U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
INTERIOR REGION 10 – CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM
1313 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093

U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
INTERIOR REGION 10 – CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN
REDDING FIELD OFFICE6640 LOCKHEED DRIVE
REDDING, CALIFORNIA 96002

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Redding Field Office, agencies within the U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) have found that the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project would have no significant impact on the human environment.

The finding is supported by the analysis disclosed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the same title, which was completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. Reclamation and BLM verify that they have complied with the requirements of NEPA, including the Department's regulations and procedures implementing NEPA at 43 C.F.R. Part 46 and Part 516 of the Departmental Manual. Reclamation has also voluntarily considered the Council on Environmental Quality's rescinded regulations implementing NEPA, previously found at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500 – 1508, as guidance to the extent appropriate and consistent with the requirements of NEPA.

Recommended by:

JAMES LEE Digitally signed by JAMES LEE Date: 2025.05.12 08:42:16 -07'00'

James Lee
Implementation Bureau Chief
Trinity River Restoration Program (Lead Agency)

Date

Approved by:

MICHAEL DIXON Digitally signed by MICHAEL DIXON Date: 2025.05.12 08:51:59 -07'00'

Mike Dixon
Executive Director
Trinity River Restoration Program

Date
CGB -EA-2025-034

Approved by:

LAURA BRODHEAD Digitally signed by LAURA BRODHEAD Date: 2025.08.08 15:52:16 -07'00'

Laura Brodhead
Acting Field Manager, Redding Field Office Bureau of Land Management (Cooperating Agency)

8/8/25

Date
DOI-BLM-CA-N060-2025-0010-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project
LEAD AGENCY

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Trinity River Restoration Program
1313 South Main Street
P.O. Box 1300
Weaverville, CA 96093
Phone: 530-623-1800
Fax: 530-623-5944
Email: mdixon@usbr.gov

COOPERATING AGENCY

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Redding Field Office
6640 Lockheed Drive
Redding, CA 96002
Phone: 530-224-2100
Fax: 530-224-2172
Email: jmata@blm.gov

Background and Need

The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP, Lead Agency) and the Bureau of Land Management Redding Field Office (BLM, Cooperating Agency), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have collaboratively prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project (referred to herein as the Project).

The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) was established to restore the fisheries of the Trinity River affected by dam construction and related diversions of the Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project. Administered by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), TRRP is a partnership of federal and state resource agencies, Tribes, and Trinity County. TRRP works to restore the processes and attributes of a properly functioning river and watershed to support the recovery of diminished salmon and steelhead populations while retaining the Trinity and Lewiston dams' delivery of water and power to the Trinity River and California's Central Valley.

The purpose of the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project (the Project), of which TRRP is the lead federal agency and USFS and BLM are cooperating agencies, is to improve instream and riparian habitat at a watershed-scale and to accelerate the recovery of north coast salmon populations (coho salmon, steelhead, and Chinook salmon), thereby fulfilling tribal trust responsibilities and obligations to local communities as well as recreational and commercial fishing industries, per the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and the Redding Field Office Northwestern California Integrated Resource Management Plan (NCIP), and state and federal recovery plan goals.

The TRRP is tasked with increasing habitat and river function for all life stages of naturally produced anadromous fish native to the Trinity River in the magnitude necessary to reach congressionally mandated population levels. The TRRP's strategy is to increase habitat diversity, quality, and quantity for juvenile

native fish rearing while also ensuring that habitat complexity and quantity increase as the alluvial processes of the Trinity River are enhanced or restored. The magnitude of the disturbance to the Trinity River from historical gold mining cannot be overstated. Hydraulic mining on the hillslopes resulted in large amounts of mining debris that buried the historical valley bottom. Subsequent dredging coupled with fluvial incision from historic water management at the Lewiston and Trinity dams has left a narrow, canal-like channel with a restricted floodplain area.

As previously mentioned, TRRP was established to restore the fisheries of the Trinity River, which had precipitously declined. To that end, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to improve instream and riparian habitat to accelerate the recovery of north coast salmonid populations (coho salmon, steelhead, and Chinook salmon) and other special status aquatic species, thereby fulfilling tribal trust responsibilities and obligations to local communities as well as recreational and commercial fishing industries (per the STNF LRMP, BLM's NCIP, and state and federal recovery plan goals).

Table 1. Broad scope goals and objectives of the Proposed Action

Objectives of Proposed Action
Restore
Restore and improve instream conditions sufficient to support all life stages of salmonids and other aquatic species
Restore upstream and downstream fish passage for all life stages of salmonids
Restore continuous paths for wood dispersal, nutrient cycling, sediment transport, and movement of other vegetative material essential for productive aquatic habitat
Restore and improve riparian and meadow habitat to promote healthy conditions for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife populations
Maintain
Maintain or restore native plant communities and vegetative structure impacted by invasive plants and pathogens, while rehabilitating eroding streambanks to improve water quality, shade conditions, and large wood recruitment
Repair
Repair, replace, or remove ineffective instream structures
Improve
Improve late summer/fall base flow conditions through process-based restoration, water conservation improvements, and meadow restoration
Increase
Increase nutrient inputs through salmon carcass placement in the watershed
Stabilize
Stabilize upslope areas around road infrastructure to minimize erosion and sediment discharges within the watershed to bring the sediment impaired watersheds into compliance with sediment reduction total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the South Fork Trinity and Trinity Mainstem rivers.

