, and identify requirements for future development within or adjacent to a floodplain, including raising structures above the base flood elevation.
The County implements its Land Clearing, Earthwork and Drainage Facilities ordinance to avoid or minimize erosion and siltation impacts from development that could lead to increased flooding hazards.
After the January 1997 Walker River flood, the County identified repetitive loss properties along Walker River and acquired 11 parcels in Walker, 4 in Mountain Gate, and 1 in Topaz to comply with the Stafford Act §404 acquisition program. The parcels are restricted to uses compatible with open space, recreational, or wetlands management; no new structures or improvements are allowed except a public facility open on all sides and related to allowable uses. All structures must be flood-proofed or elevated to the Base Flood Elevation plus one foot of freeboard.
In accordance with stream setback requirements in the Land Development Regulations, the County requires new development to set back adequately from surface waters for flood protection. Deviations from setback requirements in the 100-year floodplain must be reviewed by the County Floodplain Administrator prior to permit issuance.
Future development projects with the potential to cause substantial flooding or siltation are required to provide an analysis of the potential impacts prior to project approval. The analysis is required to include project alternatives or mitigation measures to avoid or mitigate potential impacts to downstream resources.
The County’s GIS system includes the FIRM maps and the DWR Awareness Floodplain Maps that are currently available for the county.
To reduce risks associated with natural hazards, Safety Element policies require the county to inform affected persons of potential seismic, geologic, volcanic, fire, flood, avalanche and other natural hazards in the area during the permit process. In compliance with state law, property sellers must notify buyers of potential hazards affecting the subject property.

13. **P. 4.8-51, LOCATION OF SCE FACILITIES ON JUNE LAKE LOOP:** The discussion contained on EIR page 4.8-51 concerning critical facilities in dam inundation zones is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Critical Facilities in Dam Inundations Zones: Southern California Edison facilities located below Lundy Lake, below Tioga Lake, and above ~~June-Silver~~ Lake (2 facilities), June Lake PUD facilities located below Grant Lake; and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Hydroelectric Generating Stations in the Owens Gorge (2 facilities).”

14. **P. 4.8-52, SEICHES IN MONO COUNTY:** The discussion contained on EIR page 4.8-52, (including discussion provided in the first paragraph under Impact 4.8(g) concerning exposure to inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow, and

discussion provided in the closing paragraph), is hereby amended to read as shown below:

“LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATING POLICIES AND ACTIONS. Seiches are earthquake-generated waves that occur in enclosed or restricted bodies of water such as lakes and reservoirs. Similar to the sloshing of water in a bowl or a bucket when it is shaken or jarred, seiches can overtop dams and pose a hazard to people and property within their reach. The Mono County Safety Element states that there is no available evidence that seiches have occurred in Mono County lakes and reservoirs. In its comments on the Draft EIR, however, the Mono Lake Committee notes that it would be more accurate to state that no large and damaging seiches have occurred in Mono County Lakes and reservoirs, though small seiches (often one to two tenths of a foot in amplitude) are common on Mono Lake during windstorms.

Tsunamis are unusually large sea waves that are produced by an undersea earthquake (also known as a ‘seaquake’) or undersea volcanic eruption. All of Mono County is separated from the Pacific Ocean by several hundred miles and an intervening mountain range (the Sierra Nevada) and not at risk of a tsunami.

Mudflows involve very rapid downslope movement of saturated soil, sub-soil, and weathered bedrock. The 2006 Multi-Hazard Plan indicates that potentially hazardous mudflows occur every year in the eastern Sierra County, and can occur in areas with a slope of 15% or more. The 2012 Mono County Safety Element references a 2012 FEMA study that examined County areas of special flood hazard. However, the study did not provide thorough information regarding alluvial fans and mudflow hazards, and the County has identified a significant need to update the flood hazard maps to correct these deficiencies. Large mudflows, such as the one that occurred in 1989 in the Tri-Valley area, can be destructive, particularly at the mouths of canyons.

Mudflows can also be triggered by volcanic eruptions, which in Mono County have ranged from small to cataclysmic. When an eruption does break out, its impact will depend on the location, size, and type of eruption as well as wind direction. An eruption during winter months could melt heavy snow packs, generating mudflows and locally destructive flooding. Volcanic hazards are not considered to be one of the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County due to the uncertainty of such an event and ongoing monitoring. The US Geological Survey (USGS) operates the Long Valley Observatory to monitor the Long Valley Caldera through; to mitigate impacts, the observatory provides a warning system.

The proposed 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan does not incorporate any land use plans, policies or objectives that would expose people or structures to an increased risk of loss, injury or death from inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow. Seiche and tsunami and damaging seiche events do not occur in Mono County, and the proposed Safety Element update includes policies to reduce the threat to public safety posed by hazards associated with mudflows. These policies are reinforced by emergency response capability outlined in the 2012 Emergency Operations Plan as well as the 2006 Multi-Hazards Plan.”

15. **P. 4.8-52, CLARIFICATION CONCERNING UNCERTAINTY OF VOLCANIC EVENTS:** The County agrees with MLC’s recommendation that the DEIR should more specifically reference the basis for referring to the uncertainty of volcanic events. As indicated by MLC, and as noted in the response to the fifth MLC comment on §4.6 (Health, Safety, Hazards), the uncertainty pertains to several factors including the timing of volcanic activity, the type and intensity of activity, ambient conditions during an event, and the fact that monitored changes that are indicative of potential volcanic activity do not always lead to eruptions and, alternatively, may not always reliably indicate when an eruption will occur. For added clarity, the final paragraph under Impact 4.8(g) concerning exposure to inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow is hereby amended to read as shown below:

“Mudflows can also be triggered by volcanic eruptions which, in Mono County, have ranged from small to cataclysmic. When an eruption does break out, its impact will depend on the location, size, and type of eruption as well as wind direction. An eruption during winter months could melt heavy snow packs, generating mudflows and locally destructive flooding. Volcanic hazards are not considered to be one of the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County due to the uncertainty by timing and frequency and intensity of such an event, and ongoing monitoring. The US Geological Survey (USGS) operates the Long Valley Observatory to monitor the Long Valley Caldera through; to mitigate impacts, the observatory provides a warning system.”

