Notice of Preparation

Wildfire Risk Reduction, Reliability, and Asset Protection (WRAP) Project

December 11, 2020

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Introduction

Trinity Public Utilities District (Trinity PUD) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) intend to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) referred to as an EIR/EIS for the Wildfire Risk Reduction, Reliability, and Asset Protection (WRAP) Project. Trinity PUD is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency and WAPA is the Federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Trinity PUD and WAPA will prepare the Draft and Final EIR/EIS to comply with both the CEQA and NEPA. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) are cooperating agencies.

Trinity PUD and WAPA are proposing a proactive right-of-way (ROW) expansion and vegetation management project to reduce fire risk from their transmission and distribution power lines to the surrounding communities and public lands, as well as to increase electrical reliability to maintain critical services in the local communities (see attached map).

This NOP of an EIR/EIS provides:

- a brief description of the proposed WRAP Project;
- a summary of potential Project impacts;
- the times and locations of public scoping meetings;
- information on how to provide comments; and
- instructions for obtaining additional Project information.

Concurrent with publication of this NOP, WAPA will publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the WRAP Project in the *Federal Register*. Trinity PUD and WAPA will conduct an extended 50-day scoping comment period. The comment period starts on December 11, 2020 and ends on January 29, 2021. During the public comment period, agencies, organizations, and interested parties may submit comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EIS (e.g., the proposed action, alternatives, and environmental issues, as examples). The lead agencies will consider all comments received in the preparation of the EIR/EIS.

Project Description and Location

Trinity County is located in northwestern California, midway between Redding in Shasta County and the Northern Redwood Coast, in the lower reaches of the Cascade mountain range. The Project consists of existing transmission and distribution power line ROWs and access roads that extend throughout the entirety of Trinity County. The center of the Project is approximately the town of Weaverville. The northern boundary of the Project is approximately the intersection of Coffee Creek and Highway 3 (just north of Trinity Center); the eastern boundary of the Project is at the intersection of Highway 299 and the

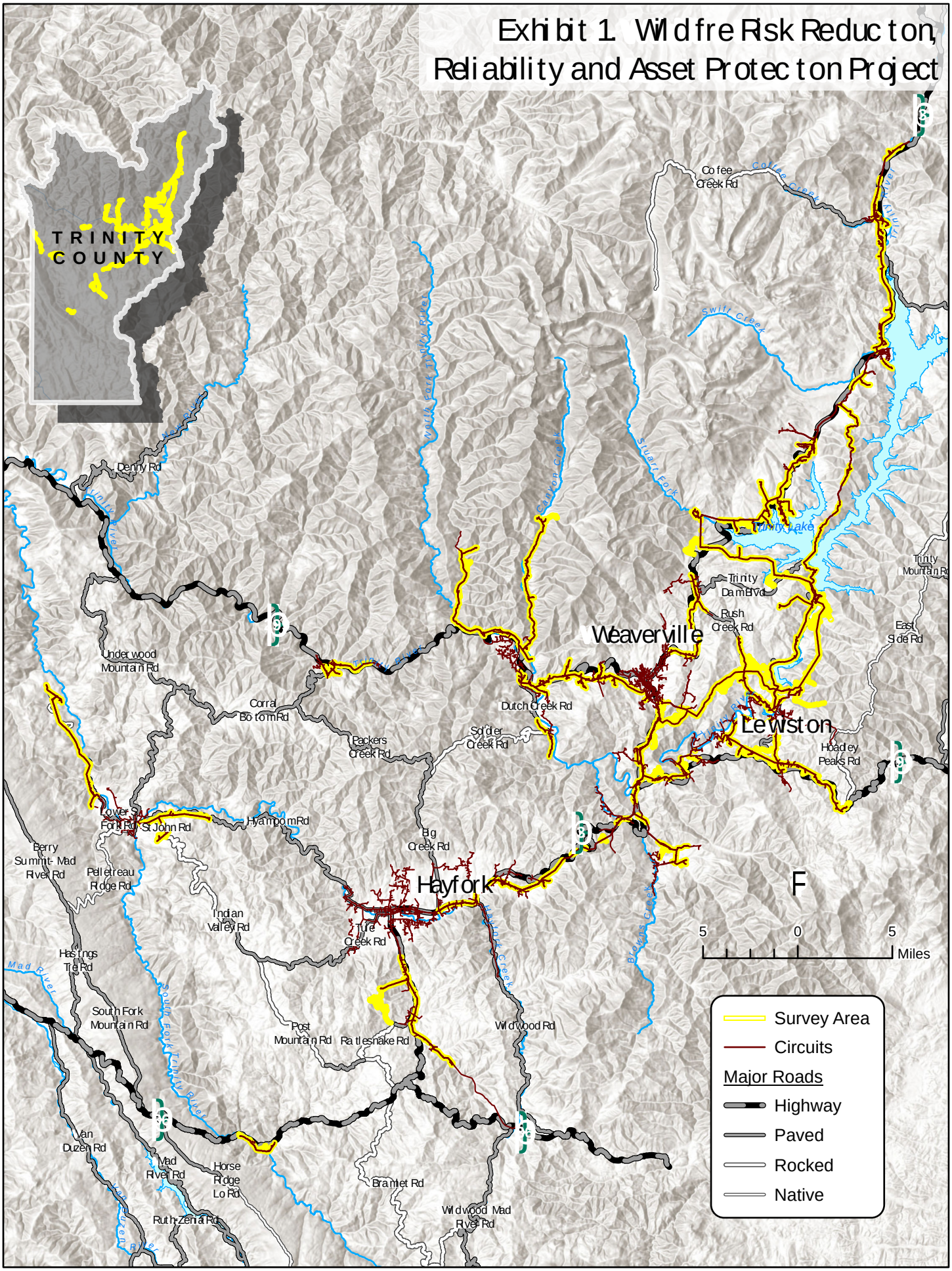
Exhibit 1 Wildfire Risk Reduction, Reliability and Asset Protection Project
TRINITY COUNTY
Coffee Creek Rd
Coffee Creek
Trinity River
Swift Creek
North Fork Trinity River
Canyon Creek
Stuart Fork
Trinity Lake
Trinity Mountain Rd
Trinity Dam Blvd
Rush Creek Rd
Weaverville
East Side Rd
Denny Rd
Underwood Mountain Rd
Corral Bottom Rd
Dutch Creek Rd
Packers Creek Rd
Soldier Creek Rd
Lewiston
Hoadley Peaks Rd
Lower Ford Rd
St John Rd
Hyampom Rd
Big Creek Rd
Berry Summit- Mad River Rd
Pelletreau Ridge Rd
Hayfork
Indian Valley Rd
Ture Creek Rd
Hastings Trl Rd
Mad River
South Fork Mountain Rd
South Fork Trinity River
Post Mountain Rd
Rattlesnake Rd
Wildwood Rd
Van Duzen Rd
Mad River Rd
Horse Ridge Lo Rd
Bramlet Rd
Ruth-Zenia Rd
Wildwood Mad River Rd
Eel River
5 0 5 Miles
Survey Area
Circuits
Major Roads
Highway
Paved
Rocked
Native

