

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project
Environmental Checklist Form
Appendix 1**

1. Project title: Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project
2. Lead agency name and address: California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region
(Lahontan)
2501 Lake Tahoe Blvd
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
3. Contact person and phone number: George Cella, 530-542-5426
4. Project location: The project is located within Lassen County approximately 20 miles northwest of Susanville, California and approximately 2 miles south west of Eagle Lake on the Eagle Lake Ranger District of the Lassen National Forest. The project area is accessed via National Forest System Road (NFSR) 31N07. The legal location is T31N, R10E, NE¼NE¼ Section 21, Mount Diablo Meridian (MDM).
5. Project sponsor's name and address: Lassen National Forest
2551 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130
6. General plan designation: National Forest
7. Zoning: National Forest
8. Description of project: The project consists of repairing and upgrading an existing wastewater treatment facility in the Eagle Lake Recreation Area. The purpose and need for this project is to bring the facility into conformance with the regulations of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. A joint NEPA/CEQA is being prepared for this project. A full description of the alternatives can be found in the Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Environmental Assessment (EA).

The Eagle Lake Ranger District of the Lassen National Forest (LNF) is proposing the following Eagle Lake Sewer Ponds Project (Project). The Eagle Lake sewage ponds service the Lassen NF's Eagle Lake Recreation Area (ELRA). The ponds, lined in the 1980's, are beginning to deteriorate. The draft Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (draft EA/IS) describes five alternative (including a "No Action alternative") proposed in order to address the situation, and disclose the potential environmental effects on each of the alternatives. Patches are considered temporary fixes to mitigate the potential immediate safety hazard of small leaks in the lining. Complete replacement of the liners could prevent widespread failure of one or more of the pond's small leaks in the lining, however, draining the ponds and replacing the liners could require closure for at least one season of the ELRA. Closure of these recreation facilities could have negative impact-political and/or economic—on the public, surrounding communities, and the LNF. Expansion of the facility could circumvent this issue, but the National Forest System (NFS) parcel on which the existing facility is located is limited in size. To add to the concerns, existing storage capacity of the evaporation ponds may be inadequate to handle future capacity increase to the ELRA. There are five alternatives addressed in the Environmental Assessment (EA). A map of the existing facility can be found on page 4 of the EA.

Alternative 1. Figure 3 on page 8 of the EA shows the approximate locations for the expanded facility. The alternative is described in detail on pages 7 through 10. Evaporation Ponds 1 and 2 would become one pond by removing the center berm that currently divides them, while Evaporation Pond 3 would be enlarged to double its capacity. Material for construction would be removed from the borrow site.

Alternative 1, impacts 0.77 acres of the 0.89 acres of wetlands on National Forest System land as a result of the existing sewage treatment facility expansion. The 0.89 acres of Merrill wetlands located on NFS lands are only a

small fraction of the greater Merrill wetlands which is located on private lands. *The Papoose Meadows Wetlands Restoration Project* has been proposed as a mitigation site for the altered onsite wetlands and marsh within the same 5th field watershed as the Merrill wetlands, and a wetlands comparison is provided in the Draft EA/IS, Appendix C. This mitigation would at a minimum, create the required one and one-half times more wetlands habitat than would be impacted by the Proposed Action. The Environmental documentation for this project was covered under the EA and Decision Notice (DN) for the South Eagle lake Grazing Allotment. A description of this project is found in Appendix D of this document. Actual design features would be submitted to Lahontan for approval prior to implementation.

Under all action alternatives liner selection and design would occur during the EL Facility design process and under consultation with Lahontan. All replaced liners would be removed off National Forest System land and disposed of according to existing regulations. Federal Acquisition Regulations that would be included in the contract involving replacement of liners include standard language that contracted work is to be in conformance with all local, State and Federal requirements.

The Action Alternatives also propose forest thinning activities to increase crown base height and remove ladder fuels throughout the 40-acre NFS site. Site-clearing activities are also proposed to provide an on-site area from which a Project-related borrow site could be established on the NF property, and to make room for the expansion of the ponds in certain alternatives. The development of an on-site well is proposed to provide water to control dust during timber harvest and pond construction/reconstruction activities.

Alternative 2 is the no action alternative.

Alternative 3, This alternative is similar to alternative 1 except the pond expansion would be located north of the delineated Little Merrill Flat wetlands. This alternative is described on pages 16 through 19 of the EA with a figure on page 17.

Alternative 4 involves deepening and relining the existing evaporative ponds with no new pond construction. This alternative is described on pages 19 through 22, with the figure on page 20.

Alternative 5 involves raising the banks between Evaporation Pond 1 and 2 so they would function as two separate ponds. The existing evaporative ponds would be relined with no new pond construction. This alternative is described on pages 22 through 25, with the figure on page 23.