The Proposed Action would continue TRRP's restoration efforts through implementors and would streamline future site-specific environmental reviews, which would likely increase the number of restoration activities implemented on an annual basis. In addition, the Proposed Action has broadened the types of restoration activities proposed and these would be implemented at the watershed-scale.

Public Involvement and Consideration of Public Comments

On November 4, 2022, Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP or Program), Shasta-Trinity National Forest (Forest), and Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Redding Field Office released a public scoping announcement to request input from the public on the

proposed Watershed Restoration Project. The public scoping period was open from November 4 to December 5, 2022, and the public was invited to provide comments by mail or email to TRRP staff.

At the onset of the public scoping period, notices informing the public of the intent to begin the environmental review process were posted on the TRRP, Reclamation, Forest, and BLM websites and at the TRRP Weaverville office, BLM Redding Field Office, and Forest Field Office. Scoping notices were also mailed and emailed to local landowners and interest groups and published in the Trinity Journal on November 16, 2022. The TRRP, Forest, and BLM provided the scoping flyer on its websites to outline the proposed watershed restoration project and to receive public input. The Scoping flyer is provided below.

The TRRP, BLM, and Forest hosted a virtual and in-person scoping meeting on November 17, 2022, to outline the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project (Project), receive public input, and to answer questions. During the meeting, the public asked questions and provided input. Presentation slides and a recording of the November 17, 2022 scoping meeting are available on TRRP's website. The scoping notice and agenda were provided to the public either on the agencies' websites or at the November 17, 2022, public meeting.

In May 2023, the TRRP engaged restoration practitioner stakeholders to provide initial feedback on the Project scope, activities and process. The meeting was followed up with a survey to give the opportunity for these stakeholders to provide specific recommendations and concerns.

An in-person open house for the public to be informed and provide comment on the Public Draft EA took place on March 1, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time at the Weaverville Hotel in Weaverville, California. Information about the Draft EA and the public meeting is available on the TRRP's website (see https://www.trrp.net/restoration/watershed-activities/watershed-ea/) Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project page.

Consistent with Reclamation and BLM agency guidance, public review of the Draft EA began when the agencies posted the document to their websites on March 28, 2025. The USFS public review period began when notice was published in Redding Record Searchlight, which is the paper of record, on April 1, 2025. The document was circulated to local, state, and federal agencies and to interested organizations and individuals for a 30-day comment period. Public review of the Draft EA ended on May 1, 2025.

The summary of public scoping and participation is included in Appendix G of the EA.

Proposed Action (Alternative 1)

The Project EA considered two alternatives: the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action. After considering the environmental commitments and project design features listed in Appendix B of the EA impacts from the Proposed Action would be less than significant pursuant to NEPA. Details concerning these alternatives and other alternatives considered but not carried forward for evaluation are included in Section 4 of the Project EA.

The watershed restoration activities are described in detail in Section 6.8 and in supplemental appendices for specific resources of the EA. The Proposed Action entails activities that are intended to improve fish habitat, including instream habitat restoration; upslope habitat restoration; road maintenance, rehabilitation, and decommissioning activities. A detailed list of project activities is included in Appendix H of the EA and clearly summarize the activity categories.

Specific project activities include:

- Restoration and Enhancement of In-Channel Habitat
- Floodplain Restoration

- Removal or Retrofitting of Fish Passage Barriers, Small Dams, Flood Gates, Pilings an Other In-water Structures
- Water Conservation Projects
- Salmon Carcass Placement
- Remote Site Incubators
- Bioengineered Bank Stabilization
- Aquatic, Wetland, Riparian, and Upslope Habitat Enhancement
- Road Maintenance
- Road Rehabilitation
- Road Decommissioning

Project activities are described in the EA in as much detail as possible, namely: the conditions that restoration activities would seek to enhance; the environmental commitments that are important for avoiding adverse effects; and the overall effect of those projects on the human environment.

FINDINGS

Affected Environment

The proposed Project would take place along the mainstem and tributaries of the Trinity River, which are located both below and above the Lewiston and Trinity dams. The Project activity area includes the Trinity Alps Wilderness. The proposed restoration activities are analyzed at the hydrologic unit code 10 (HUC 10) subwatershed scale. See Table **2** below for HUC 10 watersheds included in the Project activity area.

Key Watersheds, As described by the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS; USFS 1995), within the Project activity area are the North Fork Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, Canyon Creek, and New River. These Key Watersheds are prioritized for restoration activity implementation to provide aquatic and riparian habitat essential to the maintenance, recovery, or enhancement of anadromous fish populations. The Project's compliance with the ACS is described in more detail in Appendix C of the EA. It should be noted that though restoration activities are prioritized for Key Watersheds, restoration activities are proposed for all the HUC 10 watersheds within the Project activity area.

