



Request for Qualifications

Architect and Engineering Services for National Forest Trailhead Facilities

Proposal Due Date:
Friday, September 4th at 5:00 PM (PDT)

Summary

The Butte County Resource Conservation District ("BCRCD" or "District") is a Special District headquartered in Chico, California. BCRCD hereby gives notice of the solicitation of qualifications for architectural and engineering professional services pertaining to activities described herein. This RFQ is for design services only (no construction).

Introduction

The District has been awarded grant funding to construct two trailheads located in Lassen National Forest as part of the Colby Mountain Recreation Project. This Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") is to solicit responses from qualified architects and/ or civil engineers ("Firm") wishing to be considered for the design and construction administration services of the trailheads ("Project").

The District seeks a Firm that has specific experience in the design and construction of outdoor recreation facilities and that will identify its representatives and consultant (the "Design Team") to complete the Project and interface with the District thereon. The selected Firm and its Design Team will be one that has demonstrated extraordinary functionality in recreation design, in addition to the highest level of technical and practical capabilities.

The District will require the Design Team to provide full design and construction administration services for this Project. The efforts of the Design Team will be supported by District Staff during the design and construction process. The District reserves the right to request additional services, substitutions, or elimination of specific services or suppliers/ or re-bid any portions of the Project without added charges, prior to agreeing to a contract for services.

The Design Team must be comprised of professionals with the skills and scope necessary to design recreational trailhead infrastructure outlined in this document. The Design Team must present sufficient examples of work that show the necessary skills to plan, design, and oversee the construction of a trailhead facility that is functional and meets Forest Service design standards, along with skills in engineering and cost estimation.



The ability of the Design Team to keep within the prescribed budgets and time schedules is of utmost importance. This Project will require the Design Team to contractually hold themselves to a budget and schedule in order to effectively use public grant funds and meet the District's grant timelines.

The Design Team will assist the District in the development of a budget and cost-effective solutions for the project that meet Forest Service requirements.

Project Description

This Project is to design two new recreational trailheads (Humboldt Summit and The Hub) in Lassen National Forest - Almanor Ranger District that will serve equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, OHV, and other recreational uses allowed on Forest Service lands. This design has no utilities. The parking surface will be rocked (no paving).

The facilities include:

- Vehicle parking
- Trailer parking
- Parking delineation barriers
- Vault toilet
- Information and educational kiosks
- Picnic Tables
- ADA overlook (Humboldt Summit Only)

The trailhead facilities should be designed to optimize the recreation user experience and require low maintenance needs. The District has conducted a topographical survey of Humboldt Summit, but may need a topographical survey for The Hub. A preliminary site plan has been completed and will serve as a baseline for the design. The project has been approved through NEPA and CEQA. The Design Team will provide site design and layout.

The design and materials used shall be reviewed and approved by District Staff and Forest Service during the design process. Final approved architectural drawings, specifications, and cost estimates shall be utilized to secure a contractor to construct the facility. User group input for the design will also be collected as part of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) process; collected data will be shared with the BCRCD BOD and Forest Service.

The Firm will support the District during the project bid for construction, build process, and project closeout.



Location

- I. **Hub Trailhead** will be approximately half an acre in size, located at the intersection of Forest Road 27N06 and 27N36 (40.15376, -121.51255) at an elevation of 5,523 ft. See Attachment A for map. This trailhead will serve as a key connection point for multiple trails and a rest stop for trail users. The Hub will access and link the Lookout, Escape, Colby Drop, Home, and Yana Rim trails. The Hub may include a parking area, one vault-style toilet, hitching posts, and picnic tables. The site is located in a saddle where multiple roads intersect but will need extensive brush removal as part of site preparation. There are currently two trails constructed at this location (Escape and Lookout), with another two funded but not constructed (Home and Yana Rim).
- II. **Humboldt Summit Trailhead** is an existing approx. 2-acre undeveloped trailhead (40.15200, -121.43672) off Humboldt Road (27N43) at an elevation of 6,615 ft. The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) crosses here. The trailhead will feature a vault toilet, ADA access overlook, designated parking, hitching posts, separate kiosk for PCT and Colby Mountain (education and information), equestrian trailer parking, and picnic tables. The goal is to provide a trailhead that will enhance the user experience while working to separate mechanized and non-mechanized uses. The Pacific Crest Trail Association will provide input into the design of this trailhead.

Code Requirements

The Design Team shall be required to coordinate closely with the Forest Service and work with BCRCDD to obtain any necessary permits. All design and construction will adhere to the signed NEPA document (Appendix B) and Forest Service design standards and guides, including but not limited to:

- Architectural Barriers Act (ABA)
- [Sustainable Recreation Site Design Guide](#)
- [Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines \(FSORAG\)](#)
- [Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails](#)

District Responsibilities

- Manage the solicitation of the Request for Qualifications process
- Award the contract to the selected Proposer
- Provide available, relevant data to be utilized by the successful Proposer
- Coordinate meetings between the Project Team and the Forest Service
- Manage the contract with the selected Proposer through the Project Tasks



- Make progress and final payments to the selected Proposer for the completed Project Tasks
- Provide a District representative on a regular basis for support to the selected Proposer.

