

Initial Study/
Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration

STONEGATE WELL and PIPELINE PROJECT



County of San Benito
November 2010

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**San Benito County
Notice of Proposed Negative Declaration**

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, other County Departments, and Interested Parties.

FROM: San Benito County Public Works Department

This notice is to inform you that the San Benito County Public Works Department has prepared an Initial Study and intends to recommend adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project identified below. The public review period for the Initial Study is from November 16 to December 15, 2010. The document is available for review at the address listed below. Comments may be addressed to the contact person; written comments are preferred. Please use the project title in all communications.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

1. Project Title and/or File Number: Stonegate Well and Pipeline Project, Tres Pinos
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: San Benito County, 3220 Southside Road, Hollister, CA 95023.
3. Contact Name and Phone Number: Steve Wittry, Department of Public Works, San Benito County, 3220 Southside Road, Hollister, CA 95023, (831) 636-4170
4. Project Location: The project is located near Tres Pinos, an unincorporated area within the County of San Benito, southeast of the City of Hollister. The proposed well site is southwest of Bolado Road, and northeast of Tres Pinos Creek, south of the community of Tres Pinos. The proposed pipeline would extend from the well site next to an unimproved dirt road to Bolado Road, travel down Bolado Road southeast to Quien Sabe Road, then northeast along Quien Sabe Road, cross Airline Highway (State Route (SR) 25) and connect to an existing pipeline at the south end of the Stonegate subdivision near Quien Sabe Road (Figures 1, 2, and 3).
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: San Benito County, Department of Public Works, 3220 Southside Road, Hollister, CA 95023.
6. General Plan Land Use Designation:

Well site, area south of Bolado Road: *AP: Agricultural Productive*
North side of Bolado Road: *Rural/Urban (Tres Pinos)*
North of Highway 25, west of Quien Sabe Road: *AP: Agricultural Productive*
North of Highway 25, east of Quien Sabe Road: *AR: Agricultural Rangeland*
7. Zoning: Well Site: *AP: Agricultural Productive*
8. Description of Project:

Background and Introduction: The proposed project is the development of a new production groundwater well, well pumping facilities, and conveyance pipeline to supply the Stonegate residential subdivision in Tres Pinos, California. The Stonegate

subdivision was constructed in the 1980's as a development of 73 residential lots south of Hollister on Airline Highway (SR 25).¹ Stonegate's current infrastructure has not consistently and reliably provided adequate water for the development, and the County proposes to develop a new well as an alternate water supply to augment Stonegate's domestic and non-potable water needs. The water supply and other public services for Stonegate are administered by the San Benito County Public Works Department through County Service Area Number 31 (CSA 31), which has an equivalent area to the Stonegate subdivision.

Stonegate's current potable and non-potable water demands are supplied by the Central Valley Project (CVP). The San Benito County Water District operates the CVP distribution system, and the County's Public Works Department administers Stonegate's on-site water distribution and treatment systems. In the past, on several occasions the annual allocations have been restricted. Specifically, in the summer of 2008, the effect of this reduction – including the restriction on additional deliveries from June to August 2008 – was so severe as to require imposing emergency water conservation measures on both non-potable and potable water. Additionally, since fire suppression (hydrant) supply is plumbed to the non-potable system, both potable and non-potable must be kept available. Existing contractual obligations with CVP specifically indicate that this supply is both interruptible and subject to varying quantities. The projected yield of the proposed project well appears to be more than the potable demands, but less than the combined non-potable and potable usage rates, the existing CVP allocation may be needed as a supplement for non-potable uses. The “blue valve” water line has also experienced several breaks over the years, with repairs taking between four and fourteen days to be completed.²

The Stonegate subdivision was developed with a dual-plumbed water system throughout, allowing for the provision of domestic and non-potable water services through two separate piping systems. An existing surface water treatment plant between Meadow Court and SR 25 treats a portion of the water received through the CVP pipeline to provide potable water. Two tanks, of approximately 150,000 gallons each, near the southeast end of Diablo Hills Road provide potable and non-potable water storage for the existing system.

Groundwater Management Plan Update: The construction of water production wells and local conveyance pipelines in the Tres Pinos area are included in the project elements discussed in the *Groundwater Management Plan Update for the San Benito County Portion of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin Final Program Environmental Impact Report* (hereafter GWMP Update). This Program EIR was approved in 2004 by the Water Resources Association of San Benito County. The discussions in this Initial Study are in conformance with the impacts and mitigation measures discussed in that document.

Project Description: The proposed project is the construction of a production groundwater well, well pumping station, and transmission pipeline. Water treatment would take place at the wellhead prior to distribution of the water from the well for potable use; and may include oxidation and filtration, with residual chlorination. The

¹ The Stonegate subdivision was originally known as Diablo Hills. Out of the 73 original residential lots, 72 have been developed for residential uses. An additional parcel functions as a community lot, with tennis courts and a small park.

² The turnout valves for the CVP water are painted blue, so the CVP water is often referred to as “blue valve” water.

project does not include a connection to the existing water treatment plant or potential upgrades to these facilities.

Groundwater Well: The project proposes to outfit a groundwater well on an agricultural parcel owned by Graniterock, south of Southside Road and southwest of Bolado Road, as shown on Figure 2 and 3. To determine if the well site was suitable for a production well, a test well was drilled in January 2010 to a depth of 450 feet, and completed to 360 feet below ground surface. The results of water quality analyses from samples taken from the test well are described in *Section 2.9, Hydrology and Water Quality*. The well is expected to produce 90 gallons per minute for approximately 12 hours per day, or an average of 45 gallons per minute.

Well Site Development: To complete the development of the test well into a production well, the wellhead would be developed with a permanent pump and controls. Fencing would be installed along the well site easement boundaries to protect the well from vandalism and other security concerns, and lighting would be installed for maintenance activities.

Up to 120 gallons of chlorine used for disinfection at the wellhead would be stored in secondary containment in a small (four by four foot) hazardous materials building. A diesel backup generator may be installed on site, which would require storage of up to 100 gallons of diesel fuel. Electrical controls would be installed in a small cabinet at the site.

Transmission Pipeline: Approximately 3,500 feet of an up to eight-inch diameter transmission pipeline is proposed for conveyance of pumped groundwater from the well site to Stonegate's existing potable water system. The first of four segments of the pipeline would be approximately 600 feet in length, from the well site to Bolado Road. The second segment of the pipeline would be approximately 2,300 feet in length, traveling southeast along Bolado Road, then turning to the northeast along Quien Sabe Road to SR 25.

The third segment of the pipeline would be the short distance across SR 25, which would require permitting within the state right-of-way. This segment of the pipeline would be designed to be consistent with Caltrans criteria for trenching and crossing of state facilities.

North of SR 25, the fourth segment of the pipeline would extend approximately 600 feet and connect with an existing six-inch, potable water pipeline at the southeast end of the existing Stonegate potable water system. This existing potable pipeline extends along a shared Stonegate driveway southwest of Diablo Hills Road to serve water to the southernmost Stonegate homes (Figure 4). From the connection of the proposed pipeline to the existing Stonegate water system, the groundwater from the proposed well would feed under pressure into the existing Stonegate potable water storage tank.

The pipelines would be buried approximately three feet below ground surface, and would run beneath paved streets for most of their length, except for the first segment which would run beneath a public utility easement on unpaved Graniterock property, adjacent to an unpaved agricultural road. The pipeline may also be located below the roadway shoulder on the segment along Quien Sabe Road within a public right-of-way.

Water Treatment: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Public Health (DPH) regulate primary drinking water contaminants that affect human health with maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). In California, secondary drinking water contaminants are also regulated by MCLs developed to control the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water. Based on water quality data collected from the test well, the production well would have levels of iron and manganese above their respective secondary MCLs. Color, turbidity, and total dissolved solids (TDS), also secondary contaminants, were also found to be above recommended levels. The elevated color, turbidity, and TDS levels may be related to the elevated iron and manganese concentrations in the groundwater.

Water treatment would take place at the wellhead prior to distribution of the water from the well for potable use; and may include oxidation and filtration, with residual chlorination. In addition to wellhead treatment with chlorine for disinfection, the oxidation and filtration would reduce iron and manganese level to improve the water’s appearance prior to distribution for potable water use. Additional wellhead facilities may also include preconfigured pre-packaged treatment equipment for this purpose.

Easements: As described above, the well site would be connected to the PG&E electric distribution system. The connection to the existing electrical service would require a temporary construction easement and a permanent utility easement south of the well site.

The San Benito County Board of Supervisors may also accept a well easement on Graniterock’s property as part of this project, to allow access to the proposed well site for operation and maintenance, and to allow the water drawn from the well to be transmitted for use by the homeowners within the Stonegate subdivision (CSA 31).

The location of the proposed pipeline, easements, and well site is shown on Figure 4, and described in Table 1, below.

Table 1 Construction and Easement Areas			
Project Element	Construction or Permanent Easement	Width of Easement (in feet)	Length of Easement (in feet)
Well Site	Construction	140	170
	Permanent	100	150
Electrical Line	Construction	40	680
	Permanent	20	680
Pipeline: Unpaved Road/Field	Construction	40	520
	Permanent	20	520

Permits: Various permits associated with the project would be obtained, including those listed in Section 10, below.

- Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The proposed well site is located on an agricultural parcel (APN 022-25-0-004), within an existing agricultural area. The properties adjacent to the proposed pipeline include single-family residential uses north of Bolado Road and west of Quien Sabe Road, and agricultural uses to the south and west. Tres Pinos Creek

is located to the south of the project site. The nearest school is Tres Pinos Elementary School, at 5635 Airline Highway, northwest of the project site.

10. Other public agencies whose approval may be required:

- **County of San Benito:** Well project approval, adoption of a funding mechanism, groundwater well construction.
- **San Benito County Water District:** Water Transfer Permit (from Zone 3)
- **CA Department of Public Health:** Well Approval for Connection to Distribution System
- **CA Department of Water Resources:** Well Completion Report
- **CA Department of Transportation:** Encroachment Permit – State Route 25
- **Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District:** Backup Diesel Generator Permit

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

The environmental factors below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” or “Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated,” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural & Forest Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology & Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology & Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population & Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation & Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Service Systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this Initial Study:

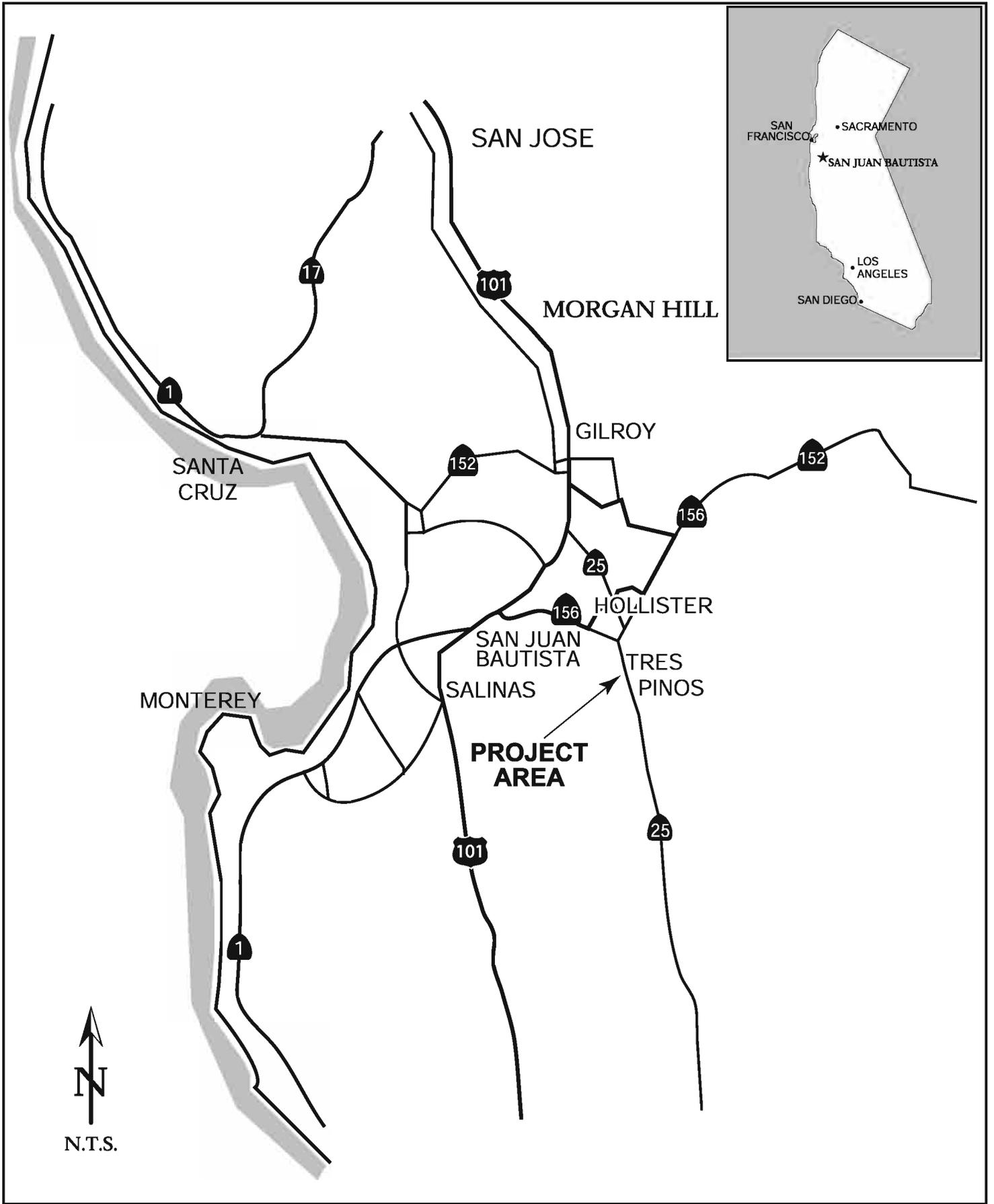
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” effect on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in a previous document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed on the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Lissette Knight

