



2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The project site is located in the unincorporated area of eastern Madera County, California near the southeast border of Mariposa County. The project area is situated along Opah Drive, approximately 0.75-mile north of its intersection with Harmony Lane.

The project area consists of approximately 487 acres proposed for residential uses and water storage facilities. The site is located adjacent to the Sierra Meadows Golf Course, which is an existing 18-hole golf course situated on approximately 142 acres.

The proposed Sierra Meadows Estates Planned Residential Development (PRD) Project involves buildout of 315 single-family residential lots and necessary infrastructure to support the development. The project would include one (1) water reservoir facility with a storage capacity of 210 acre-feet to supplement the existing 93 acre-feet of water storage in three existing ponds to store a total of approximately 309 acre-feet of water. Additional project features include onsite water and wastewater treatment plants. The project would be developed in a total of twelve (12) phases on approximately 487 acres (refer to Section 3.5, *Phasing*). Lots would range in size from 7,000 square feet (sf) to just over six (6) acres. Landscape and fencing would be placed at the discretion of the individual property owners and would not be provided by the Project Applicant.

Grading would be required for residential lots, the roadway system and the water reservoir facilities. Typical construction of the residential lots would include cut and fill areas to provide a level building pad area. The smaller lots would consist of a greater ratio of graded area to undisturbed area when compared to the larger lots. For example, lots designated for Low Density Residential (LDR) uses would be almost entirely graded to accommodate the building pad. These lots would range in size from 7,000 sf. to one (1) acre. In contrast, a typical lot designated for Rural Estate Residential (RER) land uses would be a minimum of five (5) acres and would include a building pad of approximately 0.5 acres (21,000 sf.). Thus, these lots would consist of a minimum of approximately 4.5 acres of undisturbed area. Overall, the project design would maintain a relatively even balance of total cut and fill materials and minimize the amount of cut material that would be necessary to transport offsite.

Numerous roadways would be constructed throughout the development. Opah Drive would be extended in the southeastern portion of the project area to accommodate the residential lots in Phase I of the proposed project. The design of the roadway system would provide two points of access to the project site. Harmony Lane to Opah Drive would provide the main point of access from SR-49.



2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES/MITIGATION SUMMARY

The following is a brief summary of the impacts, mitigation measures, and unavoidable significant impacts identified and analyzed in Section 5.0 of this EIR. Refer to the appropriate EIR Section for additional information.

<u>EIR SECTION</u>	<u>IMPACTS</u>	<u>MITIGATION MEASURES</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION</u>
5.1	LAND USE AND RELEVANT PLANNING		
	Madera County General Plan		
5.1-1	<i>The proposed Project is consistent with the land use plan, policies and regulations set forth in the Madera County General Plan. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant following compliance with the recommended mitigation measures, regulatory framework and General Plan Amendment approval.</i>	5.1-1 Refer to Mitigation Measures outlined in Sections 5.2 through 5.10 of this EIR.	No unavoidable significant impacts related to land use and relevant planning have been identified following compliance with the recommended mitigation measures and regulatory framework, and the policies and standards of the Madera County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, and the Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan.
	Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan		
5.1-2	<i>The proposed Project is consistent with the land use plan, policies and regulations set forth in the Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant following compliance with the recommended mitigation measures and regulatory framework, and General Plan Amendment approval.</i>	5.1-2 Refer to Mitigation Measures outlined in Sections 5.2 through 5.10 of this EIR.	
	Madera County Zoning Ordinance		
5.1-3	<i>The proposed Project is consistent with the land use plan, policies and regulations of the Madera County Zoning Ordinance. Analysis has concluded that a less than significant impact would occur with approval of a Zone Change.</i>	5.1-3 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Cumulative Impacts		
5.1-4	<i>Buildout of the proposed Project, together with development anticipated by the Madera County General Plan, would increase the intensity of land uses in the area. Analysis has concluded that cumulative impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.1-4 No mitigation measures are recommended.	



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5.2	AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE		
	Construction-Related Aesthetic/Light and Glare Impacts		
5.2-1	<i>Grading and construction activities associated with Project implementation would alter the visual character/quality of the site and the surrounding area. Analysis has concluded with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.2-1a Construction equipment staging areas shall be located away from existing residential uses and appropriate screening (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material), used to buffer views of construction equipment and material, when feasible. Staging locations shall be indicated on project Final Development Plans and Grading Plans and are subject to review and approval of Madera County. Compliance with this measure is subject to periodic field inspection by Madera County Staff.	The following aesthetics/light and glare impacts would remain significant and unavoidable following mitigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction-related aesthetic/light and glare impacts; • Visual character or quality of the site; • Effects on a scenic vista; and • Cumulative aesthetic impacts.
		5.2-1b All construction-related lighting associated with the construction of new roadways and the installation of utilities shall be located and aimed away from adjacent residential areas. Lighting shall use the minimum wattage necessary to provide safety at the construction site. A construction safety lighting plan shall be submitted to Madera County for review concomitant with Grading Permit applications for the subdivision of the lots.	If Madera County approves the proposed Project, the County shall be required to cite their findings in accordance with Section 15091 of CEQA and prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with section 15093 of CEQA.
	Site Character		
5.2-2	<i>Implementation of the proposed Project would permanently change the visual character of the site from undeveloped, foothill woodlands to residential. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.2-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Area Viewshed		
5.2-3	<i>Implementation of the proposed Project would adversely impact scenic vistas. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.2-3 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Long-Term Light and Glare Impacts		
5.2-4	<i>The proposed Project would introduce additional light and glare on-site that could affect the surrounding land uses and future residents. Analysis</i>	5.2-4 Prior to final structural approval, the following design features shall be incorporated into applicable building plans:	



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has concluded with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.

