3 Chapter 3 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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, public informational meetings and newspaper articles. This chapter summarizes the results of the Department's efforts to fully identify, address and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

3.1 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES

As part of the consultation process, several agencies were contacted in regard to this project. USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, CDFG, NAHC and RWQCB were contacted by letter (see Section 3.3 Agency Correspondence), phone and in person on various dates. Field reviews were held with United States Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game on September 18, 2003, April 26, 2004 and May 19, 2004.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Field Meeting 9/18/03
- Sent letter 2/24/2004
- Field Meeting 5/19/04

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
- Sent letter 2/24/04
- Field meeting 5/19/04

United States Army Corps of Engineers
- In office consultation 8/28/03
- Field meeting 9/18/03

California Department of Fish and Game
- Sent letter 2/24/04
- Field meeting 9/18/03
- Field meeting 4/26/04

Regional Water Quality Control Board
- In office consultation January 2004
- In office consultation February 2004

Native American Heritage Commission
- Sent letter 7/2/2003
- Received response 7/11/2003

3.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In addition to consultation with public agencies, meetings to inform local residents and interested parties were held. An informational meeting was held on July 18, 2003. Landowners expressed concern over traffic safety in the corridor and the proposed schedule for delivery of the currently proposed project. The meeting was well attended, with approximately 50 people present. A public meeting to present the proposed project and accept public comments on this environmental document was held on November 16, 2004 (See Section 3.3 for comments and responses).

As part of the public outreach process, a presentation on the proposed project was given at the monthly Board meeting of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority on February 19, 2004. Monthly updates have been given to the Board subsequent to the original presentation, and will be on-going until such time as the proposed project is implemented.

Local newspapers ran several articles on the Department's intention to improve Highway 116. Articles appeared in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat on July 18th, 2003, January 11, 2004 and February 16, 2004. The town of Sonoma's newspaper, the Index-Tribune, ran articles on July 8, 2003, July 15, 2003, and February 17, 2004. Before the July 2003 and February 2004 meetings the papers notified the public of the upcoming meetings and provided logistical information on attending them.

3.3 Public Comment and Response to Comments

The following comments were received from the public and regulatory agencies in response to circulation of the draft of this Initial Study. The comments have been numbered for organization, and labeled in relation to how they were received. Thus, comments received during the public meeting are labeled "PM#", comments received via the internet are labeled "IC#" and comments from Responsible or Regulatory Agencies are labeled "RA#." There were 21 comments received during the public meeting, 4 comments received via the internet, and one comment received from a regulatory agency.

Comment Number **Commentor and Comment**

Response:

PM1 Donald D. Reece: Triangle Ranch

Re: 1431 Stage Gulch Road - easement goes very close to house & barn; # of trees to be removed & which ones; we have to stop traffic both ways for cattle trucks & hay trucks entering and leaving as it is now, we have had many close calls; when cars are traveling faster, we will be in even more danger! Why can't the easement be taken equally from both sides, instead of all from our side?

Response:

During early scoping of this project, a retaining wall was considered at this location, but was removed as unnecessary during geotechnical analyses. When the above comment was received during the public meeting, Caltrans staff reviewed the location for other viable options. On January 6, 2005, Caltrans personnel including specialists from Highway Design, Environmental

and Geotechnical Studies (Geotech) revisited the location in question and after additional review decided to stay with the current proposal. A retaining wall on the north side was reconsidered but ultimately rejected due to additional impacts. The current proposal will reduce right of way take and minimize tree removal. Further in the process, the design team will look into ways to improve operation in and out of the driveways at this location. Options could include widening existing driveways, relocating the existing driveway to top of the crest, and/or building a new driveway. Topographic information shows that the house on the south side of Route 116 is approximately 19 meters from the edge of traveled way (ETW). The barn and house on the north side are approximately 22 meters and 45 meters respectively from ETW. Trees grow on both the north and south sides of the highway. Symmetrical widening (widening on both sides) was considered in preliminary engineering with retaining walls on both sides to minimize tree removal. However, Visual Analysis specialists commented that the two-wall scheme presented a tunneling effect, which is a significant impact to the scenery of Route 116. They recommended no widening on the south side, and that a retaining wall be constructed only on the north side. Later on, because the proposed wall height was relatively low, Geotech recommended removing the north wall at this location (after discussing the significance of the trees with environmental). From an alignment standpoint, to widen on the north side is more appropriate to conform to the curve correction at Station 14+20 to Station 15+20 (Map 2?). In addition, to widen both sides would require double the tree removal. Widening on the south side without retaining wall will cause relocation or removal of the residential house on the property of APN 068-050-026. The State would be forced to purchase the entire property. For this reason, the modifications are proposed for the north side only.

PM2 Scott M. Horine

I am very concerned about speed of traffic on 116 between Arnold and through Stage Gulch. Making a lft (sic) turn onto Bonness Rd going west on 116 is extremely dicey. I would like to see a left hand turn lane onto Bonness or a stop light at Watmaugh with flashing yellow lights preceding it. This would slow traffic in both directions and make what is becoming a residential area on Bonness Road (with development possibilities) a much safer place for drivers of all ages.

Response:

At this time, a left turn lane at Bonness Road and a signal at Watmaugh Road are not warranted based on existing traffic volumes and accident histories. Future developments that will impact traffic at these intersections will be required to provide traffic studies, project volumes and the appropriate mitigations (left turn lane, signal, etc.) if warranted. The currently proposed curve improvement and shoulder widening project will provide 8-foot paved shoulders throughout the project limits. On westbound Highway 116 at Bonness Road, the proposed 8-foot shoulder will be available for vehicles to pass a vehicle stopped ahead waiting to make a left turn. There are currently intersection warning signs in both directions approaching Bonness Road.