November 12, 2010

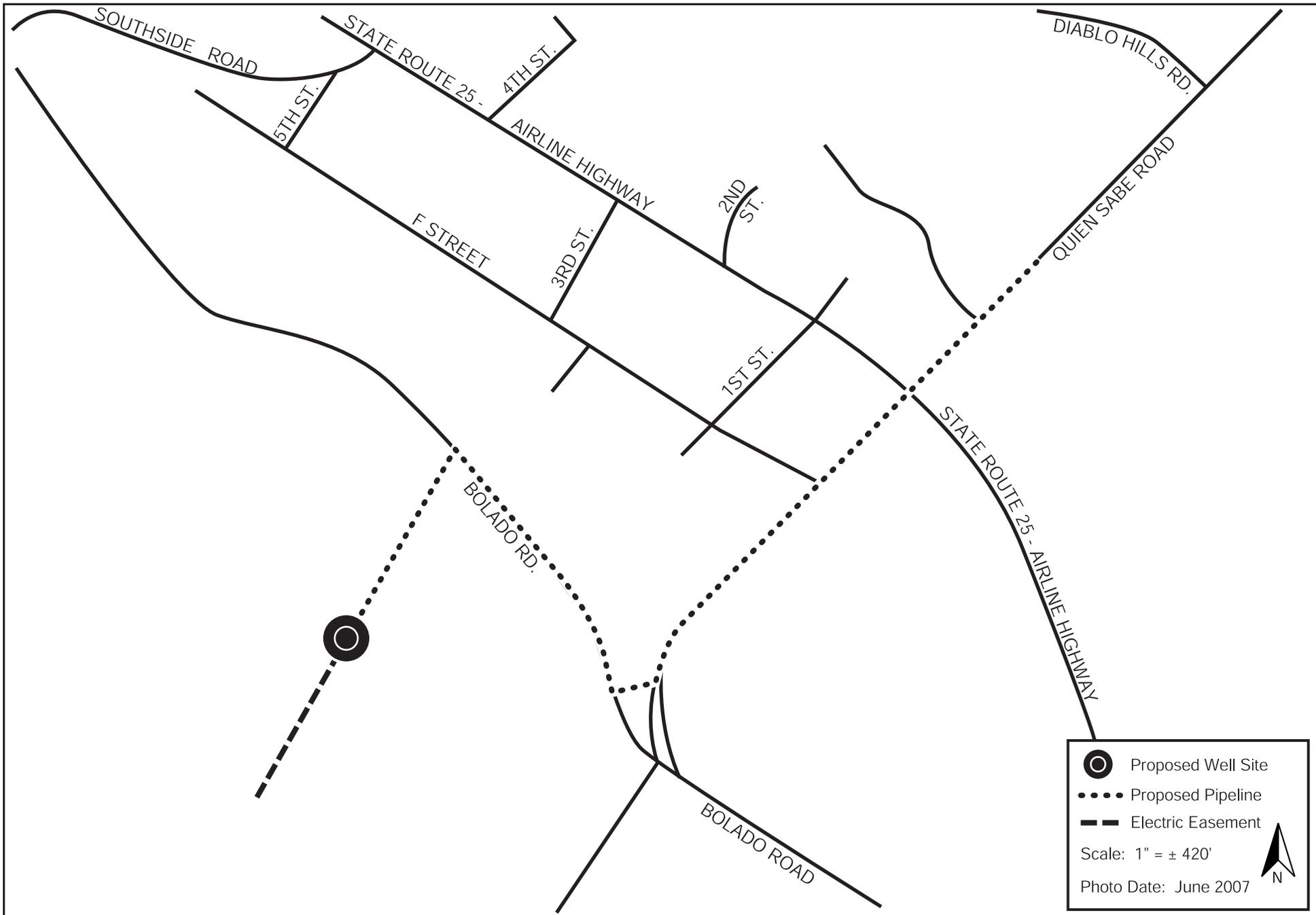
Lissette Knight, Senior Planner
Printed Name and Title

San Benito County Planning
Agency



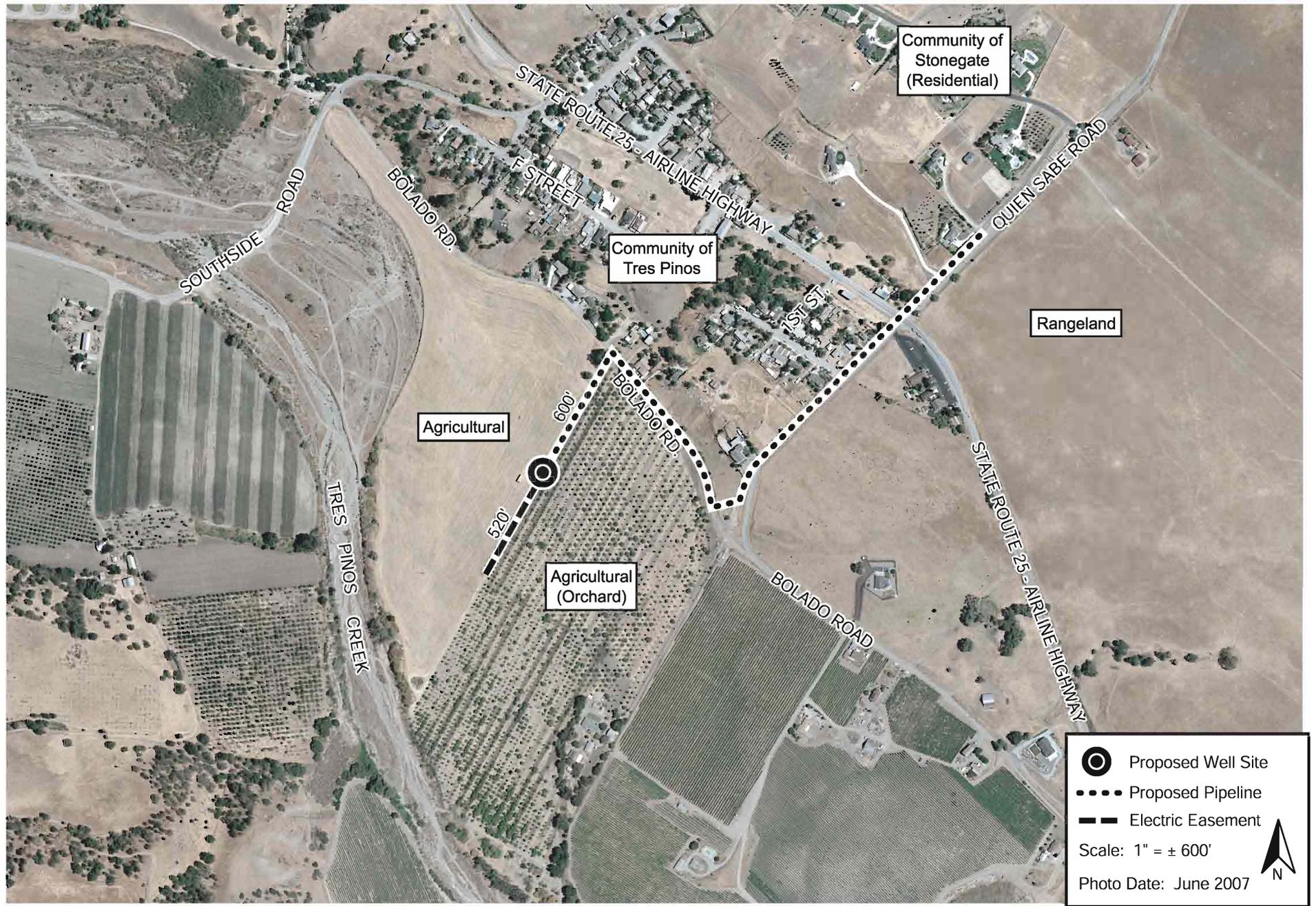
REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1



VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 2

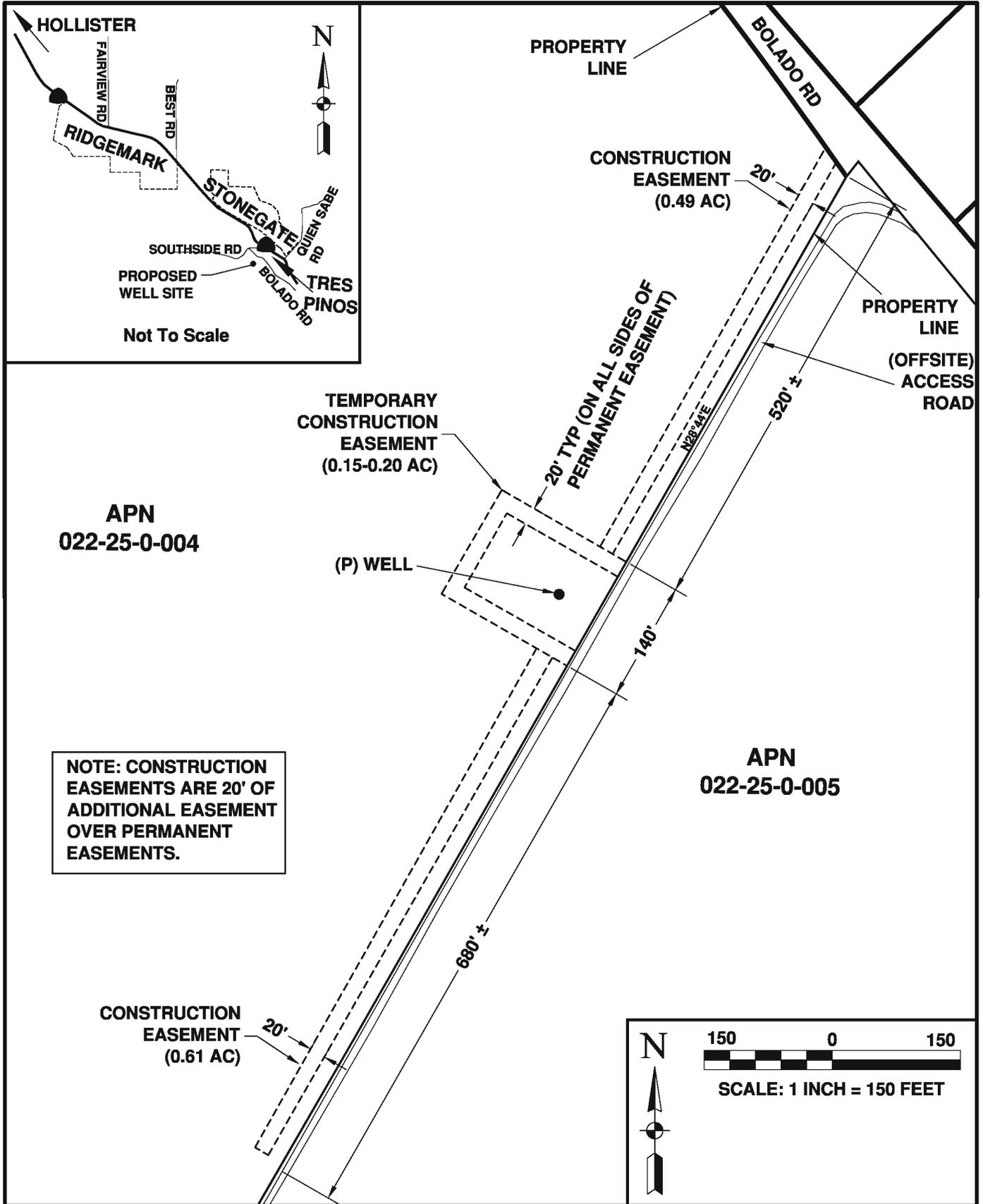


Proposed Well Site
 Proposed Pipeline
 Electric Easement
 Scale: 1" = ± 600'
 Photo Date: June 2007



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

FIGURE 3



SITE PLAN AND CONSTRUCTION EASEMENTS

FIGURE 4



Photo 1 - View of proposed well site and pipeline alignment to the southwest from near Bolado Road. Tres Pinos Creek is located at base of hills in the distance. GraniteRock property is located to the right, and the existing walnut orchard can be seen to the left.



Photo 2 - View to the northeast of the intersection of unpaved agricultural road and Bolado Road, showing overhang of large valley oak.

PHOTOS 1 AND 2



Photo 3 - View to the southeast along Bolado Road towards Quien Sabe Road. Proposed pipeline would be installed on the right (south) side of Bolado Road in this location.



Photo 4 - View of intersection of Bolado Road and Quien Sabe Road, looking southeast from Quien Sabe Road. Proposed pipeline would cross horse pasture at the right of the photograph.

PHOTOS 3 AND 4



Photo 5 - View of intersection of Quien Sabe Road and State Route 25 (Airline Highway). Photograph view is from Quien Sabe Road towards the southeast.



Photo 6 - View northeast of Quien Sabe Road, north of State Route 25 (Airline Highway). Proposed pipeline would be installed to the right (east) of the photograph, eventually crossing the road and connecting to the existing water system.

PHOTOS 5 AND 6

SECTION 2 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

This section describes the existing environmental conditions on and near the project area, as well as environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. The environmental checklist, as recommended in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, identifies environmental impacts that could occur if the proposed project is implemented.

The right-hand column in the checklist lists the source(s) for the answer to each question. The sources cited are identified at the end of this section. Mitigation measures are identified for all significant project impacts. “Mitigation Measures” are measures that will minimize, avoid, or eliminate a significant impact (CEQA Guideline 15370). Measures that are proposed by San Benito County that will further reduce or avoid already less than significant impacts are categorized as “Avoidance Measures.”