The draft EA/IS includes Individual Design Features, Best Management Practices, mitigation measures, a Revegetation Plan, and a Monitoring Plan, which would be implemented to protect resources and restore and potential impacts which could occur during Project activities.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: The 40-acre parcel of National Forest System land is completely surrounded by private timber land. The facility's function is to service the Lassen NF's Eagle Lake Recreation Area (ELRA). The ELRA consists of five campgrounds with 318 campsites, two group campgrounds; one 100 person site and one 75 person site, two day use areas, two boat launching facilities, a marina (that includes a store, showers, laundry facilities and fish cleaning stations), Camp Ronald McDonald, a research facility and hiking and biking trails.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required

Prior to commencing and thinning and or clearing operations the Lassen NF would obtain a 2009 Timber Waiver Permit from Lahontan.

In accordance with Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, a smoke management plan would be submitted to and approved by the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (LCAPCD) prior to any prescribed fire ignitions that are part of the proposed action.

A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Erosion Control Plan will be implemented. The SWPPP, which must be written by the contractor, will be submitted to Lahontan for approval 30 days prior to commencement of any ground-disturbing Project activity.

A 401/404 Water Quality Cert, and waste discharge permit will be required prior to any construction activities

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology/Soils
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazards & Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology/Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Use/Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Population/Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation/Traffic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Utilities/Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory Findings of Significance		

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

- _____
Signature

- _____
Date

CEQA Environmental Checklist

The following Appendices are attached to and incorporated into this Checklist:

Appendix A - Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project Revegetation Plan

Appendix B - Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project Monitoring Plan

Appendix C – Wetlands Comparison

Appendix D – PMWR grant (This project was analyzed under the South Eagle Lake Grazing Allotment Environmental 2007. This and the corresponding Decision Notice can be obtained from the Eagle Lake Ranger District office)

Appendix E - Best Management Practices (BMPs) (A full list of BMPs cited in the EA and this Checklist)

Appendix F – Wetlands Delineation

Mitigations refer to Integrated Design features (IDFs) common to Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 unless specifically noted as Alternative 1 (Alt.1).

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The project is not located in or adjacent to a designated scenic vista or along a scenic highway. The project would not result in the development of a new source of light or glare.

The primary impact to aesthetics would be the creation of areas of soil and vegetation disturbance. The proposed project includes the implementation and maintenance of site specific BMPs which are designed to control storm-driven erosion at the site as well as site-specific mitigation measures to restore the project site to natural conditions. See Appendix A – Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project Revegetation Plan. The impacts to aesthetics are less than significant with mitigation measures.

Mitigation Measures

Soils-17. Existing landings and skid trails would be used as much as possible to minimize new disturbance.

Two previously disturbed areas have been identified within the project area that are within proximity to the existing system road that would be suitable as timber landings. No additional landings are anticipated. Existing skid trails, many which have revegetated exist throughout the thinning area. These features are outside the designated RCA. These features would be used this entry where they facilitate moving material to the designated landings. Any new skid trails must be designated on the ground by the Contract Representative prior to use.

Wildlife-33 (Alt.1). To the extent practicable, disturbed areas, the borrow site, stockpile site, and sludge drying bed perimeter, would be seeded, with a variety of locally adapted native plants (Appendix A). These plants should provide food value to wildlife in the form of browse, fruits and seeds, possibly including but not limited to such plants as elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, Scouler's willow, and native grasses. Any substitute locally-adapted plants would be similar or better than those listed plants at providing food value.

An initial survey would be conducted on each site to determine the suitability for revegetation. The percent of each area that is practicable for revegetation in terms of exposed rock and depth of topsoil will be documented.

Newly constructed or reconstructed berms around the sewage ponds would be stabilized with a mix of native grasses (possibly including but not limited to *Poa secunda*, one-sided bluegrass; *Elymus glaucus*, blue wild rye; and *Bromus carinatus*, California brome) to prevent wind and soil erosion. Any substitute locally-adapted plants would be similar or better than those listed plants at preventing wind and soil erosion. (BMP 2-4 Stabilization of Slope Surfaces and Spoil Disposal Areas; BMP 2-28 Surface Erosion Control at Facility Sites, (Appendices A and E)

The following item would be included in the sewer pond expansion contract(s).

Facilities-39. Implementation of an approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Erosion Control Plan.

A SWPPP and Erosion Control Plan will be implemented. The SWPPP, must be written by the contractor, be submitted to Lahontan for approval 30 days prior to commencement of any ground-disturbing Project activity.

Facilities-40. Orange construction fencing will be erected around the construction zone to provide protection of existing landscape and vegetation outside of the construction zone.

Facilities-42. Upon completion of the project areas that show signs of rutting would be scarified to a depth of 6 six inches. Scarified areas would be contoured and seeded with native vegetation as per the Revegetation Plan (Appendix A).

Air Quality-43. Prescribed burning would only be conducted on permissive burn days as defined by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and follow the constraints of a Smoke Management Plan (SMP) approved by the Lassen County Air Quality Management District.

In accordance with Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, a smoke management plan would be submitted to and approved by the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (LCAPCD) prior to any prescribed fire ignitions that are part of the proposed action.