Table 2. Watersheds within the Trinity River subbasin

Subregion (HUC 4)	Basin (HUC 6)	Subbasin (HUC 8)	Watershed (HUC 10)	HUC 10 Number	Acres in Project Activity Area
Klamath-Northern California Coastal 1801	Northern California Coastal 180102	Trinity California 18010211	Big French Creek-Trinity River[1]	1801021111	153,325
			Browns Creek	1801021106	47,110
			Canyon Creek	1801021108	41,033
			Coffee Creek	1801021101	74,835
			East Fork Trinity River	1801021103	74,335
			Horse Linto Creek-Trinity River	1801021112	0
			New River	1801021110	149,597
			North Fork Trinity River	1801021109	97,483
			Stuart Fork	1801021104	88,264
			Swift Creek-Trinity River	1801021105	121,055
			Tangle Blue Creek-Trinity River	1801021102	101,393
			Weaver Creek	1801021107	142,030
		South Fork Trinity 18010212	Lower South Fork Trinity River[3]	1801021205	44,229
			Lower Hayfork Creek	1801021203	142,161
			Upper Hayfork Creek	1801021202	105,697
			Middle South Fork Trinity River	1801021204	145,776
			Upper South Fork Trinity River	1801021201	73,634

Degree of the Effects

Both the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives were evaluated in the EA with respect to their impacts in the following issue areas: water quality and hydrology, geology and soils, vegetation and wetlands, fisheries, wildlife, climate, recreation, noise, cultural resources, and wild and scenic rivers. Based on the following summary of the implementation effects of the Proposed Action (as discussed fully in the EA), there would be no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared.

The Proposed Action includes the application of environmental commitments including a combination of general protection measures (GPMs), design guidelines, and conservation measures (CMs) to site-specific project designs. These environmental commitments were developed based on existing programmatic Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultations, programmatic California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) coverage, and other guidance documents and regulatory requirements as discussed further in Appendix B of the EA. Each site-specific restoration project would be evaluated by an interdisciplinary team led by the federal agencies, to ensure all environmental commitments necessary to avoid significant impacts would be fully incorporated into the site-specific project designs. Site-specific project planning

process, cultural review compliant with applicable laws (e.g., Section 106, Executive Order 13007, etc.) would be required. The implementation plan in Appendix A of the EA describes the process that site-specific projects would go through to ensure that each project fits into the Proposed Action, incorporates applicable environmental commitments into restoration designs, and enables the lead federal agency to make a streamlined NEPA decision.

Environmental commitments were primarily developed based on measures required by the following ESA consultations:

- NMFS 2020 Biological Opinion (2020 BiOp) for the Trinity River Restoration Program's Mechanical Channel Rehabilitation, Sediment Management, Watershed Restoration, and Monitoring Actions in Trinity County, California (2020 TRRP BiOp, WCRO-2019-03827)

- USFWS 2025 Programmatic BiOp (USFWS BiOp) for the California Statewide Programmatic Restoration Effort (2025 USFWS Statewide Restoration BiOp, FWS Reference: 2022-0005149-S7).

The 2020 TRRP BiOp limits instream watershed restoration projects covered by the BiOp annually to:

- 2 fish passage/dam removal projects;
- 8 channel/floodplain rehabilitation projects (4 mainstem and 4 tributary);
- 2 in-stream habitat enhancement projects;
- 3 streambank stabilization projects; and
- 4 road-related projects with in-water activities (i.e. road decommissioning with culvert removal).

TRRP is in the process of reinitiating consultation with NMFS to include all project activity categories described in the Proposed Action that were not previously analyzed in the 2020 BiOp. Project limitations will also be reviewed during the reinitiated consultation and are anticipated to change. However, the latest applicable BiOp should be referenced, to determine current Project limits during site-specific project implementation.

Project limits would provide spatial and temporal flexibility during site-specific restoration project development and watershed planning efforts. Implementors within the watershed would continue to collaborate with the assistance of TRRP, USFS, and BLM to ensure significant regional effects would not occur.

Short- and Long-term Effects

As analyzed in the EA, this project may have short-term and long-term impacts to aesthetics/visual resources, air quality including greenhouse gases, geomorphology and soils, hydrology, land use, noise, recreation, water quality, traffic/circulation, vegetation, and fish and wildlife; however, these impacts are not significant.

Direct impacts to these resources from the Proposed Action would be minor, localized, and short in duration. In the long-term, the proposed action has the potential to result in an overall benefit to natural and recreational resources by improving the fisheries and contributing to the restoration of the ecological function of the Trinity River and its tributaries, thus any disturbance that may occur in the short term, will be offset by the long-term benefits. Further, project design features described in the EA would be implemented to provide improved wildlife habitat, protect water quality, minimize noise and visual resource impacts during construction, prevent hazardous spills from construction equipment operations,

and protect restore and improve riparian and wetland habitat to reduce the chance of short-term impacts on soils, wildlife, fish, and water quality.

Beneficial and Adverse Effects

This project may have minor impacts to soils, water quality, and wildlife and fish resulting from the proposed Project activities; however, these impacts are not significant. Beneficial and adverse effects include short- and long-term effects, which are summarized above for the general project. Implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to contribute to the Trinity River ecosystem's long-term environmental quality and sustainability with no significant adverse impacts on the environment.

Water Quality and Hydrology

Project restoration activities that are part of the Proposed Action would have short-term adverse effects on water quality to varying degrees. However, many of the proposed activities are designed and would be implemented to restore more natural watershed processes and in the long-term, the implementation of restoration activities through the Trinity River basin would be expected to improve water quality conditions overall.

The Proposed Action would generally not affect the volume of water flowing through that stream reach; however, the “Water Conservation Project” activity category is intended to increase instream flow in the long-term, thereby improving aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife. Wherever there are stream diversions along tributary streams that continue to withdraw water when streamflows are at low-flow conditions, water conservation systems are warranted and would be proposed under this restoration activity category. Many of these water conservation projects, particularly in small tributaries higher in the subwatersheds, could increase instream flows considerably, depending on the size of stream from which water had originally been diverted. These efforts would have minor beneficial effects to hydrology throughout the Trinity River basin. Effects to hydrology in the Trinity River mainstem would likely be negligible since flow is managed with the Trinity and Lewiston dams.

