

PUBLIC NOTICE

Special Meeting of the:
Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
170 Russell Ave. Suite C
Susanville, CA 96130
5302574127 ext. 100

Attachments available 4/17/2023 at www.honeylakevalleyrcd.us

Date: Wednesday, April 19th, 2023

Location: 170 Russell Ave., Suite C, Susanville, CA 96130

Time: 3:30 PM

AGENDA

NOTE: THE HONEY LAKE VALLEY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT MAY ADVISE ACTION ON ANY OF THE AGENDA ITEMS SHOWN BELOW.

NOTE: IF YOU NEED A DISABILITY-RELATED MODIFICATION OR ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING AUXILIARY AIDS OR SERVICES, TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT THE DISTRICT OFFICE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AT LEAST A DAY BEFORE THE MEETING.

- I. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tie to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Issue 1 – Build HLVRCD leadership & organizational capacity.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Per RCD Board Policy No. 5030.4.1, during this portion of the meeting, any member of the public is permitted to make a brief statement, express his/her viewpoint, or ask a question regarding matters related to the District. Five (5) minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to each subject matter.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Consideration and approval of the Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project CEQA statutory exemption for restoration projects (SERP) concurrence request. (attachment)

Tie to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Issue 1 – Build HLVRCD leadership & organizational capacity.

V. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

The next Honey Lake Valley RCD meeting will be **April 27th, 2022 at 5:30 PM**. The location is the USDA Service Center, 170 Russell Avenue, Suite C, Susanville, CA.

I certify that on Monday April 17th, 2023 agendas were posted as required by Government Code Section 54956 and any other applicable law.

Andrea Stuemky District Manager

CEQA STATUTORY EXEMPTION FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS (SERP) CONCURRENCE REQUEST

Completion and submission of this form is voluntary. This form may be submitted to request concurrence from the Director of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56.

Submit this form (pdf) and all attachments via the Department's <u>Environmental Permit Information</u> Management System (EPIMS) Document Repository.

1. LEAD AGENCY

Lead Agency Name:	Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
Contact Person's Name:	Andrea Stuemky
Street Address:	170 Russell Ave.
City, State, Zip:	Susanville, CA 96130
Contact Person's Telephone:	530-257-7271
Contact Person's E-mail:	astuemky@honeylakevalleyrcd.us

2. PROJECT PROPONENT

	<u> </u>
Business/Agency/Organization:	Plumas Corporation
Contact Person's Name:	Jeanie Hinds
Street Address:	PO Box 3880 / 418 N. Mill Creek Rd.
City, State, Zip:	Quincy, CA 95971
Contact Person's Telephone:	530-283-3739
Contact Person's E-mail:	jeanie@plumascorp.org

3. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Project Name:	Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project
B. County or Counties:	Lassen
C. Lat./Long. Coordinates:	40.26247, -120.90406
D. Estimated Project Start/End Dates:	<mark>8/0</mark> 1/23 – 10/13/23

E. F	Provide a	ı brief	descri	otion of	the	Lead <i>I</i>	Agency	's d	iscret	ionary	/ ap	proval	l pursuan	t tc) C	EC	ĮΑ

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HLVRCD) is a special district of the state of California and is implementing the Project.

F. Provide a brief description of the Project location, size, and funding sources. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project is a 441.35 acre meadow restoration project located on private industrial timberlands in western Lassen County near the Plumas County line, approximately 6 air miles southeast of Westwood, CA. See the Vicinity Map provided in Attachment 1.

Preliminary design work was funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sierra Nevada Meadow Restoration Program in 2016. Additional design and planning work have been completed through a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board's 2020 Forest Conservation Program. Funding for implementation (application pending) is anticipated from the Sierra Meadows Partnership Grant Program, which received funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board via a block grant.

G. Provide a brief Project description and summarize the expected environmental benefits (e.g., acres or stream-miles restored/enhanced, species benefitted, etc.). Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The primary goal of the Project is to restore 441.35 acres of meadow floodplain function by eliminating gullied (incised) channels and re-establishing the channel-floodplain connection. The Project includes a variety of treatment techniques to eliminate channel incision, including partial fill in the 3 primary gullies (and several upland ditch fingers tributary to the primary gullies), and complete fill or riffle augmentation with rock and sod riffles in less-incised reaches of channel. On-site fill will be generated from in-gully borrow areas, creating ponds as the groundwater table recovers. Additional fill will be generated from a terrace on the meadow edge that will be graded, reducing the overall number of borrow ponds.

Filling the incised gullies at Mountain Meadows Creek would require excavation and placement, using heavy equipment, of 79,706 cubic yards of soil in the 41 partial channel fill plugs, four upland ditch plugs, and one complete fill reach to eliminate the existing gullied channel and raise/restore the base elevation of surface water flow in the meadow. An additional 121,878 cubic yards of fill would be placed in the upland, eroded segments of channel outside of mapped wetland areas, for a total of 222,688 cubic yards of fill. At two key locations, fills will redirect stream flows into re-activated channels on the meadow surface, distributing flow across the floodplain. Stream flows will be redirected into non-incised channels on the meadow surface, distributing flow across the floodplain. Additionally, the project includes filling, abandoning, and seeding an eroded, cross-meadow roadway, planting/fencing of up to 300 native shrubs in the riparian corridor, addition of rock to an existing forest road to reduce erosion and accommodate sheet flow under restored flow conditions, removal of encroaching conifers on approximately 75 acres of meadow/riparian corridor, and construction of cross-pasture fencing to implement grazing management changes that promote habitat quality in the meadow. See Appendix A, 90% Design Report, for a complete description of design features.

The project is expected to provide the following benefits:

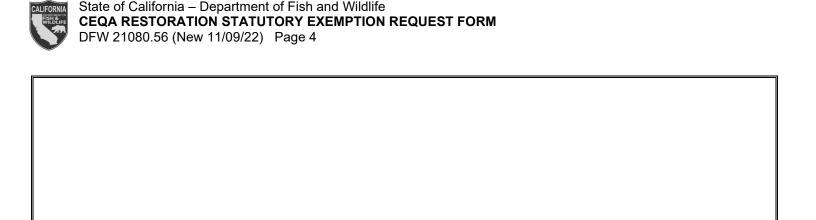
- Benefit water supply and quality: The project will enhance groundwater retention, resulting in greater summer base flows and outflow extended later in the season. Water quality will be enhanced by eliminating bank erosion, while more vigorous meadow vegetation will filter floodplain flows.
- Improve plant communities and habitat: The project will increase total riverine habitat by reactivating the historic network of flowpaths on the meadow surface. Total length of channels in the meadow will increase from 23,596 linear ft to 28,391 linear ft. The subsurface hydrology to sustain wet meadow plant species will expand, increasing wet meadow acreage from 160 acres to an estimated 247 acres, and shifting an additional 120 acres of xeric grassland to more mesic meadow conditions. Habitat quality is also expected to improve in the riparian corridor through removal of encroaching conifers, allowing more sunlight for shade-intolerant riparian species. Revegetation efforts will include seeding with native meadow graminoids and forbs and planting native riparian

shrubs in the riparian corridor, expanding food sources for meadow birds. Increased wet meadow acreage and a greater diversity of forage species will accelerate improvements in avian species diversity, particularly for meadow focal species. Special-status species known to use the meadow include greater sandhill crane and gray wolf. Improvements in habitat quality will increase foraging opportunities for both species. See Appendix B, Wildlife Biological Assessment and Evaluation, for a complete description of potential effects and benefits to wildlife.