Air Quality-44. Develop and implement a dust abatement plan along the road in the project area. Logging and vegetation management activities would be dust abated where rubber-tired vehicles are operating on haul routes. Water for dust abatement would be, obtained onsite from the well, trucked-in, or a dust palliative may be approved which may include magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, lignin sulfate, or an approved equal. Dust palliatives would not be used within 25 feet of the RCA. Dust palliatives, if used, would be stored and mixed outside of the RCA.

Approval for the use of dust palliatives is given by the Forest Service Line Officer.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

No farmland is located in the project area. There would be no impacts to agricultural resources.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY: Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion of Checklist Questions

In accordance with Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, a smoke management plan (SMP) would be submitted to and approved by the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (LCAPCD) prior to any prescribed fire ignitions that are part of the proposed action. Adherence to the SMP would ensure that emissions from pile burning would not violate the National Ambient Air Quality (NAAQ) emission standards. Since the proposed project area falls within a federal attainment area for air quality, no conformity determination is required.

Treatment of fuels under the Action Alternatives would result in decreased smoke production and associated emissions in the event of a wildland fire. This decrease in emissions would help to reduce smoke-related impacts to nearby communities. Fugitive dust could result from both construction and logging operations during dry seasons. This would be mitigated by standard contract requirements for road watering or other dust abatement techniques.

Although the Project may generate smoke during burn days, some dust during construction and timber harvesting activities, and additional sewage odors once the sewage ponds have been expanded, objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people will not occur since Project activities would occur in an isolated area away from concentrations of general public. Once construction is complete, disturbed areas would be revegetated to ensure soil stabilization. Compliance with BMPs and specific contract conditions would avoid and minimize effects to air quality. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on air quality with the following mitigations.

Mitigation Measures

Air Quality-43. Prescribed burning would only be conducted on permissive burn days as defined by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and follow the constraints of a Smoke Management Plan (SMP) approved by the Lassen County Air Quality Management District.

Air Quality-44. Develop and implement a dust abatement plan along the road in the project area. Logging and vegetation management activities would be dust abated where rubber-tired vehicles are operating on haul routes. (*Skidding by tracked vehicles would not be permitted on the haul route, FSR 31N07*).

Revegetation mitigation. Once construction is complete, disturbed areas would be revegetated to ensure soil stabilization (Appendix A).

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The Biological Evaluations/Biological Assessments (BEs/BAs) prepared for this project and incorporated by reference into the Environmental Assessment, were prepared in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and follows standards established in Forest Service Manual Direction (FSM 2671.2 and 2672.42) for Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) wildlife species. Species to be considered in this document were determined based on review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service species list (website accessed on 5 February, 2009), and on review of the USDA Forest Service Sensitive species list for Region 5. For the purpose of the CEQA Checklist, species included in the BEs/BAs are defined as “special-status species” and are included in this analysis. The following information summarizes potential effects of the proposed action on biological resources. The impacts to biological resources are less than significant with mitigations.

Terrestrial Species: Due to the project area being outside the range of the species, or due to the lack of suitable habitat or habitat components in the project area the proposed project would have no effect on the following Federally Listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat: northern spotted owl, valley elderberry beetle. Additionally, due to the project area being outside the range of the species, or due to the lack of suitable habitat or habitat components in the project area, the proposed project would have no effect on the following Forest Service Sensitive species: Northern bald eagle, California wolverine, American marten, Pacific fisher, Sierra Nevada red fox, Townsend’s big-eared bat, western red bat, greater sandhill crane, California spotted owl, Swainson's hawk, great gray owl, willow flycatcher.

Analyses of direct, indirect and cumulative effects to northern goshawk habitat concluded that the proposed project may affect individuals northern goshawks, but are not likely to result in a trend towards federal listing or loss of species viability due to, 1) the project site is an existing sewage pond facility, and thus human disturbance in this site likely reduces its value to this species, 2) there is no nesting habitat being affected within the project boundaries, and, 3) the project affects a very small number of acres of forested habitat .

Finally, analyses of direct, indirect and cumulative effects to pallid bat habitat concluded that the proposed project, and may affect individuals pallid bats, but are not likely to result in a trend towards federal listing or loss of species viability due to, 1) low potential for effects to roost trees, 2) habitat improvement via thinning, and, 3) long-term habitat loss is restricted to approximately 4 acres of meadow habitat due to construction of a evaporation pond.

Aquatic Species: The project would have no effect on the following threatened and endangered species or their critical habitat; Central Valley steelhead Distinct Population Segment (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Delta smelt (*Hypomesus transpacificus*), Winter-run chinook salmon ESU (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), Giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), Shasta Crayfish (*Pacifastacus fortis*), Conservancy fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*), Vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), and Vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*).

The project would have no effect on the following Forest Service Sensitive Species; Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), Mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), Cascades frog (*Rana cascadae*), Northwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata marmorata*), California floater (*Anodonta californiensis*), Topaz Juga (*Juga acutifilosa*) Scalloped Juga (*Juga occata*), Nugget pebblesnail (*Fluminicola seminalis*), Northwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata marmorata*), and Central Valley fall/late-fall-run Chinook salmon ESUs (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*).