- Project elevations and materials of proposed structures and facilities shall not produce excessive glare.
- All security light fixtures and standards shall be either shielded or directed away from neighboring properties and streets. Exposed bulbs shall not be permitted. All new installation fixtures shall have glare control shields.
- The type and location of lighting standards and the intensity of lighting shall be approved by Madera County Engineering and General Services Department, Building Division.

Cumulative Impacts

5.2-5 *Buildout of the proposed Project, together with development anticipated by the Madera County General Plan, would alter the nature and appearance of the area and contribute to the loss of undeveloped areas. Analysis has concluded that cumulative impacts would be significant and unavoidable.*

5.2-5 No mitigation measures are recommended.

5.3 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Year 2025 Traffic Analysis

5.3-1 *Project implementation, with year 2025 traffic conditions, would result in an increase in traffic volumes that may exceed an County's LOS D Standard, pursuant to the Madera County General Plan. Analysis has concluded that implementation of the recommended mitigation measure would reduce impacts to the intersection of Harmony Lane and State Route 49 to a less than significant level.*

5.3-1 The Project Applicant's pro-rata share payment to the area-wide circulation improvements shall pay for the project's fair share contribution to the identified roadway improvement as follows:

- Harmony Lane/SR-49: Modify eastbound SR-49 approach from one left-turn lane and one through lane to consist of one left-turn lane and two through lanes. The additional eastbound through lane should be a minimum of 200 feet in length plus taper lengths in accordance with Caltrans design standards. Implementation of this mitigation measure should be coordinated with Caltrans District 6 staff.

No unavoidable significant impacts related to traffic and circulation have been identified following implementation of recommended mitigation measures and compliance with applicable requirements set forth by Madera County.



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	Safety Hazards		
	5.3-2 <i>Project implementation may increase hazards to vehicles due to planned roadway improvements. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.3-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Cumulative Impacts		
	5.3-3 <i>Project implementation would contribute to year 2025 traffic conditions that would result in an increase in traffic volumes that may exceed Madera County's LOS D Standard. Analysis has concluded that cumulative impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.3-3 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
5.4	AIR QUALITY		
	Short-Term (Construction) Emissions		
	5.4-1 <i>Temporary construction-related dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction within the Project area. Analysis has concluded that these short-term impacts would be significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.4-1a Construction of the Project requires the implementation of a dust control plan as set forth under Regulation VIII, <i>Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District</i> . The following mitigation measures, in addition to those required under Regulation VIII, shall be implemented to reduce fugitive dust emissions associated with the Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, covered with a tarp or other suitable cover, or vegetative ground cover.• All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.• All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut and fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking.	The following air quality impacts would remain significant and unavoidable following mitigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NO_x from construction activities;• Cumulative air quality impacts. If Madera County approves the project, the County shall be required to cite their findings in accordance with Section 15091 of CEQA and prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Section 15093 of CEQA.



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- When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.
- All operations shall limit or expeditiously remove the accumulation of mud or dirt from adjacent public streets at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions. Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)
- Following the addition of materials to, or the removal of materials from, the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized of fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
- Within urban areas, trackout shall be immediately removed when it extends 50 or more feet from the site and at the end of each workday.
- Any site with 150 or more vehicle trips per day shall prevent carryout and trackout.
- Asphalt-concrete paving shall comply with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Rule 4641 and restrict the use of cutback, slow-cure and emulsified asphalt paving materials.
- Limit traffic speeds on unpaved roads to 15 mph.
- Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.

5.4-1b The following measures shall be implemented by the construction



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contractor to minimize construction exhaust emissions:

- Heavy construction equipment shall be properly tuned and maintained to reduce emissions. Construction equipment shall be fitted with the most modern emission control devices. The construction manager shall monitor compliance with the measure and is subject to periodic inspection by the City.
- The Contractor shall install or utilize the extent feasible construction equipment incorporating catalyst equipped engines and/or tier II engines.
- Require vapor control from the transfer of fuel from the fuel truck to vehicles both during construction and subsequent operations.
- Diesel powered equipment shall be located as far away as possible from sensitive land uses. Specifically, diesel compressors, pumps and other stationary machinery shall be located to the extent feasible, away from sensitive receptors.
- Construction equipment shall be shut off to reduce idling when not in direct use for extended periods of time.

5.4-1c The construction contractor shall adhere to SJVAPCD District Rule 4641 (*Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations*) to reduce emissions during asphalt paving activities. This rule applies to the manufacture and use of cutback asphalt, slow cure asphalt and emulsified asphalt for paving and maintenance operations.

5.4-1d The construction contractor shall adhere to the SJVAPCD District Rule 4601 (*Architectural Coatings*) to limit volatile organic compounds from architectural coatings. This rule specifies architectural coatings storage, clean up and labeling requirements.