PM3 Vincent Hoagland

As both a driver and a cyclist, I am very supportive of this project. My wife and I frequently haul horses in a trailer over this road to Napa and Sacramento. I also am a cyclist - member of the Sonoma County Bicycle and Ped. Advisory Committee and so also support the establishment of 8' shoulders. Years ago I rode this stretch with my heart in my throat and then decided it was too unsafe. I am a little disappointed that Chapter 1 sec 1.1.1.3 does not mention cyclists under traffic safety. Similarly section 1.2.1 doesn't mention bicycle safety.

Response:

The document was reexamined to determine if adding a discussion of bicycles in section 1.1.1.3 was appropriate. A discussion of the existing bicycle facility on Highway 116 is found in section 1.1.1.4 in Chapter 1 of the document. After further review, Caltrans staff feel that the most appropriate location for the discussion is in its present location under "1.1.1.4 Existing Facility". The currently proposed project is a safety project that would include curve improvement and shoulder widening to reduce vehicle accidents within the project limits. Wider shoulders provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side clearance. Very few cyclists currently use this route. With the completion of this project, if a noticeable increase in bicycle usage occurs, installing bike route signs would be considered in cooperation with the County, who would need to place signs on Arnold Drive and Adobe Road to complete the link between the county and state facilities for bicycles. To place the signs before a complete loop was established would create an "island" effect on Highway 116 that might cause unsafe conditions for cyclists.

PM4 Christian McDonald

I feel that it is very important that the 116 Hwy be a TYPE 2, rather than a TYPE 3 - Bike route signage is important for the safety of cyclists and "alerts" the motorists that cyclists are using the roadway. This is the perfect opportunity to make 116/Stage Gulch a "bike route" and provide a safe and recognized bike route between Sonoma & Petaluma. I feel that CalTrans has a very weak argument by saying signage will only encourage cyclists & that CalTrans does not want to encourage any more traffic - cyclists do have a right to use the roadways and every effort should be made by CalTrans to ensure cyclists safety and educate the public on sharing "our" roads - Sincerely Christian McDonald

Response:

The designation of bikeways as Class I, II and III should not be construed as a hierarchy of bikeways; that one is better than the other. Each class of bikeway has its appropriate application. This is a safety project that proposes curve improvement and shoulder widening to reduce accidents within the project limits. Wider shoulders provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side clearance. A Class II bikeway (bike lane) is not appropriate for the topography and speed of traffic on State Route 116 at this location. It would be inappropriate to encourage additional bicycle travel by designating State highways in rural areas as bikeways. Bicycle route signing and pavement marking offers little protection, if any, to bicyclists from vehicles traveling at speeds of 45 mph and higher. Generally,

stripes alone will not measurably enhance bicycling safety. Bike lane stripes can give bicyclists a false sense of security by increasing bicyclists' confidence that motorists will not stray into their path of travel if they remain within the bike lane. Bicyclists should be alert and aware of vehicles on the roadway. For this segment of State Route 116 (SR 116), a Class III bikeway is the most appropriate based on the reasons listed above. Only a minimal number of cyclists currently use this route. With the completion of this project, if a noticeable increase in bicycle usage occurs, installing bike route signs would be considered in cooperation with the County, who would need to place signs on Arnold Drive and Adobe Road to complete the link between the county and state facilities for bicycles. To place the signs before a complete loop was established would create an "island" effect on Highway 116 that might cause unsafe conditions for cyclists. This project does improve cyclists safety with the proposed 8-foot paved shoulder for the cyclists to ride on and rumble strip along the shoulder to separate the motorists from cyclists. The rumble strip improvement offers an audible warning to cyclists of approaching cars encroaching on the shoulder, rather than the silent bike lane stripe.

PM5 Vincent Hoagland

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority Bike Plan 2003 Update shows this segment as a class III bikeway and proposes it be upgraded to a Class II bikeway. Is there a reason that is not addressed in the project description? Vincent Hoagland 3rd district rep to SCPBAC [Sonoma County Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee].

Response:

Caltrans is not aware of, nor was Caltrans consulted on any plans to upgrade this segment of Highway 116 to a Class II bikeway, nor is it recommended. See response to comment PM4 above.

PM6 Frank Windes

If you won't straighten the road you should put a barrier in the middle as in RT 37. The improvements as shown will just increase speed.

Response:

When Caltrans was considering safety improvements for the project area, all standard available safety options were evaluated, including median barriers. The safety improvements being proposed will make the roadway safer for vehicles traveling at the existing posted speed limit by bringing the former County roadway to current State design standards. Drivers that exceed the posted speed limit, will do so regardless of the road condition, as evident in the accident history. Wider shoulders and travel lanes provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side clearance. We do not typically install median barriers on two-lane conventional highway. There are safety and access issues associated with median barrier. While a concrete barrier will eliminate most, if not all cross centerline accidents, two key negative impacts of barrier are: 1) A probable increase in the overall accident rate due to vehicles striking the barrier and a reduced recovery area, and 2) The restriction or elimination of vehicle access to the highway caused by the barrier may result in reduced sight distance at barrier openings, increased driving costs, increased driver frustration, and possible economic losses to

local business establishments. Local residents would also experience more difficulty accessing private driveways within the project area. We are implementing a progression of safety measures intended to reduce the incidence of run-off-the-road and cross-centerline type accidents. We are installing soft barrier in the centerline throughout the project limit. Rumble strip will also be installed next to the right edgeline stripe.