Geology and Soils

Though many of the activities proposed as part of the Proposed Action are ground-disturbing in the short-term, in the long-term, many of the activities benefit geology and soils. The “Aquatic, Wetland, Riparian, and Upslope Enhancement” activity category is intended in part to reduce soil erosion and improve soil health by stabilizing banks and soils, improving the vegetative community, and increasing the amount of organic matter. The “Road Decommissioning, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation” activity category is intended to reduce sediment into the mainstem and tributaries of the Trinity River by stabilizing soils along upslope road systems currently in use or recently decommissioned. This activity category would minimize rutting, slope failures, side-casting, and blockage of drainage facilities which can all lead to erosion and subsequent downslope sedimentation.

In conclusion, the Proposed Action would have minor short-term adverse effects to soils based on the potential for ground-disturbing actions. These effects would be avoided and minimized through the BMPs described above implemented during site-specific restoration projects. In the long-term, the Proposed Action is anticipated to have minor beneficial effects to soils throughout the Trinity River Basin as a result of activities related to revegetation, bank stabilization, and road-related projects.

Vegetation, and Wetlands

Most activities within the Project activity area, including instream and side channel restoration, floodplain restoration, water conservation projects, instream structure removal, bank stabilization, habitat enhancement and road decommissioning at stream crossing would be along streams and within floodplains, which would have the greatest effect on emergent herbaceous wetland and woody wetlands

land cover types, which only consist of 0.38 percent of the land cover in the HUC 10 watersheds within the Project activity areas.

A suite of enhancement and invasive species management projects would occur on roads or other disturbed areas. While these effects on vegetation communities along roads and in other upland areas affected by non-native invasive species (NNIS) control would be temporary, effects could last for several months to up to two years before vegetation is re-established. Reducing NNIS would result in a minor beneficial effect on the vegetation communities; however, this beneficial effect may be offset by increases in ground disturbance without herbicide application, which could increase the presence of certain NNIS species. An overall reduction in ecologically important land cover types, such as herbaceous and woody wetlands is unlikely to occur since the Proposed Action would restore habitat throughout the floodplain and in upland areas where revegetation would be implemented. Some roads would be decommissioned and restored with native vegetation, resulting in a gain in native habitat and higher quality vegetation communities.

A suite of restoration and enhancement activities and invasive species management projects would occur within riparian areas and floodplains, which are typically within the riparian reserves. In-channel projects and floodplain enhancement that require heavy equipment would require removal of vegetation for access roads, staging areas, grading of floodplain areas, and re-contouring of streambanks. Effects on NWI-mapped wetlands (PEM, PSS, and PFO) and riparian vegetation within riparian reserves would occur from habitat restoration and enhancement, floodplain restoration, removal or retrofitting of fish passage barriers, small dams, flood gates, pilings, and other in-water structures, bioengineered bank stabilization, and road rehabilitation that entail access roads and staging areas and vegetation removal. While these effects would be temporary, they could last for several months to up to two years before vegetation is re-established. The overall effect of project activities would be a long-term benefit on wetlands. The Proposed Action is expected to have short-term adverse effects but would provide a net long-term benefit on wetland and riparian habitat along the mainstem and many Trinity River tributaries, which would be a moderate beneficial effect.

Water conservation measures that would benefit wetland and riparian vegetation by maintaining or increasing instream flow and groundwater levels would also provide benefits to special status plant species that occur in riparian habitat. Proposed activities, such as restoration and enhancement of off-channel and side channel habitat, floodplain restoration, and wetland and riparian habitat enhancement could affect species within riparian reserves. For species that have been documented within riparian reserves and/or adjacent to roads, project activities may affect individuals but are not likely to result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of viability. A full list of GMPs, CMs, and design guidelines is in Appendix B of the EA. These GMPs, CMs, and design guidelines would ensure that effects would not lead to a special status plant species population decline or result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of viability. The proposed activities would result in short-term minor effects on species within riparian reserves and/or adjacent to roads but would be a long-term benefit as new habitat is created and disturbed areas are restored.

Herbicides would not be used to control NNIS in the Project activity area. Some species, including Himalayan blackberry, scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima),* and yellow star thistle, are difficult to impossible to control without herbicides. For example, tree of heaven has been observed to come back aggressively within five years with more stems and vegetative volume when it is chopped or mowed. Management of these species would likely be labor and time intensive through manual or mechanical removal and continued monitoring and management. Without the use of herbicides, these species may spread into more areas than they currently occupy. For other species, BMPs and CMs would avoid and minimize the spread of NNIS from the implementation of project activities. The net effect of controlling existing NNIS, using BMPs, CMs and design guidelines to prevent new infestations

and replanting native species, would be an overall benefit on native vegetation communities, but the benefits may be diminished by the increase in Himalayan blackberry, tree of heaven, scotch broom, and yellow star thistle, which would be a minor adverse effect.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Action would result in a temporary loss of riparian vegetation and waters of the United States. However, in the long term, floodplain function and riverine processes would be restored by revegetation of alluvial features, particularly floodplains. Upland features (i.e., terraces) would also be restored, primarily by converting old dredge tailing deposits into productive wildlife habitat. Overall, the Proposed Action would increase structural and species diversity and would speed reestablishment of native riparian and upland vegetation. Long-term changes in river inundation periods are expected to increase seasonal and perennial riparian habitats and offset impacts to wetlands and other waters. The project is designed to enhance the functions and services of the aquatic system, including wetlands and other waters.