Consultant Scope of Services

The District will execute a contract for the full scope of services for the Project, including the following RFQ Tasks:

- I. Design consultation and site analysis
- II. Topographic Survey (The Hub only)
- III. Schematic design (30-percent design)
- IV. Drawing and specification development (50-percent design)
- V. Final design drawings (95-percent design)
- VI. Forest Service meetings and design review process
- VII. Contract documents (100-percent design)
- VIII. All necessary plans and specifications
- IX. Assistance with bidding process and bid evaluations
- X. Appropriate construction administration, including inspection
- XI. As-built drawings

Work Product

All work products included in this proposal shall be made available to the District in hard copy and electronic formats suitable to the District (MS Word, Excel, AutoCAD, etc)

Minimum Qualifications

- Minimum of eight years of experience in the design and management of similar projects including architectural design, engineering, cost estimation, landscaping, surveying, etc.
- Minimum of three built project designs and management of similar recreational amenities projects including architectural design, civil engineering, cost estimation, landscaping, etc.
- Minimum of five years of experience working with federal, state, non-profit, and local resource agencies.
- An available team of experts and/ or consultants with multidisciplinary backgrounds that support the project scope
- Licensed Architects must have current California licenses and be in good standing with the California Architects Board.



- Registered Engineers and Land Surveyors must have a current California license and be in good standing with the California Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists.

Requirements and Information

All Proposers are hereby advised of the following schedule and will be expected to adhere to the required dates and times. **BCRCD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SCHEDULE AS NEEDED.**

Timeline:

Circulation of Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	August 7, 2026
Deadline for Question Submittal -by 5:00 PM -Answers to questions posted at https://www.bcrcd.org/announcements	August 26, 2026
Qualifications/ Proposal Due to BCRCD – by 5:00 PM	Friday, September 4th
Interview Selected Firms (If deemed necessary)	September 8-10, 2026
Selected Firm Notified	September 11, 2026
Contract Award	September 17, 2026
First Design Meeting Between Design Team and District Staff	September 21-25, 2026
Complete Design and Permitting, Begin Preparation of Bid Documents	May 2027
Solicit Bids from Contractors	June 2027
Award Contract for Construction Project	July 2027
Begin Construction of the Project	July 2027
Completion of the Project	Before November 2027

Technical Content Requirements:

Proposers interested in providing the scope of services must submit by the deadline defined in this RFQ. The District would like to impress upon all applicants to keep responses succinct and clear.

Proposal Elements (all proposals shall include)

1. Cover Letter- with the following information
 - a. Name, address, and phone contact information of lead firm



- b. Name and contact information (phone and email) for the Project Principal who will be leading the Design Team
 - c. Description of key personnel who will work directly on this project
 - d. A list of associated firms or consultants that may be involved in the Design Team (identify each consultant by their firm and role in the Design Team). The stated experience for subconsultants shall include a brief statement of the subconsultant experience for doing work related to the tasks described in the statement of design approach.
 - e. A brief narrative describing specific strengths of your firm as they relate to this project
2. Statement of Design Approach -please describe how your Firm would approach the design process. List any critical decision-making steps and any assistance the Design Team may provide in meeting the timeline and budget concerns.
3. Related Experience and Reference- This section should provide information that relates to the experience the Proposer has in accomplishing a similar project to the requested service. Include descriptions and photographs of example projects completed within the past five years that are comparable to the proposed project. Provide references and contact information for clients of the comparable projects.
4. Client references, which include name and title, e-mail address and telephone number of the contact person most knowledgeable of the work done by your firm.

BCRCD may opt to make multiple awards based on the availability of qualified contractors and project needs.

Selection Criteria

Consultant selection will be based upon:

- (1) The consultant's qualifications and experience, with emphasis on similar projects
- (2) The consultant's availability and ability to meet project timelines
- (3) The consultant's knowledge of the project and proximity to the project site
- (4) The consultant's statement of design approach to specific SOW
- (5) Feedback from consultant's references, with emphasis on similar projects

Acceptance or Rejection of Proposals

A contract will be awarded to the firm(s) whose qualifications and experience most closely satisfy the needs of Butte County Resource Conservation District. Costs will not be the sole determining factor in acceptance or rejection of a proposal. BCRCD reserves the right to reject



any and all proposals or portions thereof, to waive any information and/ or errors in the proposal considered to be in the best interest. BCRCD reserves the right to negotiate the scope of work and final cost of the project after selection of the consultant(s).