2.1. AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 5
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 3

a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project would result in the construction of water well pumping facilities and associated underground conveyance pipelines. The construction of the well facilities would include the installation of a permanent pump, chlorination equipment, iron and manganese treatment equipment, and a building to house some of the treatment equipment, all within a fenced area on the well site. The well site would be within an agricultural area, and set back more than 500 feet from the Bolado Road or any residential uses (Photos 1-6).

The proposed pipeline would cross State Route 25 (Airline Highway) on its alignment along Quien Sabe Road. There are no scenic resources or highways located near the project site, although State

Route 25 in the project area is considered an “Eligible State Scenic Highway” by the California Department of Transportation.

- b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project is not located near or within a designated state scenic highway, as noted above, and would not affect rock outcroppings or historic buildings.

No trees are currently proposed for removal during project construction. The pipeline would be designed to be outside of the driplines of a large valley oak and several smaller oak trees on the agricultural field, and construction activities may also take place near other trees along the pipeline route. During construction, temporary fencing may be constructed around the dripline of all trees to be retained. This fencing and other appropriate measures to protect trees during construction are discussed further in *Section 2.4, Biological Resources* of this Initial Study.

For the reasons specified above, the project would have a less than significant impact on scenic resources.

- c) *Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?* **[No Impact]**

Following project construction, the visual impact of the project would be limited to the wellhead and other equipment within an approximately 15,000 square foot fenced area, which would be set back over 500 feet from public roads. The pipeline would run beneath paved streets for most of its length, with the exception of the 600-foot segment from the wellhead which would be located adjacent to an unpaved agricultural road, and a short section in the roadway shoulder on Quien Sabe Road to connect to the existing Stonegate system. No trees are proposed for removal with the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings.

- d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The County of San Benito’s Dark Sky Ordinance (Ordinance #748) establishes general requirements and guidelines for lighting. The ordinance encourages lighting practices which will minimize light pollution and glare, conserve energy while maintaining security and productivity, and curtail the degradation of night time visual environment.³ The County would comply with the requirements of the Dark Sky Ordinance for this project.

The proposed project includes a small building which would contain chlorine and other equipment for well operation, and the only lighting proposed at the well site would be directed lighting installed for maintenance activities. For these reasons, the project would not create a substantial source of new light or glare.

³ County of San Benito website, <http://www.san-benito.ca.us/departments/planning/ordinances/dark%20sky%20ord.htm>, revised August 2005.

2.2 AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 6
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 3
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 3
d) Result in a loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

- a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*
[Less than Significant Impact]

The undeveloped parcel that the proposed well would be located on is designated as “Farmland of Local Importance,” which is described by the California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) as land which is cultivated as dry cropland, with the usual crops being wheat, barley, oats, safflower, and grain hay. The parcels southeast of Bolado Road from the well site parcel are designated as “Prime Farmland,” and are currently planted with orchards and vineyards. Areas west of Quien Sabe Road from Bolado Road are designated as “Grazing Land,” and the developed areas of Tres Pinos and Stonegate east of Quien Sabe Road are designated as “Urban and Built-Up Land” or “Other Land.”⁴

⁴ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) 2008 San Benito County Important Farmland Map, June 2009.

The proposed pipeline alignment would be built within existing roadways and road shoulders, with the exception of the segment on the undeveloped Graniterock parcel, which is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Apart from the relatively small, 0.34-acre well site, the pipeline segment on the undeveloped property would be underground and the land could be used again for dry cropland or other agricultural purposes. The project is not anticipated to result in encroachment or taking of adjacent properties that are designated as Prime Farmland. Therefore, the project would result in a less than significant impact upon farmland or agricultural resources.

- b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*
[No Impact]

The proposed project would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts. None of the parcels directly affected by the project are currently under Williamson Act contract.

- c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland.

- d) *Result in a loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not result in a loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

- e) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not result in other changes in the existing environment which would result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

2.3 AIR QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is classified as non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

a) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project site is located in northern San Benito County, which has a moderate, sunny climate year-round. San Benito County is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD), and the project site is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), which is comprised of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties.

The NCCAB is currently classified as a “nonattainment” area for the state standards for ozone and for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀). San Benito County is designated as “attainment” or “unclassified” for federal and state standards for all other pollutants.⁵

The MBUAPCD 2008 *Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region* (AQMP) is the current adopted plan for showing how the State Ambient Air Quality Standard (AAQS) for ozone would be met within the area. The 2008 AQMP is a transitional plan shifting the focus from achieving the one-hour component of the State AAQS to achieving the new eight-hour requirement. The plan includes an updated air quality trends analysis, which now reflects both the one- and eight-hour standards, as well as an updated emission inventory, which includes the latest information on stationary, area, and mobile emission sources.

⁵ Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, NCCAB Area Designations and Attainment Status, January 2009, http://www.mbuapcd.org/mbuapcd/pdf/Attainment_Status_January_2009.pdf, accessed January 7, 2010.

Existing sources of emissions in the project area includes vehicular traffic on nearby roads and agricultural activities in the area, which can generate particulate emissions. Following construction, the well and pipeline would add a minor amount of vehicle trips for operation and maintenance. Since the proposed project would not directly or indirectly result in an increase in population, and since the project would not generate substantial vehicle trips that would be inconsistent with the emissions budget in the AQMP, the proposed well and pipeline would be consistent with the AQMP. Therefore, significant impacts to air quality would not result.

b) *Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

Implementation of the proposed project would directly increase the number of vehicle trips in the area by a small amount, mainly for maintenance and operation of the well and pipeline. The project also includes a diesel back-up generator, which would require a permit from the MBUAPCD.

Construction equipment may emit quantities of particulate matter (PM₁₀) and exhaust, but the concentrations of these emissions are not anticipated to be substantial, and would be temporary in nature. Construction vehicles would produce cumulatively insubstantial amounts of ozone emissions due to the relatively small scale of the project.

The MBUAPCD *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* identify thresholds of significance for construction emissions. The MBUAPCD's threshold of significance for construction projects is 2.2 acres of disturbance, or 82 pounds of particulates per day. Since an acre is comprised of 43,560 square feet, given the length of the proposed pipeline and the estimated width of the construction zone (approximately 3,500 feet in length and with an estimated project construction width of ten feet or less), the project would impact less than one total acre during the duration of the construction, and only a portion of this area would be disturbed during any given day.

Construction equipment used at the project site may emit quantities of dust (fine particulate matter or PM₁₀) and exhaust, but the concentrations of these emissions are not anticipated to be substantial, and would be temporary. While the construction of the production well and pipeline together would not reach the above thresholds, dust-control measures are included in the project to reduce PM₁₀ impacts related to grading activities.

Avoidance Measures

AM AQ-1: Based on the MBUAPCD *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines*, the project shall implement the following dust-control measures to reduce the project's PM₁₀ impacts during construction:

- Water all active construction areas to reduce dust. The frequency shall be based on the type of operation, soil, and wind exposure.
- Prohibit all grading activities during periods of high wind (over 15 mph).
- Apply approved chemical soil stabilizers on inactive construction areas (disturbed lands within construction projects that are unused for at least four consecutive days).
- Apply non-toxic binders (e.g., latex acrylic copolymer) to exposed areas after cut and fill operations and hydro seed area.
- Haul trucks shall maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
- Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials.

- Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible.
- Cover inactive storage piles.
- Sweep streets if visible soil material is carried out from the construction site.
- Post a publicly visible sign which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and take corrective action within 48 hours. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District shall be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance).
- Limit the area under construction at any one time.

c) *Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is classified as non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

As described in Section (a) and (b), above, the project would not emit substantial quantities of air pollutants, and emissions would not be cumulatively considerable.

d) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project would construct a conveyance pipeline near residential uses on Bolado and Quien Sabe Roads. Construction-related air quality impacts to these areas would not be substantial, since construction at any one site along the pipeline alignment would be of short duration. The operational air quality impacts of the project would also be less than significant.

e) *Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed water well and conveyance pipeline would not generate objectionable odors.

2.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 8
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 8
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 8
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 8
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 4

The discussion in this section is based in part on the “Stonegate Well and Pipeline Biological Evaluation, Tres Pinos, San Benito County, California,” prepared for the proposed project by *Live Oak Associates* in November 2009. This report is attached to this document as Appendix A.

- a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?* [**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project**]

A number of special status plants and animals occur in the site's vicinity. These species and their potential to occur on the site are listed in the biological resources report in Appendix A.

Special Status Plants: Ten special status vascular plant species are known to occur in the general project vicinity. Site development would have no effect on regional populations of these species, because the site does not provide habitat for special status plants. Therefore, state and federal laws protecting special status plants would not apply to development of the site, and no mitigation measures are required.

Special Status Animals: Twenty special status animal species occur, or once occurred, regionally. With the exception of the white-tailed kite, northern harrier, burrowing owl, western red bat, and western mastiff bat, all of these species would be absent from or unlikely to occur on the site due to unsuitable habitat conditions. Proposed construction and trenching activities would have no effect on these species, because there is little or no likelihood that they would be present at the time of construction.

The special status animal species listed above may occur in the agricultural field but would not be expected to occur in the horse pasture or on the paved roads along the proposed pipeline alignment. These species either occur on the site infrequently, or may forage on the site year-round or during migration. Construction of the project would have a minimal effect on the breeding success of these species and would not result in the loss of foraging, nesting, and/or roosting habitat that is abundantly available, and of higher quality, regionally. While special status animal species may move through or occasionally forage in the agricultural field, less than 500 square feet of habitat will be permanently impacted. The remaining disturbance to this habitat will be temporary in nature, and disturbed vegetation is expected to rapidly re-establish to cover areas temporarily left barren as a result of trenching activities, including the agricultural field and a short section next to Quien Sabe Road in the roadway shoulder. Therefore, the loss of habitat for these species would be considered less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

Red-Legged Frog

The well site, possible electrical line, and a short segment of the alignment between the well site and Bolado Road fall within critical habitat designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the California red-legged frog. The remainder of the project site appears to border the designated critical habitat area. The site does not support the primary constituent elements (i.e., aquatic breeding and non-breeding habitat and upland habitat) needed to sustain the species' life cycle. The agricultural field could be considered dispersal habitat for California red-legged frogs, but it would be characterized as low quality because it is adjacent to movement barriers (e.g., roads and development). Therefore, the project would result in a less than significant impact to California red-legged frogs.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

No burrows possessing the dimensions suitable for the San Joaquin kit fox were observed on the site during the August 2009 field survey, although protocol-level surveys were not conducted for this

species. Project development would result in a less than significant loss of habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox. However, it is possible, though highly unlikely, that an individual kit fox could move onto the site incidentally prior to construction. Construction related activities may result in harm or injury to individual kit foxes, should they occur on the site. This would be considered a significant adverse impact.

Mitigation Measures: While unlikely, the possibility of the San Joaquin kit fox's occurrence on the project site warrants protection measures, should any individuals wander onto the site at the time of site development and associated construction activities. If this occurs, the County shall implement the protection measures outlined in the "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service standardized recommendations for protection of the San Joaquin kit fox prior to or during ground disturbance," attached to Appendix A and summarized below. While these recommendations were developed by the USFWS Sacramento office, they would be applicable to this project site as well.

MM BIO-1: Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance, construction activities, and/or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox. The primary objective is to identify kit fox habitat features (e.g., potential dens and refugia) on the project site and evaluate their use by kit foxes. If an active kit fox den is detected within or immediately adjacent to the area of work, the USFWS shall be contacted immediately to determine the best course of action, but in no event shall be less than the protection measures specified by the USFWS, as attached in Appendix A. If no kit fox activity is detected, a written report shall be submitted to the USFWS within five days after completion of the surveys.

MM BIO-2: Permanent and temporary construction activities and other types of project related activities shall be carried out in a manner that minimizes disturbance to kit foxes, should their presence be detected on the site during pre-construction surveys.

Minimization measures include, but are not limited to:

- a) Restriction of project-related vehicle traffic to established roads, construction areas, and other designated areas. These areas shall be designated in writing from County to the contractor prior to start of construction. All vehicles, traveling off of established County-paved road surfaces, shall obey a 15 mph speed limit. Any contract to perform the work related to this project shall bind the contractor to obey all mitigation measures established for the project.
- b) Inspection prior to use and covering of structures (e.g., pipes) when not in use, as well as installation of escape structures, to prevent the inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes. All excavation, steep-walled holes or trenches in excess of six (6) inches in depth shall will be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials, or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth dirt fill or wooden planks. Trenches will shall also be inspected for entrapped wildlife each morning prior to onset of construction activities and immediately prior to covering with plywood at the end of each working day. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they

shall be thoroughly inspected for entrapped wildlife. Any wildlife discovered will be allowed to escape before construction activities are allowed to resume, or removed from the trench or hole by a qualified biologist holding the appropriate permits (if required).

- d) Restriction of rodenticide and herbicide use. Only County-approved compounds may be applied (if necessary) by licensed applicators in accordance with label directions and other restrictions mandated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, County Agricultural Commissioner, regional label prescriptions on use, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other State and Federal legislation. Any application of herbicides shall be in compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations under the prescription of a Pest Control Advisor (PCA), and implemented by a Licensed Qualified Applicator. Herbicides shall not be applied during or within 72 hours of a scheduled rain event.
- e) Proper disposal of food items and trash. Proper disposal of food items and trash shall include: All general trash, food-related trash items (e.g., wrappers, cans, bottles, food scraps, cigarettes), microtrash (i.e., broken glass, paper and plastic waste, small pieces of metal), and other human-generated debris will be stored in animal proof containers and/or removed from the site each day. No deliberate feeding of wildlife shall be allowed.
- f) All grading and construction activities before dawn and after dusk are prohibited.

MM BIO-3:

The Ventura field office of the USFWS and the Fresno field office of the CDFG will be notified in writing within three working days in case of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during project-related activities. Notification must include the date, time, location of the incident or of the finding of a dead or injured animal, and any other pertinent information.

