

Chapter 4 Consultation and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and public meetings. This chapter addresses Caltrans' efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project related issues through early and continuing coordination.

A public notice was published in the Feather River Bulletin on January 7, 2004, and January 21, 2004, to inform the public that Caltrans was initiating studies relative to the Spanish Creek Bridge project and that a public information meeting was planned for January 27, 2004, at the Quincy Public Library meeting hall, 445 Jackson Street, in Plumas County. In addition to the newspaper ad, notices were mailed directly to appropriate public agencies, interest groups, and individuals. Project information presented at the meeting included the project purpose and need statement, project alternatives, potential project related impacts, an outline of the project development process, and the project schedule. Comment cards were made available at the meeting and attendees were encouraged to provide input. Less than 10 people attended the meeting. Four written comments were received, none of which raised significant or controversial issues. The written comments and Caltrans' responses are included in Appendix E.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an Environmental Impact Report was advertised in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. The NOP was sent to public agencies with discretionary approval authority and/or jurisdiction over resources held in trust for the public, and other appropriate public agencies, organizations, and individuals with an interest in the project. The purpose of the NOP is to obtain early comments on the proposed project, project alternatives, and potential environmental effects of the project. The only comments received were from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding compliance with regulations pertaining to water quality and fire control respectively.

Early coordination with PNF began in 2003 due to the proximity of public recreation land relative to the project and the need to acquire temporary and/or permanent right-of-way on public recreation land. Following is a summary of meetings between Caltrans and PNF during the project development process:

- March 21, 2003 and July 22, 2003 meetings were held at the PNF Mount Hough Ranger District Office near Quincy (Mt. Hough). These initial scoping meetings were attended by Caltrans and PNF staff. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce PNF to the proposed project and schedule, discuss responsibilities and coordination protocol for complying with the NEPA;
- July 20, 2004, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. Major points covered in the meeting include the following: PNF considers the public recreation land, including the campground, a “significant” resource in terms of Section 4(f); anticipated level of NEPA compliance and agency roles (Caltrans is the lead agency and PNF is a cooperating agency); project scope and potential impacts relative to public recreation area, and possible measures to minimize impacts upon recreation and campground activities;
- March 15, 2005, meeting at Spanish Creek Bridge (project site), attended by Caltrans and PNF. This meeting was to discuss construction access and staging needs, potential impacts to public recreational area, including the Spanish Creek Campground, and measures to avoid and minimize impacts to the recreation area. PNF would need to decide whether the campground and recreation area would be made available for temporary construction use and what restrictions would apply (e.g., duration of use, period of use by construction, and whether the property would remain open for public use or be closed for the duration of construction);
- March 22, 2005, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans, PNF and FHWA. Caltrans Structures Construction discussed the necessity of utilizing the campground access road and recreation area for construction access and staging. The discussion focused on whether the recreation area and campground should remain open, fully or partially, during construction or whether it should be closed. Also, discussed was Section 4(f) use and possible compensation. PNF indicated no interest in taking ownership of the Spanish Creek Bridge if a new bridge was constructed and the existing bridge was left in place. As a result of this meeting, PNF issued a letter on October 14, 2005 formally notifying Caltrans that PNF desires that the Spanish Creek Campground remain open during construction. The PNF District Ranger recommended “we (PNF) shorten the campground operation from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, and allow Caltrans controlled access through the campground while it is open. Controlled access could include traffic control and limited or no work during the weekends and definitely no work during the three major holiday weekends.”

- ❑ December 13, 2005, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. The discussion focused on the construction process and measures to minimize impacts to the public recreation land and campground. Compensation and post-construction restoration of the recreation land was also discussed;
- ❑ March 6, 2006, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. The discussion focused on measures to minimize impacts to the public recreation area and campground during construction, post-construction restoration of the property, and compensatory mitigation;
- ❑ September 7, 2006, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed compensation for impacts to public recreation land and other Section 4(f) properties, and measures to minimize harm to public recreation lands during construction;
- ❑ April 12, 2007, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed compensation for impacts to public recreation land and other Section 4(f) properties, and measures to minimize harm to public recreation lands during construction. In addition, the draft MOA to resolve adverse effects upon historic properties was delivered to PNF for their review. PNF is a concurring party to the MOA;
- ❑ September 12, 2007, meeting at Mt. Hough, attended by Caltrans and PNF. Discussed need for unanticipated overhead utility relocation; requested PNF's delineation of recreation area and campground boundary; and discussed placement of interpretive mitigation feature on PNF land to resolve adverse effects to historic properties.

On February 27, 2008, PNF issued a letter to Caltrans confirming that the public recreation area, which includes the Spanish Creek Campground, is a significant resource in terms of Section 4(f). The letter also confirmed the following: the boundary of the recreation area and campground; the campground will be closed during the three year construction period; measures to minimize harm to the recreation area; impacts to the recreation area which cannot be avoided; and the desired monetary compensation to make PNF whole.