Proposal Submittal

Complete proposals of qualifications may be emailed in PDF format (preferred) to Thad Walker, thad@bcr cd.org or mailed to:

Butte County Resource Conservation District
ATTN: Thad Walker
641 Entler Ave, Suite 47
Chico, CA 95928
admin@bcr cd.org

If you have questions, please contact: Thad Walker. thad@bcr cd.org. (530) 720-0284

SUBMITTALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DISTRICT BEFORE 5:00 PM on X. NO PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DEADLINE.

All Proposals become the property of BCRCD and BCRCD will not return any portion of the proposals that are submitted. The cost of preparing, submitting, and presenting a Proposal and participating in the interview process (if requested by BCRCD) is the sole expense of the Proposer. Solicitation of proposals in no way obligates BCRCD to contract with any firm or individual.

Rejection of Proposals

Failure to meet the requirements of any items contained in this RFQ may be cause for rejection of the Proposal. The District may reject any Proposal if it is conditional, incomplete, contains irregularities or reflects inordinately high cost rates. The District may waive immaterial deviation in a Proposal. Waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the RFQ documents or excuse the proposing firm/team from full compliance with the contract requirements if the Proposer is awarded the contract. The District may make investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of Proposers to perform the work, and Proposers shall furnish all such information and data for this purpose as may be reasonably requested by the District. The District reserves the right to reject any submission if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Proposers fail to demonstrate they are properly qualified to carry out the obligations of this project. A non-responsive Proposal is one that does not meet the basic Proposal requirements. Failure to meet the submittal requirements of the Proposal shall deem the entire Proposal package non-responsive and therefore be cause for rejection. More than one Proposal



from an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, or association, under the same or different names, will not be considered. Reasonable grounds for believing that any Proposer has submitted more than one proposal for the work contemplated herein will cause the rejection of all proposals submitted by that Proposer. If there is reason for believing that collusion exists among the Proposers, none of the participants in such collusion will be considered in this or future procurements. The decision to approve and award a contract is at the sole and absolute discretion of the District.

Errors and Omissions

This RFQ cannot identify each specific, individual task required to implement this project. The District relies on the professionalism and competence of Proposers to be knowledgeable of the general areas identified in the scope of work and to include in their Proposals all materials, equipment, required tasks and subtasks, personnel commitments, man-hours, labor, direct costs, and indirect costs, etc. Proposers shall not take advantage of any errors and/or omissions in this RFQ and its accompanying materials to the District's detriment. Where such errors or omissions are discovered, the District will issue revised instructions in the form of an addendum. The District reserves the right to remedy any technical errors in the RFQ and its accompanying materials.

Contract Award

BCRCD will award the contract to the chosen Proposer. The contract is not in force until it is awarded by the District. The contract, to be signed by the chosen Proposer, will be BCRCD's standard Consultant Services Agreement (CSA).

Agreement for Services:

The consultant will be expected to enter into MID's standard Consultant Services Agreement for services with the District. The consultant will be required to provide insurance in accordance with the District's standard provisions. The contract will be developed as a "not to exceed" contract and compensation will be based on actual billable hours for the work performed.

Non-Exclusivity of Contract:

It shall in no way be construed that any contract to be awarded hereby is or shall be the sole or exclusive contract for the requested service into which BCRCD may enter. The Proposer has no exclusive right granted per this contract.



Conflict of Interest

Proposers shall immediately notify the District, in writing, of any potential or actual conflicts of interest that arise between or among the District and any other persons and/or entities for whom Proposers provide services.

Indemnification

To the greatest extent allowed by Civil Code section 2782.8, the District intends to include and require an indemnity commitment from the selected Proposer in the final contract award.

Insurance Requirements

Coverage	Minimum Limits
Worker's Compensation	Statutory
Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability (Bodily Injury, Property Damage, Personal Injury and including independent contractors, contractual liability, product & completed operations, underground explosion and collapse hazard, and pollution liability)	\$1,000,000 Per Occurrence \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
Automobile Liability (owned, if any, non-owned, and hired), Bodily Injury, Property Damage	\$1,000,000
Professional Liability (Errors and Omissions)	\$1,000,000

Attachments

1. Map of Project Area
2. NEPA Notice of Decision

Colby Mountain Recreation Project

Lassen National Forest, Almanor Ranger District

-  Bridge Site
 -  Botany Exclusion Fencing
 -  Wet Crossing
 -  Parking
 -  Trailhead
- All trails are new construction