county line (just east of Lewiston); the southern boundary of the Project is the community of Forest Glen; and the western boundary is Hyampom Valley.

The areas surrounding Trinity PUD's and WAPA's transmission and distribution systems are particularly vulnerable to fire risk due to the dense vegetation and steep terrain. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection classifies this area as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, and this risk was manifested in the recent 2018 Carr Fire near Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and the 2020 August Complex Fires in southern Trinity County. The proposed WRAP Project would reduce these fire risks by expanding Trinity PUD's and WAPA's existing transmission/distribution ROWs and implementing a proactive integrated vegetation management program within the expanded ROWs.

The purpose of WRAP is to: (1) reduce the risk of wildfire by proactive vegetation management; (2) enhance protection of the WAPA and Trinity PUD electrical transmission and distribution line systems; (3) improve reliability of delivering power to Trinity PUD under WAPA's contract; (4) improve transmission line access by road improvement; and (5) protect the health and safety of the Trinity County community and surrounding biological and natural resources from transmission and distribution related wildfires.

Trinity PUD proposes to expand its utility ROW from 20 feet to up to 130 feet for its overhead transmission and distribution systems (216.8 miles) in high-fire risk areas on USFS, BLM, BOR, and private/other lands. The existing ROW easement for the underground distribution lines is 5 feet and would not change.

WAPA proposes to expand the ROW of its overhead transmission line between Trinity Substation and Weaverville Switchyard (17.5 miles) from 80 feet to up to 130 feet on USFS, BLM, and private lands. This transmission line provides the majority of the electricity to the Trinity PUD system.

The proposed Project would also include the improvement of WAPA's existing legal access roads using best management practices for routine access road maintenance and associated rehabilitation. Trinity PUD would maintain their existing local access roads to the standards set by the land managers.

Vegetation in the ROW may be cleared using a combination of mechanical, manual, and herbicidal control methods. Manual methods may include cutting, girdling, topping and trimming, slash disposal/fuels reduction techniques, and burning (burning for Trinity PUD only). Mechanical methods would be used in areas in which vegetation can be removed non-selectively. Most pieces of mechanical equipment are not safe to operate on slopes over 30 to 35 percent; mechanical methods are also constrained where soils are susceptible to compaction or erosion. Herbicidal control is another option that Trinity PUD and WAPA are exploring as an option to manage vegetation. Only those herbicides that have been approved for use in ROW maintenance based on evaluations of toxicity, solubility, soil adsorption potential, and persistence in water and soil would be used. Additionally, herbicides would only be applied by individuals with applicator licenses/certificates and in accordance with label requirements.

In order to maintain long-term vegetation clearances along the expanded ROWs, the proposed Project would include an updated and improved operation and maintenance plan (O&M Plan) and GIS database of all assets and sensitive resources along the subject ROWs. As part of the updated O&M Plan and GIS database, the proposed Project would develop Standard Operating Procedures, which would be implemented for all O&M tasks, as well as Project Conservation Measures that would be implemented to protect specific sensitive resources in the ROW.