Botanical Species: There are no Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive (TES) plant species found within the project area, therefore, there would be no impacts to botanical TES species from the proposed project.

Lassen National Forest Special Interest Plant Species - *Mimulus pygmaeus*. Implementation of the proposed project would have no direct effect on individual plants of the species. *Mimulus pygmaeus* occurs in the seasonally wet, vegetated margins east and south of the existing sewage ponds. Potential impacts to this species during fence reconstruction would be mitigated through integrated design features. The impacts to botanical species are less than significant with mitigations.

Wetlands: There are no perennial streams within the project area; however, the project area includes 0.89 acres of the Merrill wetlands. The 118 acres of Merrill wetlands are located at the headwaters of Merrill Creek, an intermittent stream that is 0.3 miles from the proposed project. Snowmelt provides the majority of the surface runoff, which is dispersed. Surface water and possibly emergent groundwater could flow from the wetlands to Eagle Lake via Merrill Creek during snowmelt runoff events, rain on snow events, and potentially during rain events when soils are highly saturated. The current sewage ponds are hydrologically disconnected to the wetlands (Foothill Associates, 2009).

Alternative 1 - Construction activities would cause long-term disturbance and loss of 0.89 acres of depressional wetlands and beneficial uses related to the depressional wetlands. A portion of the wetlands would be filled in and buried by the extension of Evaporation Pond 3. Appendix D details the Papoose Meadows Wetlands Restoration Project. Appendix C compares the beneficial uses of the Papoose Meadows wetlands and Little Merrill Flat wetlands

Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 would not result in a net change of wetland area pre- and post-project.

The delineated depressional Merrill wetlands described in the 2009 wetlands delineation study (Foothill Associates, 2009) would be protected during Phase 1 activities with buffers. During construction and reclamation phases, the delineated depressional Merrill wetlands would not be entered with mechanical equipment (driven); however, the lack of a buffer would potentially allow mechanical equipment (driven) to approach the wetland as close as the wetland edge. Although, the lack of a buffer would increase the potential for local effects on the wetlands, activity related sedimentation and compaction would be unlikely to affect Merrill wetlands as a whole (118 acres). Additionally, the wetlands would still exist post-project. The impacts to wetlands are less than significant with mitigations.

Mitigation measures

Botany-9. New occurrences of Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) plant species, discovered before or during ground-disturbing activities within the thinning area, would be protected through flag and avoid methods. Avoidance buffer widths would be based on the requirements of the TES species present.

Upon discovery, the Contract Administrator will notify the Forest Botanist, who will at that time determine the appropriate buffer based on the species discovered and the activity occurring in proximity to the plant

Botany-10. All fencework in the south and east margins of the project area, including the installation of permanent chain-link fence around the treatment facility, would occur when soils are dry, so that plants of *Mimulus pygmaeus* would have completed their annual life cycle.

Silviculture-16. All conifer stumps greater than 14 inches in diameter would be treated with SPORAX® within the thinning area. No Sporax would be applied within 25 feet of known Sensitive and Special Interest Plants or applied within 25 feet of the of the wetlands as described in the 2008 wetlands study

Aquatics-1. A “no mechanical equipment” buffer would be designated around the inner RCA zone (within 75 feet of the delineated wetlands as described in the 2008 wetlands delineation study) within Little Merrill Flat during timber removal. .

The following would apply within the RCAs for the Merrill wetlands:

Aquatics-2. Landings would be located outside the seasonal wetlands and the RCA zones.

Aquatics-3. Conifers would be removed with feller-bunchers that have 24-inch or greater track widths.

Aquatics-4. Skid trails would be kept to a minimum (*no more than one every 100 feet*) and no water bars would be installed after treatment *on slopes that are gentle (1-2%)*. Where slopes are gentle water bars are more likely to interfere with natural flow paths than their intended purposes, which, is to route concentrated flows from skid trails.

Slopes within the RCA in the outer RCA buffer (75 to 300 feet) are gentle and will not have waterbars installed. Outside the buffer the spacing of waterbars and energy dissipaters installation would be by the standards outlined in Forest Service Handbook 2409.15 p.61.42 Exhibit 01.

Aquatics-5. Skid trails within the RCA zones of Little Merrill Flat would require 90 percent of existing ground cover on bare soil on the trails; slash would be spread over these open areas.

Using “existing cover” rather than a predefined quantity allows site-specific application of this IDF to better approximate pre-activity conditions across a heterogeneous landscape.

Aquatic-6. Ground-based equipment would be used to remove timber using one-end suspension outside the inner RCA zone.

If rutting occurs from this type of operation skid trails within the RCA zones would be evaluated for possible scarification, recontouring, and seeding with native vegetation.