PM7 Louis Salz

The Sonoma County Bicycle Plan calls for Stage Gulch being designated a Class II bicycle lane. We are very happy with the 8 foot shoulders and would also like to see it designated a class II. It appears that plenty of pavement is included in the plan for this.

Response:

See response to comment PM4 above.

PM8 Robert McElroy

Next time you all should carpool, too many caltrans vehicles in the lot[1]. I'm very suspicious about the "Red Leg Frog", I don't believe it is native at that location[2].

Response:

[1]Comment noted

Response:

[2]California Red Legged Frog currently inhabits the project area, and scientific records indicate that they have lived there for many years. As taken from the USFWS 2002 Recovery Plan for the California Red-legged Frog, the historic distribution of the species is believed to have been common in the coastal habitats from Point Reyes, Marin County, greater Sonoma County to the inland areas near Redding, Shasta County southward to northwestern Baja California, Mexico. Historically CRLF was known in 46 California counties, it is now believed that the species is extirpated from 24 of the 46 counties (USFWS 1996a, 2002). Sonoma County and Caltrans biologists have made confirmed sightings of CRLF adjacent to and within the project site respectively. These sightings have been confirmed by USFWS staff. Caltrans biologists have submitted photographs to USFWS, one of which is included in this Initial Study. These two confirmed sightings are within the historic distribution based on the 2002, USFWS Recovery Plan for California Red-legged Frog.

PM9 Thomas E. Vinson

We have access to our property (APN 142-052-002) which formerly belonged to UCC Vineyard. We must maintain a gate near the current location. Please see Mike Clancey for details.

Response:

It is Caltrans policy to maintain access to private property on rural, undivided highways when constructing transportation projects. Every effort will be made to maintain the gate at or near its' current location.

PM10 George Sequeira

My family and I own parcel 068-050-021 we are continually experiencing vehicles in our property. CalTrans needs to install guard rails double yellow lines flashers to control speed.

Response:

Widening the roadway to provide 12-foot travel lanes and 8-foot shoulders, along with improving the curves will alleviate the run-off-the road accidents. Highway 116 is currently striped with double yellow lines, and flashing lights were recently installed at curve locations in an attempt to caution drivers to reduce speed.

PM11 Charles B. Reynolds

1. Left turn out lane to golf course right deceleration lane to golf course. 2. Acquisition of property in from of golf course to widen 116. 3. Boness Rd. - Trucks now have to go into west bound lane to make right hand turn onto Boness. (Please see my letter from last Summer Bo Yuan, Mike Clancey et al)

Response:

1. The State does not typically provide left turn and deceleration lanes to private driveways, unless the traveling public enormously benefits from it in terms of safety and traffic operation. 2. Widening entirely on the north side (Golf Course) could be one design option. However, after design staff consulted with Caltrans Right of Way division on January 10, 2005, they conclude partial (sliver) R/W taken on the south side of Route 116 is feasible and therefore the symmetrical widening is the most economical solution at this location. 3. Although there a currently no shoulders at this location, the project will construct 8 foot paved shoulders in each direction. The newly constructed shoulder will be available to westbound vehicles in the event an eastbound truck is making a right turn to Bonness Road. Large trucks that require a larger turning radius should use the Hwy 116/East Bonness Road intersection. If the property owner wishes to pursue a left turn lane and deceleration lane, it is recommended that they work with the County of Sonoma to initiate an encroachment permit with the Department of Transportation. [The letter correspondence referenced was not a comment on this environmental document and was received outside of the comment period for this document, thus has been addressed separately. However, since it is incorporated by reference here, copies of the original letter and Caltrans' response have been included with other correspondence at the end of this chapter].

PM12 Patty Moore

I would like to know if the project realignment plan differs significantly from the 1975 or 1994 proposed realignment.

Response:

The currently proposed alignment differs substantially from the project proposed in 1994 in one location. Specifically, the 500 meter section just west of Transfer Station Road is a completely new design. The proposed realignment at this location has been developed as a way to deliver this safety project in a time frame commensurate with what was appropriate for a safety project of this priority, and still eliminate or minimize environmental impacts.

The realignment plan includes minor realignment along the existing highway centerline and a major realignment of the highway at the Transfer Station Road intersection to avoid environmental impacts to Champlin Creek. Any project offered in 1975 would have differed considerably in design, scope and cost from the currently proposed project.

PM13 John Pereira

I would like more specific information about this project because I live on Stage Gulch & Watmaugh

Response:

A copy of the final environmental document will be mailed to all those who commented on the draft document. Caltrans Right of Way agents will contact all property owners effected by the current project if the project is approved.

PM14 Christine Culver

This is a very critical E/W link for bicycle riders - both recreational & for transportation. I'm pleased that there are at least 8 ft shoulders in both directions w/no rumble strips between the shoulder and the travel lanes. The wide shoulders are good, but this stretch of road should have a designated class II bike lane to conform with the county plan. Why is it going to continue to be a class III and not signed as a Class II?

Response:

Caltrans is proposing a rumble strip along the fogline. The rumble strip improvement offers an audible warning to cyclists of approaching cars encroaching on the shoulder, rather than the silent bike lane stripe. See response to comment PM4 above for additional discussion on the issue of Class II and Class III bicycle lanes.

PM15 Everardo Robledo

116 needs a left hand turn signal lane when you turn on to Bonness Rd to make it safe.

Response:

At this time, a left turn lane at Bonness Road is not warranted based on existing traffic volumes and accident histories. The State's curve improvement and shoulder widening project will provide 8-foot paved shoulders throughout the project limits. On westbound Highway 116 at Bonness Road, the proposed 8-foot shoulder will be available to vehicles to pass a vehicle stopped ahead waiting to make a left turn.

PM16 Samuel Coon, Esq.

