Appendix A – No. 3

PROPONENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Site name: Dibble Creek Workaround

Prepared for
California Public Utilities Commission

Prepared by
Level 3 Communications, LLC

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. Route Title:
Level 3 Long-Haul Network, Dibble Creek Workaround

2. Lead Agency Name and Address:
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 703-2782

3. Contact Person and Phone Number:
Bill Vander Lyn, Level 3 Communications
6689 Owens Drive, Suite A, Pleasanton, CA 94588
(925) 398-3040

4. Route Location:
The Dibble Creek Workaround is located within the jurisdiction of the City of Red Bluff, California. The workaround is a permanent five-foot, and an additional temporary ten-foot easement, located adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad ("UPRR") right-of-way ("ROW") near Milepost 225 (Assessors Map Book 27, Page 04, Lot 74, Tehama County, California). (See Figure 1, Regional Map; Figure 2, Vicinity Map; Figure 3, Parcel Map; and Figure 4, U.S.G.S. Quad.). The easement area is bordered by the UPRR ROW to the east, Dibble Creek to the south, an equipment storage yard to the southwest, and undeveloped land to the northwest (Figure 5). Photos A & B show the site from the vantage points identified in Figure 6.

5. Proponent's Name and Address:
Level 3 Communications, LLC ("Level 3")
1450 Infinite Drive, Louisville, CO 80027
(303) 926-3000

6. General Plan Designation: Industrial (I)

7. Zoning: General Industrial (M-2)

8. Description of Facility:
This checklist evaluates the Dibble Creek Workaround area, which would be constructed outside of existing utility corridors in support of the Long-Haul network.

The Dibble Creek Workaround is located within the incorporated limits of the city of Red Bluff. At this workaround, the fiber optic running line will run along the west side of the Union Pacific Railroad ("UPRR") right-of-way ("ROW") onto private property for a distance of approximately 1,600 feet. The intent of the workaround is to satisfy UPRR safety guidelines by maintaining a uniform setback from the centerline of the ROW in an area where the ROW narrows from 100 to 50 feet on each side of the centerline, and where another fiber optic line is in place. The line will run approximately parallel to the railroad. The permanent easement will be five feet wide after construction. An additional ten foot temporary easement will be used during the construction period for access purposes. At its southern end (approximately 1,100 feet), the workaround passes through a storage yard. The northern 500 feet of workaround passes through natural savannah habitat. A seasonal non-jurisdictional wetland swale meanders through this savannah.

The closest residences are located approximately ¼mile away, across Interstate 5 (Figure 7). This seasonal wetland swale is not the same as the large jurisdictional wetland associated with Dibble Creek and shown on Figure 8.

Site development will begin with preconstruction surveys as required to mark environmentally sensitive areas for avoidance. As required, brush will be cleared and the area of cable placement will be grubbed.

The fiber optic cable will be installed along the workaround by plowing, trenching, or directional boring to a depth of approximately five feet and a width of one foot. The specific technique will vary depending upon site conditions. The wetland swale along the northern portion of the workaround will be avoided by directional boring for a distance of 400 to 500 ft. A "spider" plow may be used when wet, soft, or restricted areas are encountered. After the innerduct is buried, usually with 42 inches of cover, the fiber optic cable is pulled through the innerduct and spliced at regularly spaced handholes. Handholes are round structures approximately 36 inches in diameter made of concrete and fiberglass composite, and are used to house splices and provide access to the fiber cable for maintenance. These handholes result in minimal environmental disturbance. Handhole structures will be buried approximately 6 to 24 inches below the ground surface or the top of the cover may be set at grade. They will be located approximately every 3,600 feet along the ROW.

As part of the cleanup process, the disturbed soil surface will be restored (e.g., regraded to original slope) within two days and revegetated. If open trenching is required, select, compacted fill will be placed in the trench prior to regarding and revegetation. In areas where erosion control is required due to topographical or hydrological conditions, site-appropriate measures will be incorporated into a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP). These measures may include use of devices such as straw bales or fiber mats for temporary erosion-control impacts and/or erosion-controlling plant materials native to the local areas to preclude long-term erosion. Where necessary to ensure establishment of erosion-controlling plant materials, a temporary irrigation system will be installed or periodic watering by water trucks will be used. The appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board will approve erosion-control measures in each SWPPP.

Except for the occasional inspection visit, Level 3 anticipates negligible maintenance activities on the workarounds once a native vegetation cover has been established. There are no other operation-phase activities associated with the workaround. No public utilities will be required for either construction or operation of the workaround.

Level 3 will fully compensate a grantor of an easement for any damage or injury done to livestock, growing crops, improvements, structures, parking areas, landscaping, and other appurtenances in the course of construction and (minimal) maintenance of the workaround. Level 3 agrees that the workarounds, as well as any areas adjacent to, but outside the workaround easements that are altered or damaged as a result of construction or maintenance by Level 3, shall be restored to their prior condition when work is completed. When the agreement ends, responsibilities for maintenance revert to the property owner.

Current and potential cumulative projects in the vicinity of the proposed Dibble Creek Workaround site conforming to the following criteria are shown in Table 1:

- Projects within two miles of the site. In some cases these projects are in more than one jurisdiction;
- Projects which would be constructed within one year before and one year after the "construction window" for the Level 3 facilities, or between March 1999 to March 2003;
- For "current projects," projects which have been approved by the lead agency and have had their environmental document signed, approved, and/or certified; and
- For "potential projects," projects which have been formally submitted to the lead agency and which are defined well enough to discern where they are, what they are (type of land use), and how big they are (acres, dwelling units, square footage, etc.). Although these submitted but not approved projects are considered "speculative" under CEQA, they give an indication of potential fu-

ture development around the facility site.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:
The site is bordered by the UPRR ROW to the east. A wetland swale is located between the workaround and the UPRR ROW on the southwestern sector. It meanders across the workaround in the northeastern sector. SR-36 (Beegum Road) is located approximately 300 feet southwest of the site. The southwestern portion of the workaround passes through an equipment storage yard, while the northwestern portion of the workaround and the wetland swale pass through a blue oak savannah. Dibble Creek is located approximately 70 feet south of the workaround (Figure 5, Surrounding Land Use Map). Photos A & B show the workaround from the vantage points identified in Figure 6 (the photo key).

The utility use is permitted by right in the General Industrial zone. No discretionary permits are required.