Implementation of these measures would minimize the risk that construction activities would result in mortality to individual kit foxes.

- b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? [Less than Significant Impact]*

One biotic habitat and two land uses were identified on the project site. For the purposes of this report, the habitat has been classified as “agricultural field,” and the land uses are classified as “horse pasture” and “paved road.” A list of the plant species observed on the project site and the terrestrial vertebrates using, or potentially using, the site are provided in Appendix A.

Agricultural Field: The well site, electrical line, and pipeline extending from the well site to Bolado Road are located in an agricultural field dominated by non-native annual grasses and forbs. This field was fallow at the time of the site visit. Along the proposed alignment near Bolado Road are one

large and several smaller valley oaks. Compared to more natural habitats, managed agricultural lands tend to provide relatively low habitat value for wildlife due to the lack of understory vegetation that typically provides food and cover for these species, and annual management practices that would eliminate breeding and foraging habitat. Nevertheless, because of its close proximity to Tres Pinos Creek, wildlife occurring in and along the creek may occasionally move into this habitat.

The absence of rock piles and woody debris suggests that the site is relatively poor habitat for amphibians and reptiles. Although some of these animals that potentially occur in Tres Pinos Creek may move into the fields during the winter and spring, the site provides, at best, marginal habitat for these animals. Western fence lizards and gopher snakes may seek cover in the agricultural field for forage.

A red-tailed hawk was observed perching during the field survey, but no raptor nests were observed in any of the oaks occurring in this habitat. Other resident avian species observed on the site include the turkey vulture, acorn woodpecker, western scrub-jay, and northern mockingbird. Raptor species potentially resident in the area include northern harriers and white-tailed kites, and a number of other bird species may forage on the site. Burrowing mammals are largely absent from this habitat, as evidenced by the presence of very sparse California ground squirrel and Botta's pocket gopher burrows. A number of other small mammal species could also occur on the site, and can often attract predators, including larger mammalian predators like coyotes and gray foxes.

Horse Pasture: The north corner of Bolado Road and Quien Sabe Road consists of a small horse pasture that was mostly barren of vegetation. The sparse vegetation that was present included summer mustard, coyote brush, and Peruvian pepper. The same wildlife species that could potentially occur in the agricultural field may also incidentally occur in the pasture. Other birds that would be expected to occur include the American kestrel, which was seen perched on the fence enclosing the pasture, American crows and northern mockingbirds. No small mammal burrows appeared to be present.

Paved Road: The majority of the pipeline alignment consists of paved roads. No plant or animal species were observed on the paved road. The road shoulders, however, supported predominant non-native ruderal vegetation. Trees occurring near the road shoulders included coast live oak, blue gum, and Peruvian pepper. The same wildlife species that could potentially occur in the agricultural field and horse pasture may also incidentally occur along the paved roads. Domestic dogs and feral house cats would also be expected to occur along the roads

Loss of Habitat for Native Wildlife

Construction of the well would result in the permanent loss of less than 500 square feet of existing agricultural field habitat. All other disturbances to the agricultural field would result from trenching activities and, thus, would be temporary in nature. The site would be expected to return to its prior condition and function following project completion. The remainder of the site consists of a small portion of a sparsely vegetated horse pasture and approximately 2,800 linear feet of paved roads, which provide only low-quality habitat for most species. Any impacts to these areas would also be temporary due to trenching. Vegetation that may be impacted in unpaved areas left barren as a result of trenching activities (including the agricultural field) would be expected to naturally recruit in a short period of time from surrounding areas. Due to the small amount of low-quality habitat that would be permanently and temporarily impacted by project development, the loss of habitat for native wildlife resulting from the proposed project would constitute a less than significant impact.

- c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? [Less than Significant Impact]*

Disturbance to Wetlands or Riparian Habitats

No wetlands or other jurisdictional waters occur on the project site. Therefore, state and federal regulations protecting jurisdictional waters are not relevant to project-related activities. For areas where lower order tributaries cross under the road via culverts, the pipeline will be placed beneath the culverts. The project will also have no effect on riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities, as no such areas occur on the project site, and no mitigation would be required.

Degradation of Water Quality

Proposed construction activities could result in a small, temporarily barren area of soil in the construction footprint and, therefore, vulnerable to sheet, rill, or gully erosion until the site is revegetated or unless erosion control measures are provided. Construction site runoff is often polluted with grease, oil, pesticide and herbicide residues, heavy metals, etc., which could eventually be carried to sensitive wetland habitats.

The County will abide by the provisions of the County Grading Ordinance, including standard erosion control measures that employ best management practices (BMPs), as described in *Section 2.9, Hydrology and Water Quality*. Compliance with these measures should result in no impacts to water quality in seasonal creeks, reservoirs, and downstream waters from the proposed project and should not result in the deposition of pollutants and sediments in sensitive riparian and wetland habitats.

- d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? [Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project]*

Migratory Birds

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C., sec. 703, Supp. I, 1989) prohibits killing, possessing, or trading in migratory birds, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. This act encompasses whole birds, parts of birds, and bird nests and eggs. Birds of prey are also protected in California under provisions of the State Fish and Game Code, (Section 3503.5), which states that it is “unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the order *Falconiformes* or *Strigiformes* (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto.” Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered “taking” by the CDFG.

Although no stick nests were observed on or adjacent to the site, the valley oaks occurring in the agricultural field and trees along Bolado and Quien Sabe Roads provide suitable nesting habitat for migratory birds, including tree-nesting raptors. A red-tail hawk was observed during a site visit, and northern harriers and white-tailed kites could also occur on site. Additionally, the agricultural field provides suitable, albeit sparse, nesting habitat for burrowing owls. If a migratory bird or raptor,

regardless of its federal or state status, were to nest on or near the site prior to or during proposed ground disturbance activities, such activities could result in the abandonment of active nests or direct mortality to these birds. Ground disturbance activities that adversely affect the nesting success of special-status or non-special-status migratory birds, including tree- and ground-nesting raptors, or result in mortality of individual birds constitute a violation of state and federal laws and would be considered a significant impact under CEQA.

Mitigation Measures: The following measures shall be implemented to avoid any impacts to active migratory bird or raptor (e.g., hawks, falcons, owls, etc.) nests:

MM BIO-4:

Tree-nesting Raptors: No tree removal is included in the proposed project, but should trees need to be removed, their removal should occur during the non-breeding season (September 1 through January 31). If it is not possible to avoid tree removal or other disturbances during the breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey for tree-nesting raptors and other migratory birds in all trees within the operation footprint and within 250 feet of the footprint no more than 30 days prior to tree removal or other ground disturbance.

If nesting migratory birds are detected on the site during the survey, a qualified biologist shall designate a construction-free buffer zone (typically 250 feet, but no less than 50 feet) around the nest, in accordance with the requirements of and in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The necessity to establish, and requirements for buffers are to be determined at the time of the previously-described survey and shall remain in place for the duration of the breeding season or until it has been confirmed by a qualified biologist that all chicks have fledged and are independent of their parents. Pre-construction surveys during the non-breeding season are not necessary for migratory birds, as they are expected to abandon their roosts during construction activities. Implementation of the above measures would mitigate impacts to migratory birds, including tree-nesting raptors, to a less than significant level.

MM BIO-5:

Burrowing Owls: No more than 30 days prior to the commencement of initial ground disturbing activities, the County shall implement focused pre-construction reconnaissance level surveys for burrowing owls. Surveys shall be conducted prior to the initiation of ground disturbance and be conducted by County-approved, qualified biologist(s) with experience surveying for burrowing owls. Surveys for burrowing owls shall be conducted in conformance with the California Burrowing Owl Consortium's 1995 protocols, which consist of a minimum of three site visits. Surveys shall be completed within all areas proposed for ground disturbance and within 250 of the project area on all areas in assess is granted to the County, and shall include the following avoidance measures:

1. Occupied burrows shall not be disturbed during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31) unless a qualified County-approved biologist verifies through non-invasive methods that either the birds have not begun egg-laying and incubation or that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival. Owls present on site after February 1 will be

assumed to be nesting unless evidence indicates otherwise. A 250-foot exclusion buffer around any active nest would be erected. This protected buffer area will remain in effect until August 31, or based upon monitoring evidence, until the young owls are foraging independently or the nest is no longer active.

2. For burrowing owls present during the non-breeding season (generally September 1 to January 31), a 150-foot buffer zone will be maintained around the occupied burrow(s).
3. If there is any danger that owls will be injured or killed as a result of construction activity, during the non-breeding season, the birds may be passively evicted during the non-breeding season. Relocation of owls during the non-breeding season will be performed by a qualified biologist using one-way doors, which should be installed in all burrows within the impact area and left in place for at least three nights. These one-way doors will then be removed and the burrows excavated to ensure no burrowing owl is within the burrow and then backfilled immediately prior to the initiation of grading. To avoid the potential for owls evicted from a burrow to occupy other burrows within the impact area, one-way doors will be placed in all potentially suitable burrows within the impact area when eviction occurs.

Implementation of the above measures would mitigate impacts to migratory birds, including tree and ground-nesting raptors, to a less than significant level.

Movement Corridors

Tres Pinos Creek, which is located approximately 0.15 miles southwest of the well site, facilitates wildlife movement through the region. As noted previously, a number of reptiles, birds, and mammals may use the adjacent agricultural field as part of their home range and dispersal movements. The field itself does not function as a wildlife movement corridor. The remainder of the site provides minimal dispersal habitat for native wildlife and, as such, contributes very little to regional movement pathways. Proposed construction and trenching activities are not expected to have a significant effect on home range and dispersal movements of native wildlife that may occur in the region. The proposed project may result in a temporary disruption of local wildlife movements and would be expected to do so only during daylight hours. Because the site will be functionally unchanged once construction is complete, these activities are not expected to result in any permanent or substantial changes in use or movement patterns. Wildlife species presently utilizing this area are expected to continue moving through it after project buildout. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on corridor-type movements of native wildlife within the region and no mitigation is required.

- e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?* **[Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project]**

Chapter 19.33 of the San Benito County Code of Ordinances requires that a tree pruning/removal permit be obtained from the County's Planning Director prior to the cutting or removal of any tree.

One large valley oak (approximately 50 inches in diameter) and several smaller oaks are present along the pipeline alignment near Bolado Road. The proposed alignment would be situated within the dripline of the large valley oak and may be located within the dripline of at least one of the smaller valley oaks. Trenching activities could compromise the root system and health of these trees, which would be considered a significant adverse impact. At the time this report was prepared, no trees were proposed for removal.

Mitigation Measures: The County of San Benito shall implement the following measures to minimize impacts to mature trees. These measures would ensure that retained trees are protected during trenching operations.

MM BIO-6: The proposed pipeline will be aligned so that trenching activities will occur outside of the dripline of any onsite trees. The setback distance from the trees will be determined in consultation with a certified arborist.

If avoidance is not possible (i.e., an easement cannot be obtained for realigning the pipeline to occur outside of the tree dripline), then the project applicant and trenching operator shall work in consultation with a certified arborist to determine the optimal drilling location in order to minimize direct and indirect impacts to the root system of onsite trees. Impacts to any retained trees during trenching operations would also be reduced to a less than significant level by implementation of the following measures:

- The project proponent shall retain a certified arborist prior to any ground disturbance activities. The certified arborist shall insure compliance with the tree-protection measures, based on the best management practices of the International Society of Arboriculture for avoiding tree damage during construction. These measures would include, but are not limited to:
 - Prior to any ground disturbance activities, fencing shall be installed around the dripline of all retained trees occurring within the construction area, to the extent such fencing does not present a hazard in the public right-of-way. The fencing shall remain in place for the duration of trenching operations. The type of fencing to be utilized would be at the direction of the certified arborist.
 - During construction:
 - No grading, construction, demolition or other work shall occur within the tree protection zone (fenced area). Any modifications must be approved and monitored by the certified arborist.
 - Any root pruning required for construction purposes shall receive the prior approval of, and be supervised by, the certified arborist.
 - Supplemental irrigation shall be applied as determined by the certified arborist.
 - If injury should occur to any tree during construction, it shall be evaluated as soon as possible, but not later

than 10 days, by the certified arborist so that appropriate treatments can be applied, depending on the specifics of the injury.

- No excess soil, chemicals, debris, equipment or other materials shall be dumped or stored within the tree protection zone.
- Any additional tree pruning needed for clearance during construction must be performed or supervised by an arborist and not by construction personnel.

- The construction superintendent shall meet with the certified arborist before beginning work to discuss work procedures and tree protection.
- A certified arborist or a qualified biologist shall be onsite to monitor trenching activities.
- Should project buildout require any limb or root pruning of any of the trees occurring on the site, a tree pruning/removal permit may be required pursuant to Chapter 19.33 of the County's Code of Ordinances, and the County would be expected to comply with the terms of the permit. Any limb or root pruning to be conducted on retained trees shall be approved and supervised by the certified arborist, and shall follow best management practices developed by the International Society of Arboriculture.

f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*
[No Impact]

No habitat conservation plans (HCP), or natural community conservation plans (NCCP) are in effect for this project. While a draft HCP had been underway in this region for some time, this effort is no longer moving forward.

2.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 9
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 9
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 9
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 9

The following discussion is based on a cultural resources report completed by *Holman & Associates* in November 2009.

- a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource as defined in §15064.5?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project consists of the construction of a new well and water pipeline along Quien Sabe Road and Bolado Road south and east of the village of Tres Pinos. In addition, an electrical connection would extend down an existing dirt road which runs southwest from Bolado Road to a terminus at an existing electrical tower which may be used to supply power to the proposed well site.

