

| Stanislaus National Forest Sites | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------|
| Site | NEPA | | | | | CEQA |
| | Context | Duration | Intensity | Type | Impact | |
| Cherry Lake | | | | | | |
| Cherry Valve House | CVH | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Pump Station | CPS | Local | Long-Term | Moderate | Adverse | LS |
| Cherry Water Tanks | CWT | Local | Long-Term | Minor | Adverse | LS |
| Cherry Lake Garage and Warehouse | CGW | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Lake Camphouse | CCH | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Lake Cottage #1 | CC1 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Lake Cottage #2 | CC2 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Lake Cottage #3 | CC3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Lake Cottage #4 | CC4 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Cherry Tower Site | CTS | Local | Long-Term | Moderate | Adverse | LSM |
| Early Intake & Tuolumne River Area | | | | | | |
| Intake Radio Site | IRS | Local | Long-Term | Moderate | Adverse | LSM |
| Intake Switchyard | ISY | Local | Short-Term | Negligible | Beneficial | NI |
| Kirkwood Powerhouse | KPH | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Holm Powerhouse | HPH | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | NI |
| Duckwall Mountain | | | | | | |
| Duckwall Mountain | DWM | Local | Short-Term | Negligible | Beneficial | NI |
| Jones Point | | | | | | |
| Jones Point | JPT | Local | Short-Term | Negligible | Beneficial | NI |
| Burnout Ridge | | | | | | |
| Burnout Ridge | BOR | Local | Long-Term | Moderate | Adverse | LSM |
| <u>CEQA and NEPA Impacts:</u> N/A = Not applicable NI = No Impact LS = Less than Significant LSM = Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated PS = Potentially Significant | | | | | | |

Existing Sites in Cherry Lake, Early Intake & Tuolumne River, Duckwall Mountain, and Jones Point Areas

With the exception of the Intake Radio Site, all project actions proposed for the existing communication sites in the Cherry Lake, Early Intake & Tuolumne River, and Duckwall Mountain Areas would take place in previously developed areas. No previously constructed facilities are currently present at Burnout Ridge.

There would be no impact from the Proposed Action at sites where existing equipment would be either removed or replaced. Such sites are discussed briefly below, and include some of the Cherry Lake sites, for which Visual Quality Objectives have been designated. Cherry Lake sites where existing facilities will be expanded are discussed in greater detail and the currently undeveloped Cherry Tower Site is analyzed separately. Intake Radio Site and Burnout Ridge are also analyzed separately in this section.

As stated, project sites where existing equipment would be either removed or replaced would not result in substantial changes in the visual environment as a result of the Proposed Action. Existing equipment would be removed at Duckwall Mountain and Jones Point. At Intake Switchyard, an existing parabolic dish antenna and associated feed system would be removed and replaced by the fiber optic cable. Existing radio and fiber optic equipment would also be replaced with new fiber optic equipment. Proposed activity at Kirkwood Powerhouse and Holm Powerhouse would be internal to existing buildings, with the

exception of the installation of new optical ground wire fiber optic cable on three existing transmission lines (and accompanying fiber optic cable service entrances). There would be no impact to aesthetic resources at these sites, and they are not discussed further in this section.

All project-related actions at the Cherry Lake sites would occur within previously developed areas, though it should be noted that the Cherry Water Tanks would require a minor amount of native vegetation clearing for trenching and placement of fiber optic conduit, as discussed in greater detail below. Also discussed in greater detail is the Cherry Pump Station, where a rigid galvanized steel conduit antenna would be installed. At all other Cherry Lake sites, all communication equipment would be installed inside existing buildings or in a wall-mounted cabinet on the exterior of an existing building. Fiber optic cable would be installed either as underbuild to an existing HHW&P electrical distribution line or as conduit from the wall-mounted cabinet to the underground conduit system (via trenching). No new fencing is proposed at any of the existing Cherry Lake sites. As such, no impact to visual resources would occur at these sites, and only the Proposed Action at the Cherry Pump Station and Cherry Water Tanks are discussed further in this section, along with the Cherry Tower Site, for which new development is proposed.