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

July 2023

Colby Drop Trail

Colby Mountain Lookout

Lookout Trail

Escape Trail

Meadow Trail

Home Trail

Yana Rim Trail

Willow Creek Trail

Yana Rim Alt Loop Trail

Humboldt Drop Trail

Robbers Roost Trail

Jonesville Snow Park

Humboldt Summit

The Hub

DECISION MEMO
COLBY MOUNTAIN RECREATION PROJECT
U.S.D.A. FOREST SERVICE
LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST
ALMANOR RANGER DISTRICT
BUTTE, PLUMAS, AND TEHAMA COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA

BACKGROUND

The Colby Mountain Recreation Project is a collaborative effort conducted by the Butte County Resource Conservation District, Northern California Regional Land Trust, Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, and Chico Velo to enhance trail-based recreation near the community of Jonesville in Lassen National Forest. With the support of the U.S. Forest Service, the Project has developed over months of stakeholder engagement and incorporates forest health demonstration sites, environmental education facilities, day-use and emergency response amenities and an extensive network of multi-use trails.

The new trail system will expand and enhance recreational opportunities in the Lassen National Forest for many user groups by providing long-term, sustainable trails built in a safe and resource sensitive manner. The project will support community recovery of Jonesville following the 2018 Camp Fire by increasing the quality of life for existing or displaced area residents and will aid in building a sustainable tourism revenue base for Butte County during the fire recovery process. Ultimately, the project will serve several disadvantaged communities and lower the barrier to nature access for school children and residents of all ages.

DECISION

I have decided to implement the Colby Mountain Recreation Project to construct approximately 36 miles of new non-motorized single-track trails, improve two exiting trailheads, and construct one new trailhead, one foot bridge, two wet water crossings, build exclusionary fencing, and install an information sign at the fence location. Activities will include tree and shrub cutting as needed for construction. Specific actions are the following:

Trail Construction:

We will construct about 36 miles of new non-motorized single-track trails out of Jonesville Snow Park (see Project map). The trail system will offer a variety of distance and terrain options for

multiple user groups including 0.92 miles of pedestrian-only use trails and 34.77 miles of non-motorized multi-use trails. Table 1 is a list of the trails and their estimated distances, trail classes, and uses. Trail classes are defined in the Trail Class Matrix in the Forest Service Handbook 2353, Section 14.2, Exhibit 01.

There will be two methods of trail construction, the full professional build, and the hybrid build, described in the next two bullet points:

- The Colby Drop trail, Humboldt Drop trail, Meadow trail, Robber Roost Connector trail, and Willow Creek trail will be built using mechanized equipment such as a mini excavator or trail-specific dozer, followed by a professional hand crew. This is called a full professional build method used for complex or specialized trails.
- The Escape trail, Home trail, Lookout trail, Yana Rim trail, and Yana Rim Alt. Loop trail will be built using a hybrid method. Some segments of the trails will be built utilizing the professional build method. On the remaining trail segments, we will use a single excavator to excavate the trail prism followed by volunteers to rake and compact the trail tread.

Table 1 Trail distance, class and uses.

Trail Name	Estimated Distance (miles)	Trail Class	Uses
Escape	8.35	Class 3	Non-motorized bikes, equestrians, hikers
Colby Drop	1.38	Class 4	Non-motorized bikes, hikers
Home	4.35	Class 3	Non-motorized bikes, equestrians, hikers
Lookout	2.11	Class 3	Non-motorized bikes, equestrians, hikers
Meadow Trail	0.92	Class 4	Hikers
Yana Rim	9.64	Class 2	Non-motorized bikes, equestrians, hikers
Yana Rim Alt. Loop	0.44	Class 2	Non-motorized bikes, equestrians, hikers

Willow Creek	4.76	Class 3	Non-motorized bikes, hikers
Humboldt Drop	3.4	Class 3/2	Non-motorized bikes, hikers
Robbers Roost Connector	0.34	Class 3	Non-motorized bikes, hikers
TOTAL MILEAGE	35.69		

Trailhead Improvement and Construction:

We will build or improve three trailheads to provide access for the new trail system and improve user experience. Table 2 summarizes the proposed trailhead improvements. Trailhead activities will be the following:

- We will rebuild the existing parking lot at the Jonesville Snow Park parking lot and expand it eastward and construct a well, a helipad, and a trail information kiosk. We will also build a bioswale for the parking lot expansion. The bioswale will be vegetated and include specialized soil mixes to treat, absorb and convey stormwater runoff.
- We will improve the existing Humboldt Summit trailhead currently used for the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). We will build a designated parking lot for the new Colby Drop, Humboldt Drop, and Willow Creek trails, construct one vault-style toilet, install a kiosk for the PCT and another one for the Colby Mountain trail, build hitching posts, and install picnic tables. The new parking lot will accommodate equestrian trailer parking.
- We will construct a new trailhead called The Hub at the junction of National Forest System roads 27N06 and 27N36 near the northern edge of the project area. The Hub will access and link the Lookout, Escape, Colby Drop, Home, and Yana Rim trails. The Hub will include a parking area, one vault-style toilet, hitching posts, and picnic tables.
- The parking area at the Colby Mountain Lookout will be used as a trailhead for the Lookout Trail which will provide access to the Colby Drop and Escape trails.