The presentation was very thorough and professionally conducted. I found Mr. Mac, and Mr. Basuino and Ms. Johnson to be very helpful, knowledgeable and courteous. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you, comment noted.

PM17 Martin Clinton

This project will close an important (notorious!) "gap" in bicycling routes. I applaud the eight-foot shoulder design. I understand there is no current plan for rumble-strips on the shoulder line. If this changes I trust the design will be textured-line and not dug-grooves style. Thank you.

Response:

The project includes a 16" ground-in rumble strip to the right of the edgeline stripe. There will be 6 feet of paved shoulder available to bicyclists beyond the rumble strip. It is an audible and tactile warning to a driver of the vehicle drifting from the roadway and also separates the bicyclists from vehicles on the roadway. In terms of safety, the rumble strip is a much better safety improvement than just the textured line.

PM18 Randy Swegle

Will photos similar to those displayed at the informational presentation be available on line, and if so, at what internet address?

Response:

Photo Simulations are shown in the draft environmental document, in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2, pages 2-5 and 2-6. The Environmental Document is available on the world wide web at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm

PM19 Jenaru Robledo

Middle Lane. Turning left on Bonness, Traffic is increasing dangerous turning left our, Right Involve in a rear end accident in 1997.

Response:

See response to comment PM17.

PM20 Mrs. G. L. Howland

Any Changes at Watmaugh & 116? Speed Limit Propur signs about the county dump.

Response:

The intersection of Watmaugh Road and Highway 116 was improved in a channelization project completed in 1997. There are no additional improvements proposed at this intersection. The speed limit will remain at 45 mph as posted. There are no additional signs proposed around the county dump.

PM21 Stephen Dale

Concern & Requests - Left hand turn lane at 116&Bonness Road west. Two of the winery children have been in serious accidents turning left - traffic has become heavier and faster makes for dangerous conditions. Drivers not knowing the area and looking for Bonness Rd and the winery stop quickly creating a condition that increases the danger of rear end accidents. Please consider this serious issue in your design project. Sincerely Stephen Dale, Vice President & General Manager Robledo Family Winery.

Response:

Currently, there are advance intersection warning signs in both directions on Highway 116 in the area of Bonness Road. No additional signing is proposed in the current project. Proposed shoulder widening will provide a paved area that will be available to vehicles to pass a vehicle stopped ahead waiting to make a left turn. This additional space/recovery area should help alleviate rear end accidents at this location. The winery could suggest that their guests/customers/patrons/deliverers use the Highway 116/East Bonness Road intersection.

IC1 Nancy Weiler

Good morning, Seana.

I am a Caltrans Maintenance employee (vacation this week, yeah!) who travels daily on Hwy. 116 from Sonoma to Petaluma to work. I am an Office Tech at the North Bay Region Maintenance Station office, however, I am writing this letter as the proverbial "concerned citizen" (nice to be on the other side for a change :)) and commuter on 116. This project needs to be expedited in any way that it can be. I don't agree that a 2008 completion date is acceptable and I know that Caltrans CAN and has expedited projects faster if need be. I have seen numerous accidents on this road over the years from fender benders to horrendous fatalities - there are absolutely no "escape" areas. It is narrow with no shoulders and blind curves. I know that you are aware of this, but I just felt that I needed to give a bit of input. I care about the environment and the wildlife, however, I am far more concerned with the potential loss of yet more human lives on this road, namely my own. If a person had mechanical problems or whatnot there is absolutely nowhere to pull over on that couple of mile stretch through the canyon. There are a couple of driveways in the area and when people try to turn into them, drivers waiting behind them are cringing at the thought of a big rig coming around one of those turns and plowing into the que (sic) of vehicles. I saw a four car "rearender" recently playing out that scenario. Fortunately no one appeared to be injured. One idea may be to require turn pockets into those driveways. One small mistake by any driver on that highway and yet more people will die. The volume of traffic including big rig traffic on that highway has increased dramatically over the years and this project should have been completed long ago. I'm not even sure that 116 meets the current standards for state highways. Anyway, Seana, thank you for taking the time to read this and I just want to be around to see my 7 year old (gorgeous, of course :)) granddaughter grow up. Have a good day. Nancy Weiler

Response:

Every effort has been made to deliver this safety improvement as quickly as possible. The project is currently being "fast-tracked" by the Department, with several essential design phases running concurrently. The environmental studies have been completed in shorter than typical time frame. However, the right of way acquisition process requires a long lead time (typically 18 months, although if it can be accomplished in less time, it will). The 2008 completion date is the earliest possible date given these restrictions. The current project proposes to improve the alignment and widen shoulders on Highway 116 between Adobe Road and Arnold Drive. Wider shoulders will provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side

clearance. All the improvements proposed will bring Highway 116 to current state standards within the project area.

IC2 John V. Carlson

I was unable to attend the November public meeting on the above subject but recently reviewed the published report at the Sonoma Valley Library and have some concerns. I am all in favor of improving this section of Hwy. 116, it is long overdue. My concerns involve the 1/2 to 3/4 mile section just east of the Adobe Road intersection. To my layman's eye the diagrams in the report appear to only show widening and shoulder improvements in this section of the project. This part of the road has several vertical and horizontal curves which seriously degrade visibility of oncoming traffic and the roadway ahead resulting in a hazard which could be compounded by a drunken driver and/or speeding, inattention or distraction. Over the years there have been a number of accidents, some fatal, on this section of the highway. In 1983 a westbound pickup truck with a drunken driver took a curve, marked 45 mph, at 70 mph, crossed over the centerline and hit an eastbound passenger vehicle killing its passenger and severely injuring the driver. The passenger was my wife and I was the driver. The drunk received only minor injuries. I drive this highway once or twice a week and note the continuing increase in traffic. I am asking that further improvements to this section of the road be considered. Thank you. Respectfully, John V. Carlson, Sonoma

Response:

Caltrans project staff are committed to reducing the accident rate, including in the western part of the project area. We believe that the proposed project will succeed. The project proposes to improve the alignment of Highway 116, as well as widen the shoulders. Wider shoulders will provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side clearance. We are installing soft barrier in the centerline throughout the project limit. A rumble strip will also be installed along highway centerline and the right edgeline stripe. These improvements are expected to reduce run-off-the-road and cross-centerline type accidents. Unfortunately, no design can prevent a drunk driver from causing a serious accident on the highway.

