

FEDERAL PROJECT NO. 04FT1PTE4
STATE EA: 03-0L1134
COUNTY PROJECT NO. RPST PLE-5912(070)

This study covers the construction of the Skyway lookout point parking and pedestrian viewing facilities between the Town of Paradise and Chico in Butte County.



INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Lead Agency:

Prepared by:

Butte County Public Works Department
Paul Lundbom, P.E.
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 538-7681



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1.1 REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This document is an initial study with supporting environmental studies, which provide justification for a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et seq.*, and the State CEQA Guidelines 14 California Code Regulations Section 15000 *et seq.*

An initial study is conducted by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, an EIR must be prepared if an initial study indicates that the proposed project under review may have a potentially significant impact on the environment. A Negative Declaration may be prepared instead, if the lead agency prepares a written statement describing the reasons why the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore, why it does not require the preparation of an EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15371). According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a Negative Declaration shall be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when either:

- a) The initial study shows there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment, or*
- b) The initial study identifies potentially significant effects, but:
 - (1) Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the applicant before the proposed negative declaration is released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur and;*
 - (2) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the proposed project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.**

If revisions are adopted in the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15070(b), a mitigated negative declaration is prepared.

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this initial study is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Skyway Lookout Point parking and pedestrian viewing facilities, RPSTPLE – 5912(070). Mitigation measures have been provided to reduce or eliminate any identified significant and/or potentially significant impacts.

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Lead Agency:** Butte County Department of Public Works
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
- Responsible Agency:** Butte County Department of Public Works
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
- Contact Person:** Paul Lundbom
Butte County Department of Public Works
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 538-7681
- Project Location:** The proposed project is located in Butte County on the Skyway between the towns of Chico and Paradise. The Assessor's parcel numbers are 011-240-040 and 011-240-069. Project location maps are presented in Figures 1 and 2.
- Project Sponsor:** Federal Highways Administration
Caltrans
Butte County
- General Plan Designation:** Butte County General Plan Land Use Designation - RV
(Residential Vacant)
- Zoning:** Butte County General Plan Zones - U (Unclassified), FR-2
(Foothill Recreational, 2 acres minimum parcel size) and FR-20
(Foothill Recreational, 20 acres minimum parcel size)
- Description of Project:**

The Butte County Department of Public Works has received a federally funded grant for Transportation Enhancement (TE) to construct a vista viewing facility along the Skyway in Butte County.

Butte County Department of Public Works will serve as the lead agency and manage the project formation and funding. An advisory committee has been formed, which is made up of members from the County Board of Supervisors, the Town of Paradise, Paradise Park and Recreation District, Save Our Gateway, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, Northern California Regional Land Trust, and other vested interest groups. The advisory committee will provide community input into conceptual design, while the County Public Works Department will coordinate the overall project, conduct public outreach, and disseminate project reports.

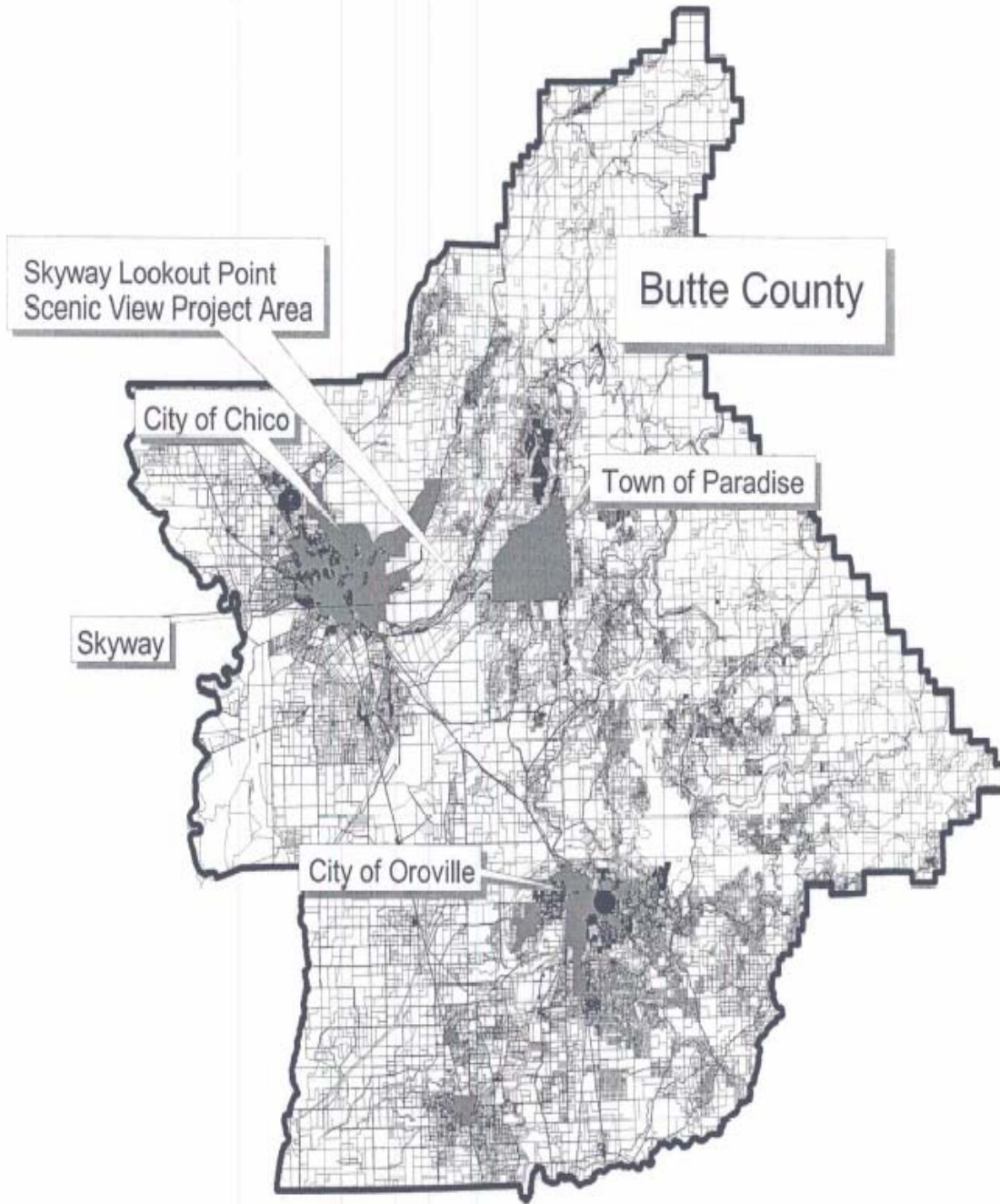


Figure 1.