The Cherry Pump Station and Cherry Water Tanks are located within a management area of the Stanislaus National Forest designated by the USFS as “Scenic Corridor,” and the Cherry Tower Site is designated as “Wildlife.” Visual Quality Objective designations for both management areas are Retention and Partial Retention. This means that, at a minimum, development activities may be evident, but must remain subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

The primary modification at the Cherry Pump Station would consist of a rigid galvanized steel conduit antenna mast, which would be installed to support a Yagi antenna for communication to the Cherry Water Tanks. The mast would be attached to the existing pump station building and the communication equipment would be located inside the building. As previously described, there are a number of recreational uses at Cherry Lake, including boating, skiing and hiking. The Cherry Pump Station is positioned on the shoreline, between Cherry Lake and a hiking trail that extends along the western edge of the lake. Existing and simulated views of the site therefore include a view from the lake (Figure 3.10.2-20: Viewpoint CPS-1) and a view from the hiking trail (Figure 3.10.2-21: Viewpoint CPS-2).

As seen from the lake, the existing pump station is a prominent enough feature in the views of the shore that the addition of the antenna mast does not contribute to a visible change in the visual character of the general landscape. The antenna would extend vertically from the relatively bulky, horizontally oriented building, and blend in with the forested background. From the hiking trail, the antenna mast would be visible in the immediate foreground. While the rock-covered roof of the pump station and accompanying signage currently provide clear evidence of development along this segment of the trail (thus the area is not visually characterized by pristine forest), the antenna would extend from the forest floor and into foreground views of the lake. However, while prominent, it would be subordinate to the existing landscape, thus meeting the prescribed VQOs for this management area, and the presence of mature trees would help to keep the presence of the antenna in views intermittent. No views of the lake would be



Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Locators

Simulated View of Cherry Pump Station (Viewpoint CPS-1)
Figure 3.10.2-20

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Locators

Simulated View of Cherry Pump Station
(Viewpoint CPS-2)
Figure 3.10.2-21

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substantially obstructed and no scenic resources would be substantially damaged. The antenna would not be a new source of substantial light or glare. Thus, the impact to visual resources at the Cherry Pump Station would be less than significant.

The Proposed Action at the Cherry Water Tanks would include the installation of a rigid galvanized steel conduit antenna mast to support a Yagi antenna for communication to the Cherry Pump Station. The mast would be attached to the one of the existing tanks and the communication equipment would be located inside the control building at this site. The two Cherry Water Tanks sit on a patch of mostly cleared, graded land, above the lake and near the Cherry Lake cottages. A storage building is adjacent to the tanks. Because the relatively small antenna proposed for this site would sit atop one of the tanks in this developed area, its installation would not constitute a visible change in the visual character of the area. No scenic view would be obstructed by its installation, nor would any scenic resources be substantially damaged or any new source of light or glare be created. The new utility infrastructure would be subordinate to the existing landscape, particularly as it would be attached to a substantially larger structure within an existing development footprint. As such, the impact to visual resources at the Cherry Water Tanks site would be less than significant.

Cherry Tower Site

Proposed Actions at the Cherry Tower Site would involve installation of a 40-foot communication tower (probably of the lattice type), a 12-foot by 24-foot modular communication shelter, security fencing, and utility power from a HHW&P distribution line. Several dishes and small additional antennae would be mounted to the tower, along with small video camera units, attached for security purposes. The communication shelter, which is proposed to have a brown-colored roof and exterior walls of exposed aggregate, would house the communication equipment. A pad-mounted, self-contained emergency generator would be installed to provide emergency power for the site. The generator would be served from a pad-mounted propane tank. A pole-mounted transformer would be installed on an existing electrical distribution line pole located just north of the site to the communication shelter. An underground secondary electrical service would be installed via trenching from the transformer to communication shelter. The site would be surrounded by a seven-foot high security fence with three strands of barbed wire on a one-foot outrigger. Most of the site within the fenced area would be covered by gravel. The proposed site would be accessed via an existing dirt road from the top of the Cherry Valley Dam which traverses the face of the dam for approximately one-eighth of a mile to the project site.