10. Other Agencies Whose Approval is Required:
The site is located within the jurisdiction of the City of Red Bluff. It is also located within the Tehama County Air Pollution Control District (TCAPCD).

Specific local policies relevant to each of the sixteen environmental impact issue areas are provided in Table 2. When there are no relevant policies, this fact is stated with an explanation. Sources for the policies are provided at the end of the listing.

PROPONENT'S DETERMINATION

On the basis of this assessment, the proposed facility would not have a significant effect on the environment because the Environmental Commitments and the Mitigation Measures described below would be incorporated into its design and construction. A Mitigated Negative Declaration would apply to this workaround area.

Environmental Commitments
The proposed workaround area is part of the project addressed in a Application for Modification an existing Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) (Decision No. 98-03-066). That CPCN Decision was supported by a Mitigated Negative Declaration that included mitigation measures to be implemented in the construction and operation of the previously approved telecommunications facilities within existing utility rights-of-way. Level 3 has incorporated all mitigation measures outlined in the previous Decision into its design of the project addressed in this Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA). Therefore, the actions previously imposed as mitigation measures in the CPCN Decision are now Environmental Commitments for the facility addressed herein. In summary, these Environmental Commitments include:

- Measures to mitigate potential impacts to various resources;
- Commitment to obtain all required local, regional, state and federal approvals and permits required for construction and operation of the project;
- Coordination with local and resource management agencies;
- Notifications of adjacent property owners;
- Coordination with other utility projects in the area; and
- Documentation and reporting of compliance.

A complete list of mitigation measures from the previous Negative Declaration is provided in Appendix E of the PEA. The site-specific details of how the proponent will implement these Environmental Commitments are provided by resource in the checklist that follows this section.

Mitigation Measures

No Mitigation Measures are required for the Dibble Creek Workaround site. All potential impacts can be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of the Proponent's Environmental Commitments.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

I. AESTHETICS

Setting

The southwestern 1,100 foot section of the workaround is within an equipment storage yard that is dominated by bare ground, gravel and ruderal vegetation. The northern 500-foot-long portion is comprised of several large blue oaks, dense savannah, and seasonal wetland habitats. A swale is located between the site and the UPRR ROW (see Photos A and B). Dibble Creek is located approximately 70 feet south of the workaround. The site is partially visible from surrounding uses to the west and south. The railroad is located approximately 25 feet above the surrounding land uses and blocks views from SR-36 to the southwest. West of Red Bluff, SR-36 is a scenic highway.

During construction equipment would be partially visible from SR-36, but only for a few days at the most.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

There are no scenic vistas of the site, or across the site, and even if there were, the workaround has no aboveground structures, so it would not block any scenic view.

b)	Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The site is visible from a state scenic highway, SR-36. With the exception of warning markers, there would be no evidence of the project after construction, because the fiber optic cable would be underground.

c)	Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The workaround entails fiber optic cable being buried adjacent to the UPRR ROW. Thus, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

d)	Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

No lighting is associated with the workaround.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Setting

The southern portion of the site is located in an equipment storage yard. The northern portion is covered by blue oak savannah. The site does not appear to have been used for agricultural purposes in the recent past. The site is not located on Prime Farmland (Tehama County, 1996), nor is it under a Williamson Act contract (City of Red Bluff, 1993).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, so the workaround would not convert such farmland to non-agricultural use.

b)	Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is zoned "General Industrial." The site is not covered by a Williamson Act contract. Thus, there would be no conflict.

c)	Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The construction of the workaround would not result in growth-inducing effects nor other off-site changes to the environment that would result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

III. AIR QUALITY

Throughout California, the fiber optic cable line will be installed along existing utility corridors in support of the Long Haul Network. In the City of Red Bluff, workaround will be constructed outside an existing utility corridor. The workaround facility is the subject of the air quality checklist analysis.

The Dibble Creek Workaround will include installation of underground fiber optic cable in a trench approximately one foot wide and five feet deep. The construction zone will be approximately 20 feet wide. The construction process will proceed in the following sequence of activities: surveying, potholing, boring, clearing, plowing, proofing, cable installation and splicing, handholing, marker installation, and site restoration. Construction methods used to excavate the trench will include plowing, trenching and/or boring. Once in-

stallation is complete, either native soil or imported material will be used as backfill. All construction spoils, remaining installation materials, and miscellaneous litter will be removed for off-site disposal.

The Dibble Creek Workaround construction activities will require different types of construction equipment, including tracked bulldozers, rubber-tired traction units, haul trucks, rubber-tired backhoe/loaders, and road graders (Table 3). The number and type of equipment in use on a given day will depend upon the particular type of construction method used along a given segment. Most of this equipment will be diesel-powered, and combustion of fuel by this equipment will generate exhaust emissions of the ozone precursors, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and reactive organic compounds (ROC). In addition, workers will travel to the site in personal or company vehicles. These activities will generate relatively small quantities of exhaust emissions and fugitive dust. Fugitive dust will also be generated by travel of heavy equipment along the alignment.

Table 3 provides detailed information on construction activities contributing to emissions of criteria pollutants and generation of fugitive dust (i.e., particulate matter with aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometers, PM_{10}). Methodologies, algorithms, and assumptions associated with these activities and estimates of associated emissions are provided as Attachment A. Included in Table 3 are the following construction-related items:

- Estimate of one-way commuting distance (miles) that members of the construction crew will travel to the construction site and numbers of such trips;
- Size and number of units of each type of equipment to be used at the construction site, along with the numbers of hours per day and days that each piece of equipment will operate; and
- On-road vehicles (e.g., worker light truck) are represented in terms of number of trips per day, total number of trips, and number of one-way miles traveled.

Each phase of construction (e.g., trenching) is assumed to occur sequentially. Within each phase, multiple pieces of equipment are assumed to operate simultaneously for the duration indicated in Table 3. Maximum daily emissions are therefore determined by the highest-emitting phase of construction. Table 3 also shows the emission factors and other parameters used to calculate exhaust emissions for diesel industrial engines and PM_{10} emissions associated with fugitive dust generation (U.S. EPA, 1996).

Following construction, there will be no operations along the workaround except for occasional inspection and maintenance visits.

Setting

The project site is located near Dibble Creek, which lies in the City of Red Bluff in Tehama County. Along much of its length, the workaround passes through uninhabited or sparsely inhabited areas. However, is does pass close to a storage yard (approximately 20 feet). The closest residences are located approximately ¼mile away, across Interstate 5. The site is located within in the Tehama County Air Pollution Control District (TCAPCD).