The Proposed Action, including the environmental commitments and project design features listed in Appendix B of the EA, would ensure that the Proposed Action would not significantly impact vegetation and wetlands.

Fisheries and Freshwater Mussels

Temporary impacts on individual fish and their habitat would be minimized through the implementation of environmental commitments and project design features (Appendix B of the EA). Temporary negative effects to fisheries could occur from proposed activities that include dewatering and fish relocation, desiccation or mechanical crushing during in-channel heavy equipment use, increased suspended sediment concentrations, bank stabilization activities, electrofishing, construction impacts to riparian vegetation, incidental chemical contaminations, pile driving, and blasting. However, environmental commitments and the project goal in the long term are to reduce risk and harm to fisheries while improving physical habitat.

Collective improvements would also enhance or restore the following aquatic habitat functions: stream structure/complexity, stream sinuosity and length, bank stability, floodplain connectivity, and riparian vegetation structure and diversity. These improvements would promote conditions that maintain or decrease stream temperature, reduce turbidity and sediment discharges (via stable streambanks, improved sediment retention through increased channel structure, riparian areas, and floodplains), and improve nutrient input (via improved riparian conditions) and retention (via increased channel structure, sinuosity, and floodplain areas). Removing or repairing in-water structures would restore fish passage for spawning, migrating, and rearing fish, and would increase aquatic habitat area. Restoration of riparian vegetative communities would improve shade along streambanks in the long-term, which would help maintain water temperatures. Large wood and boulder placement would also enhance habitat elements for migrating and rearing fish.

Restoring side channels would increase adult and juvenile rearing habitat where low flows and cooler water temperatures would provide refugia from mainstem temperatures. Streambank restoration projects would decrease direct sediment inputs into the stream channel, thereby enhancing conditions for rearing juvenile fish.

Mussels are present year-round, and in-channel work windows for salmonids do not protect freshwater mussels. Any freshwater mussel beds would be identified during the planning process for each site-specific restoration action that is part of the Project. To the extent practicable, construction effects would be minimized through implementation of erosion and sediment control BMPs and/or avoidance of physical disturbance to any freshwater mussel beds using a buffer from any construction activities or any scour as a result of construction activities. If avoidance is not possible, freshwater mussel salvage and

relocation BMPs would be considered during Project actions. Incorporating these environmental commitments into site-specific designs would entail minor effects to freshwater mussels within the Trinity River watershed. Benefits to freshwater mussels would entail an increase in aquatic habitat complexity that could provide more locations within floodplains where mussel beds could be established in the long term.

The Proposed Action, including the environmental commitments and project design features listed in Appendix B of the EA, would ensure that the Proposed Action would not significantly impact fisheries and freshwater mussels and would comply with the ESA Section 7 and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Wildlife

The Proposed Action was planned to benefit riparian and upland habitat and has the potential to affect wildlife, including special-status wildlife species (designated BLM sensitive species and/or federally and state ESA-listed threatened and endangered species). Therefore, specific environmental commitments and project design features are included in the Proposed Action to ensure that activities occur in a manner that addresses potential impacts to special-status species.

Short-term effects to wildlife species could potentially occur during project implementation, however, environmental commitments described in Appendix B of the EA would minimize these effects. Project implementation is more likely to affect species with relatively small home ranges that are reliant and well adapted to freshwater habitats of the Trinity River and its tributaries. Effects to wildlife as a result of Project activities could include loss of nesting habitat, potential take of ESA-listed species, direct harm (injury or death) of individuals, interference with habitat use, interruption to foraging activities, noise disturbance, and reduced air and water quality.

Impacts to wildlife as a result of airborne noise could result from activities such as use of heavy construction equipment, pile driving during bridge replacement, large wood placement via helicopters, bedrock fracturing, and instream structure removal. Airborne noise effects would likely affect nesting birds if migratory birds were using habitat in or in the vicinity of the site-specific project areas for nesting and rearing during implementation. Noise effects could have adverse effects to wildlife; however, these effects would be temporary and localized and minimized.

Native and nonnative vegetation removal would occur during site-specific project implementation, inducing temporary habitat alteration associated with construction activities. Heavy equipment would also produce exhaust and dust, affecting air quality and potentially affecting wildlife during implementation. Sedimentation from earth-moving activities and project activities within streams and floodplains could increase turbidity within project waterways temporarily and potentially long-term, which could affect aquatic wildlife species.

Beneficial effects include habitat enhancement and revegetation with native species in aquatic areas, meadows, wetlands, riparian areas, and upslope habitats within the watershed where the vegetative community has been disturbed by past land practices, wildfire, introduction of nonnative species, or construction activities and where habitat functions are impaired. Restorations of the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands could provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability that could benefit wildlife. Controlled dam releases or instream flow levels to provide water during plant establishment would ensure revegetation success. Site-specific design, timing, and duration would ensure reduced effects to wildlife and their habitat.