COMMENTS ON EIR §4.9, RECREATION

MLC provided no comments on EIR §4.9.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §4.10, AESTHETICS, LIGHT & GLARE, SCENIC RESOURCES

1. **P. 4.10-10, CONCERNING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION OF USFS AS A FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCY:** The discussion contained on EIR page 4.10-10 concerning the United States Forest Service (USFS) under §4.10.4 (Regulatory Setting) subsection 4.10.4.1 (Federal Regulations) is hereby amended to read as follows:

"United States Forest Service (USFS).¹¹ The National Forest Scenic Byway system was created in 1987 and is administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The system consists of 138 National Forest Byways, each administered by the designated USDA Forest Service Chief. The goal of the National Forest Scenic Byway system is to enhance rural community tourism by providing access to scenic and historic viewpoints. Although the byway system is a federal program, many of the byways are administered and maintained under state, county or local jurisdiction. These byways are designated jointly with FHWA, USFS and State Departments of Transportation. They are also eligible for special project assistance and funding through both DOT Federal Lands and other Scenic Byways programs. Five Mono County routes are designated as scenic byways; SR 120 West into Yosemite Valley; SR 120 East to Benton; SR 158 June Lake Loop; SR 203 to Minaret Vista, and ; Rock Creek Road. USFS and BLM own or lease land for a number of cell towers (including new and historical features).

USFS also manages the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, which is located in the Inyo National Forest. The Scenic Area was created in 1984 with signing of the California Wilderness Act (§304). The Act required preparation of a Comprehensive Management Plan, completed in 1989, that provides guidance, policies and direction for the protection of geologic, ecologic, cultural, scenic, and other natural resources in the Scenic Area, while allowing recreational, scientific, and other activities consistent with that goal.¹²"

2. **P. 4.10-12, Table §4.10-2 CONCERNING INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF MONO COUNTY COMMUNITIES:** Mono County appreciates the recommendations offered by MLC concerning the iconic intrinsic qualities of Lee Vining. The Design Handbook is part of the ongoing Scenic Byway project, not the General Plan Update. The County will consider this comment in the development of the final product for that project.

COMMENTS ON EIR §4.11, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MLC provided no comments on EIR §4.11.

COMMENTS ON EIR §4.12, POPULATION AND HOUSING

MLC provided no comments on EIR §4.12.

COMMENTS ON EIR §4.13, PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

MLC provided no comments on EIR §4.13.

RESPONSE TO COMMENT ON EIR §4.14, NOISE

1. **P. 4.14-10, TABLE 4.14-9 AND PAGE 4.2-5, TABLE 4.2-1 CONCERNING TRAFFIC DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR MONO BASIN:** The traffic volumes shown for US 395 at the junction with SR 120 (the Tioga pass junction) are indeed the highest in Mono County after SR 203, likely due to high visitation to Yosemite National Park and SR 120 serving as a

¹¹ USFS Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/TourUS.pdf>, accessed 3-24-15.

¹² USFS, *Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Comprehensive Management Plan, 1989*. Obtained at <http://www.monobasinresearch.org/images/legal/scenicareacmp.pdf>.

trans-Sierra route and access into California (see Table 4.2-1 and Table 4.14-3, both drawn from the Draft RTP; please note these tables have been updated per comments from Caltrans District 9). The traffic demand projections presented in Table 4.14-9, drawn from RTP Table 7, referred to (but did not explicitly clarify that it referred to) traffic passing through the Mono Basin on US 395 (north of SR 120), which is among the lowest in the county. To provide the added clarification, Table 4.14-9 is hereby amended as shown below:

TABLE 4.14-9: Traffic Demand Projections, Mono County			
	Estimated Avg. Vehicle Trips	Estimated Peak Hour Vehicle Trips	Estimated % Increase over current ADT
Antelope Valley	334.2	35.7	1.5 %
Bridgeport Valley	330.4	35.2	1.2 %
Mono Basin ¹³	120.8	12.9	2.5 %
June Lake	271.4	27.7	14.5 %
Long Valley	328.8	33.9	4.9 %
Tri-Valley	172.5	18.6	9.8 %

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON EIR §6.0, ALTERNATIVES

MLC comments supporting the approach used to identify Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative are appreciated, as is MLC’s concurrence that the concepts underlying Alternative 2 should be discussed with the RPACs and other community groups before they are submitted for formal deliberation by the Mono County Board of Supervisors. MLC support for the goals outlined in Table 6-2, as well as the priorities suggested by MLC, will also be helpful as the county prepares for future updates to the General Plan and its underlying goals and policies.

CONCLUSION

Mono County sincerely thanks MLC for its careful review and thoughtful comments on the EIR, all of which have contributed to a more thorough, accurate and useful environmental document for the proposed [2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan](#) project.

¹³ Note that the figures given for Mono Basin refer to through traffic along us 395, north of the junction with SR 120 (Tioga Pass).

**2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE
UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN
FINAL EIR**



**SECTION 4 – MITIGATION MONITORING AND
REPORTING PLAN**

2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN

FINAL EIR



SECTION 4

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

REQUIREMENT FOR MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING

The requirements for monitoring and reporting on adopted mitigation measures are outlined in CEQA Guidelines §15097 and California Public Resources Code (PRC) §21081.6. The provisions require a Lead Agency or Responsible Agency to prepare a “reporting or monitoring program for adopted or required changes to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects” as part of any EIR that has identified significant environmental effects. Where the project involves adoption of a General Plan or other plan-level document, Guidelines §15097(b) states that, “the monitoring plan shall apply to policies and any other portion of the plan that is a mitigation measure or adopted alternative. The monitoring plan may consist of policies included in plan-level documents. The annual report on general plan status required pursuant to the Government Code is one example of a reporting program for adoption of a city or county general plan.”

CEQA §15097(c) provides that “a public agency may choose whether its program will monitor mitigation, report on mitigation, or both. “Reporting” generally consists of a written compliance review that is presented to the decision-making body or authorized staff person...“Monitoring” is generally an ongoing or periodic process of project oversight. There is often no clear distinction between monitoring and reporting and the program best suited to ensuring compliance in any given instance will usually involve elements of both. The choices of program may be guided by the following: (1) Reporting is suited to projects which have readily measurable or quantitative mitigation measures...(2) Monitoring is suited to projects with complex mitigation measures, such as wetlands restoration or archaeological protection, which...are expected to be implemented over a period of time...”