Tehama County is located within the Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin, which is a subregion within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. The Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin, which includes Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama, and Yuba Counties, is currently designated as a nonattainment area for the state ozone and PM_{10} standards (California EPA, 1998).

According to monitoring data collected during the three-year period 1995-1997 at the closest monitoring station (Red Bluff), maximum ozone concentrations in the project vicinity did not exceed the national ozone standard (0.12 parts per million, one-hour average). The concentrations exceeded the more stringent state standard (0.09 parts per million, one-hour average) on approximately four days per year (California EPA, 1996-1998). The ozone problem in Tehama County is influenced strongly by transport of pollutants from the

Sacramento area, which includes Sacramento County, and portions of El Dorado, Placer, Sutter and Yolo Counties.

Based on the Red Bluff monitoring data from the 1995-1997 period, ambient PM_{10} concentrations in the project vicinity do not approach the national 24-hour-average standard of 150 micrograms per cubic meter, but exceed the more stringent state standard (also 24-hour average) of 50 micrograms per cubic meter roughly five percent of the time (California EPA, 1996 -1998). The PM_{10} problem is influenced by pollutant transport but also by such local sources as travel over paved and unpaved roads, construction activities, and farming operations.

The California Clean Air Act requires plans to be developed for areas designated as nonattainment, except of the state PM_{10} standard. Such plans are to include strategies for attaining the standards. The current ozone "attainment" plan is the *Northern Sacramento Valley Air Basin 1997 Air Quality Attainment Plan* (TCAPCD, *et. al.*, 1998). This ozone plan relies on a set of emissions control measures, some of which are to be implemented at the local air district level and others of which are to be implemented at the state and federal levels. Generally, stationary source control measures are to be implemented by the air district, while mobile and area source control measures are to be implemented at the state level by the Air Resources Board and at the federal level by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

Two relevant statewide mobile source control measures relate to construction equipment. First, the state has established specifications for all diesel fuel sold in California. Enforcement of the specifications is made on individual refiners. Second, the state has established emissions standards for off-road equipment; such standards are enforced on engine manufacturers.

The state wide ozone strategy calls for extending emissions standards to a wider set of equipment and a tightening of emissions standards for those currently subject to regulation. Specifically, with respect to off-road industrial (diesel) equipment greater than 175 horsepower (including farm and construction equipment), the State of California will tighten the NO_x standard for new engines to 2.5 grams per brake-horsepower-hour beginning with the 2005 model year (California EPA, 1994). U.S. EPA regulates emissions from engines on new farm and construction equipment less than 175 horsepower. The statewide strategy relies upon U.S. EPA to extend the NO_X standard cited above to new engines within that class by 2005. The State of California will phase-in emissions controls for gasoline-powered equipment between 25 and 175 horsepower (not including farm and construction equipment) beginning with model year 2000. The U.S. EPA will extend these emissions controls to new gasoline-powered farm and construction equipment within that class.

TCAPCD does not provide quantitative significance thresholds for construction-related emissions. The district relies on compliance with fugitive dust control measures to ensure that impacts of construction projects are less than significant (Bovee, 1999; TCAPCD Rule 4:24). In the absence of numerical thresholds for engine exhaust emissions, Level 3 provides quantitative emissions estimates to assess air quality impacts. Construction emissions from engine exhaust and fugitive dust are compiled in Table 3. During network operations, activities on the workaround site will be limited to an occasional inspection and maintenance visits. These emissions will be negligible and require no further analysis.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

Estimates of site construction parameters contributing to emissions from internal combustion engines and the resulting emissions are provided in Table 3. There are no quantitative thresholds of significance for con-

struction-related engine or fugitive dust emissions. Emissions from an occasional vehicular inspection or maintenance visit are negligible, and hence, in compliance with the applicable air quality plan.

Given the small scale of the construction and its temporary nature, project construction will not significantly affect regional ozone concentrations. In that context, while construction activities will generate emissions of the ozone precursors, NO_x and ROC, the applicable ozone plan anticipates that such emission sources would be regulated at the state and federal level, rather than on a project-by-project basis at the local level. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

Fugitive PM_{10} emissions will vary from day to day, depending on the level and type of activity, the silt content of the soil, and the weather. These emissions are shown in Table 3, are not subject to numerical limits, and hence, are less than significant.

Site-Specific Environmental Commitments: Generation of fugitive dust will be controlled in a manner consistent with the applicable air quality plans through implementation of effective dust control measures throughout the construction phase, as required by TCAPCD Rule 4:24 (discussed under III(b) below). Long-term fugitive dust emissions associated with facility operation will result from the occasional visit of a vehicle for inspection of the fiber optic line, and hence, will be negligible.

b)	Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The project site is in an area designated as nonattainment for the state ambient air quality standards for ozone and PM_{10}.

There are no quantitative thresholds of significance for construction-related engine or fugitive dust emissions. However, TCAPCD requires dust control measures to be implemented during construction. Level 3 will implement a comprehensive series of dust control measures to manage fugitive dust during construction, rendering the associated PM_{10} emissions less than significant. Construction emissions from exhaust and fugitive dust are summarized in Table 3. Given the limited scope and duration of the workaround construction, emissions will not significantly impact ambient air quality.

Site Specific Environmental Commitments: Level 3 will implement a construction-phase dust abatement program based on TCAPCD Rule 4:24 (Fugitive, Indirect, or Non-Traditional Sources) which will include the following:

- Water all active construction areas at least twice daily;
- Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard;
- Apply water three times daily, or apply (non-toxic) soil stabilizers on all unpaved access roads, parking areas and staging areas at construction sites;
- Sweep daily (with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas and staging areas at construction sites; and
- Sweep streets daily (with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.

Compliance with dust control measures and state and federal guidelines for construction and on-road engine emissions will ensure that impacts on ambient air quality will be less than significant.

c)	Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal and state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The Dibble Creek Workaround is one of two PEA sites in Tehama County and under the jurisdiction of the TCAPCD (the others being Corning).