A cultural resources literature review was completed at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) located in Rohnert Park on September 9, 2009. The actual proposed pipeline corridor and well location have not been previously surveyed and there are no recorded historic and/or prehistoric archaeological sites located inside or within 500 feet of the projected corridors. There have been two surveys of adjacent properties: in 1988 a parcel of land located along Quien Sabe Road north of Highway 25 was surveyed with negative results.

In 1999 *Far Western Anthropological Research Group* recorded a total of 26 structures in Tres Pinos, the majority of them northwest of the intersection of Highway 25 and Quien Sabe Road; only the existing 1892 church southeast of this intersection was added to what the researchers felt comprised an historical district.

Based on the literature review, no historic properties would be affected by the project construction or implementation. Although the pipeline would cross State Route 25 near the town of Tres Pinos, the historic properties within the town would not be affected by the construction, and no mitigation measures are required.

b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in §15064.5?* [**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project**]

In addition to the literature review described above, a visual inspection of the proposed pipeline right of way and well location was completed on August 27, 2009. Since the majority of the pipeline route is to be located inside the existing pavement area, the visual inspection was expanded a distance of 10 to 20 feet outside of the paved alignment route to search for cultural resources. The small jog of the pipeline which will run through the existing horse pasture was not visually inspected: this portion of the route is situated on a hillside too steep to have supported Native American settlements.

No evidence of historic and/or prehistoric archaeological resources were seen at any point along the proposed pipeline corridor, the well site and/or the proposed electrical line easement, and therefore development of the pipeline and well would have no effect on cultural resources. Monitoring of project excavation and/or a program of mechanical subsurface presence/absence testing is not indicated during implementation of the project.

There remains a small possibility that trenching for the proposed power line could uncover buried cultural resources: Tres Pinos Creek is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the proposed well site, and the former riparian zone of the creek would have been an ideal location for seasonal camp or village sites. Based on the field reconnaissance and records review, however, the potential for the site to contain buried archaeological resources is considered low, and the presence of an archaeological monitor during construction is not required.

While it is unlikely that there are archaeological deposits on the project site, there is always some potential that construction and excavation may uncover deeply buried cultural materials or human remains. Disturbance of buried cultural resources could result in a significant impact. In the event that construction trenching unearths any cultural materials or human remains, therefore, the following mitigation measures will be implemented.

Mitigation Measures

MM CR-1: In the event that construction trenching unearths any archaeological site indicators (as described below), work shall be halted within 50 feet of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist has been retained to inspect it. If the project archaeologist determines that a potentially significant resource will be impacted by additional trenching activities, it will be the responsibility of the project sponsor to submit a plan for evaluative testing to the Director of Planning, County of San Benito to demonstrate that the project area contains a resource eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR).

Archaeological site indicators include but are not limited to the following:

- Darker than surrounding soils of a friable nature,
- evidence of fire (ash, charcoal, fire affected earth or rock),
- concentrations of bone, stone or fresh water shellfish, and
- artifacts of these materials.

MM CR-2: If testing (normally limited hand excavation) demonstrates that the resource is eligible, a plan for mitigation of impacts to it shall be submitted to the Director of Planning, County of San Benito for approval before work can recommence inside the zone described as archaeologically sensitive. Mitigation can include limited data retrieval through additional hand excavation coupled with archaeological monitoring of soils removal from the zone of archaeological sensitivity in order to insure that significant archaeological materials and data are retrieved for analysis.

MM CR-3: In the event that human remains are encountered, work shall be stopped within a zone around the discovery determined by the project archaeologist until the San Benito County Coroner's Office and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) have been contacted. It is the responsibility of the NAHC to name a Most Likely Descendant (MLD), who will be responsible for advising the project sponsor regarding the method of exposure, removal and reburial of any human remains and/or associated grave goods discovered during construction. (Pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code and Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code of the State of California.)

c) *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?* **[No Impact]**

The site does not contain unique paleontological or geologic features.

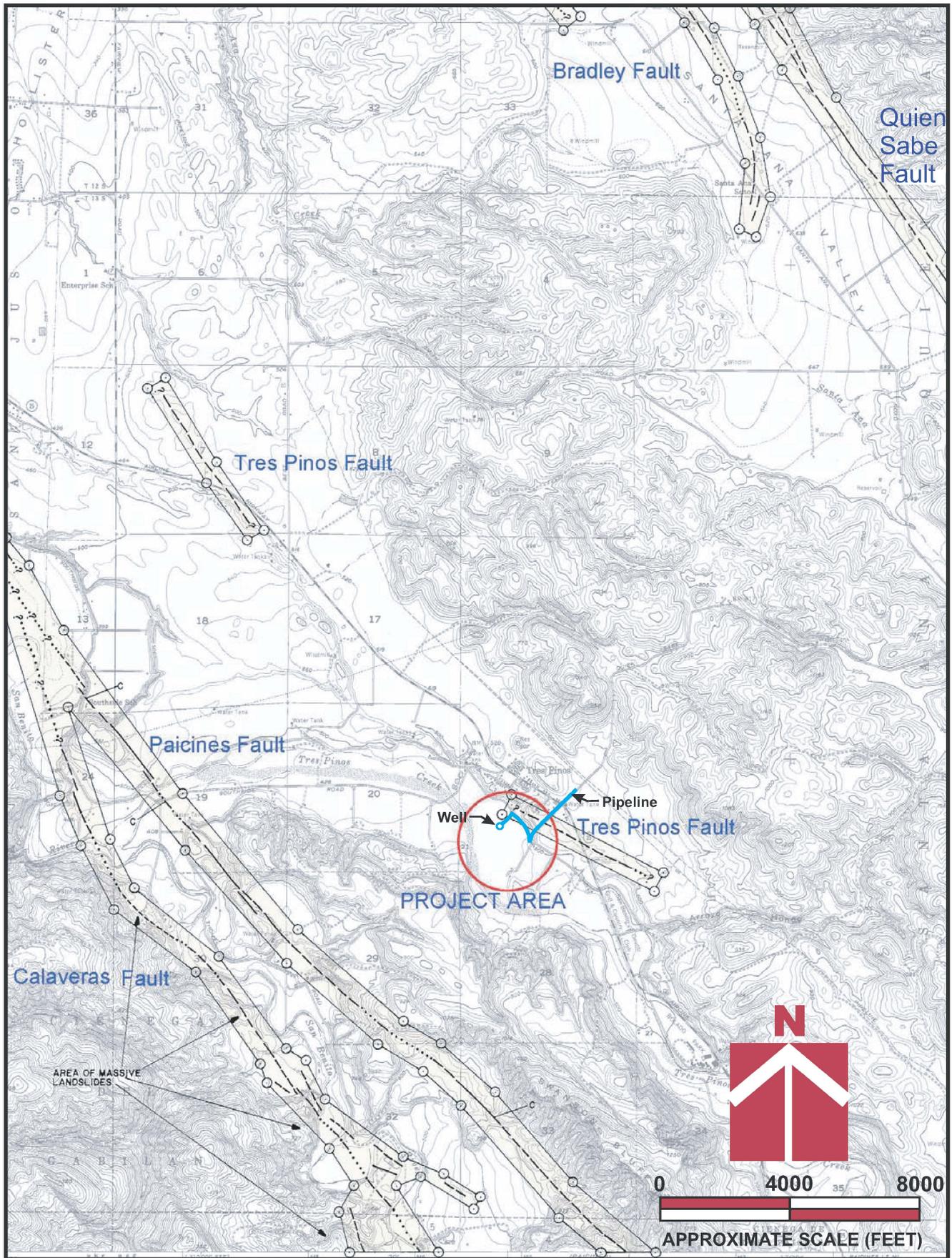
d) *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?* **[Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Included in the Project]**

Please see the discussion and mitigation measures in sections (a) and (b), above.

2.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:						
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as described on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10, 11
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that will become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10, 11
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1802.3.2 of the California Building Code (2007), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10, 11
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 10, 11

The following discussion is based in part on the “Geotechnical and Geologic Evaluation, Stonegate Well and Pipeline Initial Study, Tres Pinos, California”, by *Cornerstone Earth Group*, prepared on September 16, 2009. This report is attached to this Initial Study as Appendix B.



SPECIAL-STUDY FAULT ZONES

FIGURE 5

- a) *Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*
 - i. *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as described on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)* **[Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project]**

Faults and Special Study Zones: The Calaveras and San Andreas fault systems are both located southwest of the project site (refer to Figure 5). The active Calaveras fault, a major geologic structure in California, is located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the project site, and has been zoned by the State of California as a Special Study Zone in conformance with the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act. The Paicines fault branches out from the Calaveras fault approximately three miles northwest of the site and has also been designated by the state as a Special Study Zone. Two short segments of the Tres Pinos fault have been zoned under the Special Studies Zone concept based on weak geomorphic evidence and seismic activity apparently associated with the fault. The southern segment of the zoned Tres Pinos fault extends for approximately 850 feet in a southeasterly direction from its northern end at a point on Bolado Road approximately 700 feet north of the proposed well location. The northern segment of the Tres Pinos fault extends in a northwesterly direction approximately 2.5 miles to the northwest of the project well location.

The southern segment of the fault is mapped to cross the proposed project pipeline alignment at Quien Sabe Road, approximately 600 feet southwest of State Route 25. The Tres Pinos fault has been characterized as a nearly vertical, right-lateral strike-slip fault not showing clear evidence for recent displacement, although it presents a broad linear trough, closed depressions, and right-laterally deflected drainages.

In addition, the Quien Sabe fault, essentially parallel to the Calaveras fault, and located approximately 3.8 miles northeast of the project, has been zoned as a Special Studies Zone. Finally, a short unnamed fault approximately 6.5 miles north of the project area has been zoned as well. The San Andreas fault lies approximately 4.1 miles southwest of the project area.

Earthquakes: The San Francisco Bay area is one of the most seismically active areas in the country. During a major earthquake, ground rupture at the site is not anticipated, but very strong ground shaking would likely occur. Faults considered capable of generating significant earthquakes are generally associated with well-defined areas of crustal movement, which trend northwesterly.

As discussed above, several significant active faults are located within ten miles of the site. The Tres Pinos fault crosses the pipeline alignment and has been zoned as a Special Studies Zone by the State of California. The fault has weak evidence that it has moved during the last 11,000 years, and, therefore, fault rupture hazard is a significant geologic hazard at the site. Since the project pipeline alignment crosses the mapped trace of the fault and the well would be located in near proximity to the fault, it is possible that future movement of the fault may affect the pipeline and well.

The mitigation measures described below would reduce hazards from earthquake faults and groundshaking in the area to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-1: Rupture of the Tres Pinos fault could affect the proposed pipeline. To reduce impacts from this potential rupture, the County shall implement either of the following mitigations.

- 1) A detailed subsurface investigation shall be completed at the locations where the fault either crosses, is in close proximity, or coincides with the pipeline alignment. This investigation would evaluate the fault characteristics at those locations and its degree of activity.
- 2) If a detailed subsurface investigation is not completed, implementation of the engineering controls in Mitigation Measure **MM GEO-2** shall be implemented across the suspected fault trace to allow for pipeline deformation without rupture.

MM GEO-2: The pipeline shall be designed to withstand some potential displacement associated with renewed activity of the Tres Pinos fault. Engineering controls shall be implemented to withstand the displacement, such as valves that could be installed on the pipeline at either side of the identified fault trace that would permit isolating and repairing the affected pipeline segment in the event of fault rupture; or placing the pipeline in a bed of granular material and flexible connections on either side of the identified fault trace to allow for pipeline deformation without rupture.

ii. *Strong seismic ground shaking?* [**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project**]

Moderate to severe earthquakes can cause strong ground shaking, which is the case for the project area. Strong ground shaking should be expected at the site during the life of the project. Mitigation Measures **MM GEO-1** and **MM GEO-2**, as described above, would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. In addition Mitigation Measure **MM GEO-3** is also included in the project to further avoid the effects of ground shaking.

MM GEO-3: The proposed pipeline shall be designed to industry standards (such as the standards developed by the American Water Works Association) to avoid the affects of ground shaking.

iii. *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?* [**Less than Significant Impact**]

Liquefaction is the result of seismic activity and is characterized as the transformation of loose, water-saturated soils from a solid state to a liquid-like state after ground shaking. There are many variables that contribute to liquefaction including the age of the soil, soil type, soil cohesion, soil density, and groundwater level. High groundwater levels can increase the potential for damage to structures and roadways from earthquake-induced liquefaction. In extreme cases, the soil particles can become suspended in groundwater resulting in the deposit becoming mobile and fluid-like.

Three of the indicators for liquefaction include soil type, soil density, and depth to groundwater. Since groundwater in the area is considered to be relatively deep, the potential for liquefaction impacting the proposed well and pipeline is considered low during seismic shaking. Because the

potential for liquefaction at the site appears low, the potential for ground rupture at the site also appears low.

iv. *Landslides?* **[No Impact]**

Landslides are evident in the hills to the south and north of the project area. The well site and pipeline alignments are located in a generally flat area away from steep slopes or deep drainages and, therefore, the project is not subject to landslides or similar types of ground failure.

b) *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The surficial soils in the project area are moderately to well drained and are not likely to be significantly eroded by surface runoff or by wind action. Since the project area is not located in hilly terrain underlain by weak bedrock or soils, debris flows are unlikely to affect the proposed facilities.

c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that will become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project site is underlain by alluvial deposits. The younger alluvial deposits underlying the well site are described as consisting of gravel, sand and clay of valley areas, whereas the older alluvial deposits are described as dissected older alluvial terrace deposits consisting of gravel and sand.

Lateral spreading or lurching typically occurs as a form of horizontal displacement of relatively flat-lying material toward an open face such as an excavation, channel, or body of water. Generally, in soils, this movement is due to failure along a weak plane and may often be associated with liquefaction. The potential for liquefaction occurring at the site is considered low. In addition, there are no steep open faces within 200 feet of the site where lateral spreading could occur. Therefore, the potential for lateral spreading to affect the site is low.