Soils-22. Potential sedimentation to RCA zones from project areas, including from currently forested areas that are being harvested for pond expansion procedures (i.e. borrow site, sludge drying site), would be prevented by installing site-specific erosion and sediment control devices. These devices may include, silt fencing, straw bales, coir logs (i.e., straw wattles), plant cover, and mulch. (BMP 1-18 Meadow Protection During Timber Harvesting; BMP 2-11 Control of Side-Cast Material During Construction and Maintenance; BMP 2-13 Control of Construction; BMP 2-19 Disposal of Right of Way and Roadside Debris; BMP 2-15 Diversion of Flows around Construction Sites; BMP 2-18 Regulation of Borrow Areas).

Soils-23. Provide visible delineations around construction and borrow sites. Delineated wetland (as described in the 2008 wetlands delineation study) areas would remain free of mechanical equipment that must be driven. Examples of mechanical equipment that may be used in the wetlands are small generators, a gas power post hole digger etc. Mechanical equipment would not be left unattended on the ground in order to minimize ground contamination by fuels. Refueling of mechanical equipment would be prohibited in the RCA zones. Materials that need to be stored for more than 7 days would be stored outside the outer RCA zone.

Water Quality-27. Mechanical equipment may be utilized in the outer RCA zone (designated as 300 feet to 75 feet from the delineated wetlands within Little Merrill Flat) as long as dry soil conditions are met. Soil must be dry to a depth of 12 inches before mechanical equipment is allowed to enter the outer RCA zone.

Water Quality-29. Mechanical equipment is prohibited from entering the inner RCA zone (designated as “75 feet from the delineated wetlands within Little Merrill Flat) with the exception of the existing access road on the pond berm of Evaporation Ponds 2 and 3 and the evaporation ponds themselves with the exception of work allowed in the RCA’s previously discussed.

Water Quality-30 (Alt.1). At a minimum the contractor would have on site at all times sufficient absorption materials and tools to cleanup and properly dispose of any size oil or oil products spill. Additionally the contractor would maintain storage facilities for oil or oil products in the project area and would take preventative measures to ensure that any spill would not enter the Merrill wetlands or groundwater. If the total oil products storage exceeds 1,320 gallons in containers of 55 gallons or greater, then the contractor would prepare a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan. In addition, these BMPs would be followed: BMP 2-12 Servicing and Refueling of Equipment; BMP 7-4 Forest and Hazardous Substance Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan.

Water Quality-34. Installation of fencing located within the wetland would occur by use of the following equipment: 1) hand auger to drill post holes approximately 18 inches deep, 2) manual placement of concrete for post footings, 3) manual tightening of fence material or use of rubber tired tractor placed outside of wetland.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

There are no historic sites/resources present within the area of potential effects for the proposed undertaking. Therefore, the project would not affect the significance of historic resource values.

FS archaeological resources 05-06-58-499 and 05-06-58-982 have been evaluated for significance and determinations have been made regarding their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Test excavations, special studies, and analysis indicate that the sites should not be eligible to the NRHP. We have submitted our findings to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and requested concurrence with our ineligibility determinations and that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking. Based on recent informal consultation with their office, it is likely they would concur with our finding. A formal response from the SHPO should be received during the draft EA/IS comment period and will be presented in the FEA/IS accordingly. The impacts to cultural resources are less than significant if our analyses are confirmed by SHPO and the Indian Tribes.

Mitigation Measures

If the sites are determined to be ineligible for the inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places no further management of the sites will be required and the project may proceed. If the sites are determined eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places, then additional consultation with the SHPO and Indian tribes will be needed before project implementation can occur. Additional consultation may result in a treatment plan, mitigation, and possibly data recovery for the cultural properties.

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

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The proposed project is not located in an Earthquake Fault Zone, on a geologic unit which is unstable, or a geologic unit which could become unstable as a result of the project. The project is not located on an expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994).

The primary soil family complexes located with the project area are the Inville-Patio-Trojan families complex and the Wintoner family-Aquolls-Patio families association. The meadow area soil is comprised of the Aquoll family, a very poorly drained soil resulting in ponding for a majority of the growing season. The surface layers of Aquolls are characterized by loam and silt loam textures with granular and blocky structures. Underlying the surface layer are blocky and massive soil structures, often composed of a near-

impermeable silt- or fragi-pans, resulting in very slow rates of water permeability. Soil pit surveys conducted within the project area indicate the area has a low erosion hazard rating (EHR). The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on soils with the following mitigations.

Mitigation Measures

Develop the borrow site by retaining and storing the topsoil to be used during the reclamation phase when the retained topsoil would be respread in the borrow site. Stored topsoil will be stabilized using tarps and contained using coir logs, straw bales, or silt fencing around the base of the piles until ready to be re-spread. The areas would then be revegetated as outlined in the Eagle Lake Sewage Ponds Project Revegetation Plan (Appendix A).

Soil protection measures at the Papoose Meadow Wetland Restoration (PMWR) site were addressed in the South Eagle lake Grazing Allotment EA and Decision Notice (DN) Project design features are described in the Lassen Modoc Special Status Plant Fund Grant application. Actual design features within the meadow will require Lahontan's approval prior to implementation. (Appendix D)

Aquatics-4. Skid trails would be kept to a minimum (*no more than one every 100 feet*) and no water bars would be installed after treatment *on slopes that are gentle (1-2%)*. Where slopes are gentle water bars are more likely to interfere with natural flow paths than their intended purposes, which, is to route concentrated flows from skid trails.