The proposed site would sit below Cherry Lake Road, near the western edge of the Cherry Valley Dam. Figure 3.10.2-22 (Viewpoint CTS-1) and Figure 3.10.2-23 (Viewpoint CTS-2) show existing and simulated views of the project site from the eastbound lane of Cherry Lake Road, which would be the location from which most typical viewers in the area would be likely to see the tower and other facilities. Viewpoint CTS-1 provides a view of the project site from the point where vehicles would be turning into the segment of the road that runs along the top of Cherry Valley Dam. Viewpoint CTS-2 provides a view looking back at the project site, as a vehicle would presumably be traveling along the southern edge of Cherry Lake. Due to the elevated dam, the proposed project would not be prominently visible from the lake's surface or other points along the shoreline, and it would neither obstruct any existing views or vistas nor create a new source of substantial light or glare, particularly due to the proposed treatment of

the roof and exterior walls. While scenic resources in the area would not be substantially damaged as a result of the project, there would potentially be long-term impacts resulting from the construction process. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 1 – Visual, to return the project site to its general pre-construction condition, including re-grading of the site and re-vegetation of disturbed areas upon project completion, would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

The location for which this action is proposed does not appear as an undisturbed site. A transmission line runs through the area, adjacent to a dirt road and a large, earthen dam with a bridge over its spillway. However, the proposed facilities would appear as the largest development within the nearby vicinity of the lake, and would be the only building apparent on the southern side of the Cherry Valley Dam, thus extending man-made features in the landscape closer to Cherry Creek, at the base of a steep incline just south of the dam. As depicted in Figures 3.10.2-22 and 3.10.2-23, the tower and building would be only partially blocked by existing pine trees and would substantially shift the visual character of the immediate surroundings. However, while visible from the roadway, the prominent views in this area are not toward the Cherry Tower Site; rather, viewers' eyes and attention are likely to be drawn toward Cherry Lake, which comes into full view as viewers approach the western edge of the dam. Further, views of the proposed tower and building would be temporary, lasting only for the relative brief moments during which vehicles would be driving on to the Cherry Valley Dam. At locations along the road before Viewpoint CTS-1 and beyond Viewpoint CTS-2, the proposed tower and building would rapidly recede from view and, while evident to viewers looking in its direction, would generally be subordinate to the larger to the existing landscape, thus meeting the area's Visual Quality Objectives designation. Due to the likely brief views of the proposed projects, as well as the existing man-made visual character of the adjacent area, the impact from the Proposed Action would be moderate but would not constitute a substantial change to the overall visual character of the area.

Intake Radio Site

Implementation of Proposed Action at the Intake Radio Site would involve installation of a new, 40-foot communication tower (probably of the lattice type), along with an emergency generator and propane tank, and construction of a 12-foot by 24-foot modular, concrete-walled communication shelter at a developed site along the transmission line above Intake Switchyard. Several dishes and small additional antennae would be mounted to the tower, as well as small video camera units, attached for security purposes. The site would be surrounded by a seven-foot high security fence with three strands of barbed wire on a one-foot outrigger. Most of the site within the fenced area would be covered by gravel. Part of the site would need to be cleared to allow construction of the proposed facilities, and the removal of and/or topping of three trees (one oak, two pines) may be necessary at this site to maintain line-of-sight with other communication project sites. Although the site contains no important scenic resources of note, such actions resulting from construction would constitute a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 1 – Visual, would require, among other things, re-grading and re-vegetation of the project site and would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.



Existing



Simulated

**Simulated View of Cherry Tower Site
(Viewpoint CTS-1)
Figure 3.10.2-22**

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Existing



Simulated

Simulated View of Cherry Tower Site
(Viewpoint CTS-2)
Figure 3.10.2-23

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Of the proposed facilities, only the communication tower would be visible from areas beyond the Intake Radio Site, which is, as previously described, a rugged site, accessed by dirt road that is not a through route to any other area. The most prominent views of the new communication tower would be from points along O'Shaughnessy Dam Road where lines of sight are not obstructed by vegetation or landforms. Figure 3.10.2-24 (Viewpoint IRS-1) and Figure 3.10.2-25 (Viewpoint IRS-2) show existing and simulated views from two such locations. While the new tower would result in the placement into forestland of a man-made feature visible in both background (Figure 3.10.2-24) and middleground (Figure 3.10.2-25) views, it would not be the only such feature in these views.

The Intake Radio Site is located within a management area of the Stanislaus National Forest designated by the USFS as "Scenic Corridor." VQOs designations for this management area are Retention and Partial Retention. This means that, at a minimum, development activities may be evident, but must remain subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Placement of the new tower at the proposed location would meet the prescribed VQO designation in that the tower would be subordinate to the larger, natural landscape. It would not create any new source of substantial light or glare, and it would not have any effect on any scenic vista or important views. Further, the new tower would appear to be mostly aligned with the existing transmission alignment, consolidating such features in these views. As such, this action would not result in a substantial alteration of the existing visual character and, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 1 – Visual, its impact to visual/scenic resources would be less than significant.