- Improve watershed health: Removal of encroaching conifers is planned within the meadow, in addition to post-fire fuel removal from 2,948 acres of the surrounding uplands in a companion forestry project. Dead and dying trees will be removed, and reforestation actions will be taken in high-severity burn areas. Forest treatments will reduce the risk of future catastrophic fires, thereby protecting water quality. All forestry work on the surrounding uplands will be carried out under an approved Timber Harvest Plan.
- H. CDFW recommends public outreach and coordination with interested parties. Please provide a summary of engagement with tribes, agencies, and other interested parties. Be careful not to include any sensitive or confidential information. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Project is located on private industrial timberlands and was advanced at the request of the landowner as part of a commitment to holistic land management. The Project is part of a broader landscape-scale restoration effort in the Mountain Meadows Basin. The Project proponent received three years of funding from the Intermountain West Joint Venture (2010-2012) to foster stakeholder relationships of the Mountain Meadows Conservancy and advance a suite of restoration projects, including the proposed Project. The Mountain Meadows Conservancy has supported efforts to secure funding for the project and will provide feedback on revegetation plan implementation (see Appendix C, Letters of Support for grant funding). The Project proponent has provided periodic updates to local watershed collaboratives including the July 2019 State of the Lake Forum (Lake Almanor Basin) and meetings of the South Lassen Watershed Group. Additionally, a field tour of the Project site was conducted in April 2022 that included agency representatives from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Cutting the Green Tape Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

The Sacred Lands File record search for the project was negative, and the Cultural Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report for the Project determined that no NRHP/CRHR eligible sites were present in the project area. Efforts to engage local tribes and record local knowledge of cultural sites occurred during 2021 and 2022 and included emails, phone calls, and/or certified letters to contacts provided by the Native American Heritage Commission. Both the proposed Project and the McKenzie Meadows Restoration Project, also in the Mountain Meadows Basin, were outreached at the same time. A letter was received from the Concow-Maidu of Mooretown Rancheria in July 2022 indicating the Tribe's interest to protect any tribal cultural items or Native American human remains that may be encountered during construction. Although the letter was in response to the McKenzie Meadows Restoration Project, because the projects were outreached at the same time, the Concow-Maidu will be notified in the event of discovery of any tribal cultural items or human remains.



4. REQUIRED DETERMINATIONS

Provide a full description for each determination below:

A. The Project is exclusively one or both of the following: (1) a project to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend, or (2) a project to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District has determined that the Project is exclusively a project to restore and enhance habitat for California native fish and wildlife. The Project intends to restore and enhance mesic meadow habitat by restoring floodplain function at Mountain Meadows Creek. The Project will eliminate channel incision and reactivate historic flowpaths on the meadow surface, and includes planting native plant species in the riparian corridor and xeric portions of the meadow, removal of encroaching conifers, and implementing grazing management changes to enhance habitat quality for meadow species. The restored hydrology and improved floodplain function will promote more vigorous growth of mesic meadow plant species, enhance summer flow conditions, and improve water quality by eliminating eroding banks and filtering flood flows on the meadow floodplain surface.

B. An eligible project may have incidental public benefits, such as public access and recreation. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

Project does not have direct public benefits such as creating public access and recreation opportunities.

Project would have indirect effects on dispersed recreation that occurs on adjoining land ownership.

Mountain Meadows Reservoir is immediately downstream of the Project, and is a popular area for the Westwood community for recreation, particularly fishing. The restoration of the meadow will reduce sediment delivery into the reservoir, enhancing all recreational uses of the lake.

C. The Project does both of the following: (1) Results in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and (2) Includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

Overview:

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District has determined that the Project does both of the following: (1) results in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and (2) includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment. The Project will provide climate resiliency by increasing carbon storage in the meadow, expanding mesic meadow habitat, and increasing the diversity of avian forage species in the riparian corridor, which are expected to support breeding for three special-status meadow bird species (willow flycatcher, yellow warbler, and greater sandhill crane). Procedures for ongoing management and protection include post-project performance monitoring for three years following construction, and development of a long-term management plan to specifically address grazing management changes to enhance vegetation productivity and habitat quality in the meadow.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Climate Resiliency:

One of the most significant climate impacts to Sierra Nevada ecosystems is the increased frequency of more rain than snow precipitation events (Viers et al. 2013). Restoring the Mountain Meadows Creek meadow floodplain directly addresses this impact in several ways. Reconnecting the incised channels with the meadow floodplain will allow flows to spread out, attenuating peak velocities and reducing opportunities for flood events downstream (Ohara et al. 2013). As flows disperse across the floodplain, water is absorbed into meadow soils, providing increased water retention and replenishment of the shallow groundwater aquifer. The increased groundwater retention in turn compensates for the reduced snowpack and projected declines in spring runoff (Freeman 2010) by slowly filtering and releasing water into stream channels later into the summer months (Hunt et al. 2018). Extending the availability of cold, clean surface water in the meadow and downstream provides resiliency to drought climate impacts on habitats for a multitude of both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species.

The Project will also promote climate resiliency through a two-fold effect on carbon storage: (1) restoring the meadow will prevent continued loss of carbon via oxidation from continued drying meadow soils; and (2) the restored meadow will act as a net carbon sink as the meadow soils begin to re-sequester carbon through increased aboveground and belowground biomass (Reed and Sullivan 2019). Thus, the restoration will mitigate climate impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration.