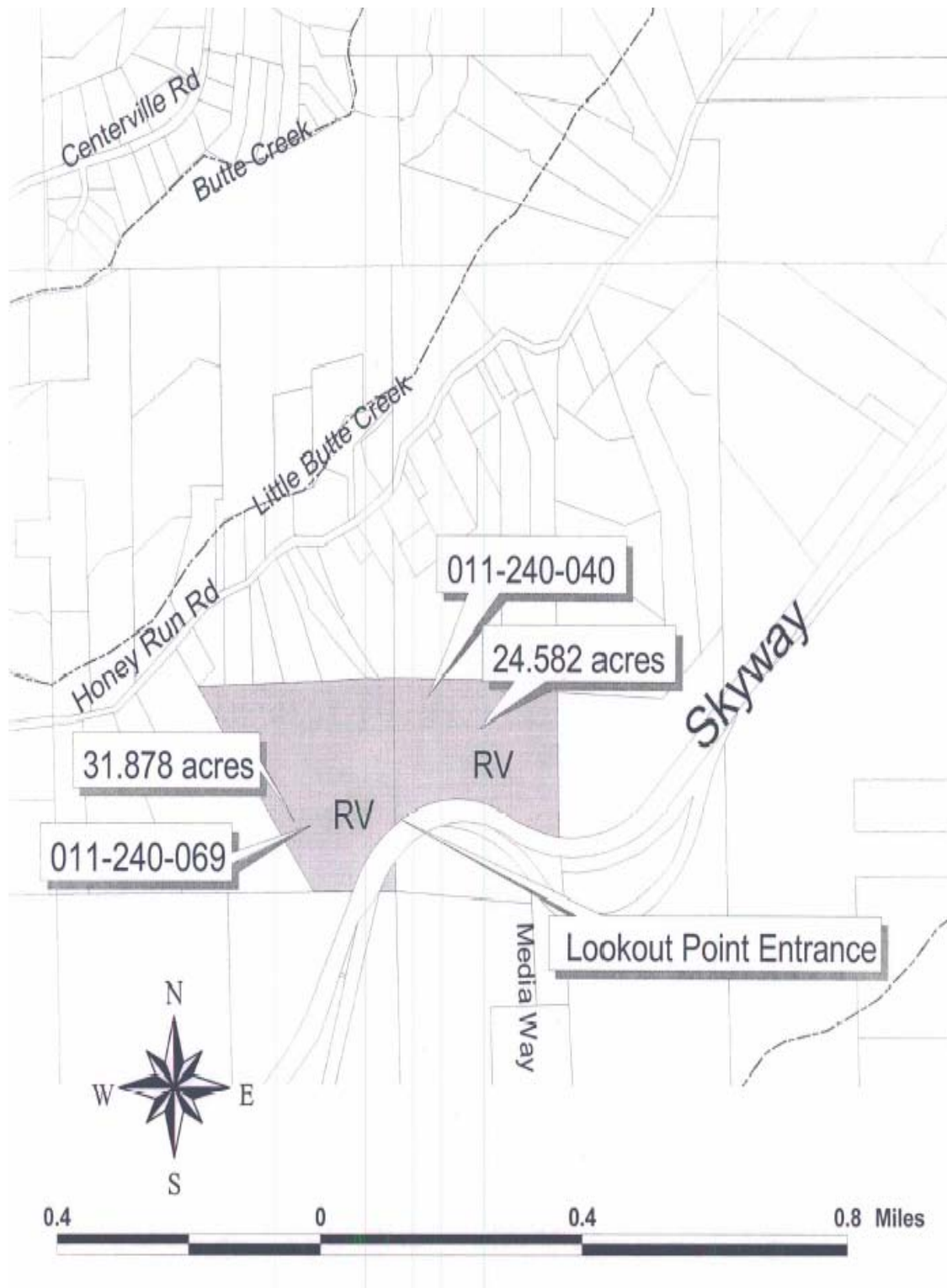


Figure 2.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The proposed project involves the purchase of two parcels totaling approximately 56.5 acres (see attached diagram), removal of abandoned vehicles, and construction of limited parking and pedestrian viewing facilities, including designated pathways, interpretive sign boards, hand rails, garbage and recycling receptacles.

Environmental considerations include air quality, botanical and biological features. An archaeological investigation and NEPA mapping of the area of potential effect (APE) will also be completed.

The project has several components:

- 1) **Property Acquisition.** Acquisition of two properties will be required. Property acquisition is currently anticipated to consist of the County's purchase of two parcels (APN #'s 011-240-069 and 011-240-040), comprising approximately 56.5 acres.
- 2) **Automobile Removal.** As part of this project, wrecked vehicles located near the toe of the cliff will be removed by means of a helicopter. Prior to removal, vehicles will be cut down to a size that is manageable for air lifting.
- 3) **Parking Lot Capacity, Size, and Location.** The exact capacity, size and location of the parking facilities are to be determined during the engineering design phase of this project. The anticipated size and location of the paved parking lot, auxiliary gravel parking lot, pathways and lookout platforms are outlined in the attached diagram. For purposes of the environmental study and documentation the attached map delineates the assumed facility. The related sizes are as follows; 1/4 acre parking lot, 1/8 acre auxiliary gravel lot, and the total APE to be 3.35 acres. The location of the lot may change in order to better fit the existing topography, provide vehicles easier access upon entering and exiting the parking lot, minimize construction cost, and provide a view from vehicles for people having trouble getting both in and out of their cars. The auxiliary parking lot may eventually become a permanent facility if needed in the future.
- 4) **Storm Drainage Facilities.** Runoff from the parking facility surface improvements will be directed to existing drainage swales and the existing drainage channel along Skyway. Additional storm drainage facilities (subterranean and/or overland) include culverts which will tie low spots of parking facilities to existing Skyway roadside drainage.
- 5) **Safety Barriers.** While both safety and aesthetics are important aspects of this project, the parking area will be lined with large boulders to act as an aesthetic approach to barricading cars from leaving the designated parking area by any other means than the exit.
- 6) **Hand Railing.** Hand rails located in the vicinity of the parking lot, along critical walkways, and surrounding vista viewing areas will be included as a means to protect people from the hazards at the cliff edges and will also provide walking assistance.
- 7) **Pathways.** Pathways between viewing areas and the parking area are to be part of the project for both safety and access purposes. Following the natural look theme, rammed earth or a similar material is to be used rather than asphalt. The three factors for consideration are keeping the natural look, a solid surface providing ease of travel for wheelchairs and other walking aids, and durability during drainage to reduce erosion.