Table 2. Trailhead Improvements

Trailhead	Existing/New	Improvements
Jonesville Snow Park	Existing trailhead, with proposed improvements	rebuild and expand existing parking lot, bioswale, trail

		information kiosk, a drinking water well, helipad
Humboldt Summit	Existing trailhead, with proposed improvements	vault toilet, designated parking, hitching posts, separate kiosk for PCT and Colby Mountain, equestrian trailer parking, picnic tables
Hub (27N06 and 27N36)	New trailhead construction	vault toilet, parking, hitching posts, picnic tables

Bridge, Wet Crossings, and Exclusionary Fencing

One 15-foot bridge will be built on the southern end of the Home trail where it will cross an unnamed drainage in section 11, T26N, R04E, M.D.M.

One wet crossing will be constructed along the northern end of the Home trail in section 35, T27N, R04E, M.D.M. and one on the north end of the Willow Creek trail where it crosses Willow Creek in section 31, T27N, R05E, M.D.M. The wet crossings will be constructed with hardened entrances to minimize the stream banks' impacts and limit sediment inputs.

We will build exclusionary fencing along 20 feet of the Home Trail in section 11, T26N, R04E, M.D.M. to bar access to a fen and install an information sign for the sensitive area.

Tree and Shrub Removal

Live trees less than 10 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) and shrubs will be cut during the construction or maintenance of the trails' eight-foot-wide corridor in accordance with the trail class. Where a trail cannot be routed around a tree that is 10-inches DBH or larger, it will be cut and removed, such as in areas where tree density is high. Best efforts will be made to avoid cutting sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), western white pine (*P. monticola*), Jeffery pine (*P. jeffreyi*), and ponderosa pine (*P. ponderosa*) trees. No trees 30 inches DBH and larger will be cut unless it is a safety issue.

Trees that are less than 10-inches DBH and shrubs that are cut will be lopped and scattered to a depth not to exceed 12 to 18 inches. For trees 10-inch DBH to less than 30-inch DBH, once the tree has been cut down, tree branches and tops of trees to a 6-inch diameter will be cut from the bole of the trees and lopped and scattered. Larger bole material can be left on site or piled.

During construction of the Jonesville Snow Park parking lot expansion, trees can be mechanically cut and removed, possibly through a small timber sale, or cut by hand. Shrubs will be cut, and slash will be piled and burned or chipped and scattered.

Shrubs will be removed for improvements to the Humboldt Summit trailhead and the construction of the Hub trailhead, but no tree removal will occur at these locations.

INTEGRATED DESIGN FEATURES

The following Integrated Design Features (IDF) are resource protection measures that were developed by specialists for the proposed action and are incorporated as part of the decision for this project. They are in addition to Best Management Practices (BMP) and standards and guidelines from the Lassen Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended. These IDF are included for implementation parameters that will be incorporated into treatments, contracts, or used to guide Forest Service or partner personnel in conducting implementations.

Botany

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Plant Species:

1. Rare plant surveys shall be completed prior to Project implementation and any occurrences of TES or SI plant species discovered will be protected through flag- and-avoid methods and with incorporation of any additional protection measures recommended by Forest Botany personnel.
2. All occurrences of *Meesia triquetra* (three-ranked humpmoss) and *Meesia uliginosa* (broad-nerved hump-moss) their associated springs, meadows and fens will be flagged and avoided from all ground disturbing activities and protected with a fence from potential impacts.
3. All ground-disturbing activities will be excluded from within 50 feet of occurrences of *Botrychium* species. Locations will be displayed as control areas on all contract maps.
4. All ground-disturbing activities will be excluded from within 25 feet of occurrences of *Piperia colemanii* species.

Invasive Plant Species:

5. All off-road equipment will be weed-free prior to entering the Forest. Staging of equipment will be done in weed free areas.
6. Known noxious weed infestations will be identified, flagged where possible, and mapped for this Project. Locations will be displayed on contract maps. Identified invasive plant species' sites within or adjacent to the Project area will be evaluated by forest personnel and treated by forest botany staff prior to Project implementation and the sites avoided. Any larger or un-pullable infestations will be avoided by harvesting equipment or equipment used will be washed on site before leaving the infested area and entering un-infested areas to prevent spreading invasive plants across the Project area.

7. New small infestations identified during Project implementation will be evaluated and treated according to the species present and Project constraints and avoided by Project activities.
8. Post Project monitoring for implementation and effectiveness of treatments and control of new infestations will be conducted as soon as possible and for a period of two years after completion of the Project.
9. If Project implementation calls for mulches or fill, they will be certified weed-free. Seed mixes used for re-vegetation of disturbed sites will consist of locally adapted native plant materials.

Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources on Forest Service land are managed and protected through the Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5), California State Historic Preservation Officer, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Processes for Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Management of Historic Properties by the National Forests of the Pacific Southwest Region (2018; R5 PA). Archaeological surveys were conducted in 2022 to identify archaeological sites within the proposed trail corridor. Site specific Approved Standard Protection Measures (SRPM), as outlined in the R5 PA, Appendix E, will be used to protect cultural resources to ensure the undertaking will have no adverse effect on the resource. Standard Resource Protection Measures for this project include the following:

10. Trails will be routed to avoid archaeological sites, artifacts, and features.
11. Mechanical equipment will be prohibited within archaeological sites.
12. An Archaeological monitor will be present during project activities near sensitive archaeological areas.
13. In the event cultural resources are discovered during project implementation (unanticipated discovery) all work shall immediately cease in the area identified and the Lassen National Forest Heritage Staff shall be notified immediately. Should any cultural resources become damaged in unanticipated ways by activities proposed in this Project, the steps described in the R5 PA for inadvertent effects will be followed.
14. LNF Heritage staff will be kept informed of the status of various stages of the Project to ensure Standard Resource Protection Measures are in place and adhered to during implementation.
15. Monitoring of cultural resources may occur during and after the Project has been completed to ensure the effectiveness of protection measures.

Silviculture

16. **Borate Treatment:** In the proposed Jonesville Snow Park parking lot expansion area, live conifer trees with a 14-inch and larger stump diameter will be treated with an Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA)-approved borate compound which is registered in California for the prevention of annosus root disease. No EPA-approved borate will be applied within 25 feet of known Sensitive and Special Interest (SI) plants or within 25 feet of live streams and meadow/wetlands.

17. **Sugar Pine Trees:** All sugar pine trees identified as rust resistant or as a candidate for rust resistance will be protected. A \$20,000 fine will be imposed for each rust-resistant or candidate tree damaged during operations. Healthy sugar pine trees showing no observable signs of blister rust will be favorably retained.

Wildlife Resources

18. **Known Populations:** The following Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) are known to be present in the LNF: Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog, Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog, Northern Spotted Owl, Central Valley Steelhead, Central Valley Spring-run Chinook, and Gray Wolf. If populations of TES species are discovered in the Project Area, consultation with USFWS will be initiated as needed and direction from the 2004 SNFPA ROD and 2014 USFWS Programmatic Biological Opinion will be applied.
19. **New Wildlife Findings:** Where subsequent surveys identify occupied threatened, endangered, or sensitive species habitat, PACs, den site buffers, or other protections will be established in coordination with the forest service biologist as described in the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Record of Decision (ROD) (USDA 2004b).
20. **Nest Trees and Wildlife Habitation:** All trees with nest structures in them or that show signs of current wildlife habitation shall be retained, regardless of the diameter.
21. **Down Wood and Snags:** In accordance with the LRMP (USDA-FS 1992 p. 4-37), coarse woody debris (CWD, large logs and snags $\geq$ 15-inch DBH) already on the ground will be retained and protected to the greatest extent possible from disturbance during treatment. Snags 15-inches DBH and larger will be retained, where possible. If a trail reroute is not possible, a gap will be cut for the trail to allow the two ends of the tree to remain as habitat.
22. **Trees in PACs:** Within California spotted owl and northern goshawk PACs, the maximum size tree to be cut will be 6-inch DBH. Trees larger than 6-inch DBH will only be cut if approved by a Forest Service Wildlife Biologist. If any trees greater than 6-inch DBH are cut in PACs, they will be left in place, although they may be moved off trail alignment.
23. **Wildlife Limited Operating Periods:** Limited operating periods (LOPs) including no construction with power tools will apply during implementation to protect key wildlife species listed in the Biological Evaluation (BE)/Biological Assessment (BA).
 - a. **California Spotted Owl:** A California spotted owl LOP from March 1st to August 15th will apply to stands within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of all spotted owl protected activity centers (PACs). The LOP may be lifted after surveys if no nesting spotted owls are confirmed. If a California spotted owl nest is found within any of the proposed treatment units and is outside of all current