Construction at the Dibble Creek Workaround and construction or operations of the Corning ILA will not occur simultaneously. As a result, any short-term cumulative impacts resulting from construction at multiple Level 3 project sites will be avoided. To prevent cumulatively significant emissions of PM_{10} during construction, Level 3 will obtain and comply with the requirements of TCAPCD fugitivedust control measures. Maximum daily emissions of NO_x and ROG from workaround construction will total only 0.4 and 0.04 percent of the average daily emissions in Tehama County (California EPA, 1999). Emissions will cease when construction activities end. As such, the incremental cumulative impact of such emissions will be less than significant.

d)	Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

Along much of its length, the workaround passes through an industrial area containing substantial abandoned land (Figure 5). The closest sensitive receptors (residences) are located approximately ¼mile a way, across Interstate 5 (Figure 7). This distance is large enough to prevent the small amount of construction emissions at the Dibble Creek Workaround from exposing these sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Air quality impacts will occur over a very short duration (two months or less). This will greatly limit the time any receptor will potentially be exposed to pollutants associated with workaround construction activities.

During construction, site access will be easy and direct. Construction vehicles will not block traffic on Highway 36 or other streets in the area for any significant period of time. An infrequently traveled access road parallels the workaround for much of its length, providing unimpeded access. Emissions from idling vehicles in the vicinity of any sensitive receptors will be minimal.

e)	Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The only potential odor source associated with construction of the workaround would be the exhaust of diesel-fueled heavy-duty equipment. The odor of the exhaust from the construction engines will not affect a substantial number of people because only one piece of heavy-duty equipment will be used at a time, and the distance between the site and the local residential population is approximately ¼mile.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Setting

The proposed Dibble Creek Workaround extends for approximately 1,600 feet immediately outside the west edge of the UPRR ROW. The southern 1,100 feet of the workaround are within an equipment storage yard that is characterized by bare ground, gravel, and ruderal vegetation. A seasonal wetland swale meanders along the UPRR ROW. The northern 500-foot-long portion intersects blue oak savannah through which the seasonal wetland swale meanders. The savannah is characterized by several large blue oaks (*Quercus douglasii*) and a dense herbaceous understory with nodding needlegrass (*Nassella cernua*). Dominant plants in the wetland swale include popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), low barley (*Hordeum depressum*), and toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*).

Evaluation

Site-Specific Environmental Commitment: The seasonal wetland swale that meanders along the northern 500 feet of the Dibble Creek Workaround will be avoided by a directional bore. The sensitive habitat will be identified and marked by a qualified biologist. The beginning and ending bore points will be located outside of the identified area. Such action will eliminate disturbance to the wetland area and any associated special status species.

a)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The occurrence potential for all sensitive species recorded in the California Natural Diversity Database Search for the site vicinity is included in Table 5 (Red Bluff East and Red Bluff West Quadrangles; California Department of Fish and Game, March 1999). The proposed workaround intersects wetland habitat with potential to support two special status plants: silky cryptantha (*Cryptantha crinita;* federal species of concern, and CNPS list 1B) and red bluff dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus* var. *leiospermus;* federal species of concern, and CNPS list 1B). This wetland area and any associated 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 will be avoided by directional bore as described in the Site-Specific Environmental Commitment, above.

b)	Would the project 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The proposed workaround will not directly affect any wetland with potential for the occurrence of rare or special status species because construction will be by directional boring under the wetland, as described in the Site-Specific Environmental Commitment, above.

c)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The proposed workaround does not intersect any federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The season, non-jurisdictional wetland located along the northern 500 feet of the workaround will not be directly impacted because this entire length of workaround will be directionally bored, as described above in the Site-Specific Environmental Commitment.

d)	Would the proposal 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site does not provide a significant migration or movement corridor for native fish or wildlife, nor does it provide habitat suitable for nursery sites.

e)	Would the proposal conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

There are no local policies or ordinances associated with the project site.

f)	Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

There is no Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other conservation plan associated with this site.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Setting

The Dibble Creek Workaround is in the northern Sacramento River Valley along Dibble Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River. It is located in the northern portion of the City of Red Bluff, Tehama County.

The Nomlaki held territory along the Sacramento River between the Patwin to the south and the Wintu to the north. They were divided into the River Nomlaki and the Hill Nomlaki who lived in the hills to the west and southwest of the River Nomlaki. Their territory was in what are now Tehama and Glenn Counties. The Dibble Creek Workaround is in the territory occupied by the River Nomlaki. The Nomlaki spoke a Wintuan language, part of the Penutian linguistic stock (Goldschmidt, 1978).

The Nomlaki lived in villages of 25 to 200 people. Each village comprised a clan of people related in the male line. The office of village chief was hereditary in the male line. The chief organized subsistence pursuits and helped settle disputes. Disputes with other villages often resulted in warfare and feuds. The chief's house was larger than the rest, had a centerpost, and was located at the center of the village. The chief's house also served as the men's' house and was the focal point of village life. The other village dwellings faced the chief's house. They were made of a framework of bent saplings and were covered with thatch. Outside the cluster of houses there was dance house and a menstrual hut.

Persons of higher status were members of a secret society that had members in each village. The members of the secret society traded wealth objects in an attempt to achieve higher status. Wealth objects included shell beads, feathers, and furs. The most prized wealth object was the pelt of a black bear. Disputes were sometimes settled by transferring wealth objects to the offended party.

The Nomlaki hunted, fished, and collected plant foods. Most members of the village moved to camps in the hills during the summer, but the village was never entirely abandoned. Important foods were acorns, grass seeds, tubers, deer, elk, rabbits and other small game, fish, and birds. Bow and arrow, clubs, nets, snares, slings, and traps were used in hunting. Deer and rabbits were more often driven into nets than shot with arrows. Important items of technology were baskets, nets, slings, sinew backed bows, and chert or obsidian arrow points and spears.

Nomlaki population was much reduced by the malaria epidemic of 1833, but they did not come into actual contact with Euro-Americans until the late 1840s. The Nomlaki were moved to a reservation of 25,000 acres in 1854. However, Euro-Americans wanted the reservation land and the Nomlaki were forced over the mountains to the west to Round Valley in 1863. However, this was the home of their traditional enemy, the Yuki. Some Nomlaki returned to their own territory to work as laborers on ranches.

Evaluation

Site-Specific Environmental Commitments: A Level 3 cultural resources professional will be present at the site during construction to monitor activities. Should significant historic, archaeological, or paleontological resources be encountered during construction activities, all work within 50 feet of the find will cease. A professional archaeologist or paleontologist will be contacted and consulted on the significance of the find and appropriate actions to mitigate impacts will be identified and implemented before construction activities will be allowed to resume.

a)	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The protocols contained in Level 3's Long Haul Fiber Optics Project Cultural Resources Procedures (Parsons Brinckerhoff Network Services, 1999), requiring records searches and field survey, where appropriate, will be followed as summarized below. A technical report, providing more information on the results of the records search and field survey has been prepared (Mason, 1999).