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	Long-Term (Operational) Emissions		
5.4-2	<i>Long-term mobile emissions would occur as a result of Project implementation. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.4-2a The project shall incorporate the installation of EPA-certified wood burning stoves or fireplaces. If this is not feasible, then the installation of a ceramic coating on the honeycomb inside a catalytic combustor shall be utilized or the use of natural gas fireplaces may be used as a feasible alternative. The project shall also comply with SJVAPCD District Rule 4901 (<i>Wood Burning Fireplaces and Wood Burning Heaters</i>). 5.4-2b Prior to development of the Sewer Treatment Plant and Water Treatment Plant, the Applicant shall submit the plans and specifications to the SJVAPCD Small Business Assistance Office for review to determine what specific permitting requirements are necessary (if any).	
	Conformity With Air Quality Attainment Plan		
5.4-3	<i>The Project would be consistent with the Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP) criteria. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.4-3 No mitigation measures are required.	
	Cumulative Impacts		
5.4-4	<i>Impacts to regional air quality resulting from the proposed Project and cumulative projects may impact existing regional air quality levels on a cumulative basis. Analysis has concluded that cumulative impacts related to air quality would be significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.4-4 Refer to Mitigation Measures 5.4-1a through 5.4-1d.	
5.5	NOISE		
	Short-Term Construction Noise Impacts		
5.5-1	<i>Grading and construction within the Project area would result in temporary noise and/or vibration impacts to nearby noise sensitive receptors. Analysis has concluded that construction noise and vibration impacts would be less than significant following compliance with the County regulations and implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.</i>	5.5-1a Construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday and prohibited on Sundays and Federal Holidays. 5.5-1b All construction equipment, fixed or mobile, shall be equipped with properly operating and maintained mufflers, to the satisfaction of the County Engineer.	No unavoidable significant impacts related to noise have been identified following implementation of recommended mitigation measures and compliance with applicable requirements set forth by Madera County.



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		5.5-1c Stationary construction shall be placed such that emitted noise is directed away from sensitive noise receptors, to the satisfaction of the County Engineer.	
		5.5-1d Stockpiling and staging areas shall be located as far as practical from noise sensitive receptors during construction activities, to the satisfaction of the County Engineer.	
		5.5-1e If blasting is required during construction of the reservoir, a qualified geophysical firm, approved by Madera County, shall monitor noise and vibration levels during blasting activities. The geophysical firm shall ensure that vibration due to blasting during reservoir construction is limited to a peak particle velocity of 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) at the nearest sensitive receptor (i.e., residence). If vibration measurements indicate at any time that vibration due to blasting at any sensitive receptor has exceeded a peak particle velocity of 0.2 in/sec, the geophysical firm shall cease blasting and immediately notify Madera County. A mitigation plan shall then be developed by the geophysical firm to achieve compliance with the maximum allowable peak velocity. The plan shall be reviewed and approved by Madera County.	
	Long-Term Noise Impacts		
	5.5-2 <i>Project implementation would generate additional vehicular travel on the surrounding roadway network, thereby resulting in noise level increases. Analysis has concluded that long-term noise impacts would be less than significant for all analyzed roadway segments in the Year 2025 traffic scenario.</i>	5.5-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Stationary Noise		
	5.5-3 <i>Project implementation would result in an increase in on-site noise. Analysis has concluded that stationary source impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with adherence to the Madera County General Plan policies relating to noise level</i>	5.5-3 Noise levels emanating from Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) units, the water treatment plant and the sewer treatment plant shall comply with the Madera County General Plan Policy 7.A.5, which sets exterior control noise limits.	



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standards and implementation of the recommended mitigation measure.

Cumulative Impacts

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| 5.5-4 | <i>Implementation of the Sierra Meadows Project, combined with development anticipated by the Madera County General Plan, would increase the ambient noise levels in the site vicinity. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i> | 5.5-4 | No mitigation measures are recommended. |
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5.6 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Foothill Woodland Vegetation

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| 5.6-1 | <i>Development of the proposed Project could impact up to 500 acres of foothill woodland vegetation that is common throughout the Sierra Nevada foothills. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.</i> | 5.6-1a | Prior to the onset of construction activities, the Project Applicant shall contract with an Arborist to complete a tree survey in the developable area focused on landmark trees. Upon completion of the survey, the arborist will submit a tree survey map of landmark trees that may be disturbed during development. If no landmark trees are found, no further studies are necessary. The survey map shall be reviewed and approved by Madera County. |
| | | 5.6-1b | Pursuant to Mitigation Measures 5.6-1a, if landmark trees are found during the tree survey that must be removed during construction activities, then a landmark tree mitigation and monitoring plan shall be prepared by an arborist and subject to review and approval by Madera County. |

Habitat for Common Wildlife

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| 5.6-2 | <i>Development of the proposed Project would result in the loss of habitat for common wildlife currently utilizing the Project site. Analysis has concluded that impacts are less than significant.</i> | 5.6-2 | No mitigation measures are recommended. |
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Special-Status Plant Species

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| 5.6-3 | <i>Development of the proposed Project could result in removal of habitat for four special-status plant species potentially occurring on the Project site including Madera linanthus, Mariposa pussy-paws, Rawson's flaming-trumpet, and Small's southern</i> | 5.6-3 | No mitigation measures are recommended. |
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clarkia. Analysis has concluded that since survey results have concluded that the species do not occur onsite, implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to these plant species.