APPROACH TO GENERAL PLAN/RTP UPDATE IMPACT MITIGATION

Analyses provided in this EIR indicate that approval and implementation of the *Draft 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan* may result in significant and unavoidable adverse environmental effects including:

- *Impacts to Candidate, Sensitive & Special Status Species*
- *Impacts to Riparian Habitat*
- *Impacts to Federally Protected §404 Wetlands*
- *Interference with Fish or Wildlife Movement or Migration*
- *Conflict with Local Biological Protection Ordinances*
- *Exposure to Seismic Effects and Unstable Geology*
- *Substantial Soil Erosion*
- *Loss of Mineral Resources*
- *Potential for Release of Hazardous Materials*
- *Inadequate Emergency Response*
- *Exposure to Wildland Fire Risks*
- *Exposure to avalanche, rockfall, storms, volcanism*
- *Impacts to Prehistoric or Historic Resources*
- *Impacts to Paleontological Resources*
- *Impacts to Sacred Lands*
- *Violation of Water Quality Objectives*
- *Violation of Waste Discharge Requirements*
- *Uncertain Availability of Adequate Water Supplies*
- *Erosion and Siltation from Altered Drainage*
- *Impacts on Recreational Facilities*
- *Impacts to Scenic Resources in a State Scenic Highway*
- *Degraded Visual Character or Quality*
- *Create new sources of Light and Glare*
- *Impacts on public fire and utility services*

As policy and plan-level documents, the updated *2015 RTP and General Plan* contain numerous goals, objectives, policies and actions that are specifically intended to minimize or avoid the significant environmental impacts associated with their implementation. Adopted policies and actions in the General Plan and in the RTP will be monitored through the annual report on general plan status that is required by California Government Code.

PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION AND MONITORING OF MITIGATING POLICIES AND ACTIONS

As part of deliberations concerning EIR certification and project approval, the Mono County Board of Supervisors will be required to consider adoption of the *General Plan* objectives, goals, policies and actions that will serve to mitigate environmental effects of General Plan project actions. If the Board of Supervisors elects to certify the EIR and approve the proposed General Plan and RTP Updates, the Mono County Board of Supervisors will then be responsible for ensuring the implementation of all adopted *General Plan* mitigating policies and actions. County staff will be responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures and policies are satisfactorily monitored, and for reporting to the Board of Supervisors regarding progress in achieving the adopted *General Plan and RTP* actions. The Board of Supervisors, acting on behalf of the residents of Mono County, will be responsible for considering the reports submitted by staff and determining whether the actions are being implemented in a manner that will afford the environmental protections for which they were developed. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors to amend the *General Plan* mitigating policies and actions if necessary to achieve the environmental protections herein.

In turn, the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) will be required to consider adoption of the *RTP* objectives, goals, policies and actions that will serve to mitigate environmental effects of RTP project actions. If the LTC Commissioners elect to approve the proposed RTP, the LTC Commissioners will then be responsible for ensuring implementation of all adopted RTP mitigating policies and actions. LTC staff will be responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures and policies are satisfactorily monitored, and for reporting to the Local Transportation Commission regarding progress in fulfilling the *RTP* mitigation obligations. The Local Transportation Commission, acting on behalf of the residents of Mono County, will in turn be responsible for considering the reports submitted by staff, and determining whether the measures are being implemented and enforced as intended in this Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. It will be the responsibility of the Local Transportation Commission to amend the *RTP* policies if necessary to achieve the environmental protections herein.

All adopted *General Plan* and *RTP* policies and actions will be monitored as part of the annual progress report on General Plan status that is required of all California counties (and most cities) pursuant to Government Code §65400. The annual report will be prepared in a manner consistent with State Guidelines.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS DEVELOPED DURING EIR REVIEW

During the Draft EIR analysis of potential environmental effects, a number of supplemental mitigation recommendations were developed. The purpose of the supplemental recommendations was to reduce or avoid environmental effects that were not already addressed by proposed General Plan/RTP goals, objectives, policies and actions. The supplemental mitigations were subsequently replaced by proposed policies and actions, all of which are now integral to the proposed General Plan and RTP.

The process of incorporating additional policies and actions to address environmental effects identified during the CEQA review reflects the essential purpose and intent of CEQA – i.e., “*the maintenance of a quality environment for the people of this state now and in the future*” (PRC §21000(a)). Supplemental policy and action recommendations that were developed in response to information obtained during the EIR analysis are presented in the table below.

**MITIGATING POLICIES AND ACTIONS INCORPORATED
IN RESPONSE TO THE
EIR ANALYSIS**

AIR QUALITY and GREENHOUSE GASES

C/OS Action 16.A.1.d. Comply with Mammoth Air Basin SIP requirements for vehicle miles traveled – see the Regional Transportation Plan in the Circulation Element and RTP Objective 7.C.2.

RTP Objective 7.C.2. Work with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the GBUAPCD, as applicable, to ensure the budget of 66,452 VMT for travel on a peak winter day in the Mammoth Air Basin in the unincorporated county is not exceeded. New development proposals must be reviewed and projected increases in peak VMT must be less than the VMT limit.

C/OS Action 15.A.1.c. On potential thermal biomass projects, work with applicable entities to develop a tight management plan for on-site wood chip storage and handling to avoid spontaneous wood pile combustion, and determine distance to residential neighborhoods and uses to avoid complaints about odors.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

C/OS Action 2.A.3.c. When applicable, revegetation and landscape plans should include provisions to retain and re-establish upland vegetation, especially bitterbrush and sagebrush, as important mule deer and sage grouse habitat.

C/OS Action 2.A.3.h. Maintenance agreements and procedures for roads and other infrastructure shall consider impacts to special-status species including consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies.

RTP Policy 9.B. Reduce the potential for wildlife collisions to improve transportation system safety.

RTP Objective 9.A.7. Seek funding for undercrossing passageways for mule deer where highways intersect traditional migratory routes to reduce collisions and animal mortality.

RTP Objective 9.A.8. Seek funding to widen existing undercrossing passageways for mule deer and other wildlife to reduce collisions and animal mortality.

RTP Objective 9.A.9. Incorporate measures in to the design of new roads and road upgrades to reduce collisions between vehicles and deer/wildlife, such as increasing driver line-of-sight and incorporating short sections of exclusion fencing that directs animals to areas of improved visibility.

C/OS Action 13.C.4.d. Seek ways to form partnerships that will facilitate mitigative control or eradication of invasive non-native plants in and around town areas. Identify and explore methods of forming collaborations, funding, and facilitating such programs.