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, Level 3 archaeologists requested a records search for the proposed Dibble Creek Workaround, and the lands within a one-half mile radius, from the Northeast Center of the California Historical Resources Information System located at California State University, Chico. The search had two objectives: (1) to determine whether previous archaeological investigations have been conducted in the project area, and (2) to provide information on known historic sites or culturally sensitive areas on and in the vicinity of the proposed workaround. The records search, which was conducted by Information Center staff, included reviews of maps for the project area and the following data sources on file at the Northeast

Information Center: the National Register of Historic Places (1996); the California Register of Historic Resources (1999); the California Historical Landmarks (1996); and the California Points of Historic Interest listing (May 1992 and updates); Historic spots in California (1966); the Historical Property Directory (Office of Historic Preservation current computer list); and Gold Districts of California (1970).

In addition, the Level 3 Team sent a letter dated October 22, 1999 to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) requesting a search of the NAHC Sacred Lands file and identification of a contact person or persons within NAHC for follow-on contact/consultation (White, 1999). The response, dated November 9, 1999, indicated that the NAHC search revealed no site-specific information on Sacred Lands. The letter cautioned that absence of information did not necessarily indicate the absence of cultural resources. A list of Native American contacts that might serve as sources of additional information was also provided (McNulty, 1999). Level 3 has followed up on this response from NAHC by sending letters to NAHC-identified Native American contacts residing in Tehama County, notifying them of the Level 3 project activities and request information they might have on sacred lands. Any response indicating the possible presence of Sacred Lands will be followed up with a detailed, site-specific evaluation utilizing the expertise of the relevant Native American contacts. The results of this effort are fully documented, as appropriate, in the supporting technical report (Mason, 1999).

The CHRIS records search indicated that two surveys for cultural resources have been recorded as having taken place within a half mile of the project area. One of the surveys included a small portion of the current project area (File Number D99-65, California Historical Resources Information System Northeast Center, November 1999).

The workaround area was surveyed by qualified archaeologist for cultural resources on November 4, 1999. The survey was conducted on foot, covering the approximately 0.25 mile linear corridor and approximately 50 feet of associated buffer zone on either side of the alignment where possible. Ground visibility varied from 20 to 100 percent over the project area. No prehistoric or historic archaeological sites or artifacts were observed within the project area during the field survey (Munns, 1999). No historical resources potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources were observed during the survey (Munns, 1999). Therefore, the project will cause no substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5.

b)	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The CHRIS records search reported that 4 prehistoric archaeological sites (CA-TEH-71A, CA-TEH-1744, CA-TEH-1745, and CA-TEH-1837) have been recorded within a half-mile of the survey area. One of these, CA-TEH-71A, has been recorded as a prehistoric and/or ethnographic village site with five house pits. There is insufficient information to provide an exact location for this site; it may extend into the project area. The three other sites all have midden and debitage. Two of these, CA-TEH-1744 and CA-TEH-1745, also have house pits (California Historical Resources Information System Northeast Center, November 1999).

Site Specific Environmental Commitment: Because of the potential for a subsurface component of archaeological site CA-TEH-71A to extend into the project area, all grading and excavation for construction within the project area will be monitored by an archaeologist. If archaeological material is encountered, the monitor will have the authority to halt cable installation so that the material can be evaluated for the California Register of Historical Resources. If eligible, measures recommended by the archaeologist could include a data recovery program. The data recovery plan would be submitted to CPUC for review and approval prior to implementation.

c)	Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The project site is underlain by Holocene stream channel deposits (unit Qsc) (Strand, 1962). No fossil site is recorded in the archives of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County Vertebrate Paleontology Section or the University of California Museum of Paleontology as occurring in this rock unit at the project site or elsewhere in the Red Bluff East 7.5-minute quadrangle. Moreover, no fossil vertebrate site is reported as occurring in this rock unit in the immediate project site vicinity (Jefferson, 1991a, b). Although there is a potential for late Pleistocene and early Holocene continental vertebrate and land plant fossil remains occurring in the subsurface at the project site, it is unlikely that construction-related earth moving at the project site would extend to a depth great enough to encounter remains old enough to be considered fossilized.

Site-Specific Environmental Commitments: No mitigation measures will be necessary, except in the unlikely event fossil remains were uncovered by earth moving. If fossil remains were uncovered by earth moving, construction activities would be diverted temporarily around the fossil site and a qualified vertebrate paleontologist would be called to the site immediately to recover the remains and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures. These measures will be in compliance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines for mitigating construction-related impacts on paleontologic resources and for museum acceptance of a monitoring program fossil collection (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, 1995 and 1996).

d)	Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The records search and field survey provided no evidence of the presence of human remains. If suspected human remains are encountered during construction, operations will stop until the proper official will be notified, the find evaluated, any mitigation recommendations implemented, and Level 3 has been cleared to resume construction in the area of the find. The procedures to be followed are described in detail in Level 3's Long-Haul Fiber Optics Project Cultural Resources Procedures (Parsons Brinckerhoff Network Services, 1999:25-39), approved by the CPUC.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Setting

The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo zone and there is a very low potential for groundshaking. The site is not within any other geological risk areas, including those for landslides, subsidence, liquefaction, or erosion. The site is located on highly expansive soils (City of Red Bluff, 1993).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of 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 Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. ii) Strong seismic-related groundshaking? iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? iv) Landslides?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The workaround consists of laying fiber optic cable adjacent to the UPRR ROW. It is not located in an Alquist-Priolo zone. The site is not subject to ground failure, liquefaction, or landslides. Thus, the project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects related to these hazards.

b)	Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is nearly flat, so soil erosion and loss of topsoil is as a result of construction would be negligible. In addition, the area of disturbance would be re-compacted, regraded and (if necessary) revegetated immediately following installation of the line in order to minimize erosion potential.

c)	Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The geologic units and soils on the site are stable. The installation of the line in this relatively flat easement area would not result in on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

d)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The workaround is located in an area known for highly expansive soils. However, because the project consists of laying fiber optic cable within the ground and does not involve any structures, the potential for substantial risk to life or property is negligible.

e)	Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The facility would not require a septic tank or wastewater disposal system.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Setting

No indications of potential hazardous materials or storage were found in database searches (Vista Information Solutions, *California Site Assessment,* 1999). The site is not within two miles of a public or private airport, nor is it located within one-quarter mile of a school.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The facility would not require the use or disposal of any hazardous substances other than fuel used to run the construction equipment. Refueling would be conducted at designated staging areas along the construction route away from sensitive areas such as creeks or other water bodies. Best management practices would be used at refueling areas to avoid spillage.

b)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

With the exception of fuel used for construction equipment, the project does not require the use or disposal of any hazardous substances.

c)	Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

No schools are located within one-quarter mile of the workaround.

d)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project site is not located on a site included on a list of hazardous materials sites (Vista Information Solutions, *California Site Assessment,* 1999).