Special-Status Invertebrate Species

Valley Elderbury Longhorn Beetle

5.6-4 *Implementation of the proposed Project could result in removal of potential habitat for Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB). Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures in this Section and in Appendix 15.6, impacts would be less than significant.*

5.6-4 As VELB habitat exists on the project site and if elderberry shrubs in the Project area cannot be avoided, consultation with USFWS shall be required. If feasible, the Project shall be revised to avoid removal of or indirect impacts to elderberry shrubs. Typically, the USFWS requires a 100-foot setback from the outer dripline edge of each shrub; however, this setback may be reduced substantially depending on the site design. If shrubs cannot be avoided, a mitigation plan prepared by a qualified biologist and subject to review and approval by the USFWS, which must include one or more of the following, shall be implemented:

- Obtain credits at an approved mitigation bank; or
- Implement an onsite mitigation and monitoring plan that includes transplantation of the shrub and planting of elderberry seedlings. Specific transplanting procedures shall be included in the plan and shall follow the measures outlined in the USFWS *General Compensation Guidelines for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle* (July 1999). All transplanting shall occur during the shrub's dormant season (November through mid-February). Elderberry seedlings shall be planted for all shrubs with stems measuring one inch or greater at ground level that are transplanted or destroyed. Elderberry seedlings shall be planted in an approved mitigation location and shall follow mitigation ratios (seedlings per shrub disturbed) outlined in the USFWS *General Compensation Guidelines for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle* (July 1999). Ratios are



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		based on location (riparian vs. non-riparian), stem diameter at ground level, and presence or absence of exit holes of affected elderberry shrubs and range from 1:1 to 8:1.	
	Special-Status Amphibian/Reptile Species		
	<u>California Horned Lizard</u>		
5.6-5	<i>Project implementation would not result in removal and/or disturbance of potential habitat for the California horned lizard. Analysis has concluded that impacts are less than significant.</i>	5.6-5 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	<u>California Red-Legged Frog</u>		
5.6-6	<i>Project implementation could result in removal and/or disturbance of potential habitat for the California red-legged frog (CRLF). Analysis has concluded that the likelihood of the species' occurrence on the project site is low and therefore the project is not likely to cause significant adverse impact to CRLF.</i>	5.6-6 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	<u>Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog</u>		
5.6-7	<i>Project implementation could result in removal and/or disturbance of potential habitat for the Foothill yellow-legged frog (FYLF). Analysis has concluded that that the likelihood of the species' occurrence on the project site is low, and therefore the project is not likely to cause significant adverse impacts to FYLF.</i>	5.6-7 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	<u>Western Pond Turtle</u>		
5.6-8	<i>Project implementation is unlikely to result in removal and/or disturbance of potential habitat for the Western pond turtle. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.6-8 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Special-Status Bird Species		
5.6-9	<i>Development of the proposed Project could result in disturbance to nesting raptors. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.6-9a If Project construction is proposed during breeding season (February through August), a focused survey for raptors and their nests shall be conducted in the Project area within 30 days prior to the beginning of	



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construction activities by a qualified biologist in order to identify active nests on the Project site. The survey shall be reviewed and approved by Madera County and/or CDFG. If no active nests are identified during the surveys or if Project construction is proposed to occur during the non-breeding season (September through January), no further mitigation would be required. If active nests are identified in the Project area during the focused surveys, Mitigation Measure 5.6-9b shall be implemented.

5.6-9b Pursuant to Mitigation Measure 5.6-9a, if active nests are identified in the Project area during the focused surveys for raptors, no construction activities shall take place within a certain distance of raptor nests (to be determined under consultation) with CDFG, until the young have fledged. Trees containing nests that must be removed as a result of Project implementation shall be removed during the non-breeding season (September through January). Madera County and/or CDFG shall monitor and enforce Mitigation Measure 5.6-9b.

Special-Status Bat Species

5.6-10 *Development of the proposed Project is unlikely to result in disturbance of breeding bat species. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.*

5.6-10 No mitigation measures are recommended.

Sensitive Habitats

Valley Foothill Riparian Habitat

5.6-11 *Development of the proposed Project could result in removal and disturbance of valley foothill riparian habitat. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.*

5.6-11a Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFG, pursuant to Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, for each stream crossing and any other activities affecting the bed, bank, or associated riparian vegetation of the stream.

5.6-11b To ensure impacts to Valley foothill riparian habitat is minimized, during grading plan review by Madera County, the County shall ensure that



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the buffer around riparian habitats is widened to encompass the entire riparian corridor and provides a 50-foot buffer from the canopy edge as per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.4.

5.6-11c During construction activities within 100 feet of riparian habitats, such as the construction of road crossings, valley foothill riparian habitat that is not proposed for removal shall be protectively fenced in the areas where construction activity will directly impact the habitat. This fence shall be maintained until all construction activities are completed.

5.6-11d Riparian vegetation removed as part of construction activities shall be replaced at a 3:1 (3 new acres per one lost acre) mitigation ratio, per Madera County General Plan - Policy 5.D.6.

Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.

5.6-12 *Development of the proposed Project could result in fill of jurisdictional waters of the U.S. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.*

5.6-12a Based upon the jurisdictional waters of the U.S. delineation, an impact/fill map shall be submitted to the Corps with the appropriate Section 404 permit application. A Section 401 Water Quality certification or waiver also is required.

5.6-12b Any jurisdictional waters that would be lost or disturbed shall be replaced or rehabilitated on a "no-net-loss" basis in accordance with the Corps' mitigation guidelines and the Madera County General Plan (Policy 5.D.2). Habitat restoration, rehabilitation, and/or replacement shall be at a location and by methods agreeable to the Corps.

5.6-12c Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFG, pursuant to Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code, for each stream crossing and any other activities affecting the bed, bank, or associated riparian vegetation of the stream. If required, the Project Applicant shall coordinate with CDFG in developing appropriate mitigation, and shall abide by the conditions of any executed permits.