C/OS Action 2.A.1.b. Project design should first seek to avoid impacts. Unavoidable impacts should next be minimized, and finally mitigated. Examples of potential appropriate mitigation measures for projects identified by Action 1.1 as having significant impacts to animal and plant habitats include:

- h. when wetland and riparian disturbance cannot be avoided, seek restoration of adjacent habitat or compensation through an acceptable mitigation fee or other program pursuant to CEQA requirements to meet §404 of the Clean Water Act;
- i. designing projects to limit the conveyance of pollutants and sediments from runoff into wetlands and riparian areas;
- j. requiring project design to minimize the redirection of wildlife movement, and in no case shall linear barriers such as fences or other design features direct wildlife onto highly traveled roadways;
- k. requiring projects with potential to impact nesting bird populations to consult with appropriate state and federal agencies, and potentially prepare a nesting bird plan approved by CDFW as a condition of approval;
- l. requiring development projects affecting and adjacent to wetland or riparian areas to undertake habitat restoration, including the removal of non-native species, when feasible, to ensure ecosystem function.

C/OS Action 2.A.1.d. Native vegetation is strongly encouraged for landscaping, erosion control, or other purposes. Use of non-native vegetation shall require an assessment and mitigation of the effects of the introduced species, and in no case shall invasive non-native species be approved.

C/JOS Action 2.A.1.e. Landscaping and revegetation plans shall include measures to control invasive, non-native plants including weeds and annual grasses.

C/JOS Action 2.A.1.f. For non-native plant removal, mechanical controls should be considered over chemical controls, where possible.

C/JOS Action 2.A.3.b. Require landscape plans to incorporate the use of native vegetation when feasible. The transplanting of existing vegetation and use of locally collected seed may be required in the landscape plan.

C/JOS Action 13.C.4.b. Revegetation plans should include measures to ensure the control of invasive, non-native plants including annual grasses.

C/JOS Action 13.C.4.c. Revegetation plans should utilize plantings from local native stock, including adjacent riparian and wetland plants, and locally collected seed when feasible.

LU Action 21.C.5.a. Work with the appropriate agencies to develop and implement a raven mitigation plan for the landfill to protect sage-grouse populations.

LU Action 1.A.3.d. Consider requirements for bear-resistant trash receptacles in applicable community areas.

C/JOS Policy 4.A.5. Projects within 30 feet of or that may otherwise impact wetland or riparian vegetation shall implement best management practices as recommended by the State Water Quality Control Board.

C/JOS Policy 4.A.7. Continue to support “no net loss” of wetlands at a regional scale.

RTP Policy 18.A.3. Support preservation of the existing heritage trees along US 395 in a manner that ensures roadway safety.

LU Action 24.F.1.a. CEQA analysis that considers direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources at Witcher and Birch creeks, including amphibians, will be required for any project that may impact these resources.

LU Action 24.F.3.f. Consult/engage with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as the responsible agency for the protection and recovery of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep prior to approving any new or renewed grazing use or altering any existing grazing use for domestic sheep.

C/JOS Action 2.A.1.r. Work with the USFWS to ensure compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

C/JOS Action 13.C.3.f. Avoid siting cellular towers in Bi-State sage grouse habitat to the extent possible; if no alternatives exist, site towers in lowest quality habitat possible.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

LU Action 18.D.1.f. Utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) including, but not limited to, the Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in the Appendix of the General Plan to minimize the effects of runoff.

C/JOS Action 4.A.8.a. As required by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, projects must provide post-construction stormwater management plans. Developers should utilize stormwater control measures that are compatible with low-impact development solutions (see General Plan Appendix), such as rain gardens, green roofs, detention ponds, bioretention swales, pervious pavement, vegetated infiltration ponds, and other measures provided by the California Stormwater Quality Association (www.casqa.org) to effectively treat post-construction stormwater runoff, help sustain watershed processes, protect receiving water, and maintain healthy watersheds.

C/JOS Action 4.A.8.c. Maintain drainage systems associated with roads and public infrastructure for stormwater management.

C/JOS Action 4.A.8.e. Subject to the availability of County resources, provide education and advice on LID measures that could be incorporated into project designs.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

C/JOS Action 3.E.1.b. Applications for out-of-basin water transfers shall be submitted to the county Planning Division and shall

include the following information: point of extraction; amount of extraction; nature and location of conveyance facilities; and identification of potential impacts to the environment such as wildlife and riparian habitat, wetlands, in-stream habitat, other water users (e.g., agricultural operators), and also including indirect effects such as the potential for increased flood risk due to reduced wetlands, and increased fire hazard risk that could result in increased sedimentation and reduced groundwater recharge capacity.

C/OS Action 3.E.1.c: In issuing a water transfer permit, the Planning Commission shall make the following findings: that the proposed project meets all reasonable beneficial water needs, including uses in-stream and for agricultural operations and recreational purposes, within the basin of origin; and that the proposed project adequately protects water quality, in-stream flows, lake levels, riparian areas, vegetation types, sensitive/rare wildlife and habitat, and related resources such as the visual quality and character of the landscape; and is not likely to increase indirect effects such as flooding, wildfire, and/or sedimentation, or reduce groundwater recharge capacity. Projects that do not adequately protect these resources shall be denied.

C/OS Policy 3.E.2.b: Applications for groundwater export projects shall obtain a Groundwater Transfer permit (Mono County Code section 20.01), which requires the assessment of the potential impacts of the project prior to project approval in accordance with CEQA, and requires findings to be made. In addition, indirect impacts of increased wildfire risk and sedimentation resulting from fire, and increased flood risk and reduced recharge rates due to reduced or degraded wetlands and riparian areas, should be considered.

LU Policy 7.B.3. Ensure that any transfer (by sale or lease) of surface water rights will not impact the natural resource values of the Bridgeport Valley.

LU Action 7.B.3.a. Monitor efforts to Save Walker Lake that may have impacts on Mono County surface water rights.

C/OS Action 5.C.2.i. Proactively collaborate with stakeholders to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from livestock and grazing activities, and recognize and support the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sierra Business Council and UC Davis incentives for ranchers to install and monitor the efficacy of grazing management practices in an effort to protect and improve water quality.