Conifer removal treatments in the riparian corridor and meadow edge and in the surrounding upland forest will create habitats that are more resilient to high intensity wildfire. Remaining trees will have increased vigor, ability to respond to disturbance, and capacity for carbon storage, a key component of climate resiliency.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Biodiversity:

The Project would expand the contiguous restoration footprint in the basin, providing resilience to fragmentation. The hydrologic improvements at Mountain Meadows Creek meadow are expected to make the meadow self-sustaining, ensuring this habitat is available for species that have reduced habitat under drier conditions. Modeling studies have shown that meadow networks will become reduced and fragmented under future climate scenarios (Maher et al. 2017). In conjunction with neighboring projects (Greenville and East Creek restoration projects, at 299 acres total), this project will increase the overall patch size of meadow habitat, countering the effects of fragmentation in a critically important migratory bird corridor and in the home range of the Lassen Pack gray wolf.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Sensitive Species Recovery:

The improved ecological condition of meadow and riparian habitat will enhance and expand vegetation used by meadow birds. Third party monitoring of restored meadows in the Sierra Nevada documents an increase in avian diversity, particularly meadow focal species, following meadow restoration projects (Burnett and Fogg 2011; Loffland et al. 2013; Campos et al. 2014; Campos et al. 2020). Point Blue Conservation Science has conducted two annual (2021 and 2022) bird and vegetation surveys at Mountain Meadows Creek during the peak breeding season (May-June) for meadow focal species. A pre-restoration avian monitoring report was completed in September 2022 (Appendix D). The analysis of survey data uses meadow focal species richness, a meadow restoration target for Sierra meadows (Campos et al. 2014). The target for healthy meadows is 1.03

species per acre (Ibid). Focal species richness at MMC averaged 0.16 species per acre (Burnett 2022). Post-restoration avian monitoring will be repeated post-implementation to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting wildlife habitat objectives. Without revegetation, it is expected that project benefits for meadow birds would not be fully realized for 10- 20 years after project implementation (Ibid). Large scale revegetation efforts to restore the riparian shrub habitat have been incorporated into the Project; these efforts may increase the pace of bird response, and effective restoration has the potential to support breeding of three special status meadow bird species: Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, and the already present Greater Sandhill Crane (Ibid).

Procedures for the Protection of the Environment:

The Project includes the following procedures for the protection of the environment:

- (1) Project implementation will be conducted during the dry season when flows are minimal or absent (typically August 1 through October 30).
- Work areas will be isolated from flowing waters through use of pumps to route flows around active earth-moving activities. Any trout found in work areas would be relocated to suitable locations in the watershed.
- (3) Existing vegetation (meadow sod and riparian shrubs) in disturbance areas will be salvaged and replanted in appropriate locations throughout the Project area.
- (4) All work will be conducted in accordance with the Construction General Permit and a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Fugitive dust will be controlled with the continuous operation of water trucks throughout the work area.
- (5) A spill kit will be kept in proximity to active work areas.
- (6) Surveys for greater sandhill crane and northern goshawk will be conducted if work is planned to begin prior to the limited operating periods (LOPs) of August 1 and August 15, respectively.
- (7) A third-party biologist will be retained to conduct protocol surveys for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYLF) in spring 2023. If any SNYLF are detected, the Lead Agency and Project proponent will ensure the permitting agencies are notified so that State and Federal consultation can proceed prior to Project implementation.
- (8) The Project proponent will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on gray wolf activity in the Project vicinity. A site-specific LOP may be required if wolf activity is detected within 2 miles of the Project; specific LOP requirements will be dependent on the nature of wolf activities in the project vicinity (e.g., rendezvous site vs. den), presence of mitigating natural geographic barriers, and habitat conditions during time of construction.
- (9) Pre-construction surveys for the sensitive plant species *Penstemon sudans* (California Rare Plant Rank 4.3) will be conducted and any occurrences will be flagged for avoidance.
- (10) All staging areas shall be surveyed for noxious weeds and treated prior to work. Infestations will be flagged for avoidance and vegetation will be removed (hand pulled or dug with heavy equipment) and buried deep in the channel fill.
- (11) Vehicles and other equipment operating in the project area shall be cleaned before entering the project according to standard vehicle washing guidelines.
- (12) Known invasive plant infestations of ventenata grass (Ventenata dubia) and Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense) or newly identified infestations would be located, flagged where possible, and mapped for this project. Locations will be displayed on contract maps. Canada thistle sites within or adjacent to the project area containing isolated patches with small plant numbers would be treated (hand pulled or dug and buried deep under channel fill) prior to Project implementation. Canada thistle sites outside of the zone of equipment travel will also be treated with a black plastic overlayment, which reduces resprouting from rhizomes.

See Appendix B (Wildlife Biological Assessment and Evaluation), Appendix E (Noxious Weeds Risk Assessment for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project), and Appendix (Biological Evaluation/Biological

Assessment for Plant Species for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project) for analyses leading to the development of mitigation/environmental protection measures.

Ongoing Management for the Protection of the Environment:

Engineering review via hydrologic modeling indicates that the project will perform as designed, with flow velocities and depths below thresholds of concern for re-incision. See 90% Design Report (Appendix A), which includes the results of modeled depths and velocities under 10-year and 100-year flow return intervals both pre-and post-project, and provides an analysis of shear stresses under post-project conditions. The Project has been designed to be self-sustaining by re-establishing the natural floodplain hydrologic function, which mitigates the erosive potential of peak flows. The rock riffles to be placed in the lower reaches of main channel will provide grade control to prevent downstream incisions from outside the Project area from propagating upstream. Conifer removal will generate material (trees and chipped/masticated material) in the meadow and riparian corridor that will be used to provide roughness on the floodplain terrace, and the re-establishment of riparian tree and shrub species will promote long-term woody debris recruitment in the restored channels.

Project performance monitoring site visits will be conducted annually during peak runoff in February 2024, 2025, and 2026 (dependent upon access) to identify the potential or actual need for post-project maintenance intervention, and provide information to the partners in developing short- and long-term adaptive management decisions. This monitoring will focus on ensuring the structural integrity of the project continues to meet desired conditions (connected floodplain and improved water quality and habitat conditions). If it is determined that any occurring erosion is affecting the project's structural integrity, maintenance and/or management actions may be taken. Annual photo point documentation would supplement performance site visits in identifying potential maintenance and/or adaptive management needs. Established photo points will be used to create a visual comparison of changes in meadow condition over time. Photos have been taken pre-implementation and will be repeated annually for five years following project construction.

The landowner is committed to protecting and enhancing the lands for wildlife while maintaining a working landscape. The Project proponent has discussed the need for shifts in grazing practices to improve habitat quality and maximize long-term productivity with the land manager. This Project includes the development of a long-term management plan to formalize these practices, develop criteria for grazing management, and ensure that grazing does not adversely affect the restoration. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the landowners, land manager, and grazing lessee. As part of the long-term management plan, the Project will include the installation of cross-fences to control distribution of cattle during periods of soil saturation.

D. The Project does not include any construction activities, except for construction activities solely related to habitat restoration. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Project does not include any construction activities unrelated to habitat restoration. See 90% Design Report (Appendix A) for a discussion of Project design features. Project implementation will proceed as follows:

Construction clearances: Pre-construction surveys/flagging for wildlife, botany, and noxious weeds
will be conducted beginning in spring 2023 by Plumas Corporation staff and a qualified biologist. At this
time, Plumas Corporation will also coordinate with the California Department of Wildlife on wolf activity
and potential for LOP development.