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	Wildlife Movement Corridors		
	5.6-13 <i>The migratory Oakhurst deer herd is unlikely to migrate through the project site, and the proposed project is unlikely to create obstacles to the home range movements of resident deer. Large buffers along Miami and Carter Creeks would facilitate the movement of various species through the site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no specific mitigation is proposed.</i>	5.6-13 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Cumulative Impacts		
	5.6-14 <i>Cumulative development in the Project area would impact the area's biological resources. Analysis has concluded that cumulative impacts would be significant and unavoidable.</i>	5.6-14 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
5.7	CULTURAL RESOURCES		
	Archaeological/Historical Resources		
	5.7-1 <i>The proposed Project may cause a significant impact to known or unknown archaeological and/or historic resources on-site. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.7-1a An archaeologist and/or a Native American Monitor appointed by Madera County shall conduct periodic inspections of the project site during earth removal or disturbance activities related to rough grading and other excavation for foundations and utilities. The inspections schedule shall be determined by the County of Madera prior to issuance of a grading permit. If any earth removal or disturbance activities result in the discovery of cultural resources, the project proponent's contractors shall cease all earth removal or disturbance activities in the vicinity and immediately notify the County selected archaeologist and/or Native American Monitor, who shall immediately notify the County. The County selected archaeologist will have the power to temporarily halt or divert the excavation equipment in order to evaluate any potential cultural material. The County selected archaeologist shall evaluate all potential cultural findings in accordance with standard practice, the requirements of the Madera County General Plan, and other applicable regulations. Consultation with the Native American Heritage	No unavoidable significant impacts related to Cultural Resources have been identified following implementation of mitigation measures referenced in this Section.



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- Commission and data/artifact recovery, if deemed appropriate, shall be conducted.
- 5.7-1b Potential impacts to sites C-MAD-623, -625, -626, -629, -634 and -635 shall be avoided with implementation of the following treatment options:

Treatment Option #1: The first choice of treatment is to preserve the sites intact by means of an impact avoidance strategy. Impact avoidance and site preservation are compatible with the proposed residential development since surface indicators are generally minimal and most casual passers-by would not recognize surface features at these sites as evidence that buried cultural material is also present. Preservation could be achieved by locating proposed residential structures, driveways, associated outbuildings, utilities, and access roads in such a way as to avoid directly impacting these sites.

In order to ensure impact avoidance and site preservation, and to ensure that the sites are not inadvertently affected or impacted during construction, the boundaries of the sites shall be clearly identified as "impact avoidance zones" on all project and development maps, and the sites temporarily flagged at the time of construction. If construction activity is to occur within approximately 25-30 feet of the mapped site boundaries, and/or if construction involves large pieces of equipment near either site, then the preservation/site areas shall also be temporarily fenced during the construction period.

Treatment Option #2: If preservation "as is" cannot be ensured by adopting a preservation plan detailed above, then those specific attributes and qualities which may render these prehistoric sites significant per CEQA shall be further specified through formal archaeological data collection work. At a minimum, such data collection work (archaeological testing) shall include excavation of a sample of cultural material sufficient



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to evaluate site and midden depth, age and make-up of the components of the sites, and characterization of artifactual and midden constituents in terms of major data categories present. The overall objectives of any such data collection work shall be to identify those research questions for which the sites contain relevant information, with the research questions representing those presently being expressed by the body of professional archaeologists in the region. Any such data collection program shall culminate in a professional report of findings that contains explicit recommendations for any mitigative-level data recovery work that might be justified or warranted on the basis of the specific findings of the testing program and the proposed level of project effects.

Paleontological Resources

5.7-2 *The proposed Project area consists of igneous rock formations, which are not likely to contain paleontological resources. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.*

5.7-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.

Burial Sites

5.7-3 *The proposed Project may cause a significant impact to unknown Native American burial sites which could occur on-site. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.*

Refer to Mitigation Measure 5.7-1a. The following mitigation measure is also recommended.

5.7-3 In the event human remains are discovered during grading/construction activities, work shall cease in the immediate area of the discovery and the Project Applicant shall comply with the requirements and procedures set forth in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code, including notification of the County Coroner, notification of the Native American Heritage Commission, and consultation with the individual identified by the Native American Heritage Commission to be the "most likely descendent."

Cumulative Impacts

5.7-4 *Cumulative development may adversely affect cultural resources in*

5.7-4 No mitigation measures are recommended.



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	<p><i>the Oakhurst/Ahwahnee area. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i></p>		
5.8	GEOLOGY AND SOILS		
	Slope Stability		
5.8-1	<p><i>Development of the proposed project could result in slope failures. Implementation of the recommended mitigation measures and compliance with the Madera County Development Code and Uniform Building Code would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.</i></p>	<p>5.8-1a Where cut slopes are planned, they shall be excavated primarily within granitic bedrock materials at inclinations not exceeding 1.5:1 (horizontal to vertical). A qualified engineering geologist shall conduct periodic inspections and compaction testing during excavation of cut slopes.</p> <p>5.8-1b Fill slopes shall be constructed with engineered fill at inclinations no steeper than 2:1. A qualified geotechnical specialist shall conduct periodic inspections and compaction testing during placement of fill slope areas.</p> <p>5.8-1c Adequate structural setbacks for homes and septic systems from the steep natural slopes adjacent to Miami and Carter Creeks shall be established per the findings of the leach field suitability study (refer to Mitigation Measure 5.8-4a). Structural setbacks shall be in compliance with all applicable Madera County Development Code and/or Uniform Building Code setback requirements. The design and locations of all on-site septic systems shall be approved by the Madera County Environmental Health Department.</p> <p>5.8-1d Surface drainage shall be directed away from steep natural slopes adjacent to Miami and Carter Creeks.</p> <p>5.8-1e Prior to issuance of Grading Permits, the Project Applicant shall fund site-specific geologic analysis/studies that includes 1) quantitative geotechnical analysis of collapsible and/or liquefaction-prone soils; 2) a design level geotechnical engineering report; 3) a design-level engineering geology report; and 4) analysis of seismically induced seiching. Pending the results of the geologic analysis/studies, site-</p>	<p>No unavoidable significant impacts related to Geology and Soils have been identified following implementation of mitigation measures and/or compliance with all applicable Madera County, DSOD and Uniform Building Codes design standards.</p>



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specific design-level measures shall be developed to address issues relating to slope stability, collapsible and/or liquefaction-prone soils, including alluvial soils, and seiching.