C/OS Policy 4.A.6. Discourage development within 30 feet of recharge, riparian, and wetland areas to minimize trampling, erosion and siltation impacts, and consider amending the General Plan to specify use and setback requirements. Continue to enforce setback requirements from surface waters.

C/OS Action 4.A.8.a. As required by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, projects must provide post-construction stormwater management plans. Developers should utilize stormwater control measures that are compatible with low-impact development solutions (see General Plan Appendix), such as rain gardens, green roofs, detention ponds, bioretention swales, pervious pavement, vegetated infiltration ponds, and other measures provided by the California Stormwater Quality Association (www.casqa.org) to effectively treat post-construction stormwater runoff, help sustain watershed processes, protect receiving water, and maintain healthy watersheds.

C/OS Action 4.A.8.c. Maintain drainage systems associated with roads and public infrastructure for stormwater management.

C/OS Action 4.A.8.d. Complementary design features with the potential to improve habitat such as settling basins, vaults, and bank stabilization should be considered when designing or maintaining culverts. Culverts should be analyzed and designed to limit unintended adverse impacts such as degraded water quality, erosion and siltation of wetlands.

C/OS Action 4.A.8.e. Subject to the availability of County resources, provide education and advice on LID measures that could be incorporated into project designs.

LU Action 7.B.3.b. As necessary and in conjunction with the existing Memorandum of Understanding with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, develop criteria governing the transfer (by sale or lease) of surface water rights by Mono County property owners.

LU Action 7.B.3.c. As necessary, provide the Board of Supervisors and local planning committees with updates on the sale and/or lease of Mono County surface water rights and provide comments to relevant agencies

C Policy 4.B.5. Work with special districts and other appropriate entities to meet community infrastructure needs such as water,

sewer, fire protection, etc.

C/OS Action 5.C.2.i. Proactively collaborate with stakeholders to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality from livestock and grazing activities, and recognize and support the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sierra Business Council, and UC Davis incentives for ranchers to install and monitor the efficacy of grazing management practices in an effort to protect and improve water quality.

**2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE
UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN
FINAL EIR**



**SECTION 5 – COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER DEADLINE
AND RESPONSES**

The County is not obligated to respond in writing to comments received after the formal deadline of September 29, 2015; however, resources and timing have allowed the preparation of responses to comments received by October 31, 2015. Responses may not be as detailed as those in Section 3 due to time constraints, and are included in the FEIR for completeness.

Wendy Sugimura

From: Wendy Sugimura
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 10:51 AM
To: Wendy Sugimura
Subject: FW: June Lake PUD Master Water Plan...
Attachments: 2007 Master Water_20151012114811.pdf; 2007 MWP_20151012114937.pdf

From: Juli Baldwin [<mailto:jlpuudfire@qnet.com>]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2015 12:06 PM
To: Courtney Weiche
Cc: Cheri Bromberger
Subject: June Lake PUD Master Water Plan...

Good Morning Courtney,

I have done more research on the Ms. Heinrich's statement in the CAC's General Plan update for 2015 on insufficient water for build out.

In the June Lake Public Utility District 2007 Master Water Plan Update, prepared by Boyle Engineering Corporation, May 2007 and approved by June Lake Public Utility District Board Members and General Manager, on page 27 and 28 under Future Water Demands. It is reported that both the Village System and Down Canyon System are capable of meeting the average yearly demand with their current diversion rights at buildout.

Should large development occur in the future we would mitigate with the developers. As you can see in the Master Water Plan the JLPUD has adequate water for buildout and expansion of these facilities would need to be mitigated with developers.

Since the District's update of 2007 was written nothing in the report has changed. We have gone through four years of a drought situation, the district has continually provided water service to the June Lake Loop without a problem. This next winter season may bring an average snow fall with ample supply of water. So to say that our water rights cannot handle buildout in our district is not accurate.

If you have any question give me an email.

Sincerely,

Cheri Bromberger
Vice President
Board of Directors
June Lake Public Utility District

#1

RESPONSE TO CHERI BROMBERGER JUNE LAKE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

The email dated October 12, 2015, from Cheri Bromberger, Vice President of the Board of Directors of the June Lake Public Utility District (JLPUD), further clarifies the JLPUD's position related to water supply availability in June Lake (see comment letter #3). The County notes this additional comment letter, and believes the response to comment letter #3 also addresses this Oct. 12th letter from the JLPUD.



United States Department of the Interior

Pacific Southwest Region FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Reno Fish and Wildlife Office
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234
Reno, Nevada 89502

Ph: (775) 861-6300 ~ Fax: (775) 861-6301



RECEIVED

OCT 27 2015

MONO COUNTY
Community Development

October 16, 2015

File No. 2015- CPA-0104

Ms. Wendy Sugimura
Mono County Community Development
Post Office Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, California 93546

Subject: Mono County General Plan Update and Other Associated Documents

Dear Ms. Sugimura:

This letter is in response to Mono County's update of the Mono County General Plan and other associated documents. Specifically, Mono County is updating the Mono County General Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan, and three elements of the Integrated Waste Management Plan. This is considered a "project" as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines; therefore, a draft environmental impact report (EIR) has also been prepared to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the project. The project includes goals, objectives, policies, actions, implementation programs, regulations and ordinances, and the repeal of a specific plan. We are providing our comments under the authorities of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (MBTA; 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*), and other authorities of the Department of Interior.

Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; sage-grouse)

On April 21, 2015, we announced the withdrawal of our proposed rule to list the Bi-State distinct population segment of sage-grouse as threatened under the ESA. Our decision was largely predicated on conservation commitments provided by our partners in the Bi-State area, primarily through the Bi-State Action Plan, and further by needed changes to existing regulatory mechanisms. Mono County has been an active partner in conservation of sage-grouse in the Bi-State area and plays an important role in both specific conservation efforts as well as through General Plan updates, which can more broadly influence conservation of the species by reducing conflicts among multiple user groups. We are encouraged by the draft 2015 General Plan update and believe this regulatory mechanism will facilitate long-term conservation of sage-grouse in

the area. We recognize the General Plan tends to be a fairly general or conceptual document and we encourage you to remain cognizant of the important role the General Plan will play in conservation as you move toward implementation and interpretation of the document in future years with respect to evaluating site specific developments.

