

PROPONENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – ZAYO PRINEVILLE-TO-RENO FIBER OPTIC PROJECT

Recreation

5.16 RECREATION

This section describes existing conditions and potential impacts on recreation as a result of construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The analysis concludes that impacts would be less than significant.

5.16.1 Environmental Setting

5.16.1.1 Recreational Setting

The lands underlying the Caltrans right-of-way ~~are owned or are~~ administered by various state, federal, and private entities in ~~Modoc, Lassen, and Sierra Counties~~, including BLM, USFS, USFWS, California State Lands Commission, and several tribal entities. Details regarding the ~~land ownership underlying land~~ administration underlying the running line are provided in Section 3.0, Proposed Project Description. An 8-mile segment of the running line would deviate from US 395 and run along Standish Buntingville Road (Lassen County Road A3) and Cummings Road between the communities of Standish and Buntingville in Lassen County, California. In this location, the underlying land is owned by Lassen County. While the majority of the project would be within existing roadway right-of-way, several ancillary facilities, staging areas, and material storage yards would be located within previously disturbed areas adjacent to the existing right-of-way, and those locations are on lands administered by Lassen County, Modoc County, Sierra County, and the City of Alturas.

In Modoc County, the project would traverse adjacent to lands designated as very-low- and low-density residential, agricultural, open space and public lands, urban reserve (in the City of Alturas and the community of Likely). The Modoc National Forest borders the project site on both the east and west and covers the majority of Modoc County, and the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge is located directly east of US 395 near the City of Alturas. Additionally, the project would pass adjacent to Goose Lake. In Lassen County, the northern portion of Lassen County also contains some of the Modoc National Forest lands that borders US 395 on both the east and the west, and the Plumas National Forest borders Lassen County in the south starting near the community of Janesville. Similarly, the portion of the project within Sierra County is relatively undeveloped and adjacent to lands that are designated as open space and public lands. Public recreational facilities adjacent to and within 1 mile of the running line include national forests, BLM land, local city or regional parks, wildlife areas, and campgrounds/recreational vehicle parks. These facilities are listed by jurisdiction and described further in Table 5.16-1. Refer to Figure 5.15-1 in Section 5.15, Public Services, for a map of parks and recreational facilities within 1 mile of the project. Additionally, there are off-highway vehicle (OHV) and hiking trails that are accessed via US 395 and crossed by the project area within these managed areas.



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Table 5.16-1: Parks and Recreational Areas Within 1 Mile of the Project

Facility	Jurisdiction	Facilities/Activities	Size of Park/ Recreational Area	Annual Visits
Modoc National Forest	USFS	Camping, fishing, hiking, nature viewing, picnicking, rockhounding, scenic driving, water activities, winter sports	1,654,392 acres	146,000
BLM land	BLM Northern California District	Biking, camping, hunting, off-highway vehicles, rockhounding, target shooting	3.5 million acres (Northern California District)	N/A
CSLC land	CSLC	State Resource Management Area	1,086.6 acres	N/A
Alturas City Park	City of Alturas	Playground, lawn/field, picnic	2.4 acres	N/A
Alturas Rotary Fields	City of Alturas	Athletic fields	24 acres	N/A
Warner Street Park	City of Alturas	Athletic fields, Disc Golf	18.5 acres	N/A
Modoc National Wildlife Refuge	USFWS	Hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and photography	7,000 acres	20,850
Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area	CDFW	Hiking, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, nature photography, and hunting Area is closed to public entry from February 1 through June 30.	13,200 acres	N/A
Likely Place Golf & RV Resort	Private	RV Park, campground, golf, playground, clubhouse, restaurant	3 acres	N/A
Plumas National Forest	USFS	Bicycling, camping, climbing, fishing, hiking, horse riding, hunting, nature viewing, OHV riding, outdoor learning, picnicking, rockhounding, scenic driving, water activities, winter sports	1,146,000 acres	357,000
Honey Lake Campground	Private	Campground, general store	35 acres	N/A
Honey Lake Wildlife Area	CDFW	Bird watching, picnicking, hiking, camping, warm-water fishing, and waterfowl hunting.	7,600 acres	N/A
Devil’s Garden Ranger District Office	USFS	Ranger station	--	N/A
Sully’s RV Park	Private	RV and Mobile Home Park	4 acres	N/A
Nifty RV & Mobile Home Park	Private	RV and Mobile Home Park	3.5 acres	N/A



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Facility	Jurisdiction	Facilities/Activities	Size of Park/Recreational Area	Annual Visits
California Historic Trail	BLM/National Park Service	National Scenic and Historic Trail - auto touring, educational programs and visitor centers to present-day gold seekers and explorers.	1,498 miles	N/A
Shaffer Mountain Trail	BLM	Hiking, walking, trail running	13.7 miles	N/A
Belfast Petroglyphs OHV Trail	BLM	Off road driving	15.7 miles	N/A
Buckhorn Backcountry Byway	BLM	Fishing, backcountry camping	48.4 miles	N/A

Notes:

BLM = Bureau of Land Management

CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife

CSLC = California State Lands Commission

USFS = U.S. Forest Service

USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

N/A = Not Applicable. Data was unavailable.

Source: AllTrails 2020a, 2020b; BLM 2020; CDFW 2020a, 2020b; Honey Lake Campground 2020; Likely Place Golf & RV Resort 2020; Massey et al. 2006; Modoc National Wildlife Refuge 2020; National Park Service 2020; USFS 2020a, 2020b; USFWS 2013.