If near-surface materials vary in composition either vertically or laterally, major earthquake shaking can cause non-uniform compaction, resulting in movement of the materials and overlying facilities. This can also occur gradually over a long period of time. Surficial materials underlying the proposed project area generally consist of alluvial deposits. Therefore, the potential for significant differential compaction affecting proposed improvements is low.

The site is situated inland, many miles from the nearest water body, at an elevation greater than 450 feet above mean sea level (USGS datum). The location is more than 25 miles east of Monterey Bay and is not located next to any major uncontrolled drainage area that would be affected by a seismically induced wave. Therefore, seismically induced waves, such as seiches, are not an anticipated hazard at the site.

d) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1802.3.2 of the California Building Code (2007), creating substantial risks to life or property?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project area is underlain by soils of the Rincon-Antioch-Cropley association consisting of nearly level to strongly sloping, well-drained and moderately well drained, medium to fine textured soils on terraces and alluvial fans. At the well site, and extending northward to approximately Bolado Road, the soil type is described as Sorrento silt loam, with zero to two percent slope. To the east, the project area is underlain by silt and sandy loams with similar slopes, and by gravelly loams with five to nine percent slopes. The soils in the project area are described as having moderate shrink/swell

potential, and moderate to moderately slow permeability. Closer to Tres Pinos Creek are sandy loams with rapid permeability due to a sandy substrate.

The soils in the area have been noted as having a moderate expansion potential. Expansive soils can undergo significant volume change with changes in moisture content. Expansive soils shrink and harden when dried, and expand and soften when wetted. During a site visit, surface soils appeared to be of a low expansion potential along the alignment; however, some moderately expansive soils could be present. The new pipeline will be embedded several feet below grade and below the zone of significant moisture fluctuation. Therefore, the potential for impact to the proposed pipeline due to expansive soils is low.

There is a potential that some existing fills could be present along the proposed pipeline alignment due to previous development, agriculture, or grading improvements for local roads and utilities. Should old fills be encountered, they should be characterized, and removed or replaced with engineered fill, as necessary.

Most of the proposed alignment for the new pipeline is within paved public roads. Approximately 600 feet of the pipeline will traverse an open field, which has been used for row crops and orchards. Tilling of agricultural fields is typically deep, on the order of 30 inches or deeper. Excavations for the pipeline trench would remove most, if not all, of the loose soils that have been previously tilled for agriculture. Therefore, the potential for loose, compressible surface soils to affect the pipeline would be low.

- e) *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?*
[No Impact]

No septic tanks or wastewater disposal systems are included in the project.

2.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7

Introduction and Background

This section provides a general discussion of global climate change and focuses on emissions from the project that could alter the chemical composition of the atmosphere. The discussion on global climate change and greenhouse gas emissions is based upon the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill (AB) 32), the 2006 and 2009 Climate Action Team (CAT) reports to Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature, and research, information and analysis completed by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United States Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board, and the CAT.

Global climate change refers to changes in weather including temperatures, precipitation, and wind patterns. Global temperatures are modulated by naturally occurring and anthropogenic (generated by mankind) atmospheric gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.⁶ These gases allow sunlight into the Earth's atmosphere but prevent heat from radiating back out into outer space and escaping from the Earth's atmosphere, thus altering the Earth's energy balance. This phenomenon is known as the "greenhouse effect." Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapor,⁷ carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.

Thresholds of Significance

Agencies at the international, national, state, and local levels are considering strategies to control emissions of gases that contribute to global warming. There is no comprehensive strategy that is being implemented on a global scale that addresses climate change; however, in California a multi-agency "Climate Action Team", has identified a range of strategies and the Air Resources Board, under Assembly Bill (AB) 32, has approved the *Climate Change Scoping Plan*. AB 32 requires achievement by 2020 of a statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit equivalent to 1990 emissions,

⁶ IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers," *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Bases. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Solomon, S., D. Qin, M. Manning, Z. Chen, M. Marquis, K.B. Averyt, M. Tignor, and H.L. Miller (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA. Available at: <http://ipcc.ch/>.

⁷ Concentrations of water are highly variable in the atmosphere over time, with water occurring as vapor, cloud droplets and ice crystals. Changes in its concentration are also considered to be a result of climate feedbacks rather than a direct result of industrialization or other human activities. For this reason, water vapor is not discussed further as a greenhouse gas.

and the adoption of rules and regulations to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The California Natural Resources Agency, as required under state law (Public Resources Code §21083.05) has amended the State CEQA Guidelines to address the analysis and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, effective March 18, 2010. In these changes to the CEQA Guidelines, Lead Agencies, such as the County of San Benito, retain discretion to determine the significance of impacts from greenhouse gas emissions based upon individual circumstances.

Neither CEQA nor the CEQA Guidelines provide a specific methodology for analysis of greenhouse gases. Given the global scope of global climate change, the issue becomes one of cumulative impacts. Therefore, the essential questions for the proposed project are whether the project creates or contributes to an environmental impact or is subject to impacts from the environment in which it would occur, and what mitigation measures are available to avoid or reduce impacts.

San Benito County Policies and Programs

The San Benito County Water Resources Association provides information and assistance on water conservation to residents and customers. Water conservation programs include rebates on replacing washing machines, toilets, and pre-1999 water softeners with high-efficiency and low water use substitutes. Programs also include information on optimizing sprinkler systems, home water checkups, and free conservation devices.⁸

a) *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts From the Project

Given the overwhelming scope of global climate change, it is not anticipated that a single project would have an individually discernable effect on global climate change. It is more appropriate to conclude that the greenhouse gas emissions generated by the proposed project would combine with emissions across the state, nation, and globe to cumulatively contribute to global climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions from the proposed well and pipeline would include emissions from constructing and operating the project.

Construction activities for the proposed project are expected to be minimal; consisting of the development of a new production groundwater well and conveyance pipeline that would connect to Stonegate's existing water supply system. The proposed well site development would include a small equipment building and generator enclosure on concrete pads, and the area around the well would be gravel-surfaced. Electrical lines would be extended to the site, and the site would be enclosed within a chain-link fence. Given the temporary and limited nature of construction activities, there would be a less than significant impact to the global climate. The proposed project would generate minimal emissions from the production of materials required for the construction process, including control equipment, pumps, and construction-related materials.

Greenhouse gas emissions from operation of the proposed project would include fuel burned for transportation related to routine maintenance visits to the site and indirect emissions from electrical energy use by lights, electrical controls, pumps, and other equipment at the groundwater well. Maintenance vehicle trips are anticipated to be infrequent, and would not generate a substantial

⁸ Water Resources Association of San Benito County, <http://wrasbc.isoars.com/>, accessed February 12, 2010.

amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The project may include an on-site backup diesel generator, which would be run periodically for testing and during emergencies. Given the infrequent operation of this generator, emissions can be considered negligible.

Global Climate Change Impacts To the Project

Climate change effects expected in California over the next century could include reduced water supply, impacts from sea level rise, an increase in the number of days per year ozone pollution levels are exceeded, and increased electricity demand, particularly in the hot summer months. Impacts to water demand from global climate change could include reduced water availability due to drought, increased evapotranspiration, and extended growing seasons. At this time, neither the State Department of Water Resources, the County of San Benito, nor the San Benito County Water District has established the effects of global climate change on water supplies in California or locally.

The project site is located substantially inland from Monterey Bay, and is not within possible inundation areas from an up to 35-inch rise in sea level, which is the upper limit predicted by the California Climate Change Center.⁹ The project, therefore, would not be directly impacted by sea level rise.

Significance of Cumulative Greenhouse Gas Emissions

To determine whether the proposed project would have significant greenhouse gas emissions is somewhat speculative, because there are no existing numerical thresholds to determine an impact. The proposed project would result in very minor short-term emissions of greenhouse gases during drilling and construction, and incrementally increase indirect emissions of greenhouse gases through electrical use at the groundwater well to power controls and pumps. While the quantity of indirect emissions can be estimated, relative to the overall energy usage throughout the state it would not create a cumulatively considerable global climate change impact.

In an effort to disclose environmental impacts and to conform with the CEQA Guidelines [§15064(b)], it is the County's position that, based on the nature of the project, and the estimated emissions from the construction and operation of the project, the proposed project would not impede the state's ability to reach the emission reduction limits/standards set forth by the State of California by Executive Order S-3-05 and AB 32.

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

As described above, the County of San Benito, the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD), and other local agencies have not yet adopted plans, policies, or regulations for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. The project does not conflict with California state plans and policies adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

⁹ California Climate Change Center, *The Future is Now: An Update on Climate Change Science Impacts and Response Option for California*, prepared for the California Energy Commission, May 2009.

2.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 12
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 12
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 12
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 12
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 13
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 13
g) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2

The following discussion is based in part on the “Limited Environmental Site Assessment, Stonegate Water Supply Project, San Benito County, California,” by *Cornerstone Earth Group*, prepared on September 22, 2009. This report is attached to this Initial Study as Appendix C.

a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project is the development of a new public water well and conveyance pipeline to connect to the existing Stonegate water supply system. The area around the well would be asphalt-paved, and a small support building would be installed. Electrical lines would be extended to the site, and the site would be enclosed within a chain-link fence. The proposed project would require the use of heavy equipment during the construction period, including refueling. These uses would be temporary, and would be required to comply with existing laws and regulations.

The proposed project would include on-going storage of hazardous materials through the use of chlorine and diesel fuel. An estimated 120 gallons of chlorine would be stored in a small support building in secondary containment. The chlorine, in the form of liquid sodium hypochlorite, would be injected directly into the water supply at a rate of approximately 120 gallons per month, which would be pumped to the existing water distribution network. The chlorine would be transported by licensed hazardous materials transporters, and handled by well operators trained in proper chemical handling and disposal. Based on the small quantity of material, and for the reasons listed above, chlorine on site would not pose a significant impact to nearby uses.

A back-up diesel generator would also be installed on the site, and would require a maximum storage of approximately 100 gallons of diesel fuel. The back-up generator would be started and run periodically for testing, and would require a permit to operate from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.

Hazardous materials used during construction and operation of the proposed well and pipeline could include fuels, lubricants, cleaners, and solvents, in addition to the chlorine and diesel discussed above. Residual iron and manganese from filtration would also be stored temporarily prior to shipping for proper disposal off-site. These materials would not be used or stored in substantial quantities, and would be required to be used in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. If used properly, these materials would not create a foreseeable significant hazard to workers or the public. The proposed project, therefore, would not create a significant hazard to the public through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

A database search and site reconnaissance was completed by *Cornerstone Earth Group* in September 2009 (Appendix C). The site reconnaissance did not identify any nearby facilities that appeared likely to use, handle, or store significant quantities of hazardous materials. The report also included a review of environmental regulatory databases to identify hazardous materials users or existing contamination on or near the project site.

The database search identified an underground storage tank installed in 1961 that was likely located on the Hain Ranch, adjacent to the Graniterock parcel. Small structures appear on historical aerial photographs of the Graniterock property near the project site in the 1940's, but were not visible by

the 1980's. The property appears to have been used as orchards from at least 1939 until the late 1970's, and has been undeveloped or agricultural land since that time.

Based on the site's previous use for agricultural purposes for several decades, pesticides likely were applied to crops in the normal course of farming or orchard operations. If elevated concentrations of agricultural chemicals are present, construction workers excavating soil could be exposed to these residential chemicals, particularly along the pipeline route through the Graniterock property. Current agricultural uses southeast of the proposed well site could apply pesticide during the course of normal operations.

As described in Section 2.8, a), liquid chlorine and diesel fuel would be stored on the well site. The chlorine would be transported by licensed hazardous materials transporters, and handled by well operators trained in proper chemical handling and disposal. Based on the small quantity of these materials, and for the reasons listed above, these materials stored on site would not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

In addition, it may be possible that a septic tank system could have been installed to service the structures observed in aerial photographs near the well site from the 1940's to the 1970's.

Mitigation Measures: The following mitigation measures would reduce impacts from agricultural pesticides or other contaminated materials remaining on site.

MM HAZ-1: Based on the agricultural history of the site, pesticides were likely applied to crops in the normal course of operations. In addition, septic tanks may have been located in the general area of the proposed well site, and their location cannot be verified. Based on this history, soil sampling and analytical testing should be completed along the pipeline alignment on the Graniterock property to evaluate if agricultural or other chemicals are present. Any suspected contaminated soils or debris encountered should be characterized and transported to an appropriate disposal facility, if warranted, in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

MM HAZ-2: Prior to construction, the San Benito Office of the Agricultural Commissioner shall be contacted to identify properties where pesticides have been recently applied (i.e., within 30 days). Areas where pesticides have been applied with restrictions of re-entry shall be identified and all restrictions shall be followed.

c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed well site is approximately one mile southeast of Tres Pinos Elementary School, which is the closest school to the project site. The use of chemicals during construction and operation of the proposed well and pipeline would not have an effect on this school.

d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?* **[No Impact]**

A database search and site reconnaissance did not identify any hazardous materials users or existing contamination on or near the project site. The site and adjacent uses are not located on the list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5.

- 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? [No Impact]*

The site is approximately eight miles southeast of the Hollister Municipal Airport, and is not within the Land Use Planning Area of the 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? [No Impact]*

The site is not within five miles of a private airstrip.

- g) *Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? [No Impact]*

The project would not conflict with any emergency response or evacuation plans.

- h) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? [No Impact]*

The site not located in a wildland fire hazard area, as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.¹⁰

¹⁰ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, *San Benito County Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) Map*, January 2000.