More specifically, we would like to commend you on several aspects of the General Plan that we believe will be instrumental in long-term conservation of the species through reducing site specific impacts as well as limiting landscape scale concerns such as fragmentation. As delineated in the Bi-State Action Plan, the County continues to move toward the elimination of the Benton Crossing Landfill. We consider this to be extremely important and applaud your resolve to manage this specific stressor. Additionally, we strongly support your decision to withdraw the previous Conway Ranch Management Plan and designate this area as open space. While we continue to have concerns over livestock grazing in the area (*see* Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep *section below*), we believe this decision is a strong move in the right direction. Finally, we consider many of the Land Use and Conservation/Open Space Elements intended to contain growth in existing communities; limit habitat disturbance outside of communities; preserve open space; and afford deference to sage-grouse habitat during discretionary permit review will greatly enhance the Bi-State area Partners' abilities to maintain individual sage-grouse populations and the connectivity among them.

Finally, we have several comments pertaining to specific items delineated in the proposed project. We request these comments be given careful consideration.

Common Ravens

Common ravens (*Corvus corax*) can have a significant impact on nesting success of sage-grouse and populations of the species can be artificially inflated in areas where anthropogenic foods subsidies are apparent. It appears that vehicle collisions with deer is a concern within the county and several actions are identified to minimize this safety issue. Assuming these actions will not be 100 percent effective, we encourage you to explore ways to collect and dispose of carcasses, thereby removing them as potential food sources for common ravens. Similarly, ranch operations will frequently dispose of dead animals by simply hauling them to a remote corner of the ranch property and leaving the carcasses exposed on the ground (i.e., "bone yards"). Actions (as allowed by law) that eliminate or restrict disposal of dead livestock in a manner that makes their carcasses available to common ravens should also be adopted.

Communication Towers

Cellular towers have been implicated to negatively affect sage-grouse populations and devices intended to limit perching and nesting by sage-grouse predators on these structures are generally ineffective. Several actions in the Project identify the need for additional cellular towers to facilitate communication and improve safety in the County. While we recognize this need, we encourage you to be deliberative in placement of this infrastructure and to the greatest extent possible restrict placement in sage-grouse habitat.

Roads

The Regional Transportation Plan identified an interest in improving State Route 270 and the Cottonwood Canyon Road in the Bodie Hills. While we are unsure at this time as to the benefit or cost of this specific action on sage-grouse, increased vehicle traffic in general has been shown to negatively affect sage-grouse populations. Therefore, we encourage you to fully consider and discuss with Bi-State partners any actions that would increase vehicle traffic in the Bodie Hills.

Non-native Grass

We have significant concerns with nonnative annual grasses, such as cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and red brome (*Bromus rubens*), due to the substantial negative impacts these species can have on native sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.) habitats. We would strongly encourage Mono County, via the General Plan or other appropriate mechanism, to assist private land owners in addressing these invasive weed concerns.

EIR

We recommend fulfilling your commitment identified in the alternatives section of the EIR (p 6-14) to incorporate the additional proactive conservation measures identified in Alternative 3 into the proposed project at this time; including those actions described in Table 6-2 pertaining to enhancement of Bi-State greater sage-grouse habitat such as fence design and density; conservation easements; limiting the significance of impacts; and closing county roads during the breeding season.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*)

In the Draft Land Use Element section (p. II-133), Action 24.F.1.a. states that Witcher and Birch Creeks were identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as locations for the reintroduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout. We would like to clarify that these two streams are located outside of the native range of Lahontan cutthroat trout and not considered streams needed for recovery of the species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) works collaboratively with CDFW to introduce Lahontan cutthroat trout into locations that contribute to the recovery of the species and we have not had any discussions with CDFW regarding the introduction of Lahontan cutthroat trout to Witcher and Birch Creeks.

The following recovery waters on the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest within the Walker River watershed contain all the self-sustaining stream populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout in Mono County: 1) Slinkard Creek, 2) Mill Creek, 3) Silver Creek, 4) Wolf Creek, 5) Murphy Creek, and 6) By-Day Creek. Another out-of-basin stream is O'Harrel Creek which is located northeast of Crowley Lake on the Inyo National Forest. In addition to these self-sustaining stream populations, Table 1 below identifies the lakes and stream segments that are stocked with Lahontan cutthroat trout by CDFW; however, waters stocked by Lahontan cutthroat trout can change.

Table 1. Waterbodies stocked by CDFW with Lahontan cutthroat trout

County	Landowner	Waterbody Name
Mono	Inyo NF	June Lake
Mono	Inyo NF	McCleod Lake
Mono	Inyo NF	Silver Lake
Mono	Inyo NF	Steelhead Lake
Mono	City of LA	Crowley Lake
Mono	Inyo NF	Gull Lake
Mono	unknown	WF Walker River section 2
Mono	HTNF	WF Walker River section 3
Mono	HTNF	EF Walker River below Bridgeport Res.
Mono	HTNF	Bridgeport Reservoir
Mono	HTNF	Kirmen Lake
Mono	HTNF	Lane Lake
Mono	HTNF	Roosevelt Lake

Sierra Amphibians

We appreciate your recognition in Policy 2.A.13. that certain lakes and streams in the backcountry may be more appropriate for the conservation of sensitive, threatened or endangered species, such as the federally-listed as endangered Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (*Rana sierrae*) and federally-listed as threatened Yosemite toad (*Anaxyrus canorus*), as identified in Policy 2.A.13. Please note that critical habitat for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and Yosemite toad are expected to publish in the Federal Register in the near future. As recovery efforts advance for this species, we look forward to working with the County.

Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis sierrae*; Sierra bighorn)

In the Draft Land Use Element section (pp. II-9, II-10, II-79, II-81), there are discussions about supporting historical uses in the Mono Basin, including domestic sheep grazing. Currently, domestic sheep grazing occurs on both the Conway and Mattly Ranches. These two properties are located less than 0.5 miles from the Mt. Warren herd unit. The Mt. Warren herd unit is identified as an “essential herd unit” or a herd unit that is most likely to support the recovery of the subspecies in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Recovery Plan for the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (2007).

On June 17, 2014, we sent a letter to the Mono County Board of Supervisors on the draft Grant Deed of Conservation Easement Conway and Mattly Ranches indicating our concerns regarding domestic sheep grazing on these two properties. As stated in that letter, the Conway and Mattly Ranch properties are located within a predicted area of potential contact which indicates that there is a high risk of Sierra bighorn coming into contact with domestic sheep. Disease transmitted by domestic sheep was one threat identified in the final rule to list Sierra bighorn as

endangered (65 FR 20) and is considered the primary factor leading to the decline and extirpation of bighorn sheep across western North America. Consequently, we remain concerned about the continued grazing of domestic sheep in areas adjacent to habitat occupied by Sierra bighorn.