Slopes within the RCA in the outer RCA buffer (75 to 300 feet) are gentle and will not have waterbars installed. Outside the buffer the spacing of waterbars and energy dissipaters installation would be by the standards outlined in Forest Service handbook 2409.15 p61.42 Exhibit 01.

Aquatics-5. Skid trails within the RCA zones of Little Merrill Flat would require 90 percent of existing ground cover on bare soil on the trails; slash would be spread over these open areas.

Soils-17. Existing landings and skid trails would be used as much as possible to minimize new disturbance.

Two previously disturbed areas have been identified within the project area that are within proximity to the existing system road that would be suitable as timber landings. No additional landings are anticipated. Existing skid trails, many which have revegetated exist throughout the thinning area. These features are outside the designated RCA. These features would be used this entry where they facilitate moving material to the designated landings. Any new skid trails must be designated on the ground by the Contract Representative prior to use.

Soils-26. Mulch, chips, and/or organic material would be spread in the borrow site area to provide a minimum of 50 percent surface coverage, to reduce soil erosion and overland flow, and to maintain soil moisture. *Fifty percent ground cover has been demonstrated to provide adequate cover for minimizing erosion, for allowing vegetative understory recovery and for minimizing fuel accumulation in thinning operations in the eastside pine ecotype.*

Water Quality-32. Use organic materials and rocks (*not considered to be boulders*) generated from the project to back fill the borrow site. When the borrow site is no longer needed, contour the site, spread topsoil and seed the site with native vegetation. (Appendices A, B and E).

Wildlife-33 (Alt.1). To the extent practicable, disturbed areas would be seeded, with a variety of locally adapted native plants. These plants should provide food value to wildlife in the form of browse, fruits and seeds, possibly including but not limited to such plants as elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, Scouler's willow, and native grasses. Newly constructed or reconstructed berms around the sewage ponds would be stabilized with a mix of native grasses (possibly including but not limited to *Poa secunda*, one-sided bluegrass; *Elymus glaucus*, blue wild rye; and *Bromus carinatus*, California brome) to prevent wind and soil erosion. (BMP 2-4 Stabilization of Slope Surfaces and Spoil Disposal Areas; BMP 2-28 Surface Erosion Control at Facility Sites).

An initial survey would be conducted on each site to determine the suitability for revegetation. The percent of each area that is practicable for revegetation in terms of exposed rock and depth of topsoil will be documented. (Appendices A and B)

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The proposed project is not expected to result in the creation of health hazards, potential health hazards, or expose people to potential health hazards since the proposed project is a relining of the existing system and expansion of capacity. The facility is located in a remote area. The nearest residence is two miles away. During construction, the use and staging of construction equipment or storage of fuels may have the potential to release hazardous substances, such as oil and diesel. The following mitigation measures would result in a less than significant risk. The Project activities are also intended to reduce the risk of wildfire, and that a burn plan will prevent escape of planned burns

Mitigation Measures

Soils-23. Provide visible delineations around construction and borrow sites. Delineated wetland (as described in the 2008 wetlands delineation study) areas would remain free of mechanical equipment that must be driven. Examples of mechanical equipment that may be used in the wetlands are small generators, a gas power post hole digger etc. *Mechanical equipment would not be left unattended on the ground in order to minimize ground contamination by fuels. Refueling of mechanical equipment would be prohibited in the RCA zones.* Materials that need to be stored for more than 7 days would be stored outside the outer RCA zone.

Water Quality-30 (Alt.1). At a minimum the contractor would have on site at all times sufficient absorption materials and tools to cleanup and properly dispose of any size oil or oil products spill. Additionally the contractor would maintain storage facilities for oil or oil products in the project area and would take preventative measures to ensure that any spill would not enter the Merrill wetlands. If the total oil products storage exceeds 1,320 gallons in containers of 55 gallons or greater, then the contractor would prepare a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan. In addition, these BMPs would be followed: BMP 2-12 Servicing and Refueling of Equipment; BMP 7-4 Forest and Hazardous Substance Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY: Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

At the watershed scale project activities would pose a negligible risk to water quality and beneficial uses within the project watershed. However, less than one percent of the project watershed area would be treated. The proposed project would prevent pond water seepage from entering the Little Merrill wetlands and groundwater. The proposed project has the potential for local effects on the water quality, activity related sedimentation and compaction. The impacts to hydrology and water quality are less than significant with mitigations. As previously discussed Alternative 1 would result in a loss of wetland acres, but this would be mitigated through the Papoose Meadows mitigation bank.