2.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 15, 16
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 15, 16
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 14
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 14
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 16
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 14
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 14

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 4
j) Be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

The discussion in this section is based on the following sources: *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*, “Flood Insurance Rate Map, San Benito County and Unincorporated Areas, California, Map Number 06069C0215D,” Revised April 16, 2009, *Geoconsultants, Inc.*, “Re: Summary Report, Drilling, Well Construction, and Aquifer Testing, Stonegate Water Supply Test Well, San Benito County, California,” April 22, 2010, and *Schaaf & Wheeler*, “Draft Memo: Analysis of Stonegate Test Well Water Quality,” May 6, 2010. These reports are attached to this Initial Study as Appendices D, E, and F.

Regulatory Framework

In California, the federal Clean Water Act, as amended by the Water Quality Act of 1987, and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of the California Water Code are the primary laws related to water quality. Regulations set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) have been developed to fulfill the requirements of this legislation. These regulations are implemented at the regional level by water quality control boards, which for the project area is the Central Coast Region (District 3) Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Federal Clean Water Act

Sections 303 and 304 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) call for the establishment of water quality standards, criteria, and guidelines. Under Section 303(d), states are required to identify impaired surface water bodies and develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for contaminants of concern. The TMDL is the quantity of pollutant that can be safely assimilated by a water body without violating water quality standards. The RWQCB has identified the Pajaro River as an “impaired” water body for sedimentation/siltation, fecal coliform, and boron. The San Benito River is listed as an impaired water body for fecal coliform. Tres Pinos Creek is also impaired due to fecal coliform concentrations exceeding water quality objectives. The TMDLs for two of these pollutants are projected to be adopted in 2011 (fecal coliform) and 2019 (boron).¹¹

Section 401 of the CWA regulates activities that may result in discharges to Waters of the United States (e.g., streams, lakes, bays, etc.), and that require a federal permit. Water Quality Certification by the SWRCB is required for activities such as placement of fill in wetlands or bodies of water.

¹¹ Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Total Maximum Daily Load Program, http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdl/, accessed June 3, 2010.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Section 402 of the federal Clean Water Act establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which controls sources that discharge pollutants into Waters of the United States. The SWRCB has adopted specific NPDES permits for a variety of activities that have potential to discharge wastes to waters of the state. The SWRCB's statewide stormwater general permit for construction activity (Order 2009-0009-DWQ) is applicable to all land-disturbing construction activities that would disturb more than one acre. All of the NPDES permits involve similar processes, including submittal to the Central Coast RWQCB of notices of intent (NOI) to discharge, and implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) that include best management practices (BMPs) to minimize those discharges. Construction activities subject to the general construction activity permit include clearing, grading, stockpiling, and excavation.

Dischargers are required to eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters. The permit also requires dischargers to consider the use of permanent post construction BMPs that would remain in service to protect water quality throughout the life of the project. NPDES permits require the implementation of design and operational BMPs to reduce the level of contaminant runoff. Types of BMPs include, but are not limited to, implementing erosion-control measures, such as silt fences, staked straw bales or wattles, sediment/silt basins and traps, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary vegetation; establishing permanent vegetative cover to reduce erosion in disturbed areas by slowing runoff velocities, trapping sediment, and enhancing filtration and transpiration; and using drainage swales, ditches, and earth dikes to control erosion and runoff.

Discharges subject to the SWRCB NPDES general permit for construction activity are subject to development and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP includes a site map and description of construction activities and identifies the BMPs that would be employed to prevent soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants (e.g., petroleum products, solvents, paints, cement) that could contaminate nearby water resources. The SWPPP also specifies the chemicals likely to be used during construction that could be present in storm water drainage and non-stormwater discharges. The SWPPP will also specify spill prevention and contingency measures, identify measures to prevent or clean up spills of hazardous materials used for equipment operation and hazardous waste, and identify emergency procedures for responding to spills. All NPDES permits also have a sampling and monitoring program that meets the requirements of SWRCB Order 2009-0009-DWQ, to ensure that the BMPs are effective.

The SWPPP identifies personnel training requirements and procedures to be used to ensure that workers are aware of permit requirements and proper installation and performance inspection methods for BMPs specified in the SWPPP. The SWPPP also identifies the appropriate personnel responsible for supervisory duties related to implementation of the SWPPP. All construction contractors must retain a copy of the approved SWPPP on the construction site at all times.

Basin Plan

Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, the RWQCB is responsible for protecting surface, ground, and coastal waters within its boundaries. Each RWQCB also adopts a water quality control plan ("Basin Plan") that recognizes the unique characteristics of each region with regard to natural water quality and beneficial uses of both surface water and groundwater. The RWQCB implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) to meet specific water quality objectives. The Basin Plan for the Central Coast region was first adopted in 1975, and the last major revision was adopted in 1994.

Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin

The Hollister Service Area (HSA) overlies the Gilroy-Hollister groundwater basin. The San Benito County portion of the groundwater basin is bounded by the Pajaro River in the North, the Diablo Range on the east, and the Gabilan Range and Santa Cruz Mountains to the southwest. The basin covers 200 square miles of the Pajaro watershed. Faults that cross the groundwater basin divide it into subbasins that function somewhat independently of one another. The major subbasins underlying the HSA include the Hollister East, Hollister West, and Tres Pinos groundwater subbasins. The project site is located in the Tres Pinos groundwater subbasin. The San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) has jurisdiction over the management of groundwater and surface water resources in the HSA.

Groundwater Management Plan (Water Resources Association)

The 2004 *Groundwater Management Plan Update for the San Benito County Part of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin* (GWMP Update) is the result of a collaborative planning process by the Water Resources Association of San Benito County (WRA). The WRA is an association of the City of Hollister, the City of San Juan Bautista, the Sunnyslope County Water District, and the San Benito County Water District. The member communities and districts of the WRA are responsible for the implementation of programs and elements described in the GWMP Update in the Northern San Benito County area. Implementation of the GWMP Update consists of voluntary, coordinated actions by the participating communities and districts of the WRA.

The GWMP includes goals and objectives for short-term and long-term management of water resources in Northern San Benito County. It is the principal plan for the management of groundwater in Hollister, San Juan Bautista, the San Benito County Water District, and the Sunnyslope County Water District within the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin. The GWMP addresses surface and groundwater management as well as wastewater treatment discharges and use of recycled water supplies. The GWMP is intended to facilitate the provision of reliable, sustainable, good quality water for existing and future agricultural, municipal and industrial (M&I) uses in accordance with the adopted goals and objectives of the Plan. The overall goal of the GWMP Update is to maintain and enhance the agricultural and economic productivity of San Benito County in an environmentally responsible manner.

Drinking Water Standards

Suppliers of domestic drinking water are subject to federal regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.) as well as California Department of Public Health regulations under the California Safe Drinking Water Plan Act (Health and Safety Code Sections 116270-116750). These regulations address primary drinking water standards, or maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for inorganic and organic chemicals and radioactivity. Secondary drinking water standards have also been established to address aesthetic factors, such as taste, smell and clarity. The State of California requires public water systems to analyze their drinking water for contaminants on a regular basis.

Groundwater in the basin can contain high concentrations of chloride, iron, and manganese, and have high levels of specific conductance, total dissolved solids, and turbidity; any of which can cause the water to exceed secondary drinking water standards. Almost all groundwater in the basin has high

hardness levels (calcium and magnesium content), which is not regulated under the drinking water standards but can cause deposits and impair the effectiveness of soap products.¹²

Existing Stonegate System

Stonegate's current potable and non-potable water demands are supplied by the Central Valley Project (CVP), a surface water source. The San Benito County Water District operates the CVP distribution system, and the County's Public Works Department administers Stonegate's on-site water distribution and treatment systems. The delivered CVP water has historically equaled about 75 percent of Stonegate's allowed amount and has not consistently met Stonegate's water demands, particularly for landscape irrigation. Future CVP water allocations are uncertain, and supplies are variable and interruptible. Based on the projected yield of the proposed well, non-potable water demands would continue to be met primarily with untreated CVP water.

The Stonegate subdivision was developed with a dual-plumbed water system throughout, allowing for the provision of domestic and non-potable water services through two separate piping systems. An existing surface water treatment plant between Meadow Court and State Route 25 treats a portion of the water received through the CVP pipeline to provide potable water that meets regulations for surface water quality. Two 150,000 gallon tanks near the southeast end of Diablo Hills Road provide potable and non-potable water storage for the existing system.

- a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Public Health (DPH) regulate primary drinking water contaminants that affect human health with maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). In California, secondary drinking water contaminants are also regulated by MCLs developed to control the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water. Based on water quality data collected from the test well, the production well would have levels of iron and manganese above their respective secondary MCLs. Color, turbidity, and total dissolved solids (TDS), also secondary contaminants, were also found to be above recommended levels. The elevated color, turbidity, and TDS levels may be related to the elevated iron and manganese concentrations in the groundwater.

Analysis of samples from the test well indicates that the groundwater does not contain constituents exceeding primary MCLs. Water treatment would take place at the wellhead prior to distribution of the water from the well for potable use; and may include oxidation and filtration, with residual chlorination.

- b) *Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

To determine if the well site was suitable for a production well, a test well was drilled in January 2010 to a depth of 450 feet and completed to 360 feet below ground surface. Based on the test

¹² San Benito County Water District/Water Resources Association, *Groundwater Management Plan Update for the San Benito County Portion of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin Final Program Environmental Impact Report*, May 2004.

results of this well, the proposed production well can be expected to produce 90 gallons per minute for approximately 12 hours per day, or 45 gallons per minute on average. This quantity of water would not substantially reduce aquifer volumes or contribute to the lowering of the groundwater table, as the drawdown around the well would be very limited and would not affect the nearest active wells (Appendix D).

- c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on-or off-site?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project area is located near Tres Pinos Creek within the San Benito River watershed. The San Benito River is a perennial creek that flows northwest from its origin in the Diablo Range. The largest tributary to the San Benito River is Tres Pinos Creek, with a drainage area of approximately 206 square miles, including the Tres Pinos and Quien Sabe Valleys.¹³

The proposed project would not alter the drainage pattern of the site or of the area, and would not result in substantial siltation or erosion off-site (see Section 2.9 (e), for further discussion).

- d) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project would not alter the drainage pattern of the site or of the area, and would not result in flooding off-site.

- e) *Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project would increase the area of impervious surfaces over current conditions, through minor concrete paving at the well-site. In addition, runoff from the well and pipeline sites during construction activities could also contain contaminants and affect water quality.

The proposed well would be installed at the site of the existing test well, utilizing the existing drilled hole. The proposed well would, therefore, not require disposal of drilling fluids and excess groundwater generated from the drilling process. Stormwater runoff from the site would likely be absorbed locally into existing pervious surfaces surrounding the wellsite. Although stormwater runoff following well and pipeline construction is not anticipated to be substantial, stormwater runoff during construction activities may contain sediment and other contaminants. Best management practices and other measures would further reduce these impacts.

Avoidance Measures

Based on the GWMP Update and regulatory requirements under the NPDES program, the following avoidance measures shall be implemented during construction and operation of the proposed well.

¹³ San Benito County Water District/Water Resources Association, *Groundwater Management Plan Update for the San Benito County Portion of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin Final Program Environmental Impact Report*, May 2004.

AM HYDRO-1: **General Measures:** Contractors shall be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for construction activities. The BMPs include measures guiding the management and operation of construction sites to control and minimize the potential contribution of pollutants to storm runoff from these areas. These measures address procedures for controlling erosion and sedimentation and managing all aspects of the construction process to ensure control of potential water pollution sources. Erosion and sedimentation control practices may include, as applicable:

- preparation and utilization of winterization and erosion control plans;
- soil stabilization applied within 14 days after the completion of construction;
- revegetation as soon as practicable, and not more than one year after construction to reduce future sediment transport during storms;
- runoff control to limit increases in sediment in storm water runoff (e.g., straw bales, silt fences, check dams, geofabrics, drainage swales, and sand bag dikes) during project grading and construction to prevent discharge of sediment-laden runoff.

AM HYDRO-2: If required, the project shall prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) in conformance with RWQCB requirements. The SWPPP shall include post-construction water quality BMPs, as appropriate. BMPs shall be designed in accordance with engineering criteria in the *California Stormwater BMP Handbook for New and Redevelopment* and shall be reviewed and approved by the County prior to issuance of grading permits.

f) *Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?* [**Less than Significant Impact**]

Please see response e).

g) *Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?* [**No Impact**]

The project does not propose to construct any housing or other residential structures.

h) *Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?* [**Less than Significant Impact**]

The proposed well site and pipeline are located in Flood Hazard Area Zone X of the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map for the area.¹⁴ Zone X is defined as:

“Areas of 0.2% annual chance flood; areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood.”

¹⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06069C0215D, San Benito County California and Incorporated Areas*, April 16, 2009.

Although the proposed well site is outside of the hazard area of the 100-year flood, the proposed electrical line to an existing electrical pole is closer to Tres Pinos Creek and would be partially within Zone A, “a special flood hazard area inundated by the 100-year flood, for which no base flood elevations have been determined.”

Although any of the proposed well site, pipeline, or electrical transmission line could be subject to flood waters, the permanent structures at the well site would not be substantial in size and would not impede or redirect flood flows. The water conveyance pipeline and electrical transmission line would be installed underground and would not be affected by potential flood hazards.

- i) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?* [**Less than Significant Impact**]

Paicines Reservoir is an off-stream reservoir approximately four miles southeast of the well site, between the San Benito River and Tres Pinos Creek, operated by the San Benito County Water District. It is filled by water diverted from the San Benito River, with some of the diversions consisting of natural runoff and some consisting of water released from Hernandez Reservoir. Water stored in the two reservoirs is released for percolation in Tres Pinos Creek and the San Benito River to augment groundwater recharge during the dry season. Failure of the Paicines Reservoir Dam would not result in a significant risk of loss or injury to the proposed project, based on the distance from the proposed project site and the nature of the proposed project.