- PACs, the nest will be protected through the placement of a new PAC or the realignment of an existing PAC boundary.
- b. **Northern Goshawk:** A goshawk LOP from February 15th to September 15th will be applied within ¼ mile of all goshawk PACs or within ¼ mile of a nest if a nest is confirmed. The LOP may be lifted if it is determined that the protected activity centers (PACs) are not occupied. If a goshawk nest is found within any of the proposed treatment units and is outside of all current PACs, the nest will be protected through the placement of a new PAC or the realignment of an existing PAC boundary.
 - c. **Pacific Fisher:** If a fisher den site is identified, a 700-acre area consisting of the highest quality habitat in a compact arrangement will be delineated around the den site. The den site area will be protected from vegetation treatments with a LOP from March 1st through June 30th as long as habitat remains suitable or until another Regionally approved management strategy is implemented. If a fisher rest site (female or male) is found within a treatment unit, the rest site structure, (e.g., log, snag, tree) will be protected from being damaged during Project implementation.
 - d. **Pacific marten:** If a marten den site is identified, a 100-acre area consisting of the highest quality habitat in a compact arrangement will be placed around the den site. The den site area will be protected from vegetation treatments with a LOP from February 15th through July 31st as long as habitat remains suitable or until another Regionally approved management strategy is implemented. If a marten rest site (female or male) is found within a treatment unit, the rest site structure, (e.g., log, snag, tree) will be protected from being damaged during Project implementation.
 - e. **Monarch Butterfly:** Disturbance to the Monarch butterfly host species, milkweed, will be avoided, where found, throughout Project implementation.
 - f. **Gray Wolf:** If a wolf den or rendezvous site is discovered during implementation of the proposed Project, an LOP from April 1 through July 15 may be implemented and coordination with CDFW and the Service shall be pursued. Further discussions and coordination with CDFW and the Service may result in a modified distances or more flexible dates for this specific conservation measure.
 - g. **Amphibians:** If populations of TES amphibians are discovered in the Project area, direction from the 2004 SNFPA ROD and 2014 USFWS Programmatic Biological Opinion for 4 Sierra Nevada Amphibians (updated in 2023 to include Foothill yellow-legged frog) will be applied. A pre- construction survey or biological monitor of the water crossings may be conducted to assess for the presence of amphibians.

Hydrology

The LNF LRMP includes Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines to maintain or, where necessary, improve water quality using BMPs. The following BMP's (FS-909a, National BMP for Water

Quality Management on National Forest System Lands, April 2012) will be applied to the project plan and implementation document.

Aquatic Ecosystems BMPs (Apply these BMPs where trail construction goes through riparian conservation areas.

24. **AqEco-2.** Operations in Aquatic Ecosystems

25. **AqEco-4.** Stream Channels and Shorelines

Recreation

Recreation activity BMPs

26. **Rec-1.** Recreation Planning

27. **Rec-2.** Developed Recreation Sites

28. **Rec-3.** Dispersed Use Recreation

29. **Rec-4.** Motorized and Nonmotorized Trails

Transportation

Road BMPs

30. **Road-10.** Equipment Refueling and Servicing

CATEGORY OF EXCLUSION

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions for the Colby Recreation project is identified in agency procedures under Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36:

- Section 220.6 (e) Category (1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.
- Section 220.6 (e) Category (22) Construction, reconstruction, decommissioning, or disposal of buildings, infrastructure, or improvements at an existing recreation site, including infrastructure or improvements that are adjacent or connected to an existing recreation site and provide access or utilities for that site. Recreation sites include but are not limited to campgrounds and camping areas, picnic areas, day use areas, fishing sites, interpretive sites, visitor centers, trailheads, ski areas, and observation sites. Activities within this category are intended to apply to facilities located at recreation sites managed by the Forest Service and those managed by concessioners under a special use authorization.
- Section 220.6 (e) (24), Construction and realignment of up to 2 miles of National Forest System roads and associated parking areas.

These categories of actions are applicable because the purpose of the project is to build a system of non-motorized, sustainable trails in a safe and resource sensitive manner, provide supporting infrastructure to improve visitor experience, and protect sensitive natural resources.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that will warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I considered resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species (terrestrial species): a Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation (BA/BE) for terrestrial Wildlife Species was prepared. The findings are that:
 - There will be **no effect** on the following federally listed threatened and endangered species or their designated critical habitat: northern spotted owl, gray wolf, and North American wolverine
 - There will be **no effect** on the following Forest Service Sensitive Species: bald eagle, great gray owl, greater sandhill crane, willow flycatcher, yellow rail, fringed myotis, pallid bat, Sierra Nevada red fox, and Townsend's big-eared bat.
 - The actions **may affect** individuals of the following species, but the actions are not likely to result in a trend toward Federal listing or the loss of viability for these species: California spotted owl, northern goshawk, Pacific marten, Pacific fisher, monarch butterfly, and western bumblebee.
- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species (aquatic species): a BA/BE for aquatic species was prepared that showed:
 - There will be **no effect** on the following federally listed threatened and endangered aquatic species or their designated critical habitat: Shasta crayfish, Central Valley spring-run chinook, Central Valley steelhead, delta smelt, California red-legged frog, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog. There is no designated critical habitat for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog or California red-legged frog within the project area and critical habitat has not been designated for the foothill yellow-legged frog at this time. Further, there are no current or historic detections of the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog, or California red-legged frog in the project area.
 - There will be **no effect** on the following aquatic Forest Service Sensitive Species: black juga, California floater, Great Basin rams-horn, kneecap lanx, montane peaclam, nugget pebblesnail, scalloped juga, Shasta hesperian snail (*Vespericola*