5.16.2 Regulatory Setting

Upon review of local General Plans, planning documents, and other policies, no federal, state, or local regulations were relevant to fiber-optic projects related to recreation. ~~are applicable to the project upon review of General Plans, and other local, and state policies were applicable to the project.~~

5.16.3 Impact Questions

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Reduce or prevent access to a designated recreation facility or area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially change the character of a recreational area by reducing the scenic, biological, cultural, geologic, or other important characteristics that contribute to the value of recreational facilities or areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Damage recreational trails or facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.16.4 Impact Analysis

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?

No Impact. As described in Section 5.14, Population and Housing, no new homes or businesses are proposed as part of the project, and the project is not anticipated to induce population growth either directly or indirectly. The population in the surrounding area in each of the counties is anticipated to decrease from 2020 to 2040, and the project would not affect the change in population, nor would it remove obstacles to population growth. Accordingly, the project would not include development of land uses that would result in increased use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities. Workers may use nearby park and recreation facilities during project construction, but any increase associated with such use would be temporary and minimal, and would not substantially contribute to the physical deterioration of existing facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. As described in response to question a, the project would not include recreational facilities nor would it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities because no growth is projected as a result of the project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

c) Reduce or prevent access to a designated recreation facility or area?

Less Than Significant Impact. The running line would be placed within existing Caltrans- and county-maintained roadway rights-of-way, with the exception of some ancillary facilities that would be placed immediately adjacent to the existing roadway in several locations. Parks and recreational facilities spanned by or adjacent to the project may be temporarily affected by construction-generated noise, traffic



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congestion, or access limitations. Multiple trails cross or are accessed via US 395, including Shaffer Mountain Trail near Litchfield (Post Mile 77.3), Belfast Petroglyphs OHV Trail near Litchfield (Post Mile 93.4), Buckhorn Backcountry Byway (Post Mile 115.2) and the California Historic Trail (Post Miles 21.9, 29.2, 29.5, 30.2, 31.1, 34, 42.8, 42.9, 43.1, 43.9, 50.6, 72.5, 76.4, 77.6); however, it is unlikely that construction activities would impact access. Any closures that are required for public safety during project construction would be temporary and short-term. APM REC-1, which requires coordination with BLM and notification of planned closures, would further reduce the project's less-than-significant impacts.

Additionally, the recreational facilities that are spanned or adjacent to the project would not be physically or permanently altered by the project. Easements will be obtained for underlying rights, including the California State Lands Commission, BLM, USFS, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as further discussed in Section 3.0, Proposed Project Description. The project would not permanently alter the availability of trail space within the pedestrian corridor nor would it permanently alter or modify trail facilities. Therefore, the impact on these facilities would be less than significant.

d) Substantially change the character of a recreational area by reducing the scenic, biological, cultural, geologic, or other important characteristics that contribute to the value of recreational facilities or areas?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would not change the character of any of the spanned or adjacent parks and recreation facilities, construction impacts would be temporary, and the project running line would be placed within existing Caltrans- and county-maintained roadway rights-of-way, with the exception of some ancillary facilities that would be placed immediately adjacent to the existing roadway in several locations. Detailed analyses of visual impacts resulting from project construction are provided in Section 5.1, Aesthetics, which indicated that the project would not result in impacts to visual character during construction. Section 5.4, Biological Resources, also determined that the project would not impact biological resources within the recreational areas. Since the project would be located in roadway right-of-way and along existing roadways that have been previously graded, compacted, and backfilled, the project would not impact cultural or geologic resources that would reduce the value of recreational facilities. Construction noise from the project would have a short-term impact on ambient noise levels; although construction noise levels could temporarily exceed ambient noise conditions, the rise in noise levels would be temporary, lasting approximately 1 day at any given receptor and therefore would have less than significant impacts to recreational visitors.

e) Damage recreational trails or facilities?

Less Than Significant. The running line and associated ancillary equipment would be placed within existing Caltrans- and county-maintained roadway rights-of-way, with the exception of some ancillary facilities that would be placed immediately adjacent to the existing roadway in several locations. The project would not permanently affect recreational trails or facilities, as described in response to question c. Once construction is complete, the area would be inspected to ensure that backfill is restored to the permitting entity's specifications. At work areas, final grading would restore contours and natural drainage patterns in keeping with those of the surrounding area. Any damaged facilities would be repaired or replaced in accordance with APM REC-1, which requires preconstruction documentation of trail



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conditions and repair or replacement of damaged facilities. Disturbed areas would be restored to original conditions. Project construction would not result in permanent damage to recreational trails or facilities, and impacts would be less than significant.

5.16.5 Draft Environmental Measures

Applicant Proposed Measures

APM REC-1: Coordination with BLM

The Applicant will coordinate closely with the BLM Northern California District Office to communicate potential disruptions of trail access during project construction activities, including Shaffer Mountain Trail near Litchfield (Post Mile 77.3), Belfast Petroglyphs OHV Trail near Litchfield (Post Mile 93.4), Buckhorn Backcountry Byway (Post Mile 115.2), and California Historic Trail (Post Miles 21.9, 29.2, 29.5, 30.2, 31.1, 34, 42.8, 42.9, 43.1, 43.9, 50.6, 72.5, 76.4, 77.6). Signs advising recreational facility users of construction activities and potential trail closures will be posted at access points to trails identified by BLM. Information on trail closures and any temporary displacement will be made available on the project website. The Applicant will document preconstruction conditions at the trail locations and will repair or replace facilities inadvertently damaged during construction activities.