Hydrology protection measures at the Papoose Meadow Wetland Restoration (PMWR) site were addressed in the South Eagle lake Grazing Allotment EA and Decision Notice (DN) Project design features are described in the Lassen Modoc Special Status Plant Fund Grant application. Actual design features within the meadow will require Lahontan's approval prior to implementation. (Appendix D)

Mitigation Measures

Aquatics-1. A "no mechanical equipment" buffer would be designated around the inner RCA zone (within 75 feet of the delineated wetlands as described in the 2008 wetlands delineation study) within Little Merrill Flat during timber removal.

Aquatics-2. Landings would be located outside the seasonal wetlands and the RCA zones.

Aquatics-4. Skid trails would be kept to a minimum (*no more than one every 100 feet*) and no water bars would be installed after treatment *on slopes that are gentle (1-2%)*. Where slopes are gentle water bars are more likely to interfere with natural flow paths than their intended purposes, which, is to route concentrated flows from skid trails.

Slopes within the RCA in the outer RCA buffer (75 to 300 feet) are gentle and will not have waterbars installed. Outside the buffer the spacing of waterbars and energy dissipaters installation would be by the standards outlined in Forest Service handbook 2409.15 p61.42 Exhibit 01.

Aquatics-5. Skid trails within the RCA zones of Little Merrill Flat would require 90 percent of existing ground cover on bare soil on the trails; slash would be spread over these open areas.

Aquatics-8. Slash piles within the RCA would be hand-piled and burned in the outer RCA zone (75 feet to 300 feet) of the RCA of Little Merrill Flat. Machine piles would be located completely outside the RCA.

Soils-17. Existing landings and skid trails would be used as much as possible to minimize new disturbance.

Two previously disturbed areas have been identified within the project area that are within proximity to the existing system road that would be suitable as timber landings. No additional landings are anticipated. Existing skid trails, many which have revegetated exist throughout the thinning area. These features are outside the designated RCA. These features would be used this entry where they facilitate moving material to the designated landings. Any new skid trails must be designated on the ground by the Contract Representative prior to use.

Soils-18. Outside the RCA, Lassen NF Wet Weather Operations and Wet Weather Haul Agreement, and Lassen NF Timber Waiver permit from Lahontan would be followed during all operations. When a conflict exists between the Wet Weather Operations and Wet Weather Haul Agreement, and Lassen NF Timber Waiver permit the most stringent requirements shall apply.

Soils-22. Potential sedimentation to RCA zones from project areas, including from currently forested areas that are being harvested for pond expansion procedures (i.e. borrow site, sludge drying site), would be prevented by installing site-specific erosion and sediment control devices. These devices may include, silt fencing, straw bales, coir logs (i.e., straw wattles), plant cover, and mulch. (BMP 1-18 Meadow Protection During Timber Harvesting; BMP 2-11 Control of Side-Cast Material During Construction and Maintenance; BMP 2-13 Control of Construction; BMP 2-19 Disposal of Right of Way and Roadside Debris; BMP 2-15 Diversion of Flows around Construction Sites; BMP 2-18 Regulation of Borrow Areas).

Soils-23. Provide visible delineations around construction and borrow sites. Delineated wetland (as described in the 2008 wetlands delineation study) areas would remain free of mechanical equipment that must be driven. Examples of mechanical equipment that may be used in the wetlands are small generators, a gas power post hole digger etc. *Mechanical equipment would not be left unattended on the ground in order to minimize ground contamination by fuels. Refueling of mechanical equipment would be prohibited in the RCA zones.* Materials that need to be stored for more than 7 days would be stored outside the outer RCA zone.

Soils-26 (Alt.1). Mulch, chips, and/or organic material would be spread in the borrow site area to provide a minimum of 50 percent surface coverage, to reduce soil erosion and overland flow, and to maintain soil moisture. *Fifty percent ground cover has been demonstrated to provide adequate cover for minimizing erosion, for allowing vegetative understory recovery and for minimizing fuel accumulation in thinning operations in the eastside pine ecotype*

Water Quality-26. All temporary access roads within the RCA zones would be evaluated for possible scarification, recontouring and, seeding with native vegetation, and have 90% of the existing groundcover following completion of the sewer pond expansion operations.

Water Quality-27. Mechanical equipment may be utilized in the outer RCA zone as long as dry soil conditions are met. Soil must be dry to a depth of 12 inches before mechanical equipment is allowed to enter the outer RCA zone.

Water Quality-28. Mechanical equipment is prohibited from entering the inner RCA zone with the exception of the existing access road on the pond berm of Evaporation Ponds 2 and 3 and the evaporation ponds themselves with the exception of work allowed in the RCA's previously discussed.

Water Quality-30 (Alt.1). *At a minimum the contractor would have on site at all times sufficient absorption materials and tools to cleanup and properly dispose of any size oil or oil products spill. Additionally the contractor would maintain storage facilities for oil or oil products in the project area and would take preventative measures to ensure that any spill would not enter the Merrill wetlands or groundwater. If the total oil products storage exceeds 1,320 gallons in containers of 55 gallons or greater, then the contractor would prepare a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan. In addition, these BMPs would be*

Water Quality-33. The well installed for dust abatement would be constructed according to California Standards (Bulletin 74-90). With seals and casing placed to prevent migration of soil and ground water from the soil layer to deeper bedrock formations. The site would be located in proximity to the existing road, allowing access from the road. Waste water from the well drilling would be pumped to existing ponds. Cuttings would be removed from the site by the contractor.