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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is not located within an airport land use plan, nor within two miles of a public or private use airport.

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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

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

g)	Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The construction and operation of the workaround would not alter emergency response or emergency evacuation routes. Roadways would not be blocked either during construction or operation.

h)	Would the proposal 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project does not involve the use of any structures.

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Setting

The Dibble Creek Workaround is located in proximity to a seasonal non-jurisdictional wetland swale. This seasonal wetland is not the larger jurisdictional wetland associated with Dibble Creek, which is located approximately 70 feet to the south (Figure 8). No trenching or plowing will be performed in the vicinity of this

seasonal wetland. The portion of the workaround that crosses the wetland will be directionally bored. The boring will be approximately 12-inches in diameter, and will be backfilled with bentonite slurry. The bentonite slurry will seal the boring and will prevent the boring acting as a conduit for drainage of the wetland area. Appendix C of the PEA includes details on use of bentonite slurry in directional boring and its past performance in similar situations.

On-site drainage consists of sheet flow toward the swale. The site is located within the 100-year floodplain of Dibble Creek (Vista Information Solutions, *NEPA Checklist*, 1999).

Evaluation

Site-Specific Environmental Commitments: As appropriate, Level 3 will implement the following measures to avoid and minimize effects on the aquatic environment during construction and operations of the Dibble Creek Workaround. Appendix E identifies the documents and practices in which these measures will be specified.

- Bore under sensitive wetland habitats;
- Implement erosion control measures during construction;
- Remove cover vegetation as close to the time of construction as practicable;
- Confine construction equipment and associated activities to the construction corridor;
- No refueling of construction equipment will take place within 100 feet of an aquatic environment;
- Comply with state, federal, and local permits;
- Perform proper sediment control;
- Prepare and implement a spill prevention and response plan;
- Remove all installation debris, construction spoils, and miscellaneous litter for proper offsite disposal; and
- Complete post-construction vegetation monitoring and supplemental revegetation where needed.

No permits from the California Department of Fish and Game, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, or United Fish and Wildlife Service will be required for the Dibble Creek Workaround.

A letter will be sent to the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) requesting a 401 Water Quality Certification Waiver. A waiver of 401 Certification is justified because the project will cause no construction-related disturbance to waters of the U.S., and the erosion and pollution control measures and low-impact construction methods would result in no impacts to water quality.

A Notification of Intent (NOI) will be submitted to the applicable RWQCB and the State Water Resources Control Board for construction of the Dibble Creek Workaround under the *General Storm Water Permit to Discharge Storm Water Associated With Construction Activity*. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and will include the following: 1) Project Description; 2) Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Storm Water Pollution Prevention; 3) Inspection, Maintenance, and Record Keeping; and 4) Training.

Although the area of disturbed ground on the Dibble Creek Workaround will be less than five acres, and will therefore be less than the minimum size requirement for a SWPPP, the cumulative area of project elements is greater than five acres. Accordingly, an NOI will be submitted, and a SWPPP will be prepared.

a)	Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The proposal would not discharge substances that could contaminate water.

b)	Would the project 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 (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is not located in a groundwater recharge area nor would water be used.

c)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is relatively flat, with sheet flow draining across the site towards Dibble Creek and the swale. Dibble Creek is located approximately 70 feet south of the workaround. Substantial erosion or siltation on or off the site would be unlikely after post-construction soil compaction and revegetation is completed.

d)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is relatively flat, with sheet flow draining across the site towards Dibble Creek and the swale. The general drainage patterns would not be altered by construction.

e)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project consists of laying fiber optic cable and will not create or contribute any runoff water.

f)	Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

No impacts to water quality are expected as a result of this project. The project would not result in polluted runoff, nor generate wastewater, nor discharge substances that could contaminate water.

g)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The workaround is located within a 100-year flood hazard area (Figure 9); however, the project involves no housing and there is no permanent staff at the ILA facility; therefore, there will be no impact.

h)	Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project does not require any aboveground structures. Thus, no structures will impede or redirect flood flows.

i)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

There are large dams in Shasta County, and failure of the largest, Shasta Dam, would inundate most of the City of Redding, all of the City of Anderson and many other towns and developments downstream along the Sacramento River including the City of Red Bluff and the site (Shasta County General Plan, as amended through October 1998, page 5.3.02). The probability of Shasta Dam failing would be very low since it is located in a low-risk seismic area. Since the site will not be permanently staffed, there would not be significant risk to human life.

j)	Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death due to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The site is too far from the ocean to possibly be impacted by a tsunami. A seiche from Lake Shasta is possible since the site is downstream of Shasta Dam (Shasta County General Plan, as amended through October 1998, page 5.3.02). However, the probability is low since the dam is located in a low-risk seismic area. The site is flat, surrounded by flat land for several miles, and therefore not subject to mudflows. The site will not be permanently staffed. Therefore even if a seiche did occur, there would be no significant risk to human life.

IX. LAND USE PLANNING

Setting

Table 2 provides specific policies relative to land use (and other environmental impact areas) at the Dibble Creek Workaround. This table also indicates the need for local land use permits/approvals. A site parcel map showing the Workaround and surrounding parcels is provided as Figure 3, and Figure 5 shows land use in the immediate vicinity of the workaround.

The general plan land use designation for the project site is "Industrial" (City of Red Bluff, 1993), which allows uses that have the potential to generate nuisance and should be separated from residential zones. The surrounding properties are also designated "Industrial." The project site is zoned "General Industrial, M-2" (City of Red Bluff, 1997) which permits construction and material yards, wholesale and storage warehouses, feed and fuel yards, and workshops. The surrounding properties are zoned "General Industrial."

Site Specific Environmental Commitment: Level 3 will obtain all required local land use permits for the Dibble Creek Workaround. The Dibble Creek Workaround is consistent with local policies and is a permitted use within the site-specific land use and zoning designation. Permitted uses fall into categories by local land use regulations, resulting in some permitted uses being allowed by right, with only administrative approval, and other permitted uses being allowed through a discretionary process. The Dibble Creek Workaround will require only administrative land use review and approval from the local jurisdiction prior to issuance of permits for project construction. Administrative land use processing involves staff-level or Planning Director-level review of a project for consistency with local policies.