IC3 Steven Schmitz

Dear Ms. Gause,

On behalf of the members of the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (SCBPAC), thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Initial Study for the Route 116 Stage Gulch Road Curve Improvement and Realignment Project. The committee members reviewed the project during their meeting on December 9, 2004 and had the following comments. Stage Gulch Road is identified in the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan as a high priority project. Currently, it is listed in the plan as a Class 3 route with proposed shoulders and bicycle warning signs. The committee is, therefore, very supportive of the current design of the project with 8-foot wide shoulders. In addition, the committee would like to request that "Share the Road" bicycle warning signs be installed at select locations along Stage Gulch Road. Caltrans has already installed such signs at several other locations along State highways in Sonoma County. Due to the high motor vehicle traffic volumes and an abundance of curves, the committee feels that "Share the

Road" bicycle warning signs are also warranted along Route 116 Stage Gulch Road. When the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan is updated within the next couple of years, the committee plans to identify Stage Gulch Road with proposed Class 2 bicycle lanes. Please give consideration to upgrading the shoulders to Class 2 bicycle lane status at that time. Should you have any questions regarding the committee's comments, please contact me at (707) 585-7516.

Response:

Caltrans is committed to working with local partners to provide operational and safety improvements for everyone who uses the state highway system, drivers and cyclists alike. Please see response to comment PM4 for a discussion of appropriate classification of the bicycle route and signage on Highway 116.

IC4 Guido Murnig

Dear Seana Gause,

On behalf of my neighbors and other residents living on Stage Gulch Road, I would like to request that Caltrans paint the center line with broken yellow lines fifty feet in both directions at the entrance to all of our driveways or common driveways in some instances. Originally the road was painted with white broken lines up and down the road, now it has become two solid double lines. When we travel west from Sonoma towards Petaluma we are making a left hand turn over the solid double line. And when we travel west towards Petaluma we are making a left hand turn across the east bound lane over the solid double line. Upon turning into our road, we put our turn indicator on at least 300 feet prior to it, and begin to decrease speed thus making all the traffic behind us slow down as we come to a stop before the road is clear to make the left turn into our roads. Technically it is illegal to cross over a double yellow line and the highway patrol could issue us tickets all day long. I would also like to request that diamond shaped road signs with the picture of a sideways T that indicates a cross road exists, be placed near the side road leading to our driveways. This brings to the attention of other drivers that a vehicle could be entering or exiting on to Stage Gulch Road/Hwy 116. These two simple request would make Stage Gulch Road/Hwy 116 a safer road to travel on. It is our hope that these requests are implemented prior to the major road work that is still years away.

Response:

The double yellow centerline was installed to prohibit passing in this segment of Highway 116. Left turns over the double-yellow lines into private driveways are permissible. The advance intersection warning sign is only used for public road intersections such as Bonness Road at the eastern edge of the project. The proposed 8-foot paved shoulder will provide an area for vehicles to pass a stopped vehicle ahead waiting to make a left turn.

RA1 Robert Floerke

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed the document for the subject project. Please be advised this project may result in changes to fish and wildlife resources as described in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Environmental Impact Report or an Initial Study and Negative Declaration for this project, a de minimus determination is not appropriate, and an

environmental filing fee as required under Fish and Game Code Section 711.4(d) should be paid to the Sonoma County Cleark on or before filing of the Notice of Determination for this project. The Federal and State endangered Sonoma sunshine flower (Blennosperma bakeri) is documented occurring along this roadway. A complete assessment of the flora within and adjacent to the project area, with particular emphasis upon identifying endangered, threatened, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats, should be provided. Rare, threatened and endangered species should be addressed should include all those which meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) definition (see CEQA Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Projects on Rare Threatened, and Endangered Plants and Natural Communities (revised May 8, 2000). The Guidelines are available at www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/pdfs/guideplt/pdf. The document acknowledges impacts to water courses. For any activity that will divert or obstruct the natural flow, or change the bed, channel, or bank (which may include associated riparian resources) of a river or stream, or use material from a streambed, DFG, may require a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant. Issuance of SAAs is subject to the CEQA. DFG, as a responsible agency under CEQA, will consider the CEQA document for the project. The CEQA document should fully identify the potential impacts to the stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for completion of the agreement. To obtain information about the SAA notification process, please access our website at www.dfg.ca.gov/1600; or to request a notification package, contact the Streambed Alteration Program at (707) 944-5520.