Wildlife species, as a result of proposed activities, could benefit with increased foraging opportunities (with expected increases to fish populations), improved vegetative community with a higher percentage of

native species, and improvements to upslope habitats (wetlands, meadows, floodplain areas, etc.) that may be more resilient and provide refugia during periods of temperature extremes and wildfire.

The Proposed Action, including the environmental commitments and project design features listed in Appendix B of the EA, would ensure that the Proposed Action would not significantly impact wildlife or their habitat and would comply with the ESA Section 7 and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Temperture and Precipitation Changes

The proposed action would have a potential beneficial effect on stream and river temperatures that are being adversely impacted by an increase in average temperatures and prevalence of drought. Restoration of rivers and streams creates complex stream morphology and can lead to increased habitat availability for cold water fish species and amphibians. Lowering floodplains, restoring and creating wetlands and riparian areas, and restoring stream geomorphic processes can help to improve temperature and drought conditions by creating conditions that allow for water to be retained in the watershed for longer periods of time, sequestering atmospheric carbon in both soils and vegetation, providing refugia for wildlife species during temperature extremes and wildfire, and providing habitat for rearing and spawning cold water fish species.

Project activities would promote resilience within these aquatic ecosystems and help to promote microclimate habitats that support and sustain aquatic species and cold water fish populations. In addition to in-channel and upslope restoration, proposed water conservation activities would augment streamflow during high water temperatures and/or low streamflow can enhance likelihood of survival for a few aquatic T&E individuals of which there are already low in numbers. With the Proposed Action, sixteen HUC 10 watersheds would be targeted for restoration activities focused on riparian reserves. The proposed action would include restorative treatments that would improve health of the riparian and aquatic habitats and the connectivity to neighboring habitats for refuge from inhospitable changes from rising temperatures and drought.

Long-term beneficial effects are expected as a result of restoration within the riparian reserves that enhance floodplains and develop or restore access to diverse aquatic habitats would provide some of the most desirable long-term effects that enhance riparian and aquatic habitat and floodplain connectivity.

Recreation

The proposed Project activities would require construction in active river and stream channels, floodplains, and adjacent upland areas. Construction activities could result in temporary disruption at river access points and fishing spots; however, disruptions would be temporary and river access and recreational opportunities would continue to be available at other locations. Very rarely would proposed Project activities interrupt access to upland trails or trailheads. Because disruptions to recreational activities would be temporary, these effects would be minor.

Flows that typically contribute to good fishing tend to have high water clarity (little to no turbidity). Temporary increases in turbidity as a result of the Proposed Action may affect the recreational experience of anglers and the aesthetic values held by other recreationists downstream from site-specific project areas. The amount that turbidity is increase would be a function of the flow regime at the time, the level of instream disturbance at the site-specific project area, and particle size of the substrate/soil disturbed. Appendix B of the EA includes several CMs designed to ensure that turbidity is monitored and minimized to the extent possible. With the implementation of these CMs as well as the localized and temporary nature of these turbidity increases, this effect is expected to be minor.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Action could pose a temporary physical hazard to recreational users of the river (e.g., boaters) and cause short-term resource damage to lands used for recreational activities in and adjacent to the site-specific project areas. Potential physical hazards to

recreationists include the presence of temporary river crossings, operation of construction equipment and vehicles in and around the restoration sites, changes to sediment deposition patterns, the addition of instream large wood, and an increased potential for chemical contamination (e.g., diesel and hydraulic fluid) from construction equipment and vehicles operating in and adjacent to the river.

Short-term disruptions to recreation resources, turbidity effects that could diminish recreation values, or physical hazards to recreational users within the Project activity area, including, but not limited to, the Trinity Alps Wilderness, private or public recreation facilities in proximity to Lewiston or Trinity lakes, water access points, or other recreation sites are anticipated to be minor as a result of the Proposed Action. Effects to upland trails or limited access to upland trailheads have a low likelihood to occur. Furthermore, adverse effects would be minimized through incorporating recreation resource CMs described in Appendix B of the EA.

In addition, the Proposed Action would have long-term beneficial outcomes for recreation resources across the watershed, through increased recreational fishing opportunities as a result of fisheries habitat recovery; improved long-term water quality conditions; and re-establishment of native vegetation communities.

The Proposed Action, including the environmental commitments and CMs listed in Appendix B of the EA, would ensure that the Proposed Action would not significantly impact recreation opportunities.

Noise

Noise from site-specific project-related construction activities and transportation of materials to and from site-specific project areas would temporarily dominate the noise environment in and adjacent to project areas for varying periods of time. Construction activities would generate maximum noise levels ranging between 65 to 105 dB L_{max} at a distance of 50 feet, although intervening terrain and vegetation could reduce these noise levels for sensitive receptors such as residents, businesses, and recreationists in the vicinity. Construction noise would be temporary and is expected to primarily occur during daytime while site-specific projects are being implemented.

It is not anticipated that ground vibration created by site-specific projects would be detectable at any sensitive receptor location, nor would the Proposed Action result in structural damage. Noise impacts to fish and wildlife are analyzed in the EA and Appendix K (fisheries) and Appendix L (wildlife) of the EA. Recreational users in the general vicinity of the site-specific project areas could encounter an increase in ambient noise levels during construction activities. While such an increase in noise could be disruptive, its impact would be temporary and localized and would be minimized with the implementation of noise-related CMs (Appendix B of the EA). With the incorporation of these CMs into site-specific project designs and the localized nature of construction activities, noise effects to sensitive receptors would be minor.