- 8) **Interpretative Sign Boards.** Interpretative sign boards describing the local topography, geology, ecology, and history are an important educational aspect of this project. The sign boards will be designed to fit in with the landscape as much as possible depending on the feasibility. The text on the sign boards will be influenced by Dr. Albin Bills and other local informational sources.
- 9) **Trash and Recycling Receptacles.** Trash and recycling receptacles are to be installed as part of this project in attempts to keep the area free from litter.
- 10) **Lighting.** Low-lying, solar-powered, pathway lighting bordering paths and portions of the parking lot are under consideration for this project. Any lighting, if used, will emit minimal amounts of light pollution.
- 11) **Trees.** The design of this facility will occur such that no trees will be damaged or removed as a result of the construction and completion of this project. No new trees are anticipated for planting.

Estimated Project Schedule - Property acquisition is anticipated for FY 05/06 after completion of the environmental study. The construction phase of this project is scheduled to begin and be completed in FY 06/07.

As there is a federal funding component for this project, further review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required. The NEPA document will be published separately from this initial study.

2.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

Lookout Point is one of the last privately owned and undeveloped vista point areas available in Butte County. The view afforded from this site encompasses more than 7,500 square miles of California. From this point, the Coastal Range Mountains can be viewed to the west, the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east, the Sutter Buttes to the south, Mt. Shasta and the Cascade Ranges to the north, as well as a large section of Butte Creek Canyon and the Butte Creek below.

The site has been plagued in the past by both attempted and successful suicides by driving through the site and off of the cliff area. For safety considerations the parking area will be lined with large boulders to act as an aesthetic approach to barricading cars from leaving the designated parking area by any other means than the exit.

2.3 PERMITS AND APPROVALS NEEDED

- Project approval by California Department of Fish and Game
- Project approval by the Butte County Board of Supervisors
- Project approval by Caltrans

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the project. There are 17 Environmental Issues evaluated in Section 3.0, including CEQA Mandatory Findings of Significance.

The **Checklist Discussion/Analysis** provides a detailed discussion of each of the environmental issue checklist questions. The level of significance for each topic is determined by considering the predicted magnitude of the impact. Four levels of impact significance are described in this initial study:

No Impact: No project-related impact to the environment would occur with project development.

Less Than Significant Impact: The impact would not result in a substantial and adverse change in the environment. This impact level does not require mitigation measures.

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: An impact that is “potentially significant” as described below; the incorporation of mitigation measure(s) would reduce the project related impact to a less than significant level.

Potentially Significant Impact: An impact that may have a “substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

The environmental factors checked below could be potentially affected by this project; however, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, potentially significant impacts are reduced to less than significant level by the project” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance	

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.1 AESTHETICS

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

Discussion of Impacts to Aesthetics:

a-c) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is a facility improvement of an existing vista lookout area. Although the site is heavily used as a vista area, the site has no designated/improved parking or pedestrian facilities. As detailed in the project description the project activities will create parking area, pedestrian trails and two lookout platforms. Interpretative sign boards describing the local topography, geology, ecology, and history will be designed to fit in with the landscape as much as possible depending on the feasibility of installing such amenities. The proposed project will not have an adverse effect on a state designated scenic highway or vista. There are no historic buildings near the project that will be adversely affected by the project. It is anticipated that the project, as proposed, will have a beneficial effect on the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.

d) No Impact. The proposed project may create additional glare from lights used to illuminate the lookout point, however the use of lights will be restricted so as to minimize impacts of increased lighting in the area. Low-lying, solar-powered, pathway lighting bordering paths and portions of the parking lot will be implemented for this project. Any lighting, if used, will emit minimal amounts of light pollution. The proposed design and placement of lighting fixtures used to illuminate the parking and pedestrian areas will incorporate shields designed to eliminate glare and light spillage beyond their borders.

Conclusion:

The project will have a less than significant impact on aesthetics by adhering to the measures described in the project description.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.2 AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				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?			X	

Discussion of Impacts to Agricultural Resources:

a) No Impact. The site is not listed as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

b) No Impact. The project site is not under a Williamson Act Contract.

c) Less Than Significant. The site is currently zoned Unclassified (U), Foothill Recreation 2 and 20 acres minimum parcels (FR-2 and FR-20 respectively) by the Butte County General Plan Zoning Map. According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) the site and surrounding parcels are not listed as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Conclusion:

The project will have no impact on Agricultural Resources.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?		X		
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)?			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

Setting:

California Air Resource Board listed the California designated status of Butte County for meeting the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) as: Attainment for carbon monoxide and sulfates, Non-attainment for ozone, Non-attainment for suspended particulate matter (PM 10), Unclassified / Attainment for nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead and visibility reducing particles, and Unclassified for hydrogen sulfide.

Discussion of Air Quality Impacts:

a) No Impact. This project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any air quality plans in Butte County.

b) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The project area functions as an existing vista lookout point. The proposed project will provide developed parking, and safer ingress/egress routes. Improvements to the existing facility are not expected to generate additional traffic, thereby generating more emissions, as would new development (i.e., new businesses or apartment buildings).

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of short-term construction-related air pollutant emissions. Exhaust emissions from construction equipment would contain reactive organic gases (ROG), nitrogen oxides (NOx), CO and PM10. PM10 emissions would also result from windblown dust (fugitive dust) generated during grading activities.

Upon discussion with the Butte County Air Quality Management District it was determined that all feasible Best Available Mitigation Measures (BAMM) should be implemented with this project.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Caltrans Standard Specifications (Section 7-1.01F, Air Pollution Control and Section 10.1, Dust Control), a required part of all state sponsored construction contracts, require the contractor to comply with Butte County Air Quality Management District (BCAQMD) and other local jurisdiction rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. The BCAQMD maintains a list of Best Available Mitigation Measures (BAMM) for the control of construction related emissions. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.3.1** would reduce construction related air quality impacts to a level that is less than significant.

MM 3.3.1 To the greatest extent feasible Caltrans Standard Specifications (Section 7-1.01, Air Pollution Control and Section 10.1, Dust Control) and the Butte County Air Quality Management District's Best Available Mitigation Measures for the control of construction related emissions shall be implemented.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to, During and Post Construction

Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, Contractor

c) Less Than Significant. Since the project will not contribute to an increase in vehicle traffic, a cumulative increase in air emissions is not expected.

d) No Impact. There are no sensitive receptors in the area and no substantial pollutant concentrations are anticipated to occur.

e) Less Than Significant. No new odor producing activities are proposed, other than that associated with equipment exhaust during construction activities. Diesel fumes may be noticeable in the vicinity of the site; however, diesel fumes will be a short-term effect. All equipment must comply with California emissions standards and Caltrans Standard Specifications.

Conclusion:

Impacts to air quality as a result of the project would be construction related and temporary in nature, and adherence to the **Mitigation Measure 3.3.1**, which calls for standard control of construction related emissions, will reduce these temporary impacts to a less than significant level.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			X	
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?				X
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?				X
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?		X		
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				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?				X

To help assess and address potential impacts from the project on biological resources several special surveys were completed. These include the following: (1) *Survey for Threatened, Rare or Endangered Species of Vascular Plants* (Gallaway Consulting Inc., 2005), and (2) *Wildlife Survey* (Gallaway Consulting Inc., 2005).

Discussion of Impacts to Biological Resources:

a) Less Than Significant Impact. During the *Survey for Threatened, Rare or Endangered Species of Vascular Plants* and the *Wildlife Survey* (Gallaway Consulting Inc, 2005) there were no species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations. However, Butte County checkerbloom (*Sidalcea robusta*) has the potential to occur within the automobile removal section of the project area. Protocol level surveys for this area were impossible due to inaccessibility. Therefore, presence is assumed. Regardless, impacts to populations of checkerbloom will be less than significant because of the specific and limited activities planned for the automobile removal

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

section and the ability of the perennial checkerbloom to recover and sometimes flourish following limited disturbance.

b) No Impact. The Butte County General Plan identifies three habitat types as potentially sensitive and requiring special consideration. These include riparian, vernal pools, and wetlands. The project area does not support any of the three habitat types. Instead, the site is comprised of gray pine woodland, mixed chaparral and annual grassland. The California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service do not identify the habitats on the project site as a sensitive natural community, therefore there will be no impact to these resources.

c) No Impact. There are no federally protected wetlands present on the site which would warrant a Section 404 permit, therefore there will be no impact to these resources.

d) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712) prohibits the take, sale, and harassment of migratory birds, including raptors. No special-status raptors, swallows, or bats species were observed during the course of field surveys. No occurrences of nesting raptors were observed during field surveys, however an additional raptor survey should be conducted in April-May, prior to construction, due to the existence of suitable raptor nesting and foraging habitat in the project area.

To reduce the potential impacts to raptors and nesting swallows **Mitigation Measure 3.4.1** shall be implemented.

MM 3.4.1 Prior to construction, a bird survey shall be conducted in April- May to detect the presence of Swainson's hawk or other special status raptors or nesting cliff swallows. All recommendations and mitigations described in the bird survey shall be incorporated into the design and management of the biological resources at the project site.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to construction

Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, DFG

e) No Impact. The County has no policies, ordinances or plans which explicitly protect biological resources.

f) No Impact. No habitat conservation plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans or similar plans apply to the project area.

Conclusion:

The project could have potentially significant impacts on special status species. However, the mitigation measures presented in this section would reduce potential impacts to levels that are less than significant.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		X		

Setting:

The project area has historically been used as a vista lookout area. The area has been highly disturbed by these activities.

Discussion of Impacts to Cultural Resources:

a-c) No Impact. By means of field surveys and a records search no evidence of historic, prehistoric, archaeological, paleontological, or protohistoric resources are located within or immediately adjacent to the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The APE is included as Appendix A.

A Negative Archaeological Survey Report (NASR) and a Historic Property Survey Report – Negative Findings (HPSR) are in the process of being filed with the California Department of Transportation.

d) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. It is not anticipated that the implementation of the proposed project would result in any significant adverse impact to cultural resources. However, there is the potential for unknown/undocumented cultural resources, including human remains, to be uncovered during work activities; therefore, the following mitigation measure shall be incorporated into project implementation.

- MM 3.5.1** A note shall be placed on the final construction plans which states “should cultural resources be encountered, the supervising contractor shall be responsible for reporting any such findings to the Public Works Department, and a qualified archaeologist will be contacted to conduct meetings with on-site employees and monitor the referenced mitigation measures.” All mitigation measures determined by the Public Works Department to be appropriate for this project shall be implemented pursuant to the terms of the archaeologist’s report.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to final construction plan approval

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, supervising contractor

Implementation of this mitigation measure would avoid substantial adverse change in the significance of cultural resources. The potential for impacts with mitigation incorporated would be less than significant.

Conclusion:

There are no known cultural resources in the project area, resulting in no impacts. However, in the event that construction activities uncover previously unknown/undocumented cultural resources, **Mitigation Measure 3.5.1** will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
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.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?		X		
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?			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?			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?				X

Setting:

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Topography in the vista point area is generally flat with a high point at the rim of the canyon sloping towards the Skyway at an elevation of approximately 1133 feet above sea level. From the Rim of the canyon towards Butte Creek the slopes are very steep, often vertical.

Discussion of Impacts to Geology and Soils:

a) i) Less Than Significant. The only designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone in Butte County is the Cleveland Hills Fault, located south of Lake Oroville. The 1994 *Fault Activity Map* has classified the fault as inactive.

a) ii) Less Than Significant. The project site is subject to potential ground shaking, generated by earthquakes both within and outside of Butte County. Ground shaking would have little impact on the parking and viewing platform components of the project. By adhering to the 2001 California Building Code and which requires incorporation of the Uniform Building Code Seismic Zone 3 requirements there will be a **less than significant** impact with regards to seismic ground shaking.

a) iii) Less Than Significant. The Butte County General Plan's Expansive Soils Map identifies the project site as having a low potential for expansive soils, subsidence, and landslides.

a) iv) No Impact. The project will not cause or contribute to landslides. The project is not within a documented landslide area.

b) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Since the ground surface will be disturbed by grading and use of construction equipment, there is an increased potential for erosion during the construction process. Erosion impacts arising from construction activities will be temporary, and will be less than significant once work is completed.

To reduce the impacts from soil erosion and the loss of topsoil **Mitigation Measure 3.6.1** shall be implemented.

MM 3.6.1 As part of the construction plans for the project; the contractor shall prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and gain approval from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) for such plan before construction activity. The SWPPP shall include the following measures:

1. Immediate revegetation or protection of all disturbed areas from both wind and water erosion upon the completion of grading activities
2. Use of water bars, temporary swales and culverts, mulch, netting, hydro seeding, silt fences, sediments and/or other measures where necessary to prevent surface water from eroding graded areas and to retain sediment
3. Maintaining items in 2) above during storm events or on-site watering to ensure that the measures continue to be effective,
4. Water soils susceptible to wind erosion at least twice per day during construction or as directed by the project engineer,

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

5. Halting of all grading activity when wind speeds exceed 20 miles per hour or existing wind creates an obvious dust cloud, and
6. If refueling of equipment and oil changing is planned on site the contractor shall prepare a Spill Prevention, Control, and Containment Plan to establish spill prevention practice, and to prepare for spill mitigation in the event of a hazardous materials spill.

Timing and implementation: Prior to, During, and Post construction Enforcement and Monitoring: CVRWQCB, Butte County Department of Public Work, Contractor

Implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3.6.1**, along with **Mitigation Measure 3.3.1**, would reduce the potential amount of soil erosion caused by the project to a level that is less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant. The Butte County General Plan’s Expansive Soils Map identifies the project site as having a low potential for expansive soils, subsidence, and landslides.

d) Less Than Significant. The potential for expansive soils on the project site is low as described in the Butte County General Plan’s Expansive Soils Map. This is considered a less than significant impact in regards to risks to life or property.

e) No Impact. No on-site wastewater disposal systems are proposed with this project.

Conclusion:

There is the potential for the project to result in impacts to geology and soils due to erosion potential during construction activities. The mitigation measures presented in this section will reduce the potential for impacts to a less than significant level.

3.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
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?		X		
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				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?				X

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				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?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				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?			X	

Setting:

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency, or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. A hazardous material is defined in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) as: "...a substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed" (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 66260. 10).

Chemical and physical properties cause a substance to be considered hazardous, including the properties of toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity. Toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity are defined in the CCR, Title 22, Sections 66261.20-66261.24. Factors that influence the health effects of exposure to hazardous material include the dose to which the person is exposed, the frequency of exposure, the exposure pathway, and individual susceptibility.

Transport of hazardous materials is regulated by both federal and state agencies. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has the regulatory responsibility for the safe transportation of hazardous materials between states. DOT regulations (Code of Federal Regulations Title 49 [49 CFR] govern all means of transportation.

State regulations concerning the transport or hazardous materials are contained in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 13. Two state agencies have primary responsibility for enforcing federal and state regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies: the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation.

Discussion of Impacts from Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

a) Less Than Significant. The hazardous materials typically used during the construction of parking areas and/or roadways are hot mix asphalt that is composed of aggregate and asphalt cement, a viscous petroleum product. Hot mix asphalt cools rapidly and hardens once applied, and the low potential for fire hazard associated with this material is eliminated once it hardens. The only other potentially hazardous materials that would be used during project construction would be motor vehicle fuels and oils that would present a minor hazard, and only if spillage occurs.

Any potential for the release of hazardous materials into the environment is regulated through existing federal and state laws. These regulations require emergency response from local agencies to contain hazardous materials. Butte County has the Butte County Interagency Hazardous Materials Team that would respond to any emergencies or accidents in the area.

b) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Construction activities associated with the project typically include refueling and minor maintenance on construction equipment on location, which could lead to minor fuel and oil spills. The use and handling of hazardous materials during construction activities would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws including California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CalOSHA) Requirements. If any fuel spills occur, they would take place in areas that are largely undeveloped, and spills would be minor. Nevertheless, such spills are considered potentially significant unless mitigation is incorporated. By implementing **Mitigation Measure 3.6.1** there will be a less than significant impact resulting from accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment.

c) No Impact. The project would not emit any hazardous substances other than the hot mix asphalt described above. School facilities are not located within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the project area. Therefore, the project would have no impact concerning hazardous emissions near school.

d) No Impact. There are no properties or sites listed on the Cortese list within or near the project location.

e) No Impact. The project is not located near a public airport, public use airport, or airport land-use plan. Therefore, there would be no safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area that is associated with airports.

f) No Impact. The project is not located near a private airstrip. Therefore, there would be no safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area that is associated with airstrips.

g) No Impact. The proposed project will not block or restrict a designated evacuation route or access to an emergency facility.

h) Less than Significant. The project site is in proximity to areas which could experience wildland fires. However, there will be no significant increase in exposing people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Conclusion:

There are no impacts resulting in hazards or hazardous materials with the exception of the potential for spillage of materials related to refueling of equipment and oil changing activities. **Mitigation Measure 3.6.1** will ensure that potential impacts are reduced to less than significant levels.

3.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?		X		
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)?				X
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?		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?		X		
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?		X		
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	
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?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				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?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

Setting:

Butte County is part of the Sacramento River Basin Watershed. Numerous streams and rivers drain the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada and Cascades, emptying into the Sacramento River. Surface water quality is good to excellent except for local degradation as streams pass through urbanized areas. Large quantities of high quality ground water exist in the recent alluvial and Tuscan Formation strata of the valley floor. In the foothill and mountain areas, ground water is generally not abundant and occurs mostly in fracture zones. Various areas of the Sacramento Valley have flooding potential, depending on elevation and proximity to streams and floodplains. Most streams and rivers of substantial flow have been controlled by the construction of levee and diversion systems.

Discussion of Impacts to Hydrology and Water Quality:

a) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. This project will require a General Construction Stormwater Permit as part of the RWQCB permit process. Obtaining certification or an agreement is considered adequate mitigation that reduces potentially significant water quality impacts to a less than significant level.

MM 3.8.1 Apply for and gain a General Construction Stormwater Permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Timing and implementation: Prior to construction

Enforcement/Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works

By implementing **Mitigation Measure 3.8.1** there will be a less than significant impact to water quality standards.

b) No Impact. The project will not require connection to any the existing or new water facilities.

c) Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. This project will require grading, and minimal roadway/parking lot construction, which has the potential to result in erosion and adverse impacts on water quality. There will be no work performed within a stream or river. This will result in temporary increases in sedimentation and turbidity. These impacts will be temporary and contained to work areas.

Because of the increased impermeable surface that results from the paved parking area, there will be an increase in the amount of water at peak flows. This increase is not substantial in comparison with the size of the total watershed.

Metals, oils, greases, and other contaminants from construction activities may run off-site into surface waters. To limit any sediments and pollutants from impacting drainages in the project area, Best Management Practices (BMP's) pursuant to Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbook and standard specification will be implemented.

Long term soil stability and erosion control will be obtained through mechanical and vegetational methods.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There is the potential for erosion of soils and siltation of waterways as a result of the construction activities and the nature of the proposed project. Construction activities will be performed in accordance with Appendix 33 (Excavation and Grading) of the Uniform Building Code to ensure that development incorporates appropriate design provisions to protect waterways and reduce erosion. By implementing **Mitigation Measures 3.6.1**, and **3.8.1** there will be a less than significant erosion or siltation impact on and off-site.

d) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Drainage patterns and surface runoff amounts are the result of a number of factors including slope, soil permeability, vegetation, and surface type. Changes to these factors that occur as the result of new development can result in a substantial increase in runoff amounts. Substantial increases in runoff can cause flooding or contribute to flooding in a flood-prone area, exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water or create new sources of polluted runoff. All projects that propose earth moving activities which would significantly alter drainage patterns are required to obtain a grading permit and/or submit a grading and drainage plan. **Mitigation Measures 3.6.1**, and **3.8.1** would ensure that proper design and grading practices be implemented so there will be a less than significant impact resulting from flooding and polluted runoff.

e) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. See **d)** above. **Mitigation Measures 3.3.1** and **3.6.1** would control the amount of sediment that would be generated by the project construction. **Mitigation Measure 3.8.1** would ensure that proper design and grading practices are implemented so there will be a less than significant impact resulting from flooding and polluted runoff.

f) Less Than Significant Impact. See the above discussion of permits and requirements related to water quality.

g) No Impact. The proposed project is an improvement of an vista lookout area and would not place any housing within a 100- year floodplain.

h) No Impact. The project site is in FEMA “Zone X”, an area determined to be outside the 500 year floodplain.

i) No Impact. The proposed project includes the improvement of a vista point area, and would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss of property, injury or death from flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of levee or dam.

j) No Impact. Seiche, tsunami and mudflow effects have not been recorded in any of the reservoirs in Butte County that are within the jurisdiction of the State of California Division of Safety of Dams. Additionally there are no reservoirs or other large bodies of water in the project vicinity.

Conclusion:

The project has the potential to impact hydrology and water quality during the construction phase. The mitigation measures presented in this section ensures that impacts to hydrology and water quality are less than significant.

3.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				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?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

Setting:

Current land use in the project area is primarily undeveloped residential and open space.

Discussion of Impacts to Land Use and Planning:

a) No Impact. This project will not physically divide an established community.

b) No Impact. This project does not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

c) No Impact. There are no applicable habitat conservation or natural community conservation plans that would be impacted by the project.

Conclusion:

The project would have no impact to land use and planning issues.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				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?				X

Setting:

There are no mineral resource sites within the project Area of Potential Impact.

Discussion of Impacts to Mineral Resources:

a-b) No Impact. No mineral resources are known to exist on the project site.

Conclusion:

The project would result in no impacts to mineral resources.

3.11 NOISE

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?		X		
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?		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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X

Setting:

Noise is traditionally defined as any unwanted sound. The magnitude of sound, whether wanted or unwanted, is usually described by sound pressure, i.e., a dynamic variation in atmospheric pressure. The human auditory system is sensitive to fluctuations in air pressure above and below the barometric static pressure. These fluctuations are defined as sound when the human ear is able to detect pressure changes within the audible frequency range.

The sound level at a particular instant is not likely to be a good measure of noise levels that vary with time over a wide range, e.g., noise from vehicular movement. To better accommodate and assess the time varying noise levels typically associated with traffic patterns, a time-averaged, single-number descriptor known as the “Level equivalent” (L_{eq}) is employed. The L_{eq} is expressed in dBA and represents the average energy content of sounds over a specified time period. It includes both steady background sounds and transient, short-term sounds. It represents the level of a steady sound which, when averaged over the sampling period, is equivalent in energy to the time-varying (fluctuating) sound level over the same period of time.

The ambient noise environment in the project area is dominated primarily by traffic on the Skyway.

Discussion of Impacts from Noise:

a) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. During the construction phases of the project, noise from construction activities will temporarily and intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. Construction noise is regulated by Caltrans standard specification, Section 7-1.01I, “Sound Control Requirements”. These requirements state that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations and that all equipment shall be fitted with adequate mufflers according to the manufacturer’s specifications.

Table 1 summarizes typical noise levels produced by construction equipment commonly used on roadway construction projects. As indicated, equipment involved in construction is expected to generate noise levels ranging from 70 to 90dBA at a distance of 15 meters (50 feet). Noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced over distance at a rate of 6dBA per doubling of distance.

Equipment	Maximum Noise Level, 15 m (50 ft) distance
Scrapers	89 dBA
Bulldozers	85 dBA
Heavy Trucks	88 dBA

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Equipment	Maximum Noise Level, 15 m (50 ft) distance
Backhoes	80 dBA
Pneumatic tools	85 dBA
Concrete pump	82 dBA

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 1995

To reduce the potentially significant noise impacts **Mitigation Measure 3.11.1** shall be implemented.

MM 3.11.1 Implement Caltrans standard specification, Section 7-1.01I, “Sound Control Requirements”

Timing and implementation: During construction

Enforcement/Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works

By implementing **Mitigation Measure 3.11.1** no adverse noise impacts from construction are anticipated because construction would be conducted in accordance with Caltrans standard specifications and would be short-term and intermittent.

b) No Impact. The type of excavation on the project site will be primarily surface grading and leveling. There are not expected to be any pile driving activities. There is not expected to be any excessive groundborne noise or vibrations as a result of the construction activities.

c) Less Than Significant Impact. Substantial permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project are not expected to occur. Noise impacts from construction related activities will end once the project is complete.

d) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Noise from construction activities are primarily concerned with new development. Temporary or periodic noise levels may be increased in the area as a result of this project. By implementing **Mitigation Measure 3.11.1** there will be less than significant impacts from noise as a result of this project.

e) No Impact. The site is not located within two (2) miles of an airport. The people residing or working in the project will not be exposed to excessive noise impacts from airport activities.

f) No Impact. The site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. The people residing or working in the project area will not be exposed to excessive noise levels from private airstrips.

Conclusion:

Impacts resulting from noise will be limited to the construction phase, and will temporary and intermittent in nature. **Mitigation Measure 3.11.1** will reduce impacts related to construction noise to less than significant levels.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Setting:

The project is located on the Skyway in a rural area between the City of Chico and the Town of Paradise. There are few residences and no commercial businesses in the general vicinity.

Discussion of Impacts to Populations and Housing:

a) No Impact. There are no new homes, structures, or extensions of roadways associated with this project. Therefore there will be no impact on population growth.

b) No Impact. The proposed project will not displace any homes.

c) No Impact. The proposed project will not displace any people, or necessitate the construction of replacement housing.

Conclusion:

There are no impacts to population and housing as a result of the project.

3.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

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:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Fire protection?			X	
b) Police protection?			X	

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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:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Schools?				X
d) Parks?				X
e) Other public facilities?			X	

Setting:

The project is located on the Skyway in a rural area between the City of Chico and the Town of Paradise. There are few residences and no commercial businesses in the general vicinity.

Discussion of Impacts to Public Services:

a-b) Less Than Significant Impact. The project will have a less than significant impact on the ability of the existing fire and police protection services to maintain acceptable service ratios or response times.

c) No Impact. The project will not result in any new population or otherwise affect schools.

d) No Impact. The proposed project will not affect the need for parks in the area.

e) Less Than Significant Impact. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electricity and gas service to many areas in the country. Telephone service is provided by SBC. There will be less than significant impacts to these and other public facilities.

Conclusion:

There may be the need to relocate the aforementioned utilities, however impacts on these facilities, and associated environmental effects for relocating them, will be less than significant.

3.14 RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				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?		X		

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Setting:

There are no parks in the immediate vicinity of the project.

Discussion of Impacts to Recreation:

a) No Impact. The project does not involve the construction of residences or other structures that would be inhabited by people. Therefore, it would not generate an additional demand for parks and recreational facilities.

b) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The project includes the development of a vista lookout area along an existing roadway which could have an adverse effect on the environment, however with the incorporation of **Mitigation Measures 3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 3.6.1, 3.8.1, and 3.11.1** there will be a less than significant impact.

Conclusion:

The project would have a less than significant impact on recreation with mitigations measures incorporated.

3.15 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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)?				X
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				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?				X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Setting:

The project site is located between the City of Chico and the Town of Paradise on the Skyway. The road is a vital four-lane two-way, rural highway running through a major portion of the County linking the Town of Paradise to SR 99. The route services residential, commercial, and agricultural traffic.

Discussion of Impacts to Traffic and Transportation:

- a) No Impact.** The project would not add any lanes and traffic capacity would not change from the existing conditions. The project would not generate additional traffic as it does not include the development of any residential or commercial or other buildings for land use activities that generate traffic.
- b) No Impact.** As previously described, the project would not have an influence on traffic volumes. Therefore, the level of service on the segment would remain the same as the existing Level of Service (LOS).
- c) No Impact.** The project is a vista lookout, with no impact on the air traffic system in the County. There are no airports or private airstrips in the vicinity of the project area.
- d) Less than Significant.** The purpose of the project is to improve the safety of motorists visiting the vista lookout, as well as providing improved viewing facilities. The site is located on a significant curve of the Skyway. The project includes the development of turn lanes for ingress/egrees, which will improve the safety of motorists entering and exiting the site. When completed the project would allow for safer passage for vehicles.
- e) Less Than Significant.** The proposed project will enhance emergency access to the site by developing adequate entrances/exits. Upon completion, the project will allow for safer passage and reduced driving hazards.
- f) No Impact.** The project will address parking deficiencies at the site; therefore there will be a beneficial impact to parking facilities.
- g) No Impact.** There are no buss turnouts, bicycle lanes or other alternative transportation facilities which would be impacted by this project.

Conclusion:

The project would have no significant adverse impacts on transportation. By improving the ingress/egress of the site, providing adequate parking facilities, and installing barriers to ensure that motorists leave the site via the Skyway; the project will benefit traffic and transportation facilities.

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3.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
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?				X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

Setting:

The public utilities in the project area consist of overhead power lines. The project will not generate wastewater or solid waste products.

Discussion of Impacts to Utilities and Service Systems:

a-c) Less than Significant. The project does not include any uses, which would require expansion of the wastewater facilities in the area. Roadside and internal drainages located in the project area will be temporarily disturbed during construction activities. The project plans include the reconstruction of these drainages in-kind and in the same general location as they exist prior to construction activities, so that there will be no net loss.

d-g) No Impact. The project does not include any uses which would require the increased use of water supplies or solid waste disposal.