- Mobilization and Site Preparation: Stockpile and staging areas will be identified prior to equipment mobilization. All access routes will be on existing roads. As much as possible, equipment will use existing disturbed areas in the meadow while maintaining the shortest possible distance between staging areas and construction zones. For the partial fill segments of channel, temporary staging areas for borrow material are located immediately adjacent to fill locations. Spill kit(s) will be placed in proximity to work area(s). Pumps for re-routing flows around work areas are only anticipated to be needed in the lower reaches of the Project. Pumps and hoses will be staged adjacent to work areas when needed and all equipment stored in accordance with the SWPPP. Equipment will be mobilized to the site following weed decontamination protocols.
- **Project Construction:** The following activities will be conducted in sequence as the Project proceeds from upstream to downstream:
 - Partial channel fill:
 - Vegetation salvage: remove any existing topsoil, sod, or other usable riparian vegetation from area where borrow material will be excavated or where channel bottoms will be inundated. Vegetation will be placed adjacent to work areas and kept watered until placed.
 - Excavate borrow material: After vegetation removal, the existing gully is widened to generate material for partial channel fill.
 - Placement of fill: Fill is placed in-channel in a series of plugs, eliminating the incised channel. At two locations, plugs will be used to redirect stream flow into the network of historic remnant channels. Plugs are constructed to subgrade and brought to grade with the floodplain surface using stockpiled topsoil and sod. Larger vegetation is planted at key locations to provide roughness and/or habitat features.
 - Complete fill: An upland terrace on the southern meadow fringe will be graded approximately 2 ft down to generate borrow material for a reach of complete fill. Vegetation salvage in the complete fill reach will take place simultaneously. Fill will be placed in channel to subgrade and brought to grade with the floodplain surface using stockpiled topsoil and sod.
 - Riffle construction: Twelve riffles will be constructed in the dredged, straight-line portion of Mountain Meadows Creek. Thirteen sod riffles (using on-site surplus material from borrow ponds and the terrace cut, vegetated with meadow sod) will be constructed in a secondary channel along the southern meadow boundary.
 - Road decommissioning: The eroded cross-meadow roadway will be eliminated with placement
 of surplus borrow material from borrow ponds and the terrace cut. The roadway will be seeded
 prior to fall rains during the initial revegetation stage.
 - Road armoring: An existing forest road will have 3"-minus rock placed across its surface to grade. The road is used for forest management activities in the surrounding uplands and will be retained. Rock placement is solely to reduce erosion from the roadway and allow for sheet flow during runoff events.
 - Conifer removal: Encroaching conifers will be removed on approximately 75 acres of meadow and riparian corridor using mastication or chipping. Some trees will be removed whole and used for roughness and habitat features in ponds and remnant channels.
 - Demobilization: Restore in-project travel routes and staging areas and remove construction equipment from the site.
- Revegetation, Fencing & Grazing Management: The project will receive a 3-year rest from grazing. Seeding disturbed areas will occur post-construction (2023). Willow staking and riparian container planting will occur in 2024. Cross-fence construction for grazing management will occur by summer 2026.
- **Post-project Monitoring:** The Project provides for continued monitoring including monthly and continuous groundwater elevation data, soil carbon analysis, CRAM Wetland Assessment, water

temperature monitoring, avian surveys, and maintenance and inform long-term adaptive	project performance monitoring to evaluate the need for management needs.
5. CERTIFICATION	
15025(a)(1), and this Project meets all the requirem	er a project is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section ents described in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, uired therein necessary to obtain the concurrence of the
	Date: 04/19/2023
Lead Agency Signature	
Printed Name and Title: Jesse Claypool, Board Cha	ir, Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District

Form DFW 21080.56 - List of Attachments and Appendices CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) Concurrence Request

Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project

Attachments

Attachment 1: Vicinity Map

Attachment 2: References

Appendices (Provided Digitally)

Appendix A: Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project 90% Design Report

Appendix B: Wildlife Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation for Mountain Meadows Creek

Restoration Project

Appendix C: Mountain Meadows Conservancy Support Letters for the Mountain Meadows Creek

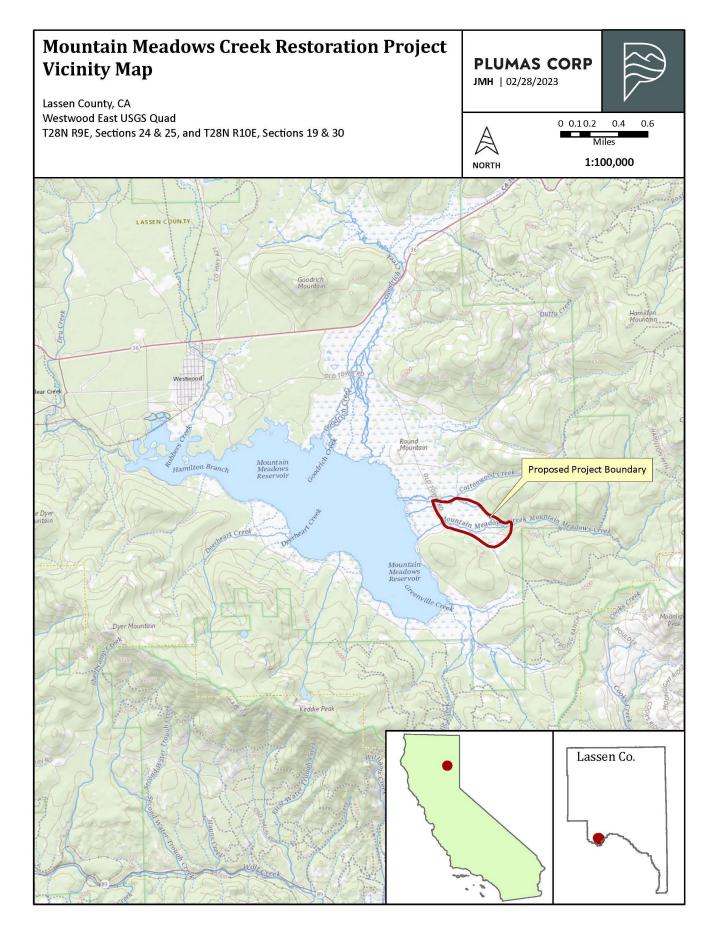
Restoration Project

Appendix D: Pre-Implementation Bird Monitoring of Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration

Appendix E: Noxious Weeds Risk Assessment for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project

Appendix F: Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment for Plant Species for Mountain Meadows