Cultural Resources

Site-specific restoration projects associated with the Proposed Action would require their own NHPA Section 106 reviews and adherence to other heritage-related laws and regulations by the federal agencies in order to avoid and minimize adverse effects to cultural resources or complete necessary mitigative measures. Based on restoration activities proposed by implementors during the design phase for each site-specific project, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) would be determined. The APE would include, but will not be limited to, areas where the site-specific project would cause construction-related effects, particularly as a result of ground-disturbing activities, to cultural resources (i.e., disturbance areas, staging areas, material storage, temporary roads, etc.). A cultural resource field inventory along with tribal review would be performed at an agency-approved professional level within the APE and would be utilized in support of the Section 106 (and other legal or regulatory) review to determine if there would be adverse effects to cultural resources. The lead federal agency would determine any applicable CMs necessary to

avoid adverse effects to cultural resources to the extent possible. Recommended CMs specific to cultural resources are included in Appendix B of the EA. If any adverse effect to a cultural resource is identified with the potential to occur as a result of a site-specific project, the lead federal agency would determine cultural mitigation (on a project-by-project basis) that is appropriate to offset the adverse effect. In extreme cases, that site-specific project could be determined to be unfeasible.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Project consists of a suite of habitat restoration projects located throughout the Trinity River basin and more specifically, within rivers designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs). An EA was prepared, led by TRRP with BLM and USFS as cooperators, and Appendix F of the EA includes an analysis of the Project's consistency with the WSRs Act.

Based on the findings and considering the direction established by the BLM's Northern California Integrated Resource Management Plan (NCIP), there would be an overall beneficial effect to free-flowing conditions, water quality, and the anadromous fisheries outstandingly remarkable value (ORV). BMPs, design guidelines, and conservation measures described in both TRRP's 2020 NMFS Biological Opinion and USFWS' 2022 Statewide Restoration Biological Opinion would be employed for all site-specific restoration projects using the EA for NEPA coverage. These are included in Appendix B of the EA.

Implementation of the Project provides a net positive effect of protecting and enhancing river values by restoring the Project WSR's natural characteristics, including free-flowing conditions with improved floodplain accessibility, and improved habitat quality for fish and other aquatic organisms.

It has been determined that there would be an overall beneficial effect to the river's free-flowing condition, water quality, and anadromous fishery ORV.

Regional Effects

In addition to effects that result only from the Proposed Action, effects that result from other activities at a regional level were also analyzed to determine if the effects could amount to a level of significance. This analysis looked at other regional activities that have affected or could affect the same resources as the Proposed Action alternative; in this case watershed resources, which include water quality and hydrology; geology and soils; vegetation and wetlands; fisheries; wildlife; climate, recreation, noise, and cultural resources. The effects of past actions are reflected in the descriptions of current existing conditions. Lands in the vicinity of the Project activity area include USFS-, BLM-, and privately-owned land.

Flow Management

Flow management in the Trinity River, including flow diversion into the Sacramento River basin, limits aquatic habitat-forming hydraulic processes and alters water temperature regimes. The Proposed Action would have minor long-term benefits to instream flows in the Trinity River tributaries as a result of water conservation activities. Because the effects of flow management are primarily realized in the mainstem Trinity River, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to affect the hydrology of the mainstem Trinity River at a watershed level.

Hatchery Influence

Salmonid populations are highly managed in the Trinity River basin, which is anticipated to continue. The Proposed Action is anticipated to affect salmonid populations by improving available aquatic habitat, nutrient cycling through salmonid carcass placement, and survival of juvenile salmonids through the use

of RSIs in the basin. Both the existing hatchery production and the Proposed Action are anticipated to increase salmonid populations within the Trinity River basin.

Cannabis Farming

Cannabis farming in the Trinity River basin is known to have minor adverse effects to water quality and hydrology. The Proposed Action through water conservation activities would have beneficial effects to hydrology within tributaries that may improve hydrologic conditions along tributaries where cannabis farming diversions are an issue. The site-specific projects that are part of the Proposed Action would have short-term water quality sedimentation effects; however, in the long-term, the Proposed Action would provide increased sediment storage and decrease of sedimentation as a result of roadway runoff that may help address some of the sediment inputs from cannabis farming.

Residential Development

Residential development results in riparian vegetation removal, changes to channel morphology and dynamics, altered hydrologic regimes because of increases of stormwater runoff, water diversions for residential use, and increased sediment loading due to ground disturbance. The Proposed Action would restore riparian vegetation, but it is unlikely that this would occur in areas developed for residences. The Proposed Action would improve habitat within the floodplain, including instream areas, which could address some of the adverse impacts that residential development has had to channel morphology and hydrologic regimes. The site-specific projects that are part of the Proposed Action would have short-term water quality sedimentation effects; however, in the long-term, the Proposed Action would provide increased sediment storage and decreased sedimentation as a result of roadway runoff that may help address some of the sediment inputs from residential development.

Resource Extraction

The primary concerns with resource extraction in the Trinity River basin is sedimentation and consequent loss of spawning gravels associated with poor forestry practices and roadbuilding. The site-specific projects that are part of the Proposed Action would have short-term water quality sedimentation effects; however, in the long-term, the Proposed Action would provide increased sediment storage and decrease of sedimentation as a result of roadway runoff that may help address some of the sediment inputs from resource extraction.