- 5.8-1f If the housing pads expose a combination of competent bedrock and loose soil, to achieve a uniform foundation for a home, the entire pad shall be over excavated a minimum of three feet and replaced with compacted fill.

Reservoir Construction

Refer to Mitigation Measure 5.1-B. The following mitigation measures are also recommended:

- 5.8-1f The Project Applicant shall fund design-level geotechnical studies that focus on the various geotechnical and hydrologic aspects for the safe design and construction of the dams. These studies would include, but are not be limited to, an evaluation of the quantity and engineering properties of on-site soils and bedrock materials necessary for construction of the dams, dam foundation characteristics, hydrogeologic conditions within the reservoirs and beneath the dams, hydrology calculations of dams and reservoir, modeling of the potential changes in groundwater levels, and stability of interior and exterior slopes of the reservoir, etc. The information generated from the geotechnical design-level study shall be forwarded to the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams for their review and comment prior to the issuance of Grading Permits by Madera County.
- 5.8-1g Test excavations using a D9 bulldozer with ripper shanks shall be performed to evaluate the depth to which the granite can be readily excavated by typical construction equipment.
- 5.8-1h A seepage analyses shall be performed during the actual design phase for the project to determine if a chimney drain is required in addition



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Groundwater

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| 5.8-2 <i>Development of the proposed project could result in groundwater recharge that could affect underground utilities and private sewage systems. Implementation of the recommended mitigation measure and compliance with DSOD dam design standards would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.</i> | 5.8-2 To preclude any significant leakage beneath the dam, a "cut-off trench" shall be constructed within the foundation of the dam, if necessary, pending the hydrogeologic findings of the design-level studies referenced in Mitigation Measure 5.8-1f. |
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Soil Erosion

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| 5.8-3 <i>Development of the proposed project could result in accelerated soil erosion. Project compliance with the Madera County Development Code and Uniform Building Code and implementation of the recommended mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.</i> | 5.8-3a Upon completion of grading for each lot, a protective vegetative cover shall be established in all disturbed areas via planting and/or seeding followed by placing a temporary protective cover, such as jute netting, mulch, hay or other non-erodable form of ground cover, until a vegetative cover is established. |
| | 5.8-3b Surface drainage shall be diverted from cut and fill slopes via brow ditches, collected in ditches with relatively shallow gradients, and provide a means to inhibit sediment runoff into natural drainages until such time as a protective vegetative cover effectively mitigates further soil erosion. Energy dissipating devices shall be placed in drainages subject to increased runoff. |
| | 5.8-3c Grading shall attempt to minimize the area of disturbance and be avoided near natural springs. |
| | 5.8-3d Prior to the issuance of Grading Permits, the Project Applicant shall post a Soil Stabilization and Revegetation Bond for the estimated cost of soil stabilization and revegetation of the grading site, for submittal and approval by the Madera County Department of Engineering and General Services. |

Sewage Disposal

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| 5.8-4 <i>Development of the on-site sewage disposal systems may impact groundwater quality and soils in the project area. Analysis has concluded</i> | 5.8-4a Prior to issuance of Grading Permits, a detailed study of leach field suitability shall be conducted for on-site sewage disposal systems. The |
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that with implementation of recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.

study shall investigate and evaluate all the factors involved in individual sewage disposal system utilization, including soil types and their depths, permeability, slopes, the locations of springs and depth to seasonal groundwater, drainage, effluent volume, and setbacks to watercourses and other features. The study shall be reviewed and approved by the Madera County Environmental Health Department.

- 5.8-4b A testing program for coliform bacteria and other possible pollutants shall be established for all on-site wastewater systems, per the approval of the Madera County Environmental Health Department. The testing program shall include monitoring of surface water quality in Miami and Carter Creeks and/or groundwater supplies, pending County discretion.

Collapsible and/or Liquefaction-Prone Soils

- 5.8-5 *Development of the proposed project may create substantial risks to life property as a result of collapsible and/or liquefaction-prone soils. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.*
- 5.8-5 Refer to Mitigation Measure 5.8-1e. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Ground Shaking

- 5.8-6 *Development of the proposed project may increase the number of people/structures exposed to effects associated with seismically induced ground shaking. Compliance with the Madera County Development Code, Uniform Building Code and DSOD dam design standards and implementation of the recommended mitigation would ensure that impacts are less than significant.*
- 5.8-6 Refer to Mitigation Measure 5.8-1e. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Cumulative Impacts

- 5.8-7 *The proposed project, combined with future development, may result in increased short-term impacts such as erosion and sedimentation, and long-term seismic impacts within the area. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.*
- 5.8-7 No mitigation measures are recommended.