Creek Restoration Project



References

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- Burnett, R.D. and A.M. Fogg. 2011. PRBO Northern Sierra 2010 Aspen and Meadow Monitoring Reports. PRBO Conservation Science Contribution Number 1813, May 2011.
- Campos, B.R., Burnett, R.D., Loffland, H.L., and R.B. Siegel. 2020. Bird response to hydrologic restoration of montane riparian meadows. Restoration Ecology. Accepted manuscript online May 24, 2020; doi: 10.1111/rec.13212.
- Campos, B.R., Burnett, R.D., Loffland, H.L., and R.B. Siegel. 2014. Evaluating meadow restoration in the Sierra Nevada using birds and their habitat associations. Report to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Point Blue Conservation Science, Petaluma, CA. Point Blue Contribution Number 2005, September 2014.
- Freeman, G.J. 2010. Tracking the impact of climate change on central and northern California's spring snowmelt subbasin runoff. Western Snow Conference 78: 21-32.
- Hunt, L.J. and M. Odland. 2018. Meadow Restoration Increases Base Flow and Groundwater Storage in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/DOI/ABS/10.1111/1752-1688.12675
- Loffland, H.L, Siegel, R.B., and R.L. Wilkerson. 2013. Assessing the effects of meadow restoration on bird populations in the greater Sierra Nevada: Report for the 2012 field season. The Institute for Bird Populations, Point Reyes Station, California.
- Maher, S.P., Morelli, T.L., Hershey, M., Flint, A.L., Flint, L.E., Moritz, C. and S.R. Beissinger. 2017. Erosion of refugia in the Sierra Nevada meadows network with climate change. Ecosphere 8(4):e01673. 10.1002/ecs2.1673.
- Ohara, N. Kavvas, M.L., Chen, Z.Q., Liang, L., Anderson, M., Wilcox, J. and L. Mink. 2013. Modelling atmospheric and hydrologic processes for assessment of meadow restoration impact on flow and sediment in a sparsely gauged California watershed. Hydrological Processes 28(7): 3053-3066.
- Reed, C.C. and B. W. Sullivan. May 2019. Restoring Function? The impacts of hydrologic restoration on soil C sequestration, nutrient cycling and primary production in Sierra Nevada meadows. University of Nevada, Reno. Presentation at 2019 Sierra Meadows Restoration Partnership Conference. Unpublished. Clio, CA.
- Viers, J.H., Purdy, S.E., Peek, R.A., Fryjoff-Hung, A, Santos, N.R., Katz, J.V.E., Emmons, J.D., Dolan, D.V. and S.M. Yarnell. 2013. Montane Meadows in the Sierra Nevada: Changing Hydroclimatic Conditions and Concepts for Vulnerability Assessment. Center for Watershed Sciences Technical Report (CWS-2013-01), University of California, Davis. 63 pp.

CEQA STATUTORY EXEMPTION FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS (SERP) CONCURRENCE REQUEST

Completion and submission of this form is voluntary. This form may be submitted to request concurrence from the Director of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56.

Submit this form (pdf) and all attachments via the Department's <u>Environmental Permit Information</u> Management System (EPIMS) Document Repository.

1. LEAD AGENCY

Lead Agency Name:	Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
Contact Person's Name:	Andrea Stuemky
Street Address:	170 Russell Ave.
City, State, Zip:	Susanville, CA 96130
Contact Person's Telephone:	530-257-7271
Contact Person's E-mail:	astuemky@honeylakevalleyrcd.us

2. PROJECT PROPONENT

	<u> </u>
Business/Agency/Organization:	Plumas Corporation
Contact Person's Name:	Jeanie Hinds
Street Address:	PO Box 3880 / 418 N. Mill Creek Rd.
City, State, Zip:	Quincy, CA 95971
Contact Person's Telephone:	530-283-3739
Contact Person's E-mail:	jeanie@plumascorp.org

3. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Project Name:	Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project
B. County or Counties:	Lassen
C. Lat./Long. Coordinates:	40.26247, -120.90406
D. Estimated Project Start/End Dates:	<mark>8/0</mark> 1/23 – 10/13/23

E. F	Provide a	ı brief	descri	otion of	the	Lead <i>I</i>	Agency	's d	iscret	ionary	/ ap	proval	l pursuan	t tc) C	EC	ĮΑ

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HLVRCD) is a special district of the state of California and is implementing the Project.

F. Provide a brief description of the Project location, size, and funding sources. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project is a 441.35 acre meadow restoration project located on private industrial timberlands in western Lassen County near the Plumas County line, approximately 6 air miles southeast of Westwood, CA. See the Vicinity Map provided in Attachment 1.

Preliminary design work was funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sierra Nevada Meadow Restoration Program in 2016. Additional design and planning work have been completed through a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board's 2020 Forest Conservation Program. Funding for implementation (application pending) is anticipated from the Sierra Meadows Partnership Grant Program, which received funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board via a block grant.

G. Provide a brief Project description and summarize the expected environmental benefits (e.g., acres or stream-miles restored/enhanced, species benefitted, etc.). Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The primary goal of the Project is to restore 441.35 acres of meadow floodplain function by eliminating gullied (incised) channels and re-establishing the channel-floodplain connection. The Project includes a variety of treatment techniques to eliminate channel incision, including partial fill in the 3 primary gullies (and several upland ditch fingers tributary to the primary gullies), and complete fill or riffle augmentation with rock and sod riffles in less-incised reaches of channel. On-site fill will be generated from in-gully borrow areas, creating ponds as the groundwater table recovers. Additional fill will be generated from a terrace on the meadow edge that will be graded, reducing the overall number of borrow ponds.

Filling the incised gullies at Mountain Meadows Creek would require excavation and placement, using heavy equipment, of 79,706 cubic yards of soil in the 41 partial channel fill plugs, four upland ditch plugs, and one complete fill reach to eliminate the existing gullied channel and raise/restore the base elevation of surface water flow in the meadow. An additional 121,878 cubic yards of fill would be placed in the upland, eroded segments of channel outside of mapped wetland areas, for a total of 222,688 cubic yards of fill. At two key locations, fills will redirect stream flows into re-activated channels on the meadow surface, distributing flow across the floodplain. Stream flows will be redirected into non-incised channels on the meadow surface, distributing flow across the floodplain. Additionally, the project includes filling, abandoning, and seeding an eroded, cross-meadow roadway, planting/fencing of up to 300 native shrubs in the riparian corridor, addition of rock to an existing forest road to reduce erosion and accommodate sheet flow under restored flow conditions, removal of encroaching conifers on approximately 75 acres of meadow/riparian corridor, and construction of cross-pasture fencing to implement grazing management changes that promote habitat quality in the meadow. See Appendix A, 90% Design Report, for a complete description of design features.