Wildland Fire Control

The primary concerns with wildland fire control include sediment discharges (as a result of erosion) and chemical contamination (by fire retardants) to waterways within the Trinity River basin. The site-specific projects that are part of the Proposed Action would have short-term water quality sedimentation effects; however, in the long-term, the Proposed Action would provide increased sediment storage and decrease of sedimentation as a result of roadway runoff that may help address some of the sediment inputs from wildland fire control. The Proposed Action would not increase chemical contamination within the basin, nor would it address the chemical contamination added by wildland fire control efforts.

Aquatic Habitat Restoration

The Proposed Action would increase the number of site-specific restoration projects at a watershed-scale, which would increase beneficial effects associated with aquatic habitat restoration. These benefits include, but are not limited to, improvements to aquatic habitat, geomorphic processes, riparian vegetative communities, and water quality.

Effects on Public Health and Safety

The proposed action is not expected to impact public health and safety. Hazards to the public were assessed in the Master EIR, and no issues were identified. Indirect public health or safety concerns are assessed in the Air Quality, Noise, Recreation, and Transportation and Traffic sections. Therefore, no direct or significant indirect impacts to public health and safety would result from the Proposed Action.

Effects that would violate federal, state, tribal, or local law protecting the environment. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

There are no effects that constitute violations of any Federal, State, and local law protecting the environment. The proposed action conforms with the provisions of NEPA and FLPMA and is compliant with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Endangered Species Act. There was no controversy found regarding impacts to resources or resource uses from the proposed action.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

After considering the environmental effects described for the Proposed Action in the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project (CGB-ED-2025-034 and DOI-BLM-CA-N060-2025-0010-EA) EA and project record, including information received during the 30-day public comment period, we have determined that implementation of the Proposed Action would not have significant environmental impacts, is in conformance with the BLM's NCIP, and would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not needed and will not be prepared. There are no connected actions to the Proposed Action that would result in significant effects to resources analyzed in the EA.

Based on the documentation in the EA and the project record, I find that the short- and long-term effects of the Proposed Action, with the incorporation of environmental commitments outlined in Appendix B of the EA, as disclosed in the EA are not significant with respect to the affected area and its resources, and would not violate Federal, State, Tribal, or local law or jeopardize public health and safety/welfare or environmental quality.

Section 3.1 of the EA describes how future site-specific analyses within the scope of the NEPA document would be evaluated to determine NEPA analysis required and whether the site-specific project would be within scope of the document and determine whether the extent of future site-specific analyses would be commensurate with the size, scope, and potential environmental impacts of the specific restoration proposal. For each of the federal agencies, the site-specific impact analysis (if deemed to be within the scope of this NEPA document) would be documented in a particular way as outlined in the EA and detailed in Implementation Plan (Appendix A of the EA).

As described above, environmental commitments including conservation measures, design guidelines, and general protection measures apply to the Proposed Action and are listed in Appendix B of the EA. These commitments would be employed during implementation to avoid or limit potential impacts to natural and cultural resources and covers planning, implementation, post implementation, and monitoring. These commitments would be incorporated into site-specific restoration project designs during the planning process. These environmental commitments were primarily developed based on measures required by the 2020 TRRP BiOp and the 2025 USFWS Statewide Restoration BiOp.

The authority by which environmental commitments and conservation measures are enforced lies with the lead NEPA agency (Reclamation), cooperating agency under NEPA (BLM and USFS) and the permitting agencies (the Army Corps of Engineers, Trinity County, the State and Regional Water Boards). Principal authorities that relate to the need for mitigation include; NEPA, FLPMA, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and other applicable statutes and regulations.

The construction of the Proposed Action at various sites to be determined is expected to provide localized improvements in aquatic and riparian habitats currently present at each site. The Proposed Action would assist in meeting long-term needs to enhance fish habitat and provide properly functioning river conditions. Although effects considered included those adverse and beneficial, the finding is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.

The Proposed Action described in this finding is consistent with BLM's NCIP and the FLPMA. The following permits are required to authorize the project:

- Section 404, Clean Water Act, Nationwide Permit 27 (San Francisco District, USACE);
- Section 401, Clean Water Act Water Quality Certification (Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region);
- Section 7, Endangered Species Act, 2020 Biological Opinion (NMFS) and/or the latest applicable BiOp;
- Section 7, Endangered Species Act, 2025 USFWS Statewide Restoration BiOp and/or the latest applicable BiOp;
- BLM Free Use Permit (FUP) to use mineral materials pursuant to 43 CFR 3604;
- BLM FUP to remove and use vegetation for site-specific rehabilitation activities pursuant to 43 CFR 5510;
- BLM Fee Permit for the removal of commercially viable trees pursuant to 43 CFR 5400;
- BLM Right of Way;
- Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (State of California)
- CEQA review and coverage, as directed by the North Coast Water Quality Control Board;
- Encroachment Permits (California Department of Trinity County); and
- Floodplain Development Permit (Trinity County).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The Proposed Action to implement the rehabilitation activities, including those specified under the jurisdiction of BLM, is consistent with the intent of the Redding Field Office NCIP for resource management conditions.

For additional information concerning the Proposed Action, contact James Lee, Implementation Chief for the Trinity River Watershed Restoration Project, Trinity River Restoration Program, P.O. Box 1300, and 1313 Main Street, Weaverville California, 96093. Email: jclee@usbr.gov.