- j) *Be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?* [**No Impact**]

The proposed project site is not subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

2.10 LAND USE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3, 4
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 8

a) *Physically divide an established community?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed well site is located south of and adjacent to the unincorporated community of Tres Pinos in San Benito County, southeast of the City of Hollister. The proposed well and pipeline would provide water to the Stonegate community, a semi-rural residential subdivision (Planned Unit Development) located near State Route 25, north of Tres Pinos in San Benito County. The proposed well would be located on agricultural land, and would not physically divide these established residential communities.

b) *Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed well site is located south of the unincorporated community of Tres Pinos in San Benito County, southeast of the City of Hollister. The well site and a portion of the pipeline would be located in an agricultural field on a property designated AP: *Agricultural Productive* on the County of San Benito's *General Plan Land Use Map*, and the remainder of the pipeline would be installed in public roads. The *Agricultural Productive* designation applies to prime agricultural lands, but can also include agriculturally productive lands of any type, including grazing lands. The proposed well site would not conflict with the agricultural use of the property. The proposed well site is zoned AP: *Agricultural Productive*.

The proposed project would not result in significant land use impacts from conflict with an existing plan or policy, including the San Benito County General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and the Groundwater Management Plan Update.

c) *Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed well and pipeline project would not conflict with any adopted Habitat Conservation or Natural Community Conservation Plans.

2.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2

- a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?* **[No Impact]**

Mineral resources in San Benito County include significant aggregate resources in the northern part of the County that have been classified and mapped by the Department of Conservation through the authority of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). These resources include sand and gravel in the San Benito River and the San Andreas Fault zone. Tres Pinos Creek helps recharge sand and gravel in the San Benito River, and extraction of these resources has taken place on Tres Pinos Creek west of the project site.

The proposed well site would be located on an agricultural property, and would be set back from Tres Pinos Creek. The project would not have a significant effect on gravel resources in the area. Therefore, no mineral resources are present on the project site that would be impacted by the proposed project.

- b) *Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?* **[No Impact]**

The project would not result in a significant impact from the loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

2.12 NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project result in:						
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
b) Exposure of persons to, or generation of, excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 13
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 13

- a) *Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed well site is located on an undeveloped agricultural parcel in San Benito County, south of the town of Tres Pinos. The proposed pipeline would be located along Bolado and Quien Sabe Roads, which border the residential areas of Tres Pinos and Stonegate. The ambient noise levels in the area are low, and mainly affected by traffic on local streets and State Route 25 (Airline Highway), aircraft overflights, and use of agricultural equipment.

San Benito County's noise levels standards (County Code §25.37.035f) identifies noise standards for noise emanating from any source, as it affects surrounding properties. The noise standards specify that rural residential land uses shall not be exposed to noise levels in excess of 45 dBA Leq (hr) during the day and 35 dBA Leq (hr) during the nighttime. Commercial land uses shall not be

exposed to noise levels in excess of 65 dBA Leq (hr) during the day and 55 dBA Leq (hr) during the nighttime.

Following construction, noise would be generated at the project site by the operation of well pumps, back-up generator operation, and maintenance and delivery vehicles. Since these activities are set back from residences by over 500 feet, the operation of the proposed well and conveyance pipeline would not result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels (greater than five dBA) and would not expose people to noise in excess of the standards identified in the County's *General Plan Noise Element* or in County Code. Construction noise impacts are discussed in Section (d), below.

- b) *Exposure of persons to, or generation of, excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

Excess groundborne vibration would not be generated by operation of the proposed project.

- c) *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed well would be located several hundred feet from the nearest public road or residence. Following construction, well operations would create a minor increase in noise, but this increase would be very minor and would not have an impact on ambient noise levels.

- d) *A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

Noise impacts resulting from construction depend on the noise generated by various pieces of construction equipment, the timing and duration of noise generating activities, and the distance between construction noise sources and noise sensitive receptors. Construction noise impacts primarily occur when construction activities occur near sensitive land uses. Typical hourly average construction generated noise levels are about 70 to 90 dBA measured at a distance of 50 feet from the center of the site during busy construction periods (e.g., earth moving equipment, drilling rigs, impact tools, etc.). Construction noise levels at distant residential receivers would generally coincide with existing noise levels generated by transportation noise sources in the area.

Typically, small projects do not generate significant noise impacts when standard construction noise control measures are enforced at the project site and when the duration of the noise generating construction period is limited to one construction season (typically one year) or less. Limiting the hours when construction can occur to daytime hours is often a simple method to reduce the potential for noise impacts.

Residential land uses are located adjacent to the proposed pipeline construction on Bolado and Quien Sabe Roads. Although in some cases the houses are relatively close to the roads, the construction at any one location would not be expected to last for an extended period of time, and, per San Benito County Code, temporary construction activities are exempt from the noise level standards if these activities are limited to weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Construction and drilling activities on the proposed well site would also generate noise. The well site is over 500 feet from the nearest residential uses, however, and construction and drilling activities would not significantly impact these uses during the construction period.

Avoidance Measures

AM NOISE-1: To further reduce construction noise impacts at residential uses along the proposed pipeline alignment, the following avoidance measures are included in the project:

- Restrict noise-generating activities at the construction site or in areas adjacent to the construction site to weekdays from the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., excluding federal holidays.
- Equip all internal combustion engine driven equipment with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment.
- Idling of internal combustion engines for more than five (5) minutes shall be strictly prohibited.
- Locate stationary noise generating equipment such as air compressors or portable power generators as far as possible from sensitive receptors. When stationary noise generating equipment rated above 70 dBA is located within 500 feet of sensitive receptors, install temporary noise barriers that will reduce construction noise levels by five (5) dBA.
- Utilize “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise sources where technology exists.
- Route all construction traffic to and from the project site via designated truck routes where possible. Prohibit construction related heavy truck traffic in residential areas where feasible.
- Control noise from construction workers’ radios to a point that they are not audible at existing residences bordering the project site.

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? [No Impact]*

The proposed project site is not located within two miles of a public or private 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? [No Impact]*

The proposed project site is not located within two miles of a public or private airport.

2.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1

- a) *Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project is the construction of a new water well and pipeline for an existing residential community in unincorporated San Benito County. The Stonegate residential subdivision was established as a 73-lot subdivision with all but one lot developed with residential uses. No construction is currently proposed for the remaining lot. One additional parcel functions as a communal area with tennis courts and a community park.

Water supplies for the existing population have been unreliable, and the proposed well and pipeline would provide part of the water required to serve the existing subdivision. As population growth and demand for domestic water production for the Stonegate area was anticipated in long-range planning by County of San Benito, the proposed well and pipeline project would not induce population growth. The existing entitlement to develop the remaining lot in the Stonegate subdivision is not dependent upon, nor affected by, the proposed project.

- b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not remove any homes from the project vicinity. No existing housing or persons would be displaced as a part of the proposed project.

- c) *Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not displace existing housing, nor would it displace any residents.

2.14 PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:						
• Fire Protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 18
• Police Protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
• Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
• Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 19
• Other Public Facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 19

- a) *Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services? [No Impact]*

The proposed project area is served by the San Benito County Sheriff's Office for police services.

The San Benito County Fire Department, which is operated under contract with CalFire (the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection), serves the unincorporated areas of the County which are not designated as wildland, including the project site. The County of San Benito has a Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement with CalFire for administration of the San Benito County Fire Department, which has been in effect for over 40 years. The CalFire Unit Chief is the County Fire Chief.

The SBCFD staffs one county-owned fire engine at the CalFire station at 1979 Fairview Road in Hollister which provides year-round, 24-hour coverage with two permanent firefighters per shift. The SBCFD also utilizes up to 25 Paid Call Firefighters (PCFs). PCF's provide additional staffing and depth when available. CalFire provides two Battalion Chiefs dedicated to its operations in San Benito County.

The site would contain limited quantities of chlorine and diesel fuel for use in water treatment and emergency power. The proposed well site would be fenced and would be lit during maintenance activities, which would reduce risks related to security and safety at the site.

The proposed well and the hazardous materials use and storage may incrementally increase the need for police and fire services at the site, over that of its current use as agricultural land. This increase in demand on public services would be insubstantial, however, and would not require additional facilities or personnel. The proposed project would not have an impact on schools, parks, libraries, or other public services.

2.15 RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 19
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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 19

a) *Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*
[No Impact]

The proposed project would not result in a loss of park space, and would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. Therefore, no impacts 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]

The proposed project does not include any recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of any such facilities. Therefore, no physical effects on the environment would result, and no impacts would occur.

2.16 TRANSPORTATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 19, 20
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 19, 20
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible land uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 19, 20

- a) *Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The proposed project is the construction of a production water well and conveyance pipeline near the town of Tres Pinos. Following implementation of the proposed project, the well would only require infrequent maintenance visits and vehicle trips, and would not cause a substantial increase in traffic or congestion in the project area.

During project construction, temporary increases in traffic and traffic interruptions may occur along Bolado and Quien Sabe Roads and State Route 25. These construction impacts would be of short duration and would have a less than significant impact on roadways and intersections.

- b) *Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not permanently exceed level of service standards developed by local planning agencies either individually or cumulatively.

- c) *Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?* **[No Impact]**

The project would not result in a change in air traffic patterns.

- d) *Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible land uses (e.g., farm equipment)?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not significantly increase roadway hazards in the area.

- e) *Result in inadequate emergency access?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

- f) *Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?* **[No Impact]**

No bicycle or pedestrian facilities are currently present near the project site. The Council of San Benito County Governments, *Final San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan* (December 2009) includes recommended future bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the County. A Class II bicycle lane is proposed in this plan on State Route 25 for 0.39 miles, from Southside Road to Quien Sabe Road. Class II bike lanes provide a signed, striped, and stenciled lane for one-way travel on both sides of a street or highway.

The proposed pipeline would cross State Route 25 on Quien Sabe Road. Although construction of the proposed project could cause temporary delays to vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians on State Route 25 and other roadways, these delays would not result in a significant impact to the long-term operation of the facilities. The project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs for alternate transportation.

2.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
Would the project:						
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 4
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2

- a) *Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

Please see *Section 2.9, Hydrology and Water Quality*. The project would not generate wastewater.

- b) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?* **[Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measure Included in the Project]**

The proposed project is the construction of a groundwater production well, water treatment, and conveyance pipeline. The environmental impacts of this action are described throughout this Initial Study, and would be less than significant with mitigation and avoidance measures incorporated in the project.

- c) *Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?* **[No Impact]**

Please see *Section 2.9, Hydrology and Water Quality*. The project would not result in the construction of stormwater drainage facilities.

- d) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?* **[No Impact]**

Please see response b).

- e) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?* **[No Impact]**

Please see *Section 2.9, Hydrology and Water Quality*. The project would not generate wastewater.

- f) *Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would not create any solid waste disposal needs other than for excavated soils and/or asphalt from construction, and residual filtered iron and manganese that could be accommodated at existing landfills, and would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

- g) *Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?* **[No Impact]**

The proposed project would comply with all regulations related to solid waste.

2.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Beneficial Impact	Information Source(s)
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 2, 4, 7, 15, 16
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1, 7, 12

a) *Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?* **[Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project]**

The project could result in impacts to biological and buried cultural resources, should they be discovered on site. With the implementation of the mitigation and avoidance measures included in the project and described in the specific sections of this report (refer to *Section 2. Environmental Setting, Checklist, and Discussion of Impacts*) of this Initial Study, the proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts.

b) *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?* **[Less than Significant Impact]**

The project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts.

- c) *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?* [**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated in the Project**]

The project could result in potentially significant seismic impacts, and less than significant hazardous materials, noise, and hydrology and water quality impacts. With the implementation of the mitigation and avoidance measures included in the project and described in the specific sections of this report (refer to *Section 2. Environmental Setting, Checklist, and Discussion of Impacts*) of this Initial Study, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse effects on human beings.

Checklist Sources:

1. CEQA Guidelines - Environmental Thresholds (Professional judgment and expertise and review of project plans).
2. County of San Benito, *General Plan*.
3. County of San Benito, County Code of Ordinances.
4. San Benito County Water District/Water Resources Association, *Groundwater Management Plan Update for the San Benito County Portion of the Gilroy-Hollister Groundwater Basin Final Program Environmental Impact Report*, May 2004.
5. California Department of Transportation, State Scenic Highways, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed July 15, 2009.
6. California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, *2008 San Benito County Important Farmland Map*, June 2009.
7. Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.
8. Live Oak Associates, *Stonegate Well and Pipeline Biological Evaluation, Tres Pinos, San Benito County, California*, November 18, 2009.
9. Holman & Associates, *Re: Cultural Resources Study of the Stonegate Well Initial Study Area, Tres Pinos, Hollister, San Benito County, California*, September 25, 2009.
10. Cornerstone Earth Group, *Geotechnical and Geologic Evaluation, Stonegate Well and Pipeline Initial Study, Tres Pinos, California*, September 16, 2009.
11. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey, San Benito County California*, November 1969.
12. Cornerstone Earth Group, *Limited Environmental Site Assessment, Stonegate Water Supply Project, San Benito County, California*, September 22, 2009.
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<http://www.sanbenitocog.org/clup/CLUP%20Report-HollisterAirport.pdf>.
14. Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06069C0215D, San Benito County California and Incorporated Areas*, April 16, 2009.
15. Geoconsultants, Inc., *Re: Summary Report, Drilling, Well Construction, and Aquifer Testing, Stonegate Water Supply Test Well, San Benito County, California*, April 22, 2010.
16. Schaaf & Wheeler, Consulting Civil Engineers, *Draft Memo: Analysis of Stonegate Test Well Water Quality*, May 6, 2009.
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19. Council of San Benito County Governments, *Final San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan*, December 2009.
20. Council of San Benito County Governments, *San Benito County 2010 Regional Transportation Plan (Draft)*, February 24, 2010.

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SECTION 4 LEAD AGENCY AND CONSULTANTS

LEAD AGENCY

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