The project is expected to provide the following benefits:

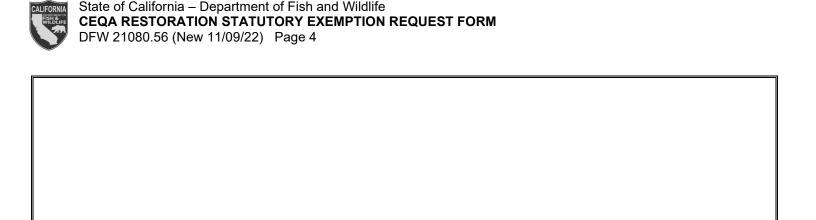
- Benefit water supply and quality: The project will enhance groundwater retention, resulting in greater summer base flows and outflow extended later in the season. Water quality will be enhanced by eliminating bank erosion, while more vigorous meadow vegetation will filter floodplain flows.
- Improve plant communities and habitat: The project will increase total riverine habitat by reactivating the historic network of flowpaths on the meadow surface. Total length of channels in the meadow will increase from 23,596 linear ft to 28,391 linear ft. The subsurface hydrology to sustain wet meadow plant species will expand, increasing wet meadow acreage from 160 acres to an estimated 247 acres, and shifting an additional 120 acres of xeric grassland to more mesic meadow conditions. Habitat quality is also expected to improve in the riparian corridor through removal of encroaching conifers, allowing more sunlight for shade-intolerant riparian species. Revegetation efforts will include seeding with native meadow graminoids and forbs and planting native riparian

shrubs in the riparian corridor, expanding food sources for meadow birds. Increased wet meadow acreage and a greater diversity of forage species will accelerate improvements in avian species diversity, particularly for meadow focal species. Special-status species known to use the meadow include greater sandhill crane and gray wolf. Improvements in habitat quality will increase foraging opportunities for both species. See Appendix B, Wildlife Biological Assessment and Evaluation, for a complete description of potential effects and benefits to wildlife.

- Improve watershed health: Removal of encroaching conifers is planned within the meadow, in addition to post-fire fuel removal from 2,948 acres of the surrounding uplands in a companion forestry project. Dead and dying trees will be removed, and reforestation actions will be taken in high-severity burn areas. Forest treatments will reduce the risk of future catastrophic fires, thereby protecting water quality. All forestry work on the surrounding uplands will be carried out under an approved Timber Harvest Plan.
- H. CDFW recommends public outreach and coordination with interested parties. Please provide a summary of engagement with tribes, agencies, and other interested parties. Be careful not to include any sensitive or confidential information. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Project is located on private industrial timberlands and was advanced at the request of the landowner as part of a commitment to holistic land management. The Project is part of a broader landscape-scale restoration effort in the Mountain Meadows Basin. The Project proponent received three years of funding from the Intermountain West Joint Venture (2010-2012) to foster stakeholder relationships of the Mountain Meadows Conservancy and advance a suite of restoration projects, including the proposed Project. The Mountain Meadows Conservancy has supported efforts to secure funding for the project and will provide feedback on revegetation plan implementation (see Appendix C, Letters of Support for grant funding). The Project proponent has provided periodic updates to local watershed collaboratives including the July 2019 State of the Lake Forum (Lake Almanor Basin) and meetings of the South Lassen Watershed Group. Additionally, a field tour of the Project site was conducted in April 2022 that included agency representatives from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Cutting the Green Tape Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

The Sacred Lands File record search for the project was negative, and the Cultural Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report for the Project determined that no NRHP/CRHR eligible sites were present in the project area. Efforts to engage local tribes and record local knowledge of cultural sites occurred during 2021 and 2022 and included emails, phone calls, and/or certified letters to contacts provided by the Native American Heritage Commission. Both the proposed Project and the McKenzie Meadows Restoration Project, also in the Mountain Meadows Basin, were outreached at the same time. A letter was received from the Concow-Maidu of Mooretown Rancheria in July 2022 indicating the Tribe's interest to protect any tribal cultural items or Native American human remains that may be encountered during construction. Although the letter was in response to the McKenzie Meadows Restoration Project, because the projects were outreached at the same time, the Concow-Maidu will be notified in the event of discovery of any tribal cultural items or human remains.



4. REQUIRED DETERMINATIONS

Provide a full description for each determination below:

A. The Project is exclusively one or both of the following: (1) a project to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend, or (2) a project to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District has determined that the Project is exclusively a project to restore and enhance habitat for California native fish and wildlife. The Project intends to restore and enhance mesic meadow habitat by restoring floodplain function at Mountain Meadows Creek. The Project will eliminate channel incision and reactivate historic flowpaths on the meadow surface, and includes planting native plant species in the riparian corridor and xeric portions of the meadow, removal of encroaching conifers, and implementing grazing management changes to enhance habitat quality for meadow species. The restored hydrology and improved floodplain function will promote more vigorous growth of mesic meadow plant species, enhance summer flow conditions, and improve water quality by eliminating eroding banks and filtering flood flows on the meadow floodplain surface.

B. An eligible project may have incidental public benefits, such as public access and recreation. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

Project does not have direct public benefits such as creating public access and recreation opportunities.

Project would have indirect effects on dispersed recreation that occurs on adjoining land ownership.

Mountain Meadows Reservoir is immediately downstream of the Project, and is a popular area for the Westwood community for recreation, particularly fishing. The restoration of the meadow will reduce sediment delivery into the reservoir, enhancing all recreational uses of the lake.

C. The Project does both of the following: (1) Results in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and (2) Includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

Overview:

The Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District has determined that the Project does both of the following: (1) results in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and (2) includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment. The Project will provide climate resiliency by increasing carbon storage in the meadow, expanding mesic meadow habitat, and increasing the diversity of avian forage species in the riparian corridor, which are expected to support breeding for three special-status meadow bird species (willow flycatcher, yellow warbler, and greater sandhill crane). Procedures for ongoing management and protection include post-project performance monitoring for three years following construction, and development of a long-term management plan to specifically address grazing management changes to enhance vegetation productivity and habitat quality in the meadow.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Climate Resiliency:

One of the most significant climate impacts to Sierra Nevada ecosystems is the increased frequency of more rain than snow precipitation events (Viers et al. 2013). Restoring the Mountain Meadows Creek meadow floodplain directly addresses this impact in several ways. Reconnecting the incised channels with the meadow floodplain will allow flows to spread out, attenuating peak velocities and reducing opportunities for flood events downstream (Ohara et al. 2013). As flows disperse across the floodplain, water is absorbed into meadow soils, providing increased water retention and replenishment of the shallow groundwater aquifer. The increased groundwater retention in turn compensates for the reduced snowpack and projected declines in spring runoff (Freeman 2010) by slowly filtering and releasing water into stream channels later into the summer months (Hunt et al. 2018). Extending the availability of cold, clean surface water in the meadow and downstream provides resiliency to drought climate impacts on habitats for a multitude of both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species.

The Project will also promote climate resiliency through a two-fold effect on carbon storage: (1) restoring the meadow will prevent continued loss of carbon via oxidation from continued drying meadow soils; and (2) the restored meadow will act as a net carbon sink as the meadow soils begin to re-sequester carbon through increased aboveground and belowground biomass (Reed and Sullivan 2019). Thus, the restoration will mitigate climate impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration.

Conifer removal treatments in the riparian corridor and meadow edge and in the surrounding upland forest will create habitats that are more resilient to high intensity wildfire. Remaining trees will have increased vigor, ability to respond to disturbance, and capacity for carbon storage, a key component of climate resiliency.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Biodiversity:

The Project would expand the contiguous restoration footprint in the basin, providing resilience to fragmentation. The hydrologic improvements at Mountain Meadows Creek meadow are expected to make the meadow self-sustaining, ensuring this habitat is available for species that have reduced habitat under drier conditions. Modeling studies have shown that meadow networks will become reduced and fragmented under future climate scenarios (Maher et al. 2017). In conjunction with neighboring projects (Greenville and East Creek restoration projects, at 299 acres total), this project will increase the overall patch size of meadow habitat, countering the effects of fragmentation in a critically important migratory bird corridor and in the home range of the Lassen Pack gray wolf.

Long-Term Net Benefits to Sensitive Species Recovery:

The improved ecological condition of meadow and riparian habitat will enhance and expand vegetation used by meadow birds. Third party monitoring of restored meadows in the Sierra Nevada documents an increase in avian diversity, particularly meadow focal species, following meadow restoration projects (Burnett and Fogg 2011; Loffland et al. 2013; Campos et al. 2014; Campos et al. 2020). Point Blue Conservation Science has conducted two annual (2021 and 2022) bird and vegetation surveys at Mountain Meadows Creek during the peak breeding season (May-June) for meadow focal species. A pre-restoration avian monitoring report was completed in September 2022 (Appendix D). The analysis of survey data uses meadow focal species richness, a meadow restoration target for Sierra meadows (Campos et al. 2014). The target for healthy meadows is 1.03

species per acre (Ibid). Focal species richness at MMC averaged 0.16 species per acre (Burnett 2022). Post-restoration avian monitoring will be repeated post-implementation to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting wildlife habitat objectives. Without revegetation, it is expected that project benefits for meadow birds would not be fully realized for 10- 20 years after project implementation (Ibid). Large scale revegetation efforts to restore the riparian shrub habitat have been incorporated into the Project; these efforts may increase the pace of bird response, and effective restoration has the potential to support breeding of three special status meadow bird species: Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, and the already present Greater Sandhill Crane (Ibid).

Procedures for the Protection of the Environment:

The Project includes the following procedures for the protection of the environment:

- (1) Project implementation will be conducted during the dry season when flows are minimal or absent (typically August 1 through October 30).
- Work areas will be isolated from flowing waters through use of pumps to route flows around active earth-moving activities. Any trout found in work areas would be relocated to suitable locations in the watershed.
- (3) Existing vegetation (meadow sod and riparian shrubs) in disturbance areas will be salvaged and replanted in appropriate locations throughout the Project area.
- (4) All work will be conducted in accordance with the Construction General Permit and a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Fugitive dust will be controlled with the continuous operation of water trucks throughout the work area.
- (5) A spill kit will be kept in proximity to active work areas.
- (6) Surveys for greater sandhill crane and northern goshawk will be conducted if work is planned to begin prior to the limited operating periods (LOPs) of August 1 and August 15, respectively.
- (7) A third-party biologist will be retained to conduct protocol surveys for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYLF) in spring 2023. If any SNYLF are detected, the Lead Agency and Project proponent will ensure the permitting agencies are notified so that State and Federal consultation can proceed prior to Project implementation.
- (8) The Project proponent will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on gray wolf activity in the Project vicinity. A site-specific LOP may be required if wolf activity is detected within 2 miles of the Project; specific LOP requirements will be dependent on the nature of wolf activities in the project vicinity (e.g., rendezvous site vs. den), presence of mitigating natural geographic barriers, and habitat conditions during time of construction.
- (9) Pre-construction surveys for the sensitive plant species *Penstemon sudans* (California Rare Plant Rank 4.3) will be conducted and any occurrences will be flagged for avoidance.
- (10) All staging areas shall be surveyed for noxious weeds and treated prior to work. Infestations will be flagged for avoidance and vegetation will be removed (hand pulled or dug with heavy equipment) and buried deep in the channel fill.
- (11) Vehicles and other equipment operating in the project area shall be cleaned before entering the project according to standard vehicle washing guidelines.
- (12) Known invasive plant infestations of ventenata grass (Ventenata dubia) and Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense) or newly identified infestations would be located, flagged where possible, and mapped for this project. Locations will be displayed on contract maps. Canada thistle sites within or adjacent to the project area containing isolated patches with small plant numbers would be treated (hand pulled or dug and buried deep under channel fill) prior to Project implementation. Canada thistle sites outside of the zone of equipment travel will also be treated with a black plastic overlayment, which reduces resprouting from rhizomes.

See Appendix B (Wildlife Biological Assessment and Evaluation), Appendix E (Noxious Weeds Risk Assessment for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project), and Appendix (Biological Evaluation/Biological

Assessment for Plant Species for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project) for analyses leading to the development of mitigation/environmental protection measures.

Ongoing Management for the Protection of the Environment:

Engineering review via hydrologic modeling indicates that the project will perform as designed, with flow velocities and depths below thresholds of concern for re-incision. See 90% Design Report (Appendix A), which includes the results of modeled depths and velocities under 10-year and 100-year flow return intervals both pre-and post-project, and provides an analysis of shear stresses under post-project conditions. The Project has been designed to be self-sustaining by re-establishing the natural floodplain hydrologic function, which mitigates the erosive potential of peak flows. The rock riffles to be placed in the lower reaches of main channel will provide grade control to prevent downstream incisions from outside the Project area from propagating upstream. Conifer removal will generate material (trees and chipped/masticated material) in the meadow and riparian corridor that will be used to provide roughness on the floodplain terrace, and the re-establishment of riparian tree and shrub species will promote long-term woody debris recruitment in the restored channels.

Project performance monitoring site visits will be conducted annually during peak runoff in February 2024, 2025, and 2026 (dependent upon access) to identify the potential or actual need for post-project maintenance intervention, and provide information to the partners in developing short- and long-term adaptive management decisions. This monitoring will focus on ensuring the structural integrity of the project continues to meet desired conditions (connected floodplain and improved water quality and habitat conditions). If it is determined that any occurring erosion is affecting the project's structural integrity, maintenance and/or management actions may be taken. Annual photo point documentation would supplement performance site visits in identifying potential maintenance and/or adaptive management needs. Established photo points will be used to create a visual comparison of changes in meadow condition over time. Photos have been taken pre-implementation and will be repeated annually for five years following project construction.

The landowner is committed to protecting and enhancing the lands for wildlife while maintaining a working landscape. The Project proponent has discussed the need for shifts in grazing practices to improve habitat quality and maximize long-term productivity with the land manager. This Project includes the development of a long-term management plan to formalize these practices, develop criteria for grazing management, and ensure that grazing does not adversely affect the restoration. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the landowners, land manager, and grazing lessee. As part of the long-term management plan, the Project will include the installation of cross-fences to control distribution of cattle during periods of soil saturation.

D. The Project does not include any construction activities, except for construction activities solely related to habitat restoration. Please cite and attach any supporting documents.