shasta), Topaz juga, Eagle Lake rainbow trout, Goose Lake redband trout, hardhead, Pacific lamprey, Cascades frog, northwestern pond turtle. Cascades frogs were last detected in and around the project area in 2014 and have since not been detected despite numerous survey efforts. Given this lack of recent occupancy and the inclusion of BMPs and IDFs designed to minimize potential effects to the species and its habitat, the Colby Mountain Recreation Project will not affect this species.

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species (botanical species): a BE/BA was conducted to review the potential effects of the proposed Colby Mountain Recreation Project on federally listed Threatened or Endangered species and Forest Service Region 5 Sensitive (TES) plant species.
 - The Colby Mountain Recreation Project area does not contain any known Federally-listed plant species nor any designated critical habitat.
 - The project may affect individuals of the following Region 5 Sensitive species *Botrychium ascendens* (upswept moonwort), *Botrychium crenulatum* (scalloped moonwort), *Botrychium minganense* (Mingan moonwort), *Botrychium montanum* (western goblin), *Botrychium pinnatum* (northwestern moonwort), *Botrychium pedunculatum* (stalked moonwort), *Meesia uliginosa* (broad-nerved hump-moss) and *Silene occidentalis ssp. longistipitata* (long-stiped campion.) and associated habitat, the project is not likely to result in a trend toward Federal listing or loss of viability for these species with the implementation of IDFs.
- Floodplain, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – The Project Area is located outside of the 100-year floodplain and will not create an impact to the floodplain. The proposed action will have little to no impact on wetlands. The project area is within the Butte Creek watershed, which is a municipal watershed that sources municipal and domestic supply to Chico. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used to improve water quality where necessary according to the LNF LRMP Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.
- There are no congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas within the project area.
- There are no inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas within the project area.
- There are no research natural areas within the project area.

- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas: Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1966 as modified by the Region 5 (R5) Programmatic Agreement (PA) (2018), 36 CFR 800, and Forest Service Manual 2360, archaeological surveys were conducted in 2022 to identify archaeological sites within the trail corridors. Site specific Approved Standard Protection Measures, as outlined in the R5 PA (2018), Appendix E, will be used to protect cultural resources to ensure the undertaking will have no adverse effect on the resource.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public meetings for this action have been held on the following dates at the designated locations:

- Forest Advisory Committee, Monday, November 25, 2019
- Public Event at Sierra Nevada Brewery, Monday, November 25, 2019
- Butte County Board of Supervisors, January 28, 2020
- Forest Advisory Committee, January 25, 2021
- Butte Meadows Jonesville Community Association, Saturday, October 2, 2021
- Connected Communities/ Colby Mountain- Butte Meadows Meeting, Saturday, October 23, 2021
- Connected Communities/ Colby Mountain- Chico Meeting, Sunday, November 21, 2021

This project was published on the Butte County Resource Conservation District website during project initiation in 2019.

This action was first listed as a proposal on the Lassen National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) in January 2023. On July 24, 2023, scoping letters and emails with copies of the Proposed Action, Purpose, and Need (PA/PN) document were sent to eight regional tribal organizations. Also on July 24, 2023, scoping letters with a link to the Colby project website and emails with the PA/PN and scoping letter attached were sent to interested and affected parties that included adjacent landowners, grazing allotment permit holders, groups responding to the proposal on the SOPA, and federal, state, and local agencies. Responses were due by September 23, 2023.

Fifty individuals and/or organizations provided comments. No issues were raised that required or resulted in modifying the proposed action.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the 1992 Lassen National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and 1993 Record of Decision (ROD) as amended by the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and ROD and the



Sierra Nevada Forests Management Indicator Species Amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement and ROD (2007). This decision is consistent with all other applicable laws and regulations including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act as amended, Clean Air Act as amended, National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Order 13112: Invasive Species-64 FR 6183 (February 8, 1999).

This project will be conducted in accordance with requirements of the California Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to ensure compliance with California Water Code and the Federal Clean Water Act.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976, combined give the Forest Service the authority and responsibility for protection of resources and management of National Forest System lands.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to appeal and administrative review

THIS DECISION IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL BY INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately after this Decision Memo is signed.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Russell Nickerson, Lassen National Forest, Almanor District Ranger, russell.nickerson@usda.gov, (530) 258-2141.

Russell Nickerson

04/01/2024

Date

Almanor District Ranger, Lassen National Forest



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