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5.9	DRAINAGE		
	Drainage		
5.9-1	<i>The proposed project would alter drainage patterns, which could result in increased erosion potential and runoff. Drainage and erosion impacts are concluded as less than significant with compliance of all applicable Madera County and FEMA design requirements.</i>	5.9-1 No mitigation measures are recommended.	No unavoidable significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality have been identified following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures and/or through regulatory compliance.
	Hydrology		
5.9-2	<i>The proposed project would alter hydrology due to onsite grading and increases in impervious area drainage patterns, which could result in on- or off-site flooding, or exceed the capacity of planned drainage systems. Impacts are concluded as less than significant with compliance of all applicable Madera County and FEMA design requirements.</i>	5.9-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Flooding		
5.9-3	<i>The proposed project would place housing in an area that is subject to flooding. Impacts are concluded as less than significant with compliance of all applicable Madera County, DSOD and FEMA design requirements and implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.</i>	5.9-3 The Project Applicant shall obtain a conditional Letter of Map Revision and Letter of Map Revision from FEMA for the proposed construction with the mapped floodplain.	
	Water Quality – Construction		
5.9-4	<i>Grading, excavation and construction activities associated with the proposed project could impact water quality due to sheet erosion of exposed soils and subsequent deposition of particles and pollutants in drainage areas. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level through regulatory compliance and with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.</i>	5.9-4a The Project Applicant shall prepare and submit a Notice of Intent to comply with the Construction General Permit to the California State Water Resources Board.	
		5.9-4b The Project Applicant shall prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) per requirements of the Construction General NPDES Permit.	
	Water Quality – Long-Term		
5.9-5	<i>Project development may result in long-term impacts to the quality of storm water and urban runoff, subsequently impacting water quality.</i>	5.9-5 The Project Applicant shall prepare and implement all applicable Caltrans guidelines, as deemed appropriate by the County, to	



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	<p><i>Impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with compliance to State and Madera County Development Code requirements and implementation of the recommended mitigation measure.</i></p>	address post-construction water quality management.	
	<p>Cumulative Impacts</p>		
5.9-6	<p><i>The proposed project along with other future development may result in increased hydrology and drainage impacts in the area. Analysis has concluded that impacts are less than significant.</i></p>	5.9-6 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
5.10	PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES		
	Fire Protection		
5.10-1	<p><i>Project implementation could result in significant physical impacts with respect to fire protection. Analysis has concluded that a less than significant impact would occur with adherence to Madera County development standards, payment of applicable development fees and taxes, and implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.</i></p>	5.10-1a In addition to development impact fees imposed on a per dwelling unit basis, the Project Applicant shall pay impact fees (per California Government Code Section 66000 et. seq. (AB 1600)) to provide for the expansion of existing facilities, equipment and staffing for a permanent, full-time career fire fighter at Ahwahnee Station No. 16. This fee shall be determined through an agreement between the Project Applicant and the Madera County Fire Department in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.	No unavoidable significant impacts related to public services and utilities have been identified following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures and compliance with applicable County, service or utility provider requirements, and County Codes and Ordinances.
		5.10-1b Fire flows shall be a minimum of 1,000 gallons per minute at 20 residual pounds per square inch (psi) for two hours duration, per Appendix IIIA and 901.3 of the Uniform Fire Code.	
	Police Protection		
5.10-2	<p><i>Project implementation would not result in significant physical impacts with respect to police protection. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.</i></p>	5.10-2 No mitigation measures are recommended.	
	Schools		
5.10-3	<p><i>Project implementation could result in significant physical impacts to existing school facilities. Potential impacts to school facilities are concluded as</i></p>	5.10-3 No mitigation measures are recommended.	



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less than significant with payment of school impact fees and compliance with applicable requirements, codes, and ordinances.

Libraries

5.10-4 *Project implementation would increase the demand on library services. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant.*

5.10-4 No mitigation measures are recommended.

Recreation

5.10-5 *Project implementation may increase the use of existing local and regional parks and other recreational facilities thereby creating the potential for physical affects at each facility. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant with implementation of the recommended mitigation measure.*

5.10-5 The Project Applicant shall be required to dedicate land and/or pay park dedication fees to ensure the funding for the acquisition and development of 2.9 acres of improved parkland. The fees are to be set by Madera County to provide for a level of funding that meets the actual costs to provide for all of the public parkland and park development needs generated by the proposed project.

Roadway Maintenance

5.10-6 *Project implementation would increase the demand on roadway maintenance services. Analysis has concluded that that a less than significant impact would occur with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.*

5.10-6a Opah Drive shall be improved to conform to Madera County and/or Caltrans Highway Design Manual standards pertaining to horizontal and vertical site distance and structural strength requirements. Prior to final map approval, the Madera County Road Department shall review and approve the proposed improvements to Opah Drive.

5.10-6b An engineering study shall be conducted for all of Maintenance District No. 46 to determine the maintenance assessment per lot required for proper road maintenance. The study shall be reviewed and approved by the Madera County Road Department prior to final map approval. In accordance with the findings of the study, an election shall be requested by the Road Department pursuant to Proposition 218 to adjust the annual road maintenance assessment, which would be adjusted annually for inflation based upon the construction cost index.



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Wastewater

- 5.10-7 *Project implementation would generate additional wastewater beyond current conditions. Analysis has concluded that impacts would be less than significant with compliance to Madera County Environmental Health Department regulations regarding on-site septic systems and implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.*
- Refer to Mitigation Measures 5.8-4a and 5.8-4b. The following mitigation measure is also recommended:
- 5.10-7 The project shall include a Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) that has a minimum treatment capacity of 130,000 gallons per day. Recycled water from the WWTP shall be used for irrigation of the golf course only.