Response:

Caltrans worked closely with Mr. Fred Botti, Senior Resource Biologist who has since retired, and is currently working with Mr. Bill Cox, Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). A Caltrans botanist supervised the botanical survey portion of the habitat analysis for federally and state listed species. Seasonal surveys were conducted and extensive species lists were compiled by geographic area and habitat type. No evidence of the Sonoma sunshine flower (Blennosperma bakeri), or habitat to support the species, was found within the proposed project area. Caltrans' proposal identifies numerous culvert crossings along Champlin Creek and several unnamed tributaries to Champlin Creek. The extent of work within these creeks will range from minor culvert extensions to the removal and replacement of concrete box culverts with oversized natural bottom culverts to improve aquatic species dispersal. Caltrans will also be relocating an approximately 500-meter section of roadway out of the riparian corridor to an adjacent upland. This new alignment will minimize the effects to the oak woodlands and the riparian habitat. This realignment will also facilitate the restoration and enhancement of this portion of Champlin Creek. A copy of the Caltrans natural environment study report (NESR) and corresponding biological assessments (BA) have been sent to CDFG. Caltrans will be submitting a 1602, Streambed Alteration Agreement application upon completion of the final design plans. Caltrans anticipates submitting this application in the fall of 2005.

3.4 AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

clearance. All the improvements proposed will bring Highway 116 to current state standards within the project area.

IC2 John V. Carlson

I was unable to attend the November public meeting on the above subject but recently reviewed the published report at the Sonoma Valley Library and have some concerns. I am all in favor of improving this section of Hwy. 116, it is long overdue. My concerns involve the 1/2 to 3/4 mile section just east of the Adobe Road intersection. To my layman's eye the diagrams in the report appear to only show widening and shoulder improvements in this section of the project. This part of the road has several vertical and horizontal curves which seriously degrade visibility of oncoming traffic and the roadway ahead resulting in a hazard which could be compounded by a drunken driver and/or speeding, inattention or distraction. Over the years there have been a number of accidents, some fatal, on this section of the highway. In 1983 a westbound pickup truck with a drunken driver took a curve, marked 45 mph, at 70 mph, crossed over the centerline and hit an eastbound passenger vehicle killing its passenger and severely injuring the driver. The passenger was my wife and I was the driver. The drunk received only minor injuries. I drive this highway once or twice a week and note the continuing increase in traffic. I am asking that further improvements to this section of the road be considered. Thank you. Respectfully, John V. Carlson, Sonoma

Response:

Caltrans project staff are committed to reducing the accident rate, including in the western part of the project area. We believe that the proposed project will succeed. The project proposes to improve the alignment of Highway 116, as well as widen the shoulders. Wider shoulders will provide space for emergency stopping for vehicles, more space for maneuvering and added side clearance. We are installing soft barrier in the centerline throughout the project limit. A rumble strip will also be installed along highway centerline and the right edgeline stripe. These improvements are expected to reduce run-off-the-road and cross-centerline type accidents. Unfortunately, no design can prevent a drunk driver from causing a serious accident on the highway.

IC3 Steven Schmitz

Dear Ms. Gause,

On behalf of the members of the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (SCBPAC), thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Initial Study for the Route 116 Stage Gulch Road Curve Improvement and Realignment Project. The committee members reviewed the project during their meeting on December 9, 2004 and had the following comments. Stage Gulch Road is identified in the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan as a high priority project. Currently, it is listed in the plan as a Class 3 route with proposed shoulders and bicycle warning signs. The committee is, therefore, very supportive of the current design of the project with 8-foot wide shoulders. In addition, the committee would like to request that "Share the Road" bicycle warning signs be installed at select locations along Stage Gulch Road. Caltrans has already installed such signs at several other locations along State highways in Sonoma County. Due to the high motor vehicle traffic volumes and an abundance of curves, the committee feels that "Share the

Road" bicycle warning signs are also warranted along Route 116 Stage Gulch Road. When the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan is updated within the next couple of years, the committee plans to identify Stage Gulch Road with proposed Class 2 bicycle lanes. Please give consideration to upgrading the shoulders to Class 2 bicycle lane status at that time. Should you have any questions regarding the committee's comments, please contact me at (707) 585-7516.

Response:

Caltrans is committed to working with local partners to provide operational and safety improvements for everyone who uses the state highway system, drivers and cyclists alike. Please see response to comment PM4 for a discussion of appropriate classification of the bicycle route and signage on Highway 116.

IC4 Guido Murnig

Dear Seana Gause,

On behalf of my neighbors and other residents living on Stage Gulch Road, I would like to request that Caltrans paint the center line with broken yellow lines fifty feet in both directions at the entrance to all of our driveways or common driveways in some instances. Originally the road was painted with white broken lines up and down the road, now it has become two solid double lines. When we travel west from Sonoma towards Petaluma we are making a left hand turn over the solid double line. And when we travel west towards Petaluma we are making a left hand turn across the east bound lane over the solid double line. Upon turning into our road, we put our turn indicator on at least 300 feet prior to it, and begin to decrease speed thus making all the traffic behind us slow down as we come to a stop before the road is clear to make the left turn into our roads. Technically it is illegal to cross over a double yellow line and the highway patrol could issue us tickets all day long. I would also like to request that diamond shaped road signs with the picture of a sideways T that indicates a cross road exists, be placed near the side road leading to our driveways. This brings to the attention of other drivers that a vehicle could be entering or exiting on to Stage Gulch Road/Hwy 116. These two simple request would make Stage Gulch Road/Hwy 116 a safer road to travel on. It is our hope that these requests are implemented prior to the major road work that is still years away.

Response:

The double yellow centerline was installed to prohibit passing in this segment of Highway 116. Left turns over the double-yellow lines into private driveways are permissible. The advance intersection warning sign is only used for public road intersections such as Bonness Road at the eastern edge of the project. The proposed 8-foot paved shoulder will provide an area for vehicles to pass a stopped vehicle ahead waiting to make a left turn.