Water Quality-34. Installation of fencing located within the wetland would occur by use of the following equipment: 1) hand auger to drill post holes approximately 18 inches deep, 2) manual placement of concrete for post footings, 3) manual tightening of fence material or use of rubber tired tractor placed outside of wetland.

Facilities-42. Site-specific erosion and sediment control devices would be installed around stockpiled materials to prevent sediment movement. These devices at a minimum would include, silt fencing, straw bales, coir logs (i.e., straw wattles), or secured tarps. (BMP 2-11 Control of Side-Cast Material During Construction and Maintenance; BMP 2-13 Control of Construction; BMP 2-19 Disposal of Right of Way and Roadside Debris; BMP 2-15 Diversion of Flows around Construction Sites; BMP 2-18 Regulation of Borrow Areas).

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING: Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The proposed project would not change any land use allocation or conflict with any applicable habitat or natural community conservation plan. The 40-acre parcel, where the sewer ponds are located, have been managed as an administrative site, since their construction. The administrative use of this 40-acre parcel for the Eagle Lake Sewer Ponds is consistent with the Forest Plan goals to manage the Eagle Lake Recreation Area.

Impacts to grazing within the Papoose meadows wetland mitigation bank site are outside the scope of this current project. The Decision Notice (2007) for the South Eagle Lake Grazing Allotment changed the

availability to use Papoose Meadows for grazing

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required

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

Discussion of Checklist Questions

There are no known mineral resources of regional or state importance in the project area. The project does not contain any designated mineral resource recovery sites.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. NOISE: Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

During construction there may be project-related noise, however this would be a temporary disturbance. The proposed project site is remote. Therefore, although project construction activities could be disruptive, the impact to noise is less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

The contract will require that OSHA protections are in place to protect the construction workers from excessive equipment noises. No other mitigation is required

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

Discussion of Checklist questions

The Project sites (Sewage treatment Ponds and Papoose Meadows) have never been designated for potential housing projects. Population and housing would not be impacted. There are no growth-inducing impacts associated with this project

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required

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

Discussion of Checklist Questions

Because of the project's remote location, construction activities would not interfere with police and fire access. The project would have no effect on schools or other public facilities, since none are located in the project area

Mitigation measures

No mitigation is required

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. RECREATION:				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The 40-acre parcel, where the sewer ponds are located, have been managed as an administrative site, since their construction. The administrative use of this 40-acre parcel for the Eagle Lake Sewer Ponds is consistent with the Forest Plan goals to manage the Eagle Lake Recreation Area. Has previously discussed in this document the purpose of the Eagle lake sewage ponds project is to repair and upgrade the existing sewage facility that services the eagle lake recreation area. This project with its previously discussed mitigation measures will have a less than significant effect.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC: Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

Transportation and traffic resources would not be impacted. Staging of the construction and timber harvesting equipment as well as personal vehicles would occur at the administrative site behind Merrill Shed, adjacent to Forest service road 31N07

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Discussion of Checklist Questions

The project consists of repairing and upgrading an existing wastewater treatment facility. The purpose and need for this project is to bring the facility into conformance with the regulations of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Eagle Lake Sewerage Pond Environmental Assessment addresses the effects of the proposed project. With the mitigations previously discussed there would be no significant environmental effects as a result of this project

Alternative 2, the No Action Alternative is an alternative which does nothing to address the existing liner failures nor does it address future needs. The impacts of the "No Action Alternative" are discussed on pages 31 through 59 of the EA.

Mitigation Measures for Alternatives 1, 3, 4 and 5

Previously noted in discussions above.

Mitigation Measures for Alternative 2

If the liners are not replaced the Forest Service would be in violation of the permit and the sewage treatment facility would be shut down by Lahontan. Attempts to simply make repairs would be a short term fix and would require intensive monitoring and inspections. Lahontan would not accept this option as a long term solution since the liners have exceeded their intended life.

If the facility is shut down, all sewage and fluids would have to be immediately pumped from the ponds and the piping system and removed from NFS lands. This would be a very large volume; most likely over 2.6 million gallons. Finding one collection facility that could receive this much material is unlikely. The length of haul to multiple facilities out of the local area would be cost prohibitive. The liners would have to be rinsed and disinfected and the residual materials removed from NFS lands and alternatives for collection of human waste would have to be established.

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

Discussion of Checklist Question a

The project, with the previously discussed mitigation measures incorporated, would not substantially impact the visual quality of the site, impair air or water quality, result in substantial soil erosion or loss of top soil, or impact biological or historic resources.

Discussion of Checklist Question b

The project would not contribute to any cumulative impacts since mitigation measures described in this document reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level

Discussion of Checklist Question c

The project would not have environmental effects that would cause adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly