Exhibit D

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Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

North Monterey County
Amphibian Habitat Restoration Project

January 2016

Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
744 La Guardia Street, Building A, Salinas CA 93905

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Initial Study

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title:	North Monterey County Amphibian Habitat Restoration Project
Lead Agency Name and Address	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County 744 La Guardia Street, Building A, Salinas CA 93905
Contact Person and Phone Number:	Paul Robins (831) 424-1036 x124
Project Location:	25 acres of land adjacent to the north side of North Monterey County High School on Castroville Blvd., near Castroville in unincorporated Monterey County
Applicable land use plan designation:	North Monterey County Land Use Plan- Public/Quasi-Public
Responsible Agency:	County of Monterey Resource Management Agency
Zoning:	Public/Quasi-Public Zoning area

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary

The North Monterey County Amphibian Habitat Restoration Project seeks to restore wetlands and uplands and enhance habitat for Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders (SCLTS) at the 25-acre piece of land adjacent to the North Monterey County High School campus. This project will improve SCLTS breeding and upland habitat though wetland enhancement, improving upland condition and cover, and creating a corridor of microhabitats beneficial to the SCLTS. The project will also provide low impact recreational and educational opportunities for North Monterey County High School students and the local community through the installation of trails and interpretive signage. A detailed project description is available in the Technical Memo attached to this document after the References section.

Project Location

The proposed project site is located on approximately 25 acres of land adjacent the north side of the North Monterey County High School campus on Castroville Blvd, near Castroville in unincorporated Monterey County (Figure 1).

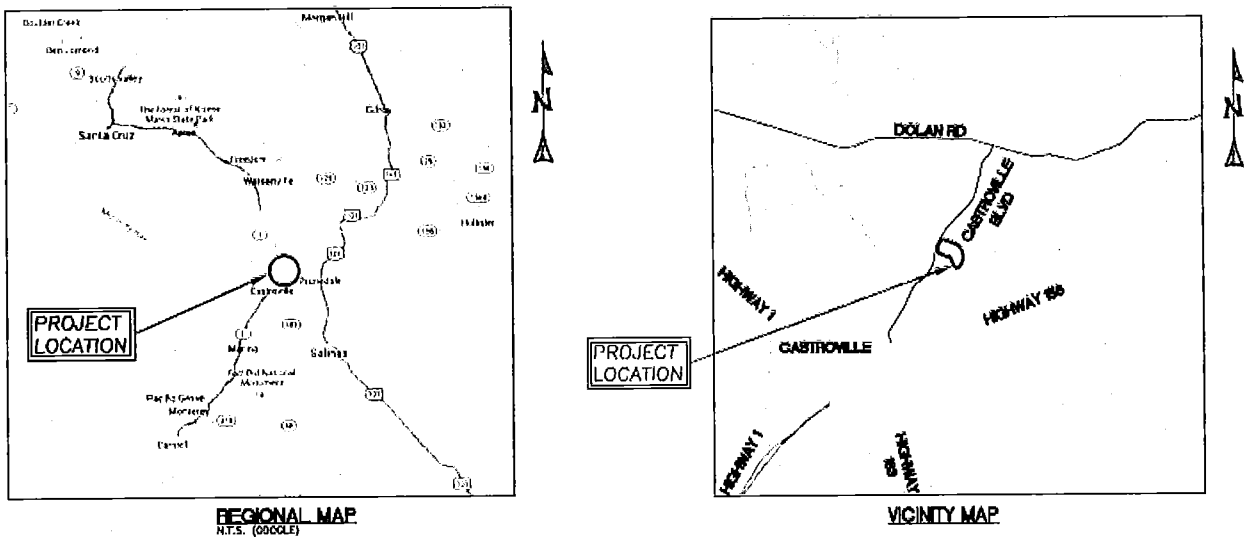

Figure 1. Project Location

Background

In 2002, North Monterey County School District identified the need for a new middle school and after the community approved a bond with the primary objective of building a new middle school, the property north of North Monterey County High School campus was selected. Extensive site grading occurred in winter 2005-06 until construction ceased due to incomplete permitting. By 2007 the site was a mosaic of disturbed habitats of various ages with small remnant islands of preexisting native vegetation. The grading also produced depressions that filled with water creating ponds. Both SCLTS and California tiger salamanders (CTS) were captured on-site during winter drift fence studies in 2006-07 and 2007-08 indicating limited migration across the project site uplands for both species. Spring aquatic surveys in 2010 did not document breeding by these species at the on-site ponds.

The School District approached the Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG) in early 2014 to determine ways in which to utilize the property. Several meetings were held that included staff from the School District, CCWG, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Resources Conservation District of Monterey Country (RCDMC), the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to work collaboratively to restore the environmentally sensitive upland and wetland habitat north of the North Monterey County High School campus for educational purposes.

Project Objectives and Design:

The project seeks to restore wetland and upland habitat for the SCLTS, within the 25 acre parcel adjacent to the North Monterey County High School campus. Habitat restoration includes the removal of excess vegetation within the ponds to help increase breeding habitat, enhancing riparian corridors to help amphibian migration, restoration of upland habitat (re-grading, removal of invasive species and planting of native plants) to provide better upland habitat for the SCLTS, reducing erosion problems on the site, and installing trails to provide recreational and educational opportunities to students and the public while also protecting sensitive habitat. Site plans for the trail system and vegetation enhancement are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3. The restoration project design was developed in consultation with a Technical Advisory Committee that included staff from USFWS and CDFW. The following restoration components make up the plan:

Vegetation Enhancement: Several zones for vegetation enhancement have been identified. These areas will be improved according to the idea of "Microcosms of the Watershed" and improvements will provide a contiguous wildlife corridor for the SCLTS beginning in the Moro Cojo, traveling up to potential breeding ponds, and ending in protected upland habitat that provides generous cover.

- *Riparian Zone*: Enhancement will occur through planting of species such as willow, dogwood, elderberry, blackberry, and mugwort. The TAC decided it would be best to not plant this zone exclusively with willows to avoid creating a dense willow thicket, which can lead to safety issues with students. The riparian zone will extend around the ponds and between ponds where feasible.

- *Pond, Sedge and Juncus Zone:* The existing ponds are currently overgrown with bulrush and cattail. Although this can be good habitat in smaller amounts, it is currently overtaking the ponds and does not allow enough open water or sunlight for the ponds to provide optimal breeding habitat. Removal of this vegetation, focusing on the Center Pond, will be a key part of the vegetation management plan. On the edge of the ponds, *Juncus* and a smaller sedge species will be planted.

- *Native Grassland Zone:* Existing locations of native grassland will be preserved and enhanced through planting of creeping wild rye, purple needle grass, California fescue, and California poppy.

- *Oak Woodland Zone:* An oak woodland zone will be created on the back side of the restoration site beyond the shrub zone. Oak woodland is known to provide excellent upland habitat for the SCLTS. Native shrub species such as black sage and coffeeberry will be planted in the understory as well as blue wild rye and blue-eyed grass.

- *Shrub Zone:* The shrub zone is currently dominated by nonnative grass and shrubs as well as coyote brush. Female coyote brush will be removed to reduce reproduction of this species. Other native shrubs such as coffeeberry, black sage, manzanita, and *Ceonothus* will be planted.

- *Corridor Zone:* The corridor zone will provide a key migration path as the SCLTS makes its way up from the Moro Cojo towards the ponds. This zone will connect the wetter riparian areas to each other as the migration path travels over some drier upland area. This zone will be planted with species such as box elder, yellow lupine, elderberry and cottonwood. The corridor zone will provide ample cover for the SCLTS as it migrates between riparian areas and ponds.

- *Locust Replacement Zone:* The existing locust area has a dense clay layer that provides the zone with more moisture than other upland areas. The existing locust trees are possibly stunted by subsoil characteristics, so final plant selection for this zone will take this into account. The locusts will be removed and re-planted with native shrub species, such as ceonothus, manzanita, and coffeeberry, which can accommodate moist

conditions and the subsoil characteristics. This will also act as a transitional zone between the riparian zone, shrub zone, and oak woodland.

Pond Extension: The main Central Pond is already a good habitat zone for wildlife, including the endangered California Red-Legged Frog, and wetland plants. There is room to make it larger, which will both increase water-holding capacity and create shorter corridors between habitat zones for migrating wildlife. The southeast arm of the pond will be extended by excavating 1-2 feet over approximately $1/10^{th}$ of an acre.

Trails and Signage: A network of walking trails will be installed throughout the wetland and upland area. The trail system will improve the usefulness of the wetlands, providing education and recreation while also protecting sensitive habitat. The trails will be routed to minimize impacts on to the natural habitat. Several existing/former paths will be reused to help with this goal. Where feasible the majority of the trails will be ADA-compliant to allow access to all. Trails will be shaped to shed water, reducing maintenance requirements. Three culverts will be installed in key locations to allow water to drain without damaging the trails. Approximately 6,000 feet (just over 1 mile) of trails will be installed. The figure-eight trail system was designed to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat, maximize trail distance for recreational purposes, while also allowing for more direct routes through the property. The trail system will have three access points: Access to the trails for student educational purposes will be located at the southeast corner of the football field. This access will be limited to students during school hours and locked during non-school hours. Two public access points will be located on the north west and north east side of the property, connecting the trail system to the county trail along Castroville Blvd and the adjacent housing community respectively. Low profile interpretive signage will be installed along the trail system to help educate about the life history of the SCLTS and the importance of different types of wetland and upland habitat.

Earthen Embankment to Increase Hydrologic Regime of Smaller Pond: An embankment will be installed at the outlet of the depression located closest to the Moro Cojo Slough, which will create a deeper and larger wetland area. The embankment will be 3 feet high and 8 feet wide, across the waterway outlet. This will provide more water for a longer duration, improving habitat for wildlife and wetland plants.

Erosion Control: Currently, there are two actively-eroding gullies on the property. One is along the depression behind the visitor's bleachers, while the other is on the hill at the north end of the football field. These gullies cause several problems. First, once this valuable soil is lost, it cannot be replaced. Second, it is difficult to get vegetation to grow back on the steep, constantly eroding slopes. Lastly, when the soil finally settles out downstream, it can fill in ponds, reduce the capacity of streams, and cover over wildlife and plant habitat. Our solution is to collect runoff water, convey it to a stable location, and then reshape the gully to allow vegetation to grow and naturally secure the soil. In both locations, a gravel-filled ditch will be installed across the flowpath, gathering runoff water into pipelines and sending it to the flat areas at the bottom of the gully

Re-grading of Upland Soil Mounds: Soil piles in the upland area, leftover from a previous construction project, will be re-graded to a maximum height of 4' as measured from the finished toe of grade to the highest finished grade elevation on soil. Heights may vary at the direction of the engineer to increase topographic variability and provide a more complex upland habitat for the SCLTS

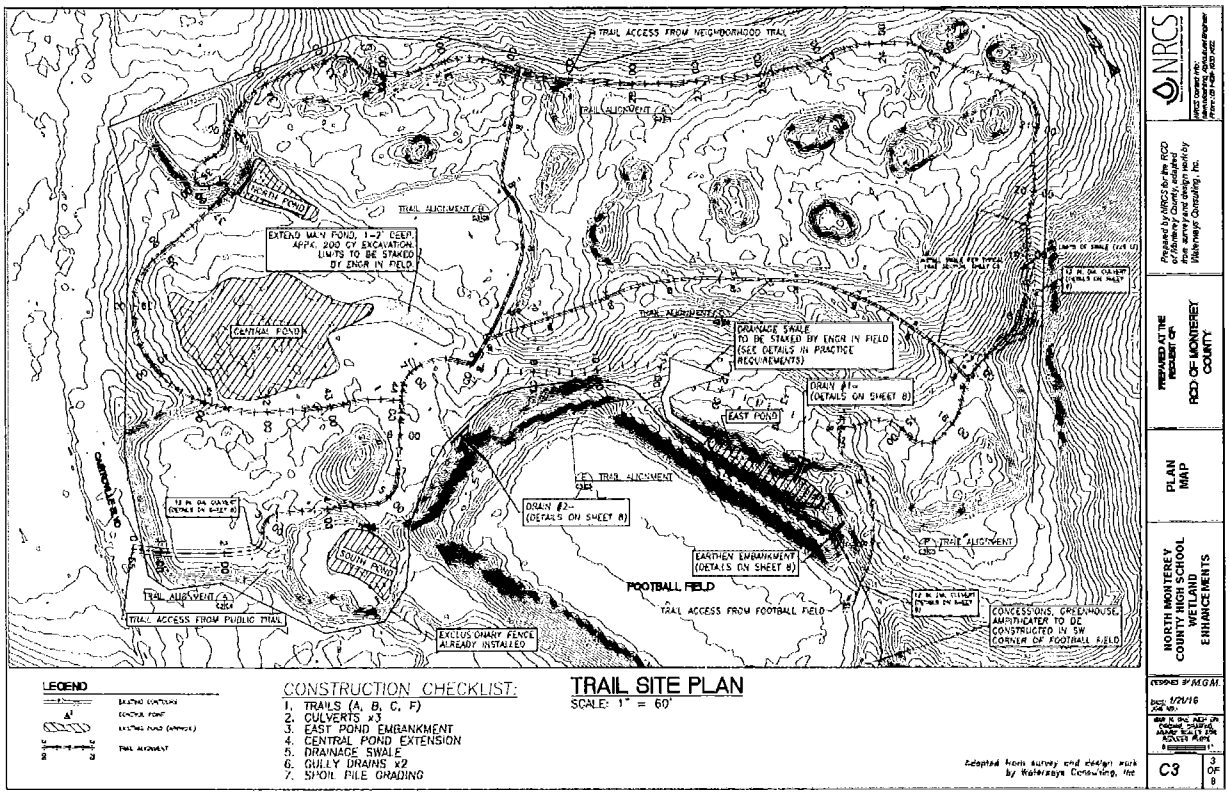

Figure 2. Trail Site Plan

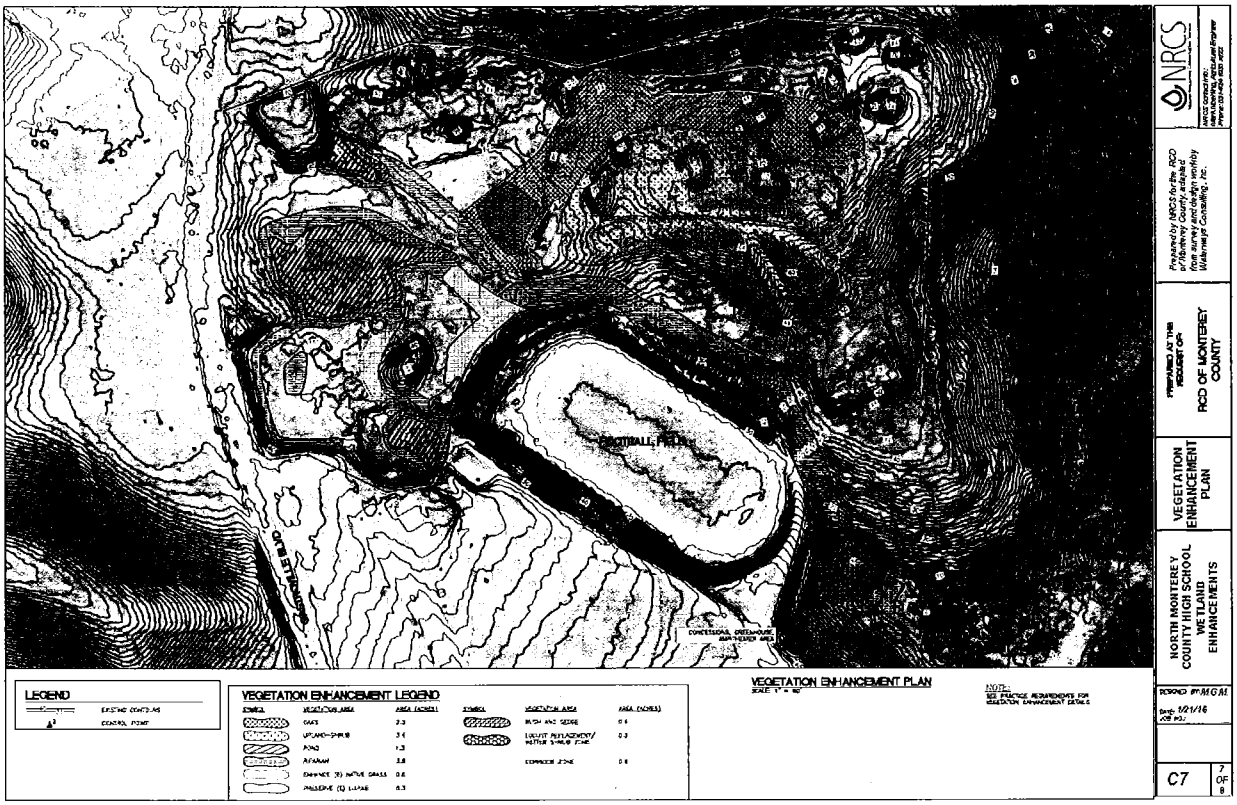

Figure 3. Vegetation Enhancement Plan

B. PROJECT PROPONENTS

The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) and the Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs (CCWG) are acting as project leads.

A technical advisory committee was established to work on this project and includes representatives from the CCWG, RCDMC, North Monterey County Unified School District and school staff, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, RCD of Santa Cruz County, John Gilchrist and Associates, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Monterey County Supervisor, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Caltrans. The project has been approved by the North Monterey County School District Board. Further, the project was presented to the community at several school board meetings and received support from community members.

RCDMC is an independent, non-regulatory special district formed under Division 9 of the California State Resources Code and is governed by a voting board of local directors appointed by the Monterey Board of Supervisors. RCDMC has provided technical assistance and implemented conservation programs for over 60 years. The RCDMC is a recognized community contact for conservation efforts and expediting watershed health actions. RCDMC implements and expedites watershed planning and enhancement actions and facilitates a problem-solving management process for the rural/urban interface. The strength of the RCD delivery system rests on a voluntary, cooperative approach to solving land management problems.

CCWG is an affiliate wetlands research group based at Moss Landing Marine Labs. Their mission is "to coordinate the advancement of wetland science and management on the Central Coast." CCWG has extensive experience designing and managing wetland and habitat restoration projects and work closely with regional and state partners to improve wetland science communication between researchers, resource managers and policy makers.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES:

The proposed project site is located on approximately 25 acres of land adjacent the north side of the North Monterey County High School campus on Castroville Blvd, near Castroville in unincorporated Monterey County. The North Monterey County Land Use Plan designates the proposed site location for the North Monterey County Amphibian Habitat Restoration Project as Public/Quasi Public use. The site is across from agricultural preservation (some unique farmland), next to residential/medium and high density, and backs up to Resource Conservation (Wetlands) (Figure 2). Immediately adjacent to the site is North Monterey County High School.

Current site conditions include a mosaic of disturbed habitats. Uplands on the site are dominated by dense stands of ruderal vegetation typified by mustard, radish and non-native grasses. Evidence of ground squirrel colonies seem to be lacking. The site includes three main ponds: South Pond, Central Pond, and North Pond. There is one additional pond, "East Pond," on the south east side of the restoration site that does not currently retain water for long periods of time (Figure 2). The three main ponds are overgrown with *Typha,* limiting open water which is essential for SCLTS breeding habitat. Both SCLTS and CTS are known to be present at the site (CNDDB 2014; Gilchrist 2007) (Figure 5).

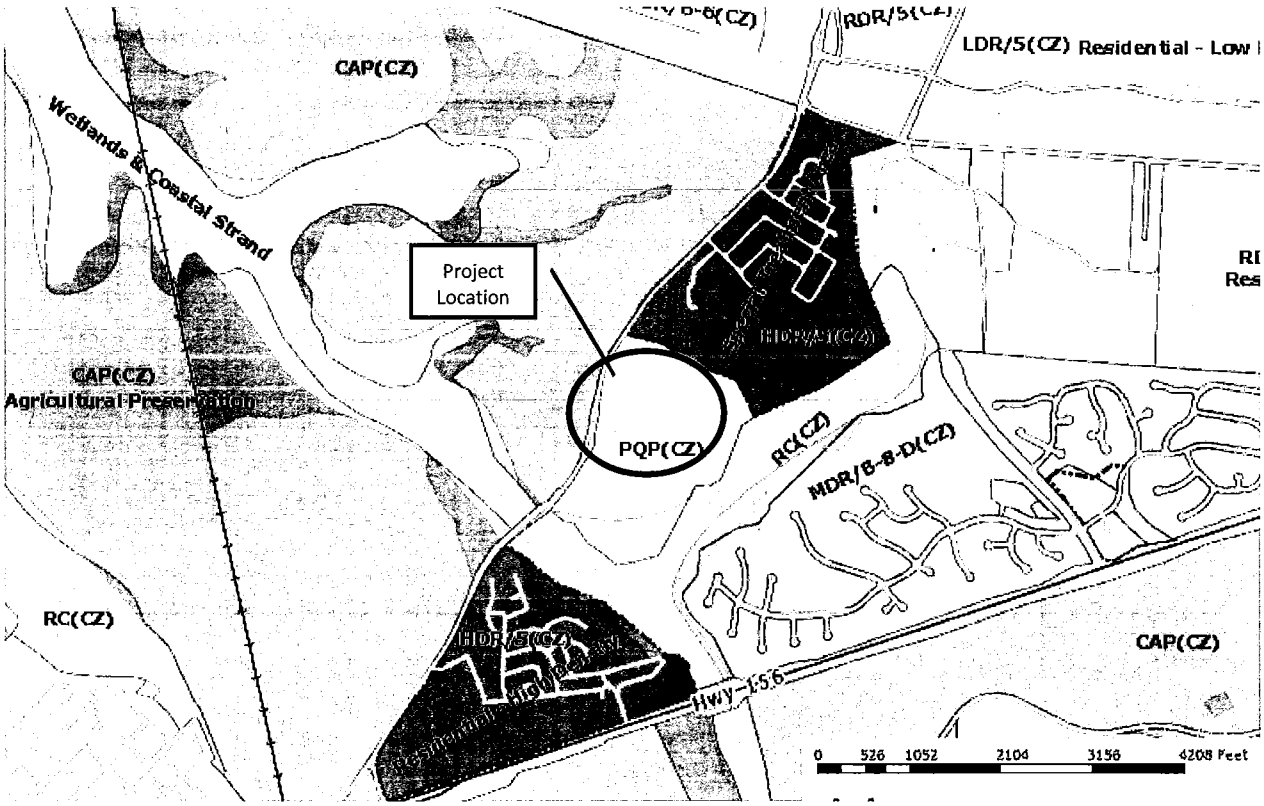

Figure 4. Land Use Designations

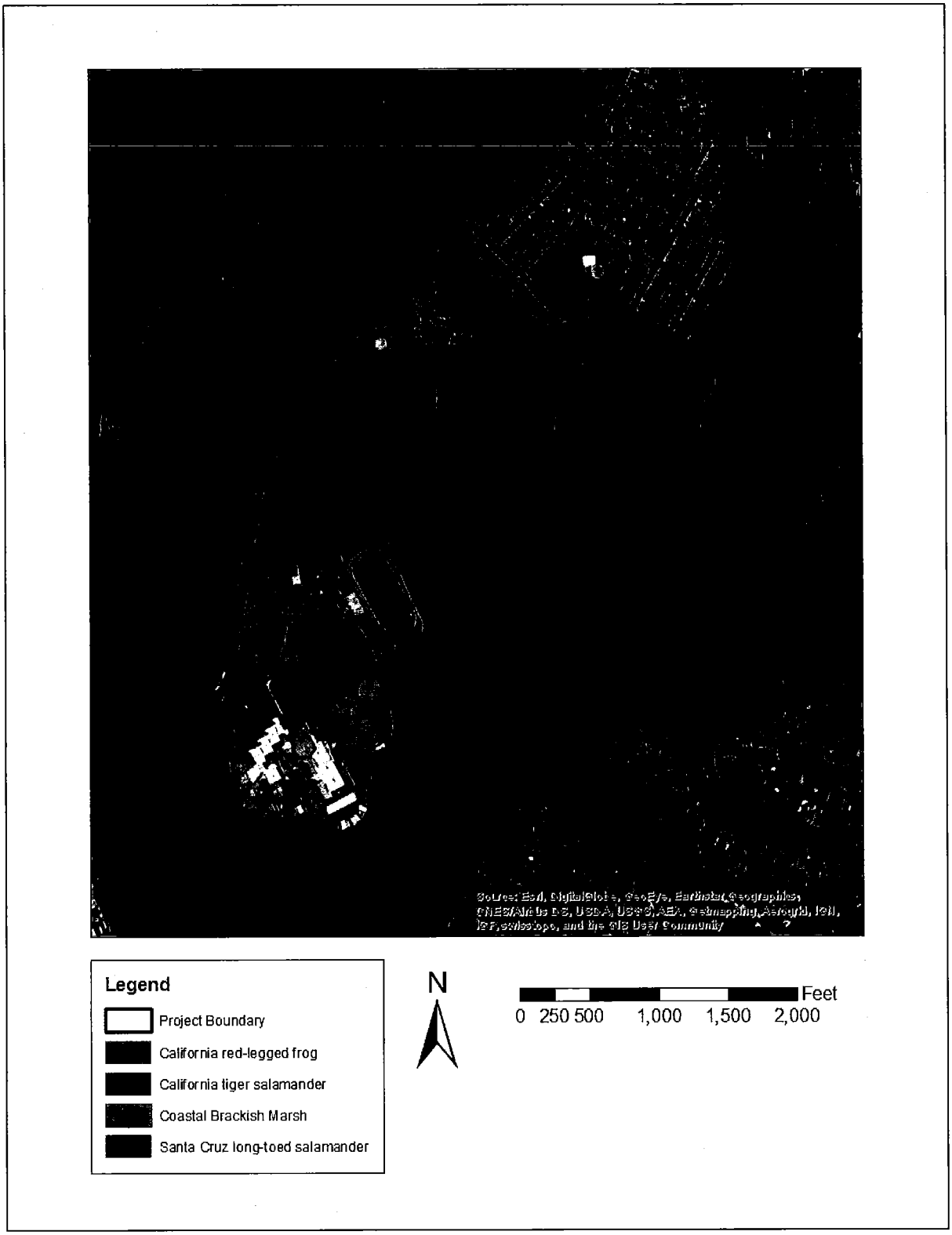

Figure 5. Special status species present at site (CNDDB 2014)

D. OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED (E.G., PERMITS, FINANCING APPROVAL, OR PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT)

County of Monterey: Grading and Coastal Development Permit

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Memorandum of Understanding with US Fish and Wildlife Service for Projects Benefiting Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties—will provide coverage related to standards and protection measures for SCLTS, CA Tiger Salamander, and CA Red-Legged Frog

US Army Corps of Engineers—determined to need no permit (per email from Janelle Leeson, dated February 4, 2016)

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board—determined to need no permit (per email from Kim Sanders, dated January 13, 2016)

Potential implementation funding opportunities:

The Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program -The Wildlife Conservation Board's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program is the Board's general restoration program that includes all projects that fall outside the Board's other mandated programs. This includes native fisheries restoration, restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, other native habitat restoration projects including coastal scrub, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitats, in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions, and other projects that improve native habitat quality within the State.

Endangered Species Conservation and Recovery Grant Program -CDFW distributes federal funds for threatened and endangered species conservation and recovery actions through the Endangered Species Conservation and Recovery Grant Program. Funds for threatened and endangered species conservation actions are provided to states and territories from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through their Traditional Conservation Grants Program Section 6 Grant Program.

National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants Program-The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act Section 305, Title III, Public Law 101646, 16 U.S.C. 3954 established the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program NCWCGP to acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal States through competitive matching grants to State agencies. The primary goal of the NCWCGP is the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems.

CalTrans Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation EEM Program- The EEM Program encourages projects that produce multiple benefits which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase water use efficiency, reduce risks from climate change impacts, and demonstrate collaboration with local, state and community entities. For eligibility of this project we would need to make the connection between the restoration site and Hwy 156 Project. This project would fall under the Resource Lands Projects category of the program. Projects in this category are for the acquisition, restoration, or enhancement of resource lands (watersheds, wildlife habitat, wetlands, forests, or other significant natural areas) to mitigate the loss of or detriment to such lands within or near the right of way for transportation improvements.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

A. FACTORS

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, as discussed within the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture Resources	☐ Air Quality
X Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology/Soils
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐Hazards/Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology/Water Quality
☐ Land Use/Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise
☐ Population/Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☐ Transportation/Traffic	☐ Utilities/Service Systems	

B. 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.

X 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 revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. 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	2/5/2016 Date
Paul Robins Printed Name	Executive Director Title

IV. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on project-specific screening analysis).
2) All answers must take into account the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8) The explanation of each issue should identify:

   The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

ISSUES & SUPPORTING DATA SOURCES:

1. AESTHETICS. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Affect a scenic vista or view open to the public?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As with any restoration project, there would be some temporary decrease in the visual appeal of the area immediately affected by the work being performed. The presence of construction vehicles may reduce the visual character and quality of the project site and the surrounding landscape. However, the duration of the work would be limited and temporary. After construction is complete, this project will have a beneficial impact on the aesthetics of the site for those visiting it. The view from the public road (Castroville Blvd) running on the west side of the site will not change. In the Monterey County's General Plan's Conservation and Open Space element it states: "OS-1.9 Development that protects and enhances the County's scenic qualities shall be encouraged" (Monterey County 2010).

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The site is not in the area of a scenic highway and therefore would have no impact.

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As with any restoration project, there would be some temporary decrease in the visual appeal of the area immediately affected by the work being performed. The presence of construction vehicles may reduce the visual character and quality of the project site and the surrounding landscape. However, the duration of the work would be limited, the immediate project area would be temporarily closed to visitors, thus limiting exposure to unsightly construction activity, and visual impacts would be overshadowed by the aesthetic improvements and protection of the resource that would be the end result. There would be no permanent or long-term degradation of the visual character of the site or its surroundings as a result of this project. Therefore, the impact from this project would be less than significant.

d) Create light or glare beyond the physical limits of the project site?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Lighting is not an element of this project and no new light sources would be introduced into the landscape. All construction work would be limited to daylight hours, eliminating the need for work lights. The proposed project would have no impact.

2. AGRICULTURE. Would project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**

a) Convert Farmlands listed as "Prime", "Unique" or of "Statewide Importance," as shown on the State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

According to the Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (Monterey County Important Farmland Map 2012), no impact to agricultural resources from the proposed project would occur because there is currently no farmland, as defined by the California Resources Agency, within the proposed project area. The proposed project location is not zoned for agricultural use or protected under a California Land Conservation (Williamson Act) contract. Farmland adjacent to the North Monterey County High School would not be affected by the proposed project. Moreover, no forest lands are located within or adjacent to the project area and, as such, the project would not result in any direct loss of forest land or lands currently under timber preserve. Thus, the proposed project have no impact on agriculture or forestry resources.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒

See 2a. No impact

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

See 2a. No impact.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

See 2a. No impact.

3. AIR QUALITY. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project area is located within Monterey County and the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD). The MBUAPCD's jurisdiction is the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), composed of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. The most recently adopted air quality plan is the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan, which includes strategies for MBUAPCD to reach attainment for the State's 8-hour ambient air quality standards (MBUAPCD 2008a). The Monterey County General Plan (Monterey County 2010) governs land use in the project area and recognizes the need to provide for growth and to maintain good air quality by taking proper actions to achieve desired standards of air quality.

The project will not result in an increase in pollutant emissions other than those temporarily generated during construction by ground-moving machinery. Thus, this project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

If a project is proposed in a city or county with a general plan that is consistent with the most recently adopted air quality plan, and if the project is consistent with that general plan, then the project is considered to be consistent with

applicable air quality plans and policies. The proposed project would be consistent with the current land use designation for the project area within Monterey County (i.e., Public/Quasi Public) and the 2010 General Plan (Monterey County 2010) is consistent with the strategies identified in the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan and would have no impact on this environmental factor.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Construction related emission:
Construction of the proposed project would involve use of equipment and materials that would temporarily generate dust and emit ozone precursor emissions (i.e., reactive organic gases [ROG] and nitrogen oxide [NOX]). Fugitive dust (including particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter [PM10]) and other criteria pollutants would be generated from the operation of heavy equipment (primarily diesel-operated), and construction worker vehicle trips (primarily gasoline-operated). The entire NCCAB is a nonattainment area for PM10 and a substantial increase in PM10 emissions would be considered a significant impact by the MBUAPCD. The Monterey County General Plan requires the County to implement MBUAPCD measures to address off-road mobile source and heavy duty equipment emissions as conditions of approval for future development to ensure that construction-related NOx emissions from non-typical construction equipment do not exceed the MBUAPCD's daily threshold for NOx (Monterey County 2010). However, only typical construction equipment (e.g., excavators, dump trucks) would be used to construct the proposed project. Given that construction related volatile organic compound (VOC) and NOx emissions from typical construction equipment are accommodated in the emissions inventories of State- and federally-required air quality plans, the potential generation of ozone precursor emissions during construction would be less than significant. With respect to PM10, according to the MBUAPCD's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, project-related construction activities that have the potential to disturb fewer than 8.1 acres with minimal grading, and 2.2 acres with major earthmoving, would not be expected to exceed the MBUAPCD's PM10 threshold and would be considered less than significant. Neither major nor minor earthmoving activities at the project site would be expected to exceed these thresholds because the area of disturbance subject to minimal grading (soil pile grading and trailwork) is 5.5 acres and major earthmoving is .5 acres. In addition, the MBUAPCD's CEQA Guidelines establish a threshold of significance for PM10 construction-related emissions of 82 pounds per day. Construction-related emissions were modeled for the Parsons Slough Project, a larger and longer duration project located at mouth of Parsons Slough, and presented in the Parsons Slough Project Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (Vinnedge Environmental Consulting 2010). As described in that document, PM10 emissions for the Parsons Slough Project were modeled at 4 pounds per day, well below the MBUAPCD threshold of significance of 82 pounds per day. It is anticipated that construction of the proposed project would generate fewer emissions than the Parsons Slough Project, given the more limited area that would be disturbed and the shorter duration of construction. As such, the potential generation of PM 10 during construction of the proposed project would be **less than significant**

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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As discussed above, the entire NCCAB is a nonattainment area for PM10 and a substantial increase in PM10 emissions would be considered a significant impact by the MBUAPCD. However, the proposed project would result in air pollutant emissions well below the MBUAPCD significance thresholds; therefore, the proposed project's individual impact on regional air quality would be less than significant. For projects with less than significant individual impacts that are consistent with the adopted regional air quality plan, the CEQA Air Quality Guidelines state that the cumulative impact would also be less than significant (MBUAPCD 2008b).

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As noted in b), the proposed project would not generate substantial pollutant concentrations and thus would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. The project impact would be less than significant.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

This project will not create objectionable odors. No impact.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project impact:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

The main goal of this project is to enhance the wetland habitat in order to create better breeding sites for SCLTS, which is a fully protected species under Federal and State regulations. The CTS is also present in the area, and is a federally threatened species. The project will enhance breeding pond habitat, and increase upland cover in order to establish a more suitable breeding habitat for SCLTS.

Mitigation Measures:
All practicable measures will be taken to avoid killing or injuring any life stage of the covered species during habitat enhancement activities. Ground disturbance will be restricted during the breeding season and possibly until first rains of season as newly metamorphosed juveniles typically stay close by breeding ponds in surrounding upland habitat until first rain events. For upland grading, work should occur in the dry season when adults are not moving. Grading within the pond(s) should occur in the Fall, before winter rains start and after most larvae have transformed. Or, surveys for larvae could be conducted and if none are present then work could proceed earlier in the summer. In order to further reduce adverse effects on the species, all work will occur in compliance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2015. Memorandum: Intra-Service Biological Opinion on the Issuance of a lO(a)(l)(A) Permit to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County for the Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Recovery Initiative in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, California

1. Prior to the start of work, an educational program regarding the sensitivity of the covered species, and their habitat will be conducted for all personnel. The educational program will include visual materials on species identification, procedures to follow when encountering any covered species in the work area, penalties for take, and all work restrictions within the project area.
2. A chain of command for field crews and other on-site personnel will be established prior to commencement of all activities. This program will establish the biological monitors as the persons in charge of, and responsible for, all facets of project implementation. The Field Supervisor specific chain-of-command will be defined at the pre-activity meeting to be held immediately prior to the initiation of work.
3. Biological monitors will have the responsibility and authority of stopping work activities, if any crews or personnel are not complying with the provisions outlined in this document and/or conditions in any other authorization from the Service and/or CDFW.

4. Prior to the start of work, areas will be identified by the biological monitor-in-charge and approved by the Service as acceptable locations to which covered species may be relocated if these species are encountered within a work area. Relocation areas will be a minimum of 500 yards from the boundary of any work area and will not include staging areas or roads. Covered species will not be removed from the work area or maintained in captivity overnight without prior notification and written approval by the Service and CDFW, unless the animal is in need of emergency medical assistance. Medical assistance will be provided to injured animals by a certified wildlife veterinarian familiar with amphibian care.
5. Only biological monitors specifically authorized by the Service and CDFW to handle covered species will be allowed to handle, transport, and relocate individuals of these species. When transporting individuals, precautions will be taken to ensure that the animals are not over-stressed and are maintained in safety. Such measures include: keeping animals in a cool, dark, and safe location, providing adequate hydration, maintaining a stable cool temperature to avoid over-heating, and ensuring holding tanks are kept clean to prevent the spread of disease.
6. Biological monitors will check for any covered species under vehicles and equipment that are parked for more than 30 minutes.
7. To maintain safety and limit the chance of take or habitat disturbance, communication systems consisting of a simple system of hand signals or handheld radios will be utilized to ensure proper communication between the monitors, truck drivers, equipment operators, and field personnel to use during habitat enhancement and related activities.
8. Both the Service and CDFW will be notified immediately if any of the covered species are injured or killed during the course of any project related activity. All other incidental observations will be reported in the daily field monitoring forms or notes.
9. Refueling of equipment will be conducted using heavy-gauge tarps made of chemically resistant polypropylene or other impervious material with vertical sides for spill containment. These containment tarps will be set up under the equipment prior to servicing or refueling. Once the work is completed, the tarp and its contents must be immediately removed from the property and all contaminants properly disposed of off-site. Standard operating procedures will be implemented immediately in case of fuel spillage.
10. Prior to conducting non-native plant removal or treatments (e.g., spraying with herbicide, cutting, pulling, digging out), the permittee will make every reasonable attempt to ensure that covered species are not hidden within the plant or the residual plant mailer to be treated.
11. Pond or upland enhancement activities will be described in the annual work plan and will specify the areas where work will be performed, the dates during which the work will be performed, and a description of the work to be performed.
12. Pond and upland enhancement activities could include: vegetation removal, basin deepening or recontouring, sediment removal, berm repair and strengthening, and planting vegetation, all of which may be performed manually or using heavy machinery. Draining of ponds to perform the authorized work should only occur during part of the year when the larval life stage has been completed and before the subsequent breeding season. This timeframe corresponds to a work period typically between August 1 and November 1. Within 2 days of the start of work on a pond, that pond will be sampled by a qualified biologist to ensure that all covered species from that pond are in the post metamorphic stage and will be minimally affected by draining of the pond.
13. For all habitat management activities a monitor will be present before and during the activity and will conduct surveys and species monitoring as needed. Surveys and monitors may not be required for small scale maintenance activities using hand tools; the need for surveys and monitoring will be coordinate with the Service and CDFW prior to the start of project activities.

14. Activities including the use of mechanical equipment, excavating, and bulldozing will require pre-activity visual surveys as well as monitoring during the activities. Survey and monitoring during ground disturbing activities will only be conducted by Federal and State permitted biologists in accordance with their permits. Pre-activity surveys will take place the day prior to the proposed recovery action. Visual surveys will determine routes to be marked for off pavement vehicle travel, areas of ground disturbance where exclusion fencing will be required, and how many biological monitors will be required during the actions, based on the size of the affected area and potential density of covered species.
15. Exclusion fencing may be required based on specific project requirements and determined in coordination with the Service and CDFW. If required, exclusion fencing will be placed, at a minimum, around the immediate work area where machinery will be operating. During activities involving mechanized equipment, biological monitors will maintain exclusion fencing and evaluate work performed during enhancement activities. Monitors are required to temporarily stop any work that they believe may harm individuals of the covered species. Work will not resume until a satisfactory method is agreed upon to minimize take of the covered

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The goal of this project is to enhance the wetland and upland habitats. The project will be undertaken in cooperation with the Central Coast Wetlands Group, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game. The project will be beneficial to this sensitive natural community. No Impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The goal of this project is to improve the wetland and upland habitats. Existing ponds will be enhanced through riparian vegetation planting, removal of overgrowth, and creation of embankments to improve water retention in ponds. However, ACOE and RWQCB have determined that these ponds are not Waters of the US and hence not federally protected. No impact.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

This project will have a less than significant impact on the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors. Restoration activities will enhance wildlife habitats and migration corridors and will not result in any significant adverse impacts.

e) Conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan or any other local policies or ordinances that protect biological resources?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The goal of the project is to improve biological resources by enhancing wetlands and creating a better habitat for SCLTS. The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan or any other local policies or ordinances that protect biological resources. The project would support/enact elements found in local land use plans and species and habitat management plans as the project is enhancing riparian habitat and protecting natural resources.

5. CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒

In May 2006 Archaeological Consulting was authorized by Myles Billheimer of North Monterey County Unified School District to prepare a Preliminary Archaeological Reconnaissance report (Doane and Breschini 2006) for the middle school site adjacent to North Monterey County High School in Castroville that was being proposed at that time. This is the same site in which the Habitat Enhancement project is currently being proposed. Methodology for the survey included a background records search at the Northwest Regional Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, located at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park; and a field reconnaissance of the project area. Based upon the background research and the surface reconnaissance, the report concluded that the project parcel contains no surface evidence of potentially significant archaeological resources. Therefore the project would have no impact.

If historical/archaeological resources are identified during any project activities, work will stop immediately in that area. No historical/archaeological materials will be collected. Work will be diverted away from the sensitive areas, which will remain intact.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact, See 5a

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact, See 5a

d) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact, See 5a

e) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact, See 5a

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Will the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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:				
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project area is located within the active San Andreas Fault System. However, the project site is not located in the fault rupture hazard zone as delineated on the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. The closest fault rupture hazard zone is the portion of the San Andreas fault which crosses through San Juan Bautista, 10 miles from the project site. The USGS estimates a 6.4% probability of an earthquake with a Mw of 6.7 or greater occurring in the Northern San Andreas Fault before 2044 (Field 2014). No impact.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒

If an earthquake was to occur in the San Andreas Fault, there could be a risk of strong seismic ground shaking. However, the project is a wetland enhancement project and no structures are being built. The pond embankment will be less than 6ft tall and the soil will be selected by the engineer and compacted, reducing its susceptibility to seismic activities. Therefore, strong seismic ground shaking in the area would not expose people to serious dangers. No impact.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Due to the geologic location and soil type (fine sandy loam), there is a risk of liquefaction. However, even a total failure of the proposed pond embankments would pose no risk to people, property, or other habitats. No impact.

iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒

People and structures would not be put in danger from risk of landslides at the site. No impact.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The project will ultimately reduce erosion currently occurring on the site. During construction, erosion control best management practices will be implemented, reducing project impacts of soil erosion to less than significant.

c) Produce unstable geological conditions that will result in adverse impacts resulting from landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project is not located within a geologic unit or soil that is known to be unstable based upon available data. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Expansive soils do not exist in the project area. No new structures are being constructed. The project would have no impact.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does not involve the installation of a septic system or waste water disposal. The project would have no impact.

7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Currently, the State has not developed specific GHG thresholds of significance for use in preparing environmental analyses under CEQA, although the State has provided guidance to lead agencies in determining significant impacts from GHG emissions. The Monterey Bay United Air Quality Management District has not adopted GHG thresholds to determine significance. Therefore, in lieu of thresholds, a qualitative discussion of the GHG emissions related to the habitat restoration project and its potential impacts is included.

The transportation sector is the largest contributor to GHG emissions. Project vehicles would likely include one excavator, one bulldozer, one skid-steer, one dump truck, 2-3 light duty trucks and one 15 crew transport vehicle. Not all vehicles would operate simultaneously within the site. During Most crew vehicles would park at staging areas within the project site and then crew members would walk in to active restoration areas. Some personnel (and vehicles) would only be present during certain stages of the project depending on the work being done. Project related activities (including both construction and vegetation removal and planting activities) would last approximately 50 days over the course of 2 years. The project manager estimates 15 workers on site during peak activities. Peak project activities would occur during weeding and large outplanting events, and trail construction efforts.

The construction-related phase of the proposed restoration project involving equipment and vehicle use would be short-term and GHG emissions from project equipment and vehicles would be temporary and limited. The project engineer estimates 70 vehicle trip to transport gravel and equipment. No fill or cut will be imported or exported from

the site. Vehicle trips to the site after construction is complete would be by students already present at the school and some community members for recreation and educational purposes. There would be no significant increase in the number of vehicle trips to and from this area in the long term and no significant operational increase of GHG emissions.

The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District limits potential emissions from stationary sources to less than 100,000 tons of greenhouse gases per year. The project will not involve the construction of a stationary source of greenhouse gases.

The project would have a less than significant impact.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As stated in "Discussion A" above, the State has not developed specific GHG thresholds of significance for use in preparing environmental analyses under CEQA, and the Monterey Bay United Air Quality Management District has not adopted GHG thresholds to determine significance. The Association of Environmental Professionals' document Alternative Approaches to Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents, states that emissions for criteria pollutants tend to follow similar patterns as the emissions for GHG emissions"(AEP 2007). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that if all other pollutants from the Project are determined to be less than significant, the CO2 emissions can also be deemed less than significant. The proposed dune restoration project would not violate Monterey County's air quality standards and would not result in a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate significant GHG emissions and would therefore not conflict with the current State and Monterey County guidelines or any applicable plans, policies or regulations concerning GHG emissions.

To reduce potential GHG emissions due to restoration activities, the project would undertake the following best management practices:

- Use alternative-fueled (e.g., biodiesel, electric) construction vehicles/equipment as feasible.
- Use local (within 100 miles) building materials of at least ten percent.
- Recycle at least 50 percent of construction waste or demolition materials.
- Limit or eliminate vehicle idling during project activities.
- All vehicles and equipment must be properly maintained and tuned up (according to manufacturer's specifications), and in compliance with all state and federal requirements.
- Carpooling to project site will be encouraged.

Implementation of these project requirements would ensure that the project would have a less than significant impact.

8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS **Would the project:**	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project does not involve the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project does not involve the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials. The project would have no impact.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project site is within one-quarter mile of an existing school, however, there will be no hazardous materials or emissions at the site. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites (Cortese List) compiled by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, pursuant to Government Code §65962.5. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project is 10 miles from the Salinas Airport, 11 from the Watsonville Airport, and 13 miles from the Monterey Airport. However, it is not located within 2 miles of a public airport or under a current airport land use plan. No Impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

There is a private airstrip at Long Valley Spur, approximately 2.5 miles north of North Monterey County High School. This is far enough away that people in the project area would not be exposed to hazards from the airport nor would any work associated with the project would interfere with airport operations. No impact.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Proposed activities would occur within the project site boundaries away from public roads and would not impact emergency response or evacuation plans. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The site does not pose a high fire hazard. The project will follow protocols pertaining to vegetation around the East Pond as instructed in the School District's Fuel Management Plan. All construction and transportation equipment will be limited to parking areas or areas with minimal vegetation to minimize potential fire hazards. Further, tactical use of herbicides and hand pulling rather than mechanized weeding would reduce the potential for fire-related adverse impacts and ensure impacts from this project remain at a less than significant level.

9. HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Violate any water quality or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐

During construction activities, the release of minimal amounts of sediment to the wetland ponds and Moro Cojo could occur. Therefore, this project is likely to increase the short-term potential for the introduction of increased levels of sediment to the nearby bodies of water. The project will use best management activities during construction activities such as using straw waddles and hay to help reduce sedimentation. Additionally, any herbicide spraying that may occur to help eradicate invasive plants will only happen on no-wind days to reduce the potential for overspray onto healthy vegetation, reducing impacts to less than significant.

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.	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not involve the extraction of groundwater or activities that would significantly alter groundwater recharge or lower the existing groundwater table levels. The project would have no impact.

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.	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does entail slightly altering the drainage pattern on parts of the site to help decrease erosion However, the project will not alter the existing drainage pattern in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site. The project will reduce erosion in the area. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does entail slightly altering the drainage pattern on parts of the site to help decrease erosion issues. However, the project will not alter the existing drainage pattern in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

If an irrigation system is deemed necessary for the project (to help prevent loss of the plantings during periods of dry conditions) it will be a temporary system and used sparingly. It would have a less than significant impact on contributing runoff water.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Proposed project activities such as removal of vegetation and re-grading could reduce water quality in the short-term by increasing sedimentation. By using best management practices and timing plantings to avoid exposing newly unvegetated sediment to seasonal rains the project would ensure that potential impacts to water quality remain at a less than significant level.

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.	☐	☐	☐	☒

Most of the project area is located within the 100 year floodplain according to the official Flood Map (06053C0070G) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2009. However, this project does not include the construction of housing. The project would have no impact.

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures, which would impede or redirect flood flows	☐	☐	☐	☒

This project is within the 100 year flood plain of Moro Cojo Slough, but the project does not involve building any structures that would redirect flood flow. The project would have no impact.

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.	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project would not expose people or structures to an increased significant risk of loss, injury, or death from flooding, including flooding resulting from failure of a levee or dam. None of those structures exist within the project area or nearby. The project would have no impact.

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does not increase the potential to expose people or structures to dangers from. inundation. The project is outside of the tsunami hazard zone, is not susceptible to a seiche (wave generated in an enclosed water body) and there is no reasonable expectation that the area is subject to a mudflow. The project would have no impact.

10. LAND USE & PLANNING. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does not propose the introduction of new infrastructure such as major roadways or water supply systems, or utilities to the area. Therefore, the proposed project will not significantly disrupt or divide the established community. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Development and uses within the project site are guided by the North County Land Use Plan (1982) and the regulations of various agencies with jurisdiction over some or all areas of the site. The proposed project is on land designated as Publi/Quasi Public and is allowed for such uses as schools, parks, regional parks, recreation areas, and uses which serve the public at large

The following goals and policies of the North County Land Use Plan (1982) are relevant to the Proposed Project:

Chapter 2. Resource Management

Visual Resources

General Policy 2.2.2.2: The coastal dunes and beaches, estuaries, and wetlands, should be designated for recreation or environmental conservation land uses that are compatible with protection of scenic resources. Facilities that are provided to accompany such uses shall be designed and sited to be unobtrusive and compatible with the visual character of the area.

General Policy 2.2.2.5: Structures should be located to minimize tree removal, and grading for the building site and access road. Disturbed slopes should be restored to their previous visual quality. Landscape screening and restoration should consist of plant and tree species complementing the native growth of the area.

Sensitive Habitat

2.3.1 Key Policy- The environmentally sensitive habitats of North County are unique, limited, and fragile resources of statewide significance, important to the enrichment of present and future generations of county residents and visitors; accordingly, they shall be protected, maintained, and, where possible, enhanced and restored.

General Policy 2.3.2.4: To protect environmentally sensitive habitats and the high wildlife values associated with large areas of undisturbed habitat, the County shall maintain significant and, where possible, contiguous areas of undisturbed land for low intensity recreation, education, or resource conservation use. To this end, parcels of land totally within sensitive habitat areas shall not be further subdivided. On parcels adjacent to sensitive habitats, or containing sensitive habitats as part of their acreage, development shall be clustered to prevent habitat impacts.

General Policy 2.3.2.7: Where public access exists or is permitted in areas of environmentally sensitive habitats, it shall be limited to low intensity recreation, scientific or education uses such as nature study and observation, education programs in which collecting is restricted, photography, and hiking. Access in such locations shall be confined to appropriate areas on designated trails and paths. No access shall be approved which results in significant disruption of habitat.
General Policy 2.3.2.9: The County shall require the use of non-invasive plant species in proposed landscaping and should encourage the use of appropriate native species or species that are compatible with native plants.
General Policy 2.3.2.10: Construction activities, industrial, and public and commercial recreational uses which would affect rare and endangered birds shall be regulated to protect habitats of rare, endangered, and threatened birds during breeding and nesting seasons. Regulations may include restriction of access, noise abatement, and restriction of hours of operation of public or private facilities. Regulations shall not prohibit emergency operation of service and public utility equipment.

Chapter 4. Land Use and Development

N. Public/Quasi Public: The site is designated as Public/Quasi Public which in the land use plan is designated for: "A range of uses including administrative, management, and maintenance facilities for public agencies, community halls, churches, post office, libraries, and schools are allowed. Many of these uses are appropriate in areas designated for residential use."
Because the project site encompasses habitat for threatened and endangered species and is located adjacent to resource conservation land, the following land use descriptions and policies have also been included:

A. Resource Conservation

Protection of sensitive resources, plant communities, and animal habitats is emphasized. This land use is applied to wetlands, dunes, and riparian corridors under the Wetlands and Coastal Strand Category, and to sensitive forest and upland habitats -- under the Forest and Upland Habitat Category. Only very low intensity uses and supporting facilities compatible with protection of the resource are allowed.
Specific Policies: 4.3.6 A. Resource Conservation
Only the minimum level of facilities essential to the support of recreational, educational, scientific, or aquacultural use of Resource Conservation areas shall be permitted. Facilities shall be sited so as to avoid adverse impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats and wildlife.

B. Scenic and Natural Resource Recreation

Low intensity recreational and educational uses that are compatible with the natural resources of the area and require a minimum level of development accommodating basic user needs and necessitating minimal alteration of the natural environment are appropriate. Uses may include hiking, fishing, picnicking, nature study, backpacking, horse riding, and walk-in camping.

C. Recreation Management

Recreation Management:
1. Recreation in environmentally sensitive areas such as dunes, wetlands, riverbanks, and areas with rare, endangered, or threatened plant or animal communities shall be limited to passive, low-intensity use dependent on the resource and compatible with its long term protection

G. Other Uses

3. Public and quasi-public uses should be located in areas where they will be compatible with adjacent land uses and local traffic conditions.

Chapter 6. Public Access

Key Policy 6.2: Public access to the shoreline and along the coast shall be protected and provided, and opportunities for recreational hiking access shall be enhanced. The provision of all future access and improvements to existing access areas must be consistent with the overriding objective of protecting coastal agriculture, environmentally sensitive habitats and other sensitive coastal resource areas.

The Project is also supported by the Monterey County General Plan Open Space Element (2010):

Goal OS-1 Retain the character and natural beauty of Monterey County by preserving, conserving, and maintaining unique physical features, natural resources, and agricultural operations.
Vehicle and equipment use during the project would be necessary to complete the restoration of the site and installation of trails. Project contractors would adopt best management practices to limit impacts to the immediate project area. The project activity would be temporary in nature and would benefit the wetland and upland ecosystems

in the long term. No other project elements would be in conflict with the zoning, regulatory policies, land use plans, conservation plans or ordinances for this area. All appropriate consultation and permits would be acquired, in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Implementation of project requirements proposed in this document would reduce any potential adverse environmental impacts associated with project implementation to a less than significant level.

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does not conflict with any habitat conservation or natural communities plans. The project is in accordance with the goals expressed within the USFWS/CDFW MOU (currently being drafted) and the Moro Cojo Slough Management and Enhancement Plan (1996).

11. MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource, as no known mineral resources exist within the project boundary that are not currently protected by state and local policy. The project would have no impact

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site, as none exist within the project boundary. The project would have no impact.

12. NOISE. Would the project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The sensitive receptors located in the immediate vicinity of the restoration project area that could be substantially affected by the proposed construction-related activities are the North Monterey County High School adjacent to the site and the housing development a few hundred meters away from the site. Existing ambient noise at the site includes noise levels associated with schools and noise from vehicles along Castroville Blvd. Construction noise levels at and near the project area would fluctuate, depending on the type and number of construction equipment operating at any given time, and may exceed ambient noise standards in the immediate vicinity of the project work site during some stages of the project. Under certain conditions and during certain phases of the project equipment noise could potentially disturb school classrooms and private residences. Project equipment could include chainsaws and weed

trimmers, and grading equipment, but these stages of the project would be focused in small areas and short in duration. Depending on the specific construction activities being performed, short-term increases in ambient noise levels could result in speech interference at the work site, making it difficult for project workers to communicate verbally with each other. Taking all these factors into consideration, construction-generated noise would potentially have a short-term, less than significant, impact.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Construction activity would not involve the use of explosives or other intensive construction techniques that could generate significant ground vibration or noise. Minor vibration immediately adjacent to pile-driving equipment (if needed for trail fencing), would only be generated on a short-term basis. Therefore, ground-borne vibration or noise generated by the project would have a less than significant impact

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Project-related noise would only occur during actual construction. Once the project is completed, all noise-generating equipment would be removed from the site. Nothing within the scope of the proposed project would result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Therefore, the project would have no impact.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Temporary or periodic project noises would increase ambient noise levels but only for short periods of time. The project engineer estimates construction activities (grading, excavation, trail installation) would take no longer than 30 days to complete. Potential noise impacts would remain less than significant.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

13. POPULATION & HOUSING. Would project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not build any new homes or business, nor will it create new infrastructure. No impact.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not disturb existing housing. No impact.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not disturb existing housing. No impact.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would project result in need(s) for new/altered government facilities/services in:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: **i. Fire protection?** **ii. Police protection?** **iii. Schools?** **iv. Parks?** **v. Other public facilities?**	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not alter government facilities nor create a need for more governmental facilities nor public services such as fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities.

15. RECREATION. Would project:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

This project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood or parks. The project may lessen the impact on local parks by providing another open space with paths for people to use. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

One component of the project is to create trails which should have a positive physical effect on the environment as the paths will be created to keep visitors out of the sensitive habitat areas. Other than the trail system to direct human access within the site, no recreational facilities or facility expansion are proposed under this project.

The project is in accordance with the North Monterey County Land Use Plan that states: "Where public access exists or is permitted in areas of environmentally sensitive habitats, it shall be limited to low intensity recreation, scientific or education uses such as nature study and observation, education programs in which collecting is restricted, photography, and hiking. Access in such locations shall be confined to appropriate areas on designated trails and paths."

Further the project is supported by goals stated within the Monterey County General Plan's Open Space element (2010): Goal OS-1 retain the character and natural beauty of Monterey County by preserving, conserving, and maintaining unique physical features, natural resources, and agricultural operations, OS-1.10 recognizing the value of trails in Monterey County, policies to establish a trails program, including bike paths (class 1), and walking and equestrian facilities used by the general public.

The project would have a less than significant impact.

16. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION. Would the project result in:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Most of the vehicle traffic and construction activities associated with the project would occur within the boundaries of the project site. During construction activities, construction vehicles may need to access or leave the site via Castroville Blvd. The project engineer estimates approximately 70 vehicle trips to bring in gravel and equipment. Any traffic associated with the construction activities would be concentrated to off-peak hours (outside of school-drop off and pick-up hours). Any vehicles would stop and wait for traffic or pedestrians to pass before entering or exiting the site and would cause no increase in congestion. The project may require small grading and material transport equipment (excavator, bulldozer, skid-steer, and dump trucks) and up to 15 crew transport (passenger or light-duty trucks) vehicles to complete the work. Crew vehicles would likely make one to two trips daily to and from the project access points. Most vehicles would remain onsite or parked at the project staging areas when not in use. Some vegetation would be hauled offsite in light-duty trucks. These project activities would not constitute a substantial increase in traffic volume for Castroville Blvd, would not interfere with mass transit or non-motorized travel, or result in additional congestion. Therefore the project would have a less than significant impact.

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project does not conflict with a congestion management program. This project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project site is not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles (3.2 km) of a public airport, in the vicinity of a private air strip, and does not serve as a normal reporting point for air traffic in the area. Nothing in the proposed project would in any way affect or change existing air traffic patterns in the area. Therefore, no impact would occur as a result of this project.

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No portion of the project design or implementation would alter existing roads or traffic conditions, or add any element that would increase hazards to traffic or other forms of transportation. The project would have no impact.

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

This project will not affect emergency access routes. The project would have no impact.

f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Visitors wishing to access the open space area after restoration is complete will have parking available on the north side of the existing High School's parking lot, which is large enough to accommodate vehicles for the public wishing to access the site, without resulting in inadequate parking capacity for the high school. The public will be allowed to access this lot between the hours of 6am and 10pm when the gates to the lot are open. During construction and restoration related activities some vehicles may use this parking lot as well. The area is large enough to accommodate project-related vehicles without resulting in inadequate parking capacity for the high school. The project would have less than significant impact.

g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

This project will create new pedestrian paths throughout the restoration site to help increase access to open space areas for the public and students, while also protecting important habitat. This does not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs. The project is in accordance with the North Monterey County Land Use Plan (1982) that states:

"Where public access exists or is permitted in areas of environmentally sensitive habitats, it shall be limited to low intensity recreation, scientific or education uses such as nature study and observation, education programs in which collecting is restricted, photography, and hiking. Access in such locations shall be confined to appropriate areas on designated trails and paths."

17. UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would project result in needs for new or substantial alterations in:	**Potential Significant Effect**	**Less than Significant w/ Mitigation**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project is located within the area of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The proposed project is a restoration project and would not involve nor affect any wastewater facilities. No wastewater would be produced by this project. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project would not result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities. The project would have no impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities. The project would have no impact.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☒	☐

As indicated above, no new facilities would be constructed for the proposed project. Outplanting of native plants and seeds will be timed to take advantage of winter rains. If winter rains are inadequate to establish new plantings, it is possible that the project sites will require a temporary drip irrigation system. If an irrigation system is deemed necessary, it will be installed after completion of the initial removal of vegetation and prior to seeding and planting. A temporary irrigation system will prevent loss of the plantings during periods of dry conditions, and help establish the newly installed vegetation community. Established native vegetation communities do not require irrigation under normal conditions, so supplemental irrigation will be applied sparingly and used primarily to establish the native plant community. The temporary drip irrigation system would tie into the school's irrigation system at the track. The project would have a less than significant impact.

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project will not create additional wastewater. The project would have no impact.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Implementation of the project may generate solid waste associated with completing restoration project activities. The proposed project involves the removal of some vegetation including cattail and coyote bush. Vegetation waste would be disposed of at the Monterey Regional Waste Management District, where it would be processed into compost.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Implementation of the project may generate solid waste associated with completing restoration project activities. The only solid waste disposal would be from vegetation refuse generated which would be hauled to the Monterey Regional Waste Management District for processing into compost. The project would comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. The project would have no impact.

MANDATORY FINDINGS	Potential Significant Effect	Less than Significant w/ Mitigation	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 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: Per the instructions for evaluating environmental impacts in this Initial Study, 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 were considered in the response to each question in section V of this document. In addition to project specific impacts, this evaluation considered the project's potential for significant cumulative effects. Resources that have been evaluated as significant would be potentially impacted by the project, particularly biological resources. However, as noted in the response to Question 5 of this checklist, mitigation has been included that clearly reduces these effects to a level below significance. This mitigation includes avoidance of sensitive species' breeding seasons, biological surveys and monitoring. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that, after mitigation, significant effects associated with this project would result. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

No impact. This restoration project provides long term environmental benefits by enhancing the wildlife habitat in a disturbed area with limited habitat quality, and providing trails to direct human access on the site and reduce potential human impacts to the improved habitat. This makes the project sustainable over the long term and helps assure that habitat improvements are not temporary enhancements. Activities carried under this project are routinely considered forms of MITIGATION for other projects involving construction and/or land use change.

Per the instructions for evaluating environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential for adverse cumulative effects were considered in the response to each question in this checklist. In addition to project specific impacts, this evaluation considered the project's potential for incremental effects that are cumulatively considerable. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that there are cumulative effects associated with this project. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance

c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Less than Significant Impact: In the evaluation of environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential for adverse direct or indirect impacts to human beings were considered in the response to certain questions in sections: (1) Aesthetics; (2) Agriculture; (3) Air Quality; (6) Geology & Soils; (8) Hazards; (9) Hydrology & Water Quality; (10) Land Use & Planning; (12) Noise; (13) Population & Housing; (14) Public Services; (15) Recreation; (16) Transportation; (17) Utilities & Service Systems. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that there are adverse effects on human beings associated with this project. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

VI. SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

Biological Resources Mitigation Measures:
All practicable measures will be taken to avoid killing or injuring any life stage of the covered species during habitat enhancement activities. Ground disturbance will be restricted during the breeding season and possibly until first rains of season as newly metamorphosed juveniles typically stay close by breeding ponds in surrounding upland habitat until first rain events. For upland grading, work should occur in the dry season when adults are not moving. Grading within the pond(s) should occur in the Fall, before winter rains start and after most larvae have transformed. Or, surveys for larvae could be conducted and if none are present then work could proceed earlier in the summer. In order to further reduce adverse effects on the species, all work will occur in compliance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2015. Memorandum: Intra-Service Biological Opinion on the Issuance of a lO(a)(l)(A) Permit to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County for the Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Recovery Initiative in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, California

1. Prior to the start of work, an educational program regarding the sensitivity of the covered species, and their habitat will be conducted for all personnel. The educational program will include visual materials on species identification, procedures to follow when encountering any covered species in the work area, penalties for take, and all work restrictions within the project area.

2. A chain of command for field crews and other on-site personnel will be established prior to commencement of all activities. This program will establish the biological monitors as the persons in charge of, and responsible for, all facets of project implementation. The Field Supervisor specific chain-of-command will be defined at the pre-activity meeting to be held immediately prior to the initiation of work.
3. Biological monitors will have the responsibility and authority of stopping work activities, if any crews or personnel are not complying with the provisions outlined in this document and/or conditions in any other authorization from the Service and/or CDFW.
4. Prior to the start of work, areas will be identified by the biological monitor-in-charge and approved by the Service as acceptable locations to which covered species may be relocated if these species are encountered within a work area. Relocation areas will be a minimum of 500 yards from the boundary of any work area and will not include staging areas or roads. Covered species will not be removed from the work area or maintained in captivity overnight without prior notification and written approval by the Service and CDFW, unless the animal is in need of emergency medical assistance. Medical assistance will be provided to injured animals by a certified wildlife veterinarian familiar with amphibian care.
5. Only biological monitors specifically authorized by the Service and CDFW to handle covered species will be allowed to handle, transport, and relocate individuals of these species. When transporting individuals, precautions will be taken to ensure that the animals are not over-stressed and are maintained in safety. Such measures include: keeping animals in a cool, dark, and safe location, providing adequate hydration, maintaining a stable cool temperature to avoid over-heating, and ensuring holding tanks are kept clean to prevent the spread of disease.
6. Biological monitors will check for any covered species under vehicles and equipment that are parked for more than 30 minutes.
7. To maintain safety and limit the chance of take or habitat disturbance, communication systems consisting of a simple system of hand signals or handheld radios will be utilized to ensure proper communication between the monitors, truck drivers, equipment operators, and field personnel to use during habitat enhancement and related activities.
8. Both the Service and CDFW will be notified immediately if any of the covered species are injured or killed during the course of any project related activity. All other incidental observations will be reported in the daily field monitoring forms or notes.
9. Refueling of equipment will be conducted using heavy-gauge tarps made of chemically resistant polypropylene or other impervious material with vertical sides for spill containment. These containment tarps will be set up under the equipment prior to servicing or refueling. Once the work is completed, the tarp and its contents must be immediately removed from the property and all contaminants properly disposed of off-site. Standard operating procedures will be implemented immediately in case of fuel spillage.
10. Prior to conducting non-native plant removal or treatments (e.g., spraying with herbicide, cutting, pulling, digging out), the permittee will make every reasonable attempt to ensure that covered species are not hidden within the plant or the residual plant mailer to be treated.
11. Pond or upland enhancement activities will be described in the annual work plan and will specify the areas where work will be performed, the dates during which the work will be performed, and a description of the work to be performed.
12. Pond and upland enhancement activities could include: vegetation removal, basin deepening or recontouring, sediment removal, berm repair and strengthening, and planting vegetation, all of which may be performed manually or using heavy machinery. Draining of ponds to perform the authorized work should only occur during part of the year when the larval life stage has been

completed and before the subsequent breeding season. This timeframe corresponds to a work period typically between August 1 and November 1. Within 2 days of the start of work on a pond, that pond will be sampled by a qualified biologist to ensure that all covered species from that pond are in the post metamorphic stage and will be minimally affected by draining of the pond.

13. For all habitat management activities a monitor will be present before and during the activity and will conduct surveys and species monitoring as needed. Surveys and monitors may not be required for small scale maintenance activities using hand tools; the need for surveys and monitoring will be coordinate with the Service and CDFW prior to the start of project activities.
14. Activities including the use of mechanical equipment, excavating, and bulldozing will require pre-activity visual surveys as well as monitoring during the activities. Survey and monitoring during ground disturbing activities will only be conducted by Federal and State permitted biologists in accordance with their permits. Pre-activity surveys will take place the day prior to the proposed recovery action. Visual surveys will determine routes to be marked for off pavement vehicle travel, areas of ground disturbance where exclusion fencing will be required, and how many biological monitors will be required during the actions, based on the size of the affected area and potential density of covered species.
15. Exclusion fencing may be required based on specific project requirements and determined in coordination with the Service and CDFW. If required, exclusion fencing will be placed, at a minimum, around the immediate work area where machinery will be operating. During activities involving mechanized equipment, biological monitors will maintain exclusion fencing and evaluate work performed during enhancement activities. Monitors are required to temporarily stop any work that they believe may harm individuals of the covered species. Work will not resume until a satisfactory method is agreed upon to minimize take of the covered

VII. INCLUDED ACRONYMS

ACOE: Army Corps of Engineers

CCWG: Central Coast Wetlands Group

CDFW: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

CTS: California Tiger Salamander

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency

MBUAPCD: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

RCD: Resource Conservation District

RCDMC: RCD of Monterey County

RWQCB: Regional Water Quality Control Board

SCLTS: Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander

USGS: US Geological Survey

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