RA1 Robert Floerke

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed the document for the subject project. Please be advised this project may result in changes to fish and wildlife resources as described in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Environmental Impact Report or an Initial Study and Negative Declaration for this project, a de minimus determination is not appropriate, and an

environmental filing fee as required under Fish and Game Code Section 711.4(d) should be paid to the Sonoma County Cleark on or before filing of the Notice of Determination for this project. The Federal and State endangered Sonoma sunshine flower (Blennosperma bakeri) is documented occurring along this roadway. A complete assessment of the flora within and adjacent to the project area, with particular emphasis upon identifying endangered, threatened, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats, should be provided. Rare, threatened and endangered species should be addressed should include all those which meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) definition (see CEQA Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Projects on Rare Threatened, and Endangered Plants and Natural Communities (revised May 8, 2000). The Guidelines are available at www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/pdfs/guideplt/pdf. The document acknowledges impacts to water courses. For any activity that will divert or obstruct the natural flow, or change the bed, channel, or bank (which may include associated riparian resources) of a river or stream, or use material from a streambed, DFG, may require a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant. Issuance of SAAs is subject to the CEQA. DFG, as a responsible agency under CEQA, will consider the CEQA document for the project. The CEQA document should fully identify the potential impacts to the stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for completion of the agreement. To obtain information about the SAA notification process, please access our website at www.dfg.ca.gov/1600; or to request a notification package, contact the Streambed Alteration Program at (707) 944-5520.

Response:

Caltrans worked closely with Mr. Fred Botti, Senior Resource Biologist who has since retired, and is currently working with Mr. Bill Cox, Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). A Caltrans botanist supervised the botanical survey portion of the habitat analysis for federally and state listed species. Seasonal surveys were conducted and extensive species lists were compiled by geographic area and habitat type. No evidence of the Sonoma sunshine flower (Blennosperma bakeri), or habitat to support the species, was found within the proposed project area. Caltrans' proposal identifies numerous culvert crossings along Champlin Creek and several unnamed tributaries to Champlin Creek. The extent of work within these creeks will range from minor culvert extensions to the removal and replacement of concrete box culverts with oversized natural bottom culverts to improve aquatic species dispersal. Caltrans will also be relocating an approximately 500-meter section of roadway out of the riparian corridor to an adjacent upland. This new alignment will minimize the effects to the oak woodlands and the riparian habitat. This realignment will also facilitate the restoration and enhancement of this portion of Champlin Creek. A copy of the Caltrans natural environment study report (NESR) and corresponding biological assessments (BA) have been sent to CDFG. Caltrans will be submitting a 1602, Streambed Alteration Agreement application upon completion of the final design plans. Caltrans anticipates submitting this application in the fall of 2005.

3.4 AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
111 GRAND AVENUE
P. O. BOX 23660
OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
PHONE (510) 286-5681
FAX (510) 286-5600
TTY (800) 735-2929

Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!

February 24, 2004
04 Son 116
04-283800

Mr. Dan Buford
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825

Attention: Mr. Vincent Griego

Dear Mr. Griego,

On September 18, 2003, Caltrans Senior Biologist Chuck Morton and Associate Biologist Chris States met with you in the field to review the Sonoma County Route 116 curve correction project. We discussed that the project limits are located along the northern limit the current range of California red-legged frog, (CRLF) (*Rana aurora draytonii*) and that the County had identified a known breeding sites for the CRLF within a half mile radius of the project. During our meeting you stated that if avoidance measures were in place (i.e. seasonal restraints, minimization of riparian disturbance), that US Fish and Wildlife Service could determine that the project would have a "not likely to adversely affect" finding for the CRLF.

The Caltrans environmental and design staff are taking every possible opportunity to implement avoidance and minimization measures to avoid impact to the CRLF and its habitat. As discussed at our September meeting we will be implementing the realignment design south of the existing roadway and riparian corridor.

We also discussed with you Caltrans plans to remove the abandoned box culverts and section of roadway and restore the natural meander to the creek. As a component to the riparian restoration we intend to enhance the terrestrial habitat. Considering the realignment away from the riparian corridor and known breeding pond, creek restoration, and enhancement of the upland habitat are you still in concurrence with a "not likely to adversely affect" finding?

If you have any questions please contact Chris States at (510) 286-7185 or me at (510) 286-5681.

Sincerely,

Chuck Morton
District Branch Chief
Caltrans, District 4

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
111 GRAND AVENUE
P. O. BOX 23660
OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
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February 24, 2004
04 Son 116
04-283800

Mr. Fred Botti
California Department of Fish and Game
PO Box 47
Yountville, CA 94599

Dear Mr. Botti,

On September 18, 2003, Caltrans Senior Biologist Chuck Morton and Associate Biologist Chris States met with you in the field to review the Sonoma County Route 116 curve correction project. We discussed that the project limits are located along the northern limit the current range of California red-legged frog, (CRLF) (*Rana aurora draytonii*) and that the County had identified a known breeding sites for the CRLF within a half mile radius of the project. During our meeting you stated that if avoidance measures were in place (i.e. seasonal restraints, minimization of riparian disturbance), that US Fish and Wildlife Service could determine that the project would have a "not likely to adversely affect" finding for the CRLF.

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If you have any questions please contact Chris States at (510) 286-7185 or me at (510) 286-5681.

Sincerely,

Chuck Morton
District Branch Chief
Caltrans, District 4

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February 24, 2004
04 Son 116
04-283800

Mr. Gary Stern
NOAA Fisheries
777 Sonoma Ave, Suite 325
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Attention: Ms. Maura E. Moody

Dear Ms. Moody,

Caltrans is in the planning and design stages of safety project on State Highway 116 in Sonoma County. This stretch of the highway is commonly called Stagegulch Road and parallels and crosses Champlin Creek numerous times. Champlin Creek is a tributary of Sonoma Creek and is, in its lower reaches, known to be a steelhead creek.