The Sierra bighorn population has been steadily increasing since it was listed; however, disease events still pose a threat to the subspecies and the effects can last for decades. Due to the potential impact to the Sierra bighorn population from domestic sheep grazing, we recommend including Sierra bighorn in Wildlife Resources section 4.5.2.6 (Section in original document should be corrected to 4.4.2.6) and discussing the potential impacts to the species. Including Sierra bighorn in this discussion would be consistent with Policy 24.F.3. (Protect wildlife and native plants, especially rare and endangered species) and Action 24.F.3.e. (Support the CDFW's continuing program to reintroduce native game species (bighorn sheep)), which were both identified in the Draft Land Use Element with Edits section of the General Plan Update (p. II-134).

We look forward to continuing discussion and collaboration toward solutions to this concern.

Sierra Nevada Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes necator*)

We recommend updating information related to the Sierra Nevada red fox. As of October 8, 2015, the Sierra Nevada distinct population segment was determined to be warranted but precluded from listing under the ESA (80 FR 60990). As a result, the Service considers this subspecies to be a candidate species under the ESA. This population occurs near Sonora Pass in Mono, Tuolumne, and Alpine Counties. We recommend that the second paragraph and Table 4.4-7 under the Biological Resources section on pages 4.4-22 and 4.4-24, respectively, be modified to reflect this new information.

Migratory Birds

Migratory birds are a public trust resource of the Service and are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. You can find a list of species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act at 50 Code of Federal Regulations 10.13. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act prohibits the "take" or possession of migratory birds; "take" under this law means to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempts to do so (50 Code of Federal Regulations 10.12).

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act is a strict liability statute, meaning that proof of intent, knowledge, or negligence is not an element of a violation of this statute. The statute's language is clear that an action resulting in the "taking" of an individual of a protected species is a violation of this law. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not specifically authorize the incidental take of migratory birds; consequently, the Service does not issue permits authorizing such take.

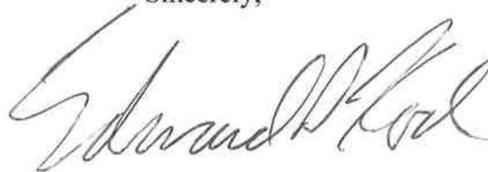
Wendy Sugimura

File No. 2015-CPA-0104

The Service carries out its mission to protect migratory birds by fostering relationships with entities that have taken effective steps to avoid take, by encouraging others to implement measures to avoid take, and through investigations and enforcement when appropriate. We encourage you to work closely with the Service to identify available protective measures when developing project plans to safeguard wildlife and to implement those measures where applicable. Examples of recommended conservation measures can be found here: <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php>.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the updated General Plan. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (775) 861-6300 or Erin Nordin, of my staff, at (760) 872-5020 or Erin_Nordin@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward D. Koch".

Edward D. Koch
Field Supervisor

Wendy Sugimura

File No. 2015-CPA-0104

References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). 2007. Recovery Plan for the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. Sacramento, California. xiv + 199 pages.

#2

RESPONSE TO TED KOCH US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Response to comments offered in correspondence from Ted Koch, Field Supervisor of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Pacific Southwest Region office, dated October 16, 2015.

BI-STATE DISTINCT POPULATION SEGMENT (DPS) OF THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

The USFWS's recognition of the County's various efforts to contribute to the long-term conservation of the Bi-State DPS is appreciated. The policies cited in the USFWS letter are the direct result of collaboration with agency partners through the Bi-State Local Area Working Group.

Common Ravens

The County has little to no authority over the disposal of carcasses from wildlife collisions on roadways and ranching operations. However, the County is concerned about the creation of anthropogenic subsidies for raven populations, and is seeking to reduce wildlife collisions and reduce the impact of the Benton Crossing Landfill throughout the closure process. The County will pass on the concern about disposal of carcasses from wildlife collisions to Caltrans District 9, which is the jurisdiction having authority, and will elevate the importance of disposal methods in future discussions about wildlife collisions.

In 2015, the County was awarded a California State Strategic Growth Council grant to support the development of a Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy Plan, which will include management practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. Since the majority of grazing occurs on lands that are not private and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the County, and other entities such as the USFWS have concerns about grazing practices, the County anticipates a highly collaborative project with input from these various stakeholders, including private ranchers. At project initiation, the County looks forward to inviting the USFWS to participate in the project to help craft best management practices to avoid and minimize grazing impacts, including the disposal of dead livestock to reduce subsidies available to ravens.

Communication Towers

The County acknowledges the USFWS comment, and hereby adds the following action to the Conservation/Open Space Element:

Action 13.C.3.f. Avoid siting cellular towers in Bi-State sage grouse habitat to the extent possible; if no alternatives exist, site towers in lowest quality habitat possible.

The County acknowledges that raptor "deterrents" have been shown to be ineffective, particularly on electrical transmission infrastructure. However, to clarify, the County requires raptor "proofing," which we understand to be a different device than a "deterrent," is considered by the County's contract biologist to be a standard and effective measure, and has proven to be effective on past projects. The County suggests a future discussion with the USFWS to review the details and effectiveness of this measures.

Roads

The USFWS's comment is acknowledged. Paving of SR 270 and/or Cottonwood Canyon Road may or may not increase traffic volume, a project-specific analysis would be undertaken at the time of CEQA and/or NEPA review.

Non-Native Grass

The biological assessment accompanying the EIR agrees that cheatgrass is a substantial threat to sage-grouse habitat. The County is aware of this threat and the General Plan contains (or has added) the following policies to the Conservation/Open Space Element to address the issue:

Action 13.C.4.d. Seek ways to form partnerships that will facilitate mitigative control or eradication of invasive non-native plants in and around town areas. Identify and explore methods of forming collaborations, funding, and facilitating such programs.

Action 2.A.1.e. Landscaping and revegetation plans shall include measures to control invasive, non-native plants including weeds and annual grasses.

Action 2.A.1.f. For non-native plant removal, mechanical controls should be considered over chemical controls, where possible.

Action 13.C.4.b. Revegetation plans should include measures to ensure the control of invasive, non-native plants including annual grasses.