Water

- 5.10-8 *Project implementation would increase the demand for water beyond existing conditions. Analysis has concluded that, with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, impacts would be less than significant.*
- 5.10-8 The project shall include a water reservoir that has a minimum operational/usable capacity of 210 acre-feet. The design and operational capacity of the reservoir shall be reviewed and approved by Madera County and the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD).

Solid Waste

- 5.10-9 *Development of the Project area would result in increased solid waste generation. Project compliance with the Integrated Waste Management Plan for the Madera County would reduce the amount of solid waste that is ultimately disposed of at the Fairmead Landfill and maintain potential impacts at a less than significant level.*
- 5.10-9 No mitigation measures are recommended.

Electricity

- 5.10-10 *Project implementation would result in an increased demand for electrical service beyond existing conditions and would require expansion of the existing electrical system. Analysis has concluded that with implementation of the recommended mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.*
- 5.10-10 Prior to final map approval, Madera County in cooperation with Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), shall verify that the site plan provides for unrestricted utility access and does not include easement encroachments that might impair the safe and reliable maintenance and operation of PG&E's facilities.

Natural Gas

- 5.10-11 *Project implementation would result in an increased demand for natural gas service beyond existing conditions. Analysis has concluded impacts would be less than significant.*
- 5.10-11 No mitigation measures are recommended.



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	Cumulative Impacts		
5.10-12	<i>Cumulative development could result in an increased demand for public services and an increase in the consumption rates for public utilities, potentially requiring expansions of the existing utility systems. Analysis has concluded that cumulative development is subject to standards and requirements of reviewing agencies and impacts would be less than significant.</i>	5.10-12 No mitigation measures are recommended.	

2.3 SUMMARY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

In accordance with *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* Section 15126.6, Section 7.0 describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project. The evaluation considers the comparative merits of each alternative. The analysis focuses on alternatives capable of avoiding significant environmental effects or reducing them to less than significant levels, even if these alternatives would impede, to some degree, the attainment of the proposed Project objectives. Potential environmental impacts associated with three separate alternatives are compared to impacts of the proposed Project. The following is a description of each of the alternatives evaluated in Section 7.0

“NO PROJECT/NO DEVELOPMENT” ALTERNATIVE

Implementation of the No Project/No Development Alternative would retain the site in its current condition. None of the improvements proposed as part of the project and/or the existing General Plan Land Use (or Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan) designation would occur. It is noted that this Alternative is presented for the purposes of this EIR Alternatives Section. It is not the intent of the County to preclude development from occurring within the project site. The following discussion evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the No Project/No Development Alternative and compared to impacts from the proposed Project.

“NO PROJECT/EXISTING DESIGNATION” ALTERNATIVE

Implementation of the No Project/Existing Designation Alternative would be in accordance with the existing Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan land use designations, which are consistent with the Madera County General plan. The proposed densities would be consistent with the Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan. This Alternative would be more intensive than the proposed Project. The proposed Project would include 315 dwelling units. Assuming 3.055 persons per household, approximately 962 persons would be added to the permanent population



of Madera County under the proposed Project. Approximately 545 dwelling units would occur at buildout of the project area under the No Project/Existing Designation Alternative. The proposed Project would result in land use designation changes that would affect approximately 245 acres, while approximately 294 acres would have land use designations that would remain unchanged. Assuming 3.055 persons per household, approximately 1,664 persons would be added to the permanent population of Madera County under this Alternative. The following discussion evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the No Project/Existing Designation Alternative as compared to impacts from the proposed Project.

“REDUCED DENSITY” ALTERNATIVE

For the Reduced Density Alternative, development of 302 dwelling units and associated infrastructure would occur on project site, as compared to 315 dwelling units under the proposed Project. Similar to the proposed Project, the proposed densities would be consistent with the General Plan/ Ahwahnee/Nipinnawasee Area Plan under this Alternative. This Alternative would downsize Phase 5 of the proposed Project, which encompasses lots 108 through 120 (14 one-acre lots). Under this Alternative, the Bobby Jones Court cul-de-sac would be eliminated and four (4) one-acre lots with all driveway entries would be constructed along Opah Drive. This would result in a net reduction of ten (10) lots. Also, under this Alternative, lots 44, 45 and 46 would be eliminated in Phase 2, which would represent a total residence reduction of 13 lots or 4.1 percent of the proposed Project, as well as a reduction of 40 residents from the projected population increase as compared to the proposed Project. This Alternative would also include one water reservoir to serve the proposed residential uses. The following discussion evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the Reduced Density Alternative as compared to impacts from the proposed Project.

“MULTIPLE RESERVOIRS DESIGN” ALTERNATIVE

Development of the Multiple Reservoirs Design Alternative would be similar to the proposed Project in that it would take into account the entire 487-acre property, as well as adjacent land to be utilized for water storage facilities. The Multiple Reservoirs Design Alternative would include the same number of proposed dwelling units (315 dwelling units), at the same density, as the proposed Project. The difference between the Multiple Reservoirs Design Alternative and the proposed project is that the Proposed Project includes one 210-acre foot reservoir, while the Multiple Reservoirs Design Alternative would include a series of nine (9) reservoir facilities to provide water storage for the proposed project. The nine reservoirs would be generally located in the same area as the water reservoir included in the proposed Project. The total capacity of the nine reservoirs would be same as the reservoir for the proposed Project. Although the nine reservoirs would have varying capacity, each dam would be below the capacity and embankment height threshold levels to qualify for jurisdiction under the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). The reservoir under the proposed Project would be under DSOD jurisdiction.