Caltrans plans to remove the abandoned box culverts and a section of roadway and restore the natural meander to the creek. As a component to the riparian restoration, we intend to enhance the terrestrial habitat. At another location, Caltrans is proposing to install a low flow culvert which would allow any salmonid to progress to upper reaches of the creek. Currently this location is a fish passage barrier during most of the year.

The Caltrans environmental and design staff are taking every possible opportunity to implement avoidance and minimization measures to avoid impact to any salmonids and their habitat.

Caltrans is of the opinion that, with these avoidance and compensation measures, that this project may be eligible for a not likely to adversely affect determination from NOAA Fisheries. Please contact us at your earliest convenience to discuss the project.

If you have any questions please contact Chris States at (510) 286-7185 or me at (510) 286-5681.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Chuck Morton
District Branch Chief
Caltrans, District 4

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
111 GRAND AVENUE
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OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
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July 2, 2003

Debbie Pilas-Treadway
State Of California
Native American Heritage Commission
915 Capitol Avenue, Room 364
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Sacred Lands File Search for Three California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) Projects in Sonoma and Napa Counties.

Dear Ms. Pilas-Treadway:

Caltrans proposes three projects, which will involve ground-disturbing activity. As part of State and Federal regulation, we are initiating Native American consultation and request a list of Native American contacts and a search of the Sacred Lands File for the following three project areas:

1. Caltrans proposes to construct shoulders and realign Stage Gulch Road (Route 116) from the intersection at Adobe Road (KP 67.2) to the Arnold Drive Route 116 intersection at KP 71.8 in the Cities of Petaluma and Sonoma, Sonoma County, California (EA 283800, KP 67.2-71.8/PM 41.8-44.7). The project area is located on the Petaluma River, Sears Point and Sonoma USGS Quad maps. Specifically, it is located:

   a) within the southwest quadrant of the Sonoma Quad, in an unincorporated portion of Township 5 North (T 5N) and Range 6 West (R 6 W)
   b) within the northwest quadrant of the Sears Point Quad, in an unincorporated portion of Township 5 North (T 5 N) and Range 6 West (R 6 W), and
   c) within the northeast quadrant of the Petaluma River Quad, in an unincorporated portion of Township 5 North (T 5 N) and Range 6 West (R 6 W).

2. Caltrans proposes to widen and realign State Route 121 between Duhig Road and the Napa and Sonoma County Line, in the Cities of Napa and Novato, (EA 444200 KP 0.58-3.88/PM 0.3-2.0). This project is plotted on the Napa USGS Quad map. Specifically, it is located within the southwest quadrant of an unincorporated portion, of Township 5 North (T 5 N) and Ranges 4 West (R 4 W) and 5 West (R 5 W).

3. Caltrans proposes to install horizontal drainage pipes along State Route 128 (EA 250000, KP32.19-33.2/PM 20.0-20.5) near the Capell Creek Bridge, in Napa County California. The project area is plotted on the Capell Valley USGS Quad map. Specifically, it is located within the northwest quadrant of Section 6 of Township 7 North (T 7 N) and Range 3 West (R 3 W).

A copy of the USGS Quad, which contains each of these project areas, has been attached for your convenience.

If you have any questions pertaining to this matter, I am available by email at Lissa_McKee@dot.ca.gov or by phone at (510) 622-5458.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. McKee

ELIZABETH MCKEE
District Native American Coordinator
Caltrans District 04

STATE OF CALIFORNIA Gray Davis Governor

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 653-4082
Fax (916) 657-5390
Web Site www.nahc.ca.gov

July 11, 2003

Elizabeth McKee
District Native American Coordinator
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94823-0660

Sent by Fax: 510-286-6374
No of Pages: 4

RE: Proposed Install horizontal drainage pipes along SR 128, Napa County. Widening and realignment of SR 121, Napa County. Construct shoulders and realign Stage Gulch Road project, Sonoma County.

EA 283800

Dear Ms. McKee:

A record search of the sacred land file has failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area. The absence of specific site information in the sacred lands file does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any project area. Other sources of cultural resources should also be contacted for information regarding known and recorded sites.

Enclosed is a list of Native Americans individuals/organizations who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. The Commission makes no recommendation or preference of a single individual, or group over another. This list should provide a starting place in locating areas of potential adverse impact within the proposed project area. I suggest you contact all of those indicated, if they cannot supply information, they might recommend other with specific knowledge. If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the Commission requests that you follow-up with a telephone call to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from any these individuals or groups, please notify me. With your assistance we are able to assure that our lists contain current information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 653-4038.

Sincerely,

Debbie Pilas-Treadway
Environmental Specialist III

NATIVE AMERICAN CONTACTS
Sonoma County
July 11, 2003

Grant Smith
4309 Chico Ave
Santa Rosa , CA 95401
(707) 528 -2584

Coast Miwok
Pomo

The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
Tim Campbell, Cultural Resources Officer
320 Tesconi Circle, Suite G
Santa Rosa , CA 95401
(707) 566-2288
(707) 566-2291 - fax
coastmiwok@aol.com - email

Coast Miwok

Kathleen Smith
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Walnut Creek , CA 94596
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Pomo
Coast Miwok

Dawn S. Getchell
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(707) 865-2248

Coast Miwok
Pomo

The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
Gene Buvelot
1025 Susan Way
Novato , CA 94947
(415) 883-9215 Home
coastmiwok@aol.com - email

Coast Miwok

This list is current only as of the date of this document.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regards to the cultural assessment for the proposed construct shoulders and realign Stage Gulch Road project, Sonoma County.