The Project does not include any construction activities unrelated to habitat restoration. See 90% Design Report (Appendix A) for a discussion of Project design features. Project implementation will proceed as follows:

Construction clearances: Pre-construction surveys/flagging for wildlife, botany, and noxious weeds
will be conducted beginning in spring 2023 by Plumas Corporation staff and a qualified biologist. At this
time, Plumas Corporation will also coordinate with the California Department of Wildlife on wolf activity
and potential for LOP development.

- Mobilization and Site Preparation: Stockpile and staging areas will be identified prior to equipment mobilization. All access routes will be on existing roads. As much as possible, equipment will use existing disturbed areas in the meadow while maintaining the shortest possible distance between staging areas and construction zones. For the partial fill segments of channel, temporary staging areas for borrow material are located immediately adjacent to fill locations. Spill kit(s) will be placed in proximity to work area(s). Pumps for re-routing flows around work areas are only anticipated to be needed in the lower reaches of the Project. Pumps and hoses will be staged adjacent to work areas when needed and all equipment stored in accordance with the SWPPP. Equipment will be mobilized to the site following weed decontamination protocols.
- **Project Construction:** The following activities will be conducted in sequence as the Project proceeds from upstream to downstream:
 - Partial channel fill:
 - Vegetation salvage: remove any existing topsoil, sod, or other usable riparian vegetation from area where borrow material will be excavated or where channel bottoms will be inundated. Vegetation will be placed adjacent to work areas and kept watered until placed.
 - Excavate borrow material: After vegetation removal, the existing gully is widened to generate material for partial channel fill.
 - Placement of fill: Fill is placed in-channel in a series of plugs, eliminating the incised channel. At two locations, plugs will be used to redirect stream flow into the network of historic remnant channels. Plugs are constructed to subgrade and brought to grade with the floodplain surface using stockpiled topsoil and sod. Larger vegetation is planted at key locations to provide roughness and/or habitat features.
 - Complete fill: An upland terrace on the southern meadow fringe will be graded approximately 2 ft down to generate borrow material for a reach of complete fill. Vegetation salvage in the complete fill reach will take place simultaneously. Fill will be placed in channel to subgrade and brought to grade with the floodplain surface using stockpiled topsoil and sod.
 - Riffle construction: Twelve riffles will be constructed in the dredged, straight-line portion of Mountain Meadows Creek. Thirteen sod riffles (using on-site surplus material from borrow ponds and the terrace cut, vegetated with meadow sod) will be constructed in a secondary channel along the southern meadow boundary.
 - Road decommissioning: The eroded cross-meadow roadway will be eliminated with placement
 of surplus borrow material from borrow ponds and the terrace cut. The roadway will be seeded
 prior to fall rains during the initial revegetation stage.
 - Road armoring: An existing forest road will have 3"-minus rock placed across its surface to grade. The road is used for forest management activities in the surrounding uplands and will be retained. Rock placement is solely to reduce erosion from the roadway and allow for sheet flow during runoff events.
 - Conifer removal: Encroaching conifers will be removed on approximately 75 acres of meadow and riparian corridor using mastication or chipping. Some trees will be removed whole and used for roughness and habitat features in ponds and remnant channels.
 - Demobilization: Restore in-project travel routes and staging areas and remove construction equipment from the site.
- Revegetation, Fencing & Grazing Management: The project will receive a 3-year rest from grazing. Seeding disturbed areas will occur post-construction (2023). Willow staking and riparian container planting will occur in 2024. Cross-fence construction for grazing management will occur by summer 2026.
- **Post-project Monitoring:** The Project provides for continued monitoring including monthly and continuous groundwater elevation data, soil carbon analysis, CRAM Wetland Assessment, water

temperature monitoring, avian surveys, and maintenance and inform long-term adaptive	project performance monitoring to evaluate the need for management needs.
5. CERTIFICATION	
15025(a)(1), and this Project meets all the requirem	er a project is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section ents described in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, uired therein necessary to obtain the concurrence of the
	Date: 04/19/2023
Lead Agency Signature	
Printed Name and Title: Jesse Claypool, Board Cha	ir, Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District

Form DFW 21080.56 - List of Attachments and Appendices CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) Concurrence Request

Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project

Attachments

Attachment 1: Vicinity Map

Attachment 2: References

Appendices (Provided Digitally)

Appendix A: Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project 90% Design Report

Appendix B: Wildlife Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation for Mountain Meadows Creek

Restoration Project

Appendix C: Mountain Meadows Conservancy Support Letters for the Mountain Meadows Creek

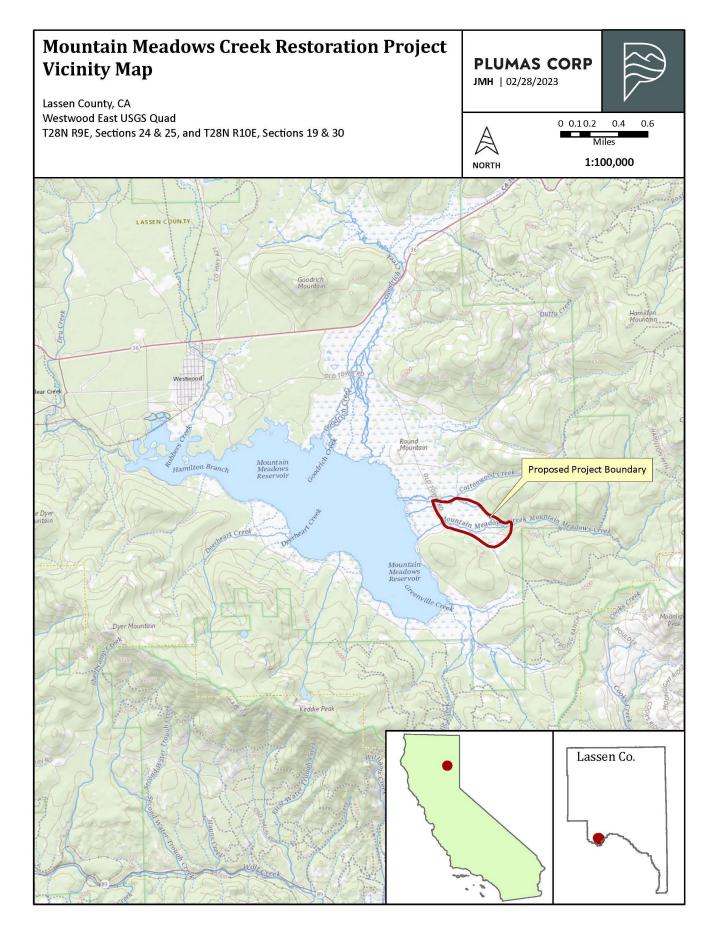
Restoration Project

Appendix D: Pre-Implementation Bird Monitoring of Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration

Appendix E: Noxious Weeds Risk Assessment for Mountain Meadows Creek Restoration Project

Appendix F: Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment for Plant Species for Mountain Meadows

Creek Restoration Project



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