The County will include control of invasive species in future outreach efforts as well, such as a revised edition of the *Living Light Guide*.

EIR

To clarify, the EIR discloses these additional proactive conservation measures for consideration by the public, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors, and recommends the policies and regulations be vetted through the Regional Planning Advisory Committees prior to any adoption. The County appreciates the USFWS's prioritization of the sage grouse conservation policies.

LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT

The County appreciates the additional information regarding Lahontan cutthroat trout and will file the information appropriately. Please see comment letter #2b from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the County's response and policy modification.

SIERRA AMPHIBIANS

The County looks forward to working with the USFWS as critical habitat designation and recovery efforts for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and Yosemite toad proceeds.

SIERRA NEVADA BIGHORN SHEEP

Comments regarding the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep were also raised by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (comment letter #2c), Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation (comment letter #4), and an earlier comment by the USFWS (comment letter #11). As described in the County's response to #2c, the County supports recovery efforts and the General Plan policies do not directly conflict with bighorn sheep management. In addition, a policy has been added regarding the grazing domestic sheep, and the EIR has been modified.

SIERRA NEVADA RED FOX

The determination of the Sierra Nevada red fox as a candidate species under the ESA occurred subsequent to the closing of the comment period. However, the County is willing to modify the EIR as this is a simple re-labeling with no known environmental or policy impacts at this time. The EIR is hereby modified on p. 4-4-22 as follows:

The CDFW ranks sensitive wildlife according to Heritage Program standards that reflect the degree of imperilment the species faces within California. CDFW may additionally assign Species of Special Concern status for declining

species that are considered to be in greatest need of conservation (Table 4.4-6). Owens tui chub, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, and willow flycatcher (*E. t. ssp. extimus*) are listed under the federal ESA as Endangered. Greater sage grouse (Bi-State DPS) was proposed under the federal ESA to be listed as Threatened, and the proposal was withdrawn in 2015. Owens tui chub, willow flycatcher (all ssp.), and bald eagle are listed under the State of California's ESA as Endangered. Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, Swainson's hawk, bank swallow, and Sierra Nevada red fox are State listed as Threatened. Fisher (West Coast DPS) is a Candidate species for listing as threatened under both federal and state ESA law, and Sierra Nevada red fox (Sierra Nevada DPS) is a Candidate species under federal ESA law. Critical Habitat designations pursuant to the ESA for listed species in Mono County do not currently intersect any of the 16 unincorporated communities, or any County roads or other facilities.

In addition, Table 4.4-7 is hereby modified as follows:

<i>Taxonomic Group</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>State Ranking</i>	<i>Agencies</i>	<i>ESA</i>
<i>Vulpes vulpes necator</i>	Sierra Nevada red fox	S1	USFS = S	ST, <u>FTC</u>

MIGRATORY BIRDS

In addition to the response to the USFWS's earlier letter (see comment letter #11), the following action is hereby added to the Conservation/Open Space Element:

Action 2.A.1.r. Work with the USFWS to ensure compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.¹⁴

¹⁴ Recommended conservation measures are available at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php>

**2015 MONO COUNTY RTP, GENERAL PLAN, CIWMP, AND NOISE ORDINANCE
UPDATES; AND REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN
FINAL EIR**



SECTION 6 – NOTICES OF DETERMINATION

**MONO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PROPOSED 2015 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, GENERAL PLAN, COUNTYWIDE
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND
REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN**

FINAL EIR



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
State Clearinghouse SCH #2014061029**

TO: Mono County Clerk Recorder
P.O. Box 237
Bridgeport, CA 93517

FROM: Mono County Community Devt. Dept.
Post Office Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination pursuant to Public Resources Code §21152

PROJECT TITLE: 2015 Mono County Regional Transportation Plan, General Plan, Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, and Noise Ordinance Updates; and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan

COUNTY CONTACT: Wendy Sugimura, 760.924.1814

CONSULTANT: Sandra Bauer, Bauer Planning & Environmental Services, Inc. 714.508.2522

LOCATION: All unincorporated areas and communities of Mono County, California; and the incorporated town of Mammoth Lakes for portions of the Regional Transportation Plan and Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan

DESCRIPTION: The 2015 Mono County Regional Transportation Plan, General Plan, Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, and Noise Ordinance Updates; and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan (2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan) includes a comprehensive update to the Land Use, Circulation, Conservation/Open Space, Safety, and Noise elements, and appendices of the General Plan; as well as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), including the Regional Blueprint, Bicycle Transportation Plan, and Trails Plan; three elements of the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP); Noise Ordinance; and the repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan. The project is a comprehensive and overarching policy document that will guide policy decisions throughout the 3,132-square mile planning area over the coming years, and includes goals, objectives, policies, actions, programs, maps and figures. The General Plan and RTP update continue to focus growth in and adjacent to existing communities to avoid growth in environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural lands, and support sustainable, healthy, and livable communities. The 2015 Updates will replace the current General Plan elements, RTP, CIWMP and Noise Ordinance.

This Notice is to advise that the County has approved the proposed 2015 Updates and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan Project, and has made the following determinations regarding the project in its approved form:

1. The project would have a significant adverse effect on the environment.
2. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the project pursuant to CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the project in the form of project goals, policies, and actions that were directly incorporated.
4. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for this project.
5. Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Final EIR, with comments and responses and a record of the project approval, is available to the general public at the Mono County Community Development Department, located in Minaret Mall at 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite P, in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, California.

Signature: _____

Name & Title: _____

Date Received for Filing and Posting: _____

**MONO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PROPOSED 2015 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, GENERAL PLAN, COUNTYWIDE
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND NOISE ORDINANCE UPDATES; AND
REPEAL OF THE CONWAY RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN
FINAL EIR**



NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
State Clearinghouse SCH #2014061029

TO: State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning & Research
Post Office Box 3044

FROM: Mono County Community Devt. Dept.
Post Office Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination pursuant to Public Resources Code §21152

PROJECT TITLE: 2015 Mono County Regional Transportation Plan, General Plan, Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, and Noise Ordinance Updates; and Repeal of the Conway Ranch Specific Plan

COUNTY CONTACT: Wendy Sugimura, 760.924.1814

CONSULTANT: Sandra Bauer, Bauer Planning & Environmental Services, Inc. 714.508.2522

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Signature: _____

Name & Title: _____

Date Received for Filing and Posting: _____