The local land use designations will not "… 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." Therefore, by definition, there will be no impact to local land use designations associated with this site.

The requirement for an administrative use permit does not imply a lack of conformance with local land use designations. Rather, a use permit is implemented to assure the local jurisdiction that the proposed use, already determined to be consistent with local land use designations, is also in compliance with the many and varied other concerns the local community may have. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to, hours of operation, building height, setbacks, landscaping, exterior materials and colors, parking, and architectural character. Conditions imposed through the use permit process will be fully complied with by Level 3. At this time, however, it is not possible to identify the conditions of the use permit that will be applied to the Dibble Creek Workaround.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project physically divide an established community?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

There are no residential buildings located in close vicinity to the site. Thus, there is no potential for the project to divide an established community.

b)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The City of Red Bluff land use designation for the site is "Industrial," which allows the "General Industrial" zoning on the site. The workaround facility is allowed by right in the "General Industrial" zone. There are no conflicts between the general plan and zoning designations for the parcel and the installation of the fiber optic line.

c)	Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The proposed workaround would not conflict with any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other conservation plan.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES

Setting

The project site is not located in an area designated by the state or the City of Red Bluff for mineral resources (Brewer, 1999).

Evaluation

a)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is not located in an area with known mineral resources so development of the site would not result in impacts to mineral resources of value to the region or the residents of the state.

b)	Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan other land use plan?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is not located in an area with known mineral resources so development of the site would not result in loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource.

XI. NOISE

The analysis included herein indicated that there should be no significant noise impacts for either workaround construction or operation. This is partially attributed to the absence of numerical noise thresholds for the City of Red Bluff. However, keeping noise impacts at less than significant levels is also being achieved by Level 3's commitment to restrict construction work hours in accordance with County guidelines.

This short-term construction project will create temporary low-level noise impacts that are less than significant. Since there are no permanent above-ground facilities or operations associated with the workaround, there will be no long-term noise impacts from site operations. The only activity after construction would be an occasional inspection visit by one worker (in one vehicle), which would have a negligible noise impact.

Setting

The project site is located near Dibble Creek, which lies in the City of Red Bluff in Tehama County. The surrounding areas are occupied by a storage yard, residentially developed properties, and undeveloped/unoccupied land. Along much of its 1,600-foot length, the workaround passes through uninhabited or very sparsely inhabited areas. However, it passes in close proximity to a storage yard (approximately 20 feet). Based on estimates of the field personnel who performed the site investigation, the closest residences are located approximately ¼mile away, across Interstate 5. The City of Red Bluff land use desi gnation for the site is "Industrial," which allows the "General Industrial" zoning on the site (City of Red Bluff, 1993, 1996, 1997). The workaround facility is consistent with the "General Industrial" zoning.

Estimates of ambient noise levels (35 dBA) were derived from Schomer and Associates (1991) as typical of sites designated as "very quiet, sparse suburban and rural areas" (consistent with observations during the site visits). However, the "industrial" zoning would allow higher levels such as the 52 dBA Schomer and Associates (1991) determine for "moderate commercial and industrial areas". The workaround is not located within two miles of a public or private airport, nor is it within an airport land use plan.

Noise will be generated from construction of the workaround. These construction activities will include installation of underground fiber optic cable in a trench approximately one foot wide and five feet deep. The construction process will proceed as a sequence of the following activities: surveying, potholing, boring, clearing, proofing, cable installation and splicing, handholing, marker installation, and site restoration. Construction methods used to excavate the trench will include, trenching, and boring. Construction activities will require different types and sizes (in gross hp) of construction equipment, including tracked bulldozers, rubber-tired traction units, haul trucks, rubber-tire backhoe/loaders, and road graders (Table 3). The number and type of equipment in use on a given day equipment and the numbers of hours that each piece of equipment will operate will depend upon the particular type of construction method used along a given segment.

Noise from off-site construction activities, associated with personnel vehicles and material delivery trucks, was not included because all vehicles will travel legally on local streets and state highways and will not remain stationary for a significant period of time to create a noise disturbance. As stated in Section III (Air Quality) site access is generally easy and direct, and traffic will not be blocked on local streets or highways for any significant period of time.

A key assumption implicit in the evaluation of noise impacts is that only one piece of heavy equipment will operate at any one time. Therefore, maximum construction noise level was based on the noisiest piece of construction equipment. Project construction will occur over a very short duration (two weeks or less). This will greatly limit the time any receptor will potentially be exposed to noise associated with workaround construction activities.

Maximum potential noise at full engine power for diesel-powered construction equipment (muffled) measured at a distance of 50 feet away is 84 dBA (U.S. EPA, 1971). This value was used as the maximum noise

level from workaround construction activities. The maximum construction noise level at the closest public receptor (92 dBA) was estimated by adjusting 84 dBA using the inverse square of the distance between the site and the receptor. (Note that this is higher than the value at 50 foot distance because the nearest receptor is conservatively estimated to be 20 feet away). Detailed methodologies, algorithms, and assumptions associated with the noise analysis are provided as Attachment A.

The local noise regulation restricts construction activities to the period 7 am to 7 pm on any day (personal communication with John Brewer, Community Development Officer, Red Bluff City Planning Department, July 9, 1999). There is no numerical threshold for noise from a construction site.

Following installation, there will be no significant activity at the workaround, as there are no aboveground facilities. Negligible noise will be generated by operation and maintenance of the cable. Therefore, no thresholds apply.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project result in 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project will not generate noise levels in excess of local standards during construction or operation because there are no numerical standards that apply. Therefore, no regulatory-based threshold will be violated. Level 3 will comply with local construction-related noise ordinances by restricting construction activities to period 7 am to 7 pm on any day. The estimated maximum noise level at the nearest receptor is 92 dBA. Since construction activities are linear and will proceed quickly, the nearest public receptor (located near one end of the workaround) would be exposed to this noise level for a very short time.

Except for the occasional visit to the workaround for inspection and minor maintenance, there are no operation-phase activities. Therefore, there is no operation-phase noise to assess.