As part of the proposed Project, Trinity PUD and WAPA will submit applications for ROW authorizations for the expansion of transmission and distribution line ROWs on BLM- and USFS-administered lands. Trinity PUD would also amend their Interagency Agreement with BOR. In addition, the proposed Project may include timber sale contracts with the USFS, BLM, BOR, and private landowners for merchantable timber resulting from ROW expansions and vegetation removal.

Potential Environmental Effects

The EIR/EIS will discuss the potential environmental effects of the proposed WRAP Project and will identify mitigation measures to avoid or substantially reduce any potentially significant adverse effects, to the extent feasible. The Trinity PUD and WAPA have not yet identified alternatives to the Project but will identify and consider feasible alternatives in the EIR/EIS analysis. Based on preliminary analysis, implementation of the proposed WRAP Project will consider the following environmental effects:

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Recreation
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Soils and Mineral Resources
- Transportation
- Utilities/Service Systems/Public Services
- Visual Resources
- Wildfire and Forestry Resources

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply a predetermination of impacts. Trinity PUD and WAPA invite interested stakeholders to suggest specific issues, including possible mitigation measures, within these general categories, or other categories not included above, to be considered in the EIR/EIS.

Public Scoping

Pursuant to both CEQA and NEPA, scoping is the process of soliciting input from affected governmental agencies, organizations, and the public on the scope and content of the environmental document (i.e., the joint EIR/EIS). Public scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth in the EIR/EIS, and helps to identify those issues that can be eliminated from detailed study.

Members of the public, affected Federal, State, and local agencies, interest groups, and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process by providing written comments or recommendations concerning the issues to be analyzed in the EIR/EIS. Interested parties may also provide oral comments during the public scoping meetings discussed below.

Project Scoping Meetings

Virtual public scoping meetings will be held on January 12, 2021 and January 14, 2021 (see specific dates, times and access in the table below). The purpose of the scoping meetings is to provide information about the proposed WRAP Project, review Project maps, answer questions, and take oral comments from interested parties.

There will be two scoping meetings, one in the morning and one in the evening, to accommodate and encourage public participation. Each meeting will use Zoom Webinar and will be virtual or online consistent with statewide restrictions with in-person meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meeting Dates and Times	Meeting Access Information
Virtual Meeting #1 Tuesday, January 12, 2021 6:00 pm-7:30 pm PT	**Zoom Webinar:** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84343935277 **By Phone:** 1-669-900-6833 Webinar ID: 843 4393 5277
Virtual Meeting #2 Thursday, January 14, 2021 11:00 am-12:30 pm PT	**Zoom Webinar:** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81016861568 **By Phone:** 1-669-900-6833 Webinar ID: 810 1686 1568

Scoping Comments

At this time, Trinity PUD and WAPA are soliciting comments regarding any issues and alternatives that should be considered in the preparation of the EIR/EIS. Suggestions for submitting scoping comments are presented at the end of this section. Written comments must be postmarked no later than **January 29, 2021**. Written comments may be submitted in a variety of ways: (1) by mail, (2) by electronic mail (email), or (3) by fax. You can also present oral comments by attending a Public Scoping Meeting (see times and locations above). Instructions for submitting written comments are provided below.

By Electronic Mail: E-mail communications are the preferred method; however, please remember to include your name and return address in the email message. Email messages must be sent to saare@wapa.gov.

By Mail: If you send comments by mail, please use first-class mail and be sure to include your name, return address, and email address (please write legibly). All written comments on the scope of the WRAP Project EIR/EIS must be sent to:

Tish Saare

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Western Area Power Administration

114 Parkshore Dr.

Folsom, CA 95630

By Fax: Faxed comments must be sent to 916-985-1935. Your name and return address must be included in the fax.

Suggestions for Effective Participation in Scoping. Following are some suggestions for preparing and providing the most useful information for the WRAP Project EIR/EIS scoping process:

- Review the description of the proposed WRAP Project.
- Review the potential environmental effects.

- Participate in the virtual scoping meetings.
- Submit written comments; explain important issues that the EIR/EIS should address.
- Suggest specific mitigation measures that could reduce impacts from the proposed Project.
- Suggest possible alternatives that could avoid or reduce impacts.

Agency Comments

We are seeking comments from all Responsible and Trustee Agencies and all other public agencies with jurisdiction by law with respect to the Project as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR/EIS. Agency responses should identify the issues to be considered in the EIR/EIS, including significant environmental issues, alternatives, mitigation measures, and whether the responding agency will be a responsible or trustee agency, and the basis for that determination. Your response should be sent at the earliest possible date but must be postmarked by no later than **January 29, 2021**. Please send your comments to the electronic mail or mailing addresses above.

Additional Project Information

Project Website: Information about the environmental review process will be posted on the Project website at: https://www.wapa.gov/regions/SN/environment/Pages/WRAP.aspx. This site will be used to post all public documents during the environmental review process and to announce upcoming document releases and public meetings.