Coordination with PNF has been ongoing with respect to temporary easements, highway right-of-way, and measures to minimize harm to the public recreation area, including the campground. Implementation of the build alternatives would require PNF to approve a series of federal actions on National Forest system lands. A Special Use Permit will be issued to the bridge contractor for use of National Forest

system lands for activities such as staging equipment, building a temporary trestle over Spanish Creek, construction of temporary roads, hauling material and supplies on National Forest lands, etc. A Forest Order(s) would be issued for the temporary closure of the Spanish Campground and for the temporary closure of a section of Spanish Creek in the vicinity of the proposed bridge project.

Caltrans initiated consultation with the SHPO in accordance with the July 2003 Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation. SHPO correspondence and an approved MOA regarding the treatment of historic properties adversely affected by the project are included in Appendix G. Following is a chronology of SHPO consultation:

- Caltrans submitted a letter to the SHPO on December 28, 2005 transmitting a Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) and requesting SHPO's concurrence regarding Caltrans' determinations of eligibility for listing on the National Register;
- On February 9, 2006, the SHPO submitted a letter to Caltrans indicating concurrence with Caltrans' determinations of eligibility for the National Register for the following resources: CA-PLU-893H (not eligible), CA-PLU-2914H (not eligible), Indian Valley Road (not eligible), Union Pacific Railroad Tunnel No. 31 (not eligible), Butte County Road 50545A (eligible), Dark Canyon Road from Jarbo Gap to the Dark Canyon Road boat launch ramp (eligible as a contributing element to the Feather River Highway Historic District), and the Utah Construction Road of the Western Pacific Railroad (assumed eligible). The SHPO stated however, it was unable to concur that the segment of the Maxwell Ditch within the project's APE is ineligible for listing in the National Register. The SHPO indicated concern that the segment may contribute to the historic significance and integrity of the property as a whole. The SHPO recommended that Caltrans assume National Register eligibility of the ditch segment;
- The SHPO submitted a letter to Caltrans on May 3, 2006 requesting Caltrans' signature, which would acknowledge acceptance of SHPO's recommendation in its February 9, 2006 letter that Caltrans assume National Register eligibility for the Maxwell Ditch segment. Caltrans signed the letter on May 12, 2006 thereby concluding consultation with the SHPO regarding determinations of eligibility;

- ❑ On October 30, 2006, Caltrans submitted a Finding of Adverse Effects Report to the SHPO. Caltrans found that the project would have an adverse effect on the following historic properties: Feather River Highway Historic District, Spanish Creek Bridge as a contributive element of the Feather River Highway Historic District, and the Spanish Creek Bridge as a California Historic Truss Bridge. A draft MOA was included with the FOAE to resolve adverse effects. The letter requested SHPO's concurrence with Caltrans' FOAE and review and comments on the draft MOA;
- ❑ The SHPO submitted a letter to Caltrans on May 7, 2007 indicating concurrence with Caltrans' findings that the project will result in an adverse effect on the Feather River Highway Historic District and the Spanish Creek Bridge;
- ❑ The MOA was approved by the SHPO and Caltrans on July 28, 2008.

On April 25, 2008, Caltrans notified the ACHP in writing of the undertaking's adverse effect on historic properties. The ACHP responded on June 25, 2008 declining participation in the consultation to resolve the adverse effects. Copies of the letters are included in Appendix G.

In accordance with CEQA and NEPA, the Draft EIR/EA with Section 4(f) Evaluation was circulated for public review and comment for a 45-day period from January 10, 2007 through February 23, 2007. A notice was published in the Feather River Bulletin on January 10, 17, and 24, 2007 advertising availability of the draft environmental document. The notice also advertised a public information meeting to be held on January 25, 2007 to discuss the project and the draft environmental document. In addition to the newspaper advertisement, letters were sent directly to individual and agency stakeholders. The draft document was published on Caltrans environmental document internet website:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/envinternet/envdoc.htm> and paper copies were made available for public review at the Quincy Public Library, 445 Jackson Street, in Quincy.

The public information meeting was held on January 25, 2007 at the Quincy Public Library meeting hall, 445 Jackson Street, in Quincy from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The meeting was an open-house format. A formal presentation was not made. Approximately ten people attended the meeting. Comment cards were provided to attendees. A total of six comments were received during the draft document circulation period. Written comments and Caltrans' responses to the comments are included in Appendix F.

Copies of the draft EIR/EA with Section 4(F) Evaluation were submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse (SCH), for distribution to selected state agencies in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. The SCH notified Caltrans on February 14, 2007 that no comments were submitted by any of the state agencies during the review period.

Caltrans submitted one paper copy of the Draft EIR/EA with Section 4(f) Evaluation and 12 copies on compact disc to the Department of the Interior (DOI) on January 3, 2007 for review and comment. Comments were requested by the end of the public review period, February 23, 2007. A letter was received from the DOI on April 18, 2007 with limited comments. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix F.

Agencies and stakeholders contacted during the project planning phase include:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Plumas National Forest (PNF), Mount Hough Ranger District
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Plumas County Department of Public Works
- California Department of Fish and Game, Region 2
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State Office of Historic Preservation
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Maidu Tribal Organizations and Individuals
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- Department of the Interior