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Conclusion:

Impacts to public utilities as a result of the project would be less than significant.

3.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?		X		
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)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		X		

Discussion of Mandatory Findings of Significance Impacts:

a) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: Construction activities could contribute to fugitive dust and air quality degradation. Proposed mitigation (**MM 3.3.1**) would reduce this potential to a level of less than significant. Project related activities could negatively impact protected species, (**MM 3.4.1**) are provided to reduce this potential to a level of less than significant. Construction activities have the potential to disturb undocumented cultural resources, however, mitigation (**MM 3.5.1**) is provided to reduce the significance of impacts to a level of less than significant.

The improvement of the vista lookout could expose persons to risks associated with seismic events; however, mitigation measure **MM 3.6.1** is provided which would reduce the significance to a less than significant level. Construction activities have the potential to contribute to, or induce soil erosion, storm water pollution and the loss of topsoil, however mitigation measures **MM 3.6.1** are included which addresses these impacts and reduces them to a less than significant level. Construction related activities have the potential to cause significant impacts resulting from the accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment, however, by implementing the mitigation measure (**MM 3.6.1**) which addresses spill prevention, impacts will be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Project related activities have the potential to violate water quality standards, however, mitigation (**MM 3.8.1**) is provided which would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Construction related

3.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

activities have the potential to impose temporary sources of noise, however, mitigation (**MM 3.11.1**) is provided which will reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

b) Less Than Significant. Cumulative effects from the project will be primarily beneficial in nature, including a reduction of motorists leaving the site by any other means than the developed exit. The project would not contribute to population increase, or an increase in demand for public facilities and services.

c) Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. This initial study does not identify any environmental effects that could cause a hazard to human beings. Mitigation included in the initial study is intended to reduce the potential for impacts from noise (**MM 3.11.1**) and to air quality (**MM 3.3.1**) during construction. In addition, adherence to Butte County Air Quality Management District's Best Available Mitigation Measures and Caltrans Standard Specifications (Section 7-1.01F, Air Pollution Control, and Section 10.1, Dust Control) cited in the initial study will also reduce air quality impacts to less than significant levels. Adherence to Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria requirements (Section V.1.2) will ensure that impacts related to the potential for strong seismic ground shaking will be reduced to less than significant levels.

Conclusion:

The mitigation measures presented in this section will ensure that any potentially significant impacts related to the project are reduced to a level that is less than significant.

4.1 DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- 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.
- 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
Printed Name Mike Crump Director of Public Works	Title

4.2 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

3.3 Air Quality

MM 3.3.1 To the greatest extent feasible Caltrans Standard Specifications (Section 7-1.01, Air Pollution Control and Section 10.1, Dust Control) and the Butte County Air Quality Management District’s Best Available Mitigation Measures for the control of construction related emissions shall be implemented.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to, During and Post Construction
Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, Contractor

3.4 Biological Resources

MM 3.4.1 Prior to construction, a bird survey shall be conducted in April- May to detect the presence of Swainson’s hawk or other special status raptors or nesting cliff swallows. All recommendations and mitigations described in the bird survey shall be incorporated into the design and management of the biological resources at the project site.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to and during construction
Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, USFWS

3.5 Cultural Resources

MM 3.5.1 A note shall be placed on the final construction plans which states “should cultural resources be encountered, the supervising contractor shall be responsible for reporting any such findings to the Public Works Department, and a qualified archaeologist will be contacted to conduct meetings with on-site employees and monitor the referenced mitigation measures.” All mitigation measures determined by the Public Works Department to be appropriate for this project shall be implemented pursuant to the terms of the archaeologist’s report.

Timing and Implementation: Prior to final construction plan approval
Enforcement and Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, supervising contractor

3.6 Geology and Soils

MM 3.6.2 As part of the construction plans for the project; the contractor shall prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and gain approval from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) for such plan before construction activity. The SWPPP shall include the following measures:

1. Immediate revegetation or protection of all disturbed areas from both wind and water erosion upon the completion of grading activities
2. Use of water bars, temporary swales and culverts, mulch, netting, hydro seeding, silt fences, sediments and/or other measures where necessary to prevent surface water from eroding graded areas and to retain sediment
3. Maintaining items in 2) above during storm events or on-site watering to ensure that the measures continue to be effective,
4. Water soils susceptible to wind erosion at least twice per day during construction or as directed by the project engineer,
5. Halting of all grading activity when wind speeds exceed 20 miles per hour or existing wind creates an obvious dust cloud, and
6. If refueling of equipment and oil changing is planned on site the contractor shall prepare a Spill Prevention, Control, and Containment Plan to establish spill prevention practice, and to prepare for spill mitigation in the event of a hazardous materials spill.

Timing and implementation: Prior to, During, and Post construction Enforcement and Monitoring: CVRWQCB, Butte County Department of Public Work, Contractor

3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

MM 3.8.1 Apply for and gain a General Construction Stormwater Permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

*Timing and implementation: Prior to construction
Enforcement/Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works, Agent*

3.11 Noise

MM 3.11.1 Implement Caltrans standard specification, Section 7-1.01I, “Sound Control Requirements”

*Timing and implementation: During construction
Enforcement/Monitoring: Butte County Department of Public Works*

5.1 REPORT PREPARERS

GALLAWAY CONSULTING INC.

Jody Gallaway, President
Kevin Sevier, Planner
Shirley Innecken, Botanist

5.2 REFERENCES

CONTACTS:

- Paul Lundbom, Butte County Public Works, pers. comm. 2/10/05
- Jeff Jukkola Butte County Public Works, pers. comm. 2/10/05

LIST OF TECHNICAL STUDIES:

- Archeological Reconnaissance Survey, Cultural Resource Associates, 2005

REFERENCES:

- Butte County General Plan, 2000
- California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database Map, 2003
- Northeast Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NEIC), Complete record search for the Skyway Lookout Point Parking and Pedestrian Viewing Facilities
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Map No.06007C0570C June, 1998.
- California Uniform Building Code, California Building Standards Commission, 2001.
- Standard Specifications, California Department of Transportation, 2002.