Site Specific Environmental Commitment: Level 3 will comply with local construction-related noise ordinances by restricting construction activities to the period 7 am to 7 pm on any day.

b)	Would the proposal result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

Project construction would not generate excessive groundborne noise or vibration. The low level groundborne vibration and noise generated during construction will be short term in nature, and generally will not extend more than a few feet from the active work area. Since the nearest receptor is approximately ¼mile away, there will be a less than significant impact from groundborne vibrations or noise during construction.

For the operational period, there would be no aboveground machinery (e.g., generator) for this workaround that could potentially generate excessive groundborne noise or vibrations; in addition, the buried fiber optic cable will not generate any perceptible vibrations or noise. Consequently, there will be no excessive groundborne vibration or noise impacts from site operations.

c)	Would the proposal result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

After the short-term construction of the line, there will be no operationally related noise impacts.

d)	Would the proposal result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

Construction noise will be temporary; therefore, there will be no permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the workaround. Temporary noise increases will occur during construction, but these would comply with the local noise ordinance, and hence, would not be 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The site is not located within two miles of a private airstrip.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Setting

The site is located within the City of Red Bluff, with a population of 12,851 as of 1992 (City of Red Bluff, 1993). The closest residential buildings are located approximately one mile east of the site beyond the railroad.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project 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)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The proposed project would not create new housing nor extend roads or other infrastructure that would indirectly induce population growth.

b)	Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not displace existing housing units.

c)	Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not displace people.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

Setting

The site is located within the city of Red Bluff. Fire protection is provided by the City of Red Bluff Fire Department. Police protection is provided by the City of Red Bluff Police Department. The nearest public park, William B. Ide State Historic Park, is located approximately one mile east of the project site.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any or the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not result in a need for new or physically altered government facilities nor affect response time or other performance objectives.

XIV. RECREATION

Setting

The nearest public park, William B. Ide State Historic Park, is located approximately one mile east of the project site.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

This project would not increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated.

b)	Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not include recreational facilities nor require the construction or expansion of recreation facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Setting

The site is accessed from SR-36 (Beegum Road), a two-lane highway running northwest/southeast. Roads will not be encroached by the Dibble Creek Workaround. At this workaround, the fiber optic running line will run along the west side of the Union Pacific Railroad ("UPRR") right-of-way ("ROW") onto private property for a distance of approximately 1,600 feet. The line will run parallel to the railroad. Therefore a road will not be encroached by the fiber optic line.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

During construction at the site, construction workers will be commuting to the workaround site for approximately four to six weeks. The average number of commuting workers is expected to be four. The workers will commute during off-peak traffic hours (usually 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.) and park on land traversed by the workaround cable or off adjacent, low-use roads. Trenching and boring equipment will usually be delivered once to the site and removed when the project is complete. Roads will not be encroached by the workaround. Occasionally, trucks will deliver cable and other materials to the site and haul a minimal quantity of construction debris from the site to recycling centers or landfills. These truck trips will be infrequent and off-peak from area traffic flows. A construction staging/laydown area will not be required. The offsite impacts from construction are therefore expected to be less than significant. During operation of the site, a service person will occasionally visit the site for inspection and to perform routine maintenance and repairs. The project would therefore not result in a permanent increase in traffic load or daily trips because the project site would not be occupied on a daily basis.

b)	Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

There will be no permanent increase in the traffic load or daily trips associated with the project because once the fiber optic cable has been buried along the length of the workaround, the site will only be occupied when maintenance is required.

c)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project will not affect air traffic patterns.

d)	Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☒	No Impact ☐

The accessway to the workaround site is located on a curve with limited sight distances. Entrance to the workaround is not affected by the blind curve, however, the view is restricted when making a left turn out of the entrance way. Right turns out of the entranceway are not affected by the blind curve.

Once the fiber optic cable has been buried along the length of the workaround, there would be no one on site except when maintenance is required. Thus, the workaround would not substantially increase the hazard of the blind curve.

e)	Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project will not affect emergency access routes.

f)	Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project will not affect nor require parking.

g)	Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The workaround will not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Setting

There are existing underground and overhead utilities adjacent to but not within the workaround.

A minimal amount of "green" waste will be generated at the Dibble Creek Workaround during cable placement operations. The workaround includes no aboveground structures, so there is no waste associated with facility construction or operation.

If necessary, Level 3 will utilize the Thelma County Landfill (Red Bluff Sanitary Landfill) for disposal of the small amount of solid waste generated during site clearing. Based on personal communication with Jon Brewer, with the Red Bluff Community Development Department, the permitted daily capacity of this landfill is 100 tons/day with average daily intake of 138 tons per day. Level 3 short-term solid waste disposal needs

fall well-within the capacity of this landfill.

The Dibble Creek Workaround will involve no aboveground facilities; therefore, it will require any fire protection equipment or stormwater drainage. Were any fire protection equipment needed, it would be installed per Tehama County Ordinance 1537, Fire Safety and UBC have been adopted (personal communication with Allen Carlson, Tehama County). Were any stormwater drainage equipment required, it would be installed per Tehama County Ordinance 1708 (personal communication with Dan Walsh, Tehama Co. Building Department), which adopts the 1998 California UBC, Amendments to Section 15 of the Tehama County Building Code, and NPDES CAF00002 Order 92-08 DWQ (personal communication with Carole Crowe, RWQCB.

Evaluation

a)	Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not increase the burden on wastewater treatment. The site would not be occupied.

b)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not increase the burden on wastewater treatment. The site would not be occupied.

c)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

The project would not increase the burden on stormwater drainage facilities. There are no aboveground facilities associated with the workaround.

d)	Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

This project would not require water hook-ups.

e)	Would the project 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?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

This project would not require wastewater treatment.

f)	Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

This project would not generate significant amounts of solid waste. The general clean-up of the site after construction will produce a minimal amount of solid waste which could easily be accommodated within local landfills.

g)	Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	Potentially Significant Impact ☐	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation ☐	Less than Significant Impact ☐	No Impact ☒

This project would not generate significant amounts of solid waste. The general clean-up of the site after construction will produce a minimal amount of solid waste which could easily be accommodated within local landfills.

Analysis Team

A multi-disciplinary team of environmental analysts prepared this Environmental Checklist. The team members visited the site, visited the local agency, and used various other sources to perform the analysis (see Sources). The team members and the dates of their field work, if applicable, are listed below:

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Tables

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Figures

Photo Plates

Photo A South End of Workaround Facing North
Photo B North End of Workaround Facing South

Attachment

Attachment A. Methodologies, Algorithms, and Assumptions Used in the Air and Noise Analysis.