Burnout Ridge

The action proposed for Burnout Ridge would place a 120-foot communication tower, probably of the lattice type and with etched paint, on a cleared site, along with a 12-foot by 40-foot modular communication shelter with non-white concrete walls, an emergency generator, pad-mounted propane tank, and pad-mounted electrical transformer. Several dishes and small additional antennae, along with small video camera units, would be mounted to the tower. The site would be surrounded by a seven-foot high security fence with three strands of barbed wire on a one-foot outrigger. Most of the site within the fenced area would be covered by gravel. As with other sites where relatively substantial development is proposed, the construction process has the potential to create significant impacts. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 1 – Visual, would reduce construction-related impacts to a less than significant level.

Burnout Ridge is located within a management area of the Stanislaus National Forest designated by the USFS as "Scenic Corridor." Visual Quality Objective designations for this management area are Retention and Partial Retention. This means that, at a minimum, development activities may be evident, but must remain subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

As with other remote sites, the proposed communication tower is the only proposed feature at Burnout Ridge that would be visible beyond the immediate project site. However, the degree to which the tower is visible would diminish over distance, as evidenced by existing and simulated views of Burnout Ridge from nearby roads that are heavily traveled, in relative terms. In views from O'Shaughnessy Dam Road (Figure 3.10.2-26, Viewpoint BOR-1) and Cherry Lake Road (Figure 3.10.2-27, Viewpoint BOR-2; Figure 3.10.2-28, Viewpoint BOR-3; Figure 3.10.2-29, Viewpoint BOR-4), the proposed communication tower at Burnout Ridge would recede into the forested skyline and be mostly indistinguishable from the

nearby trees, thus meeting the prescribed VQO. In these views, the tower would not diminish from the existing visual character, nor would it have an adverse effect on scenic views or vistas and the etched paint, along with the building's non-white exterior color, would serve to reduce potential for substantial glare. The long background views of national forest land would not be substantially affected. As such, no impacts to scenic/visual resources would occur as a result of the communication tower.

However, the site is currently accessed by a 1,500-foot long remnant of an existing US Forest Service road that connects with a well-traveled existing logging road (Forest Road 1N86). The action proposed for this site would also include upgrading of the remnant road to accommodate long-term maintenance access. The remnant road would be an engineered, gravel road with a drainage swale along one side of the road. Preparation of the roadway would require the clearing of existing trees and stumps within the roadway alignment, and rock outcrops within the alignment would be leveled to the required sub-base.

The upgrading of the road to meet such standards could create a scarring effect that would be visible from surrounding areas and present in some views of Burnout Ridge beyond the construction period. However, this change would not likely be discernable from the prominent, distant views, and would be less than significant under CEQA, and local, long-term, moderate, and adverse under NEPA.

Impact Determination (Existing Sites in Cherry Lake, Early Intake and Tuolumne River areas):

CEQA: Less than significant impact.

NEPA: All existing Cherry Lake sites are local, long-term, negligible, NA, except Cherry Pump Station (local, long-term, moderate, adverse) and Cherry Water Tanks (local, long-term, minor, adverse)

Early Intake and Tuolumne River areas are Jones Point and Intake Switchyard (local, short-term, negligible, beneficial), and Kirkwood Powerhouse and Holm Powerhouse (local, short-term, negligible, NA).

Impact Determination (Intake Radio Site)

CEQA: Less than significant impact, with mitigation.

NEPA: Local, long-term, moderate, adverse impact.

Impact Determination (Burnout Ridge):

CEQA: Less than significant impact, with mitigation.

NEPA: Local, long-term, moderate, adverse impact.

Impact Determination (Cherry Tower Site):

CEQA: Less than significant impact, with mitigation.

NEPA: Local, long-term, moderate, adverse impact.



Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Intake Radio Site (Viewpoint IRS-1)
Figure 3.10.2-24

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Intake Radio Site (Viewpoint IRS-2)
Figure 3.10.2-25

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Burnout Ridge (Viewpoint BOR-1)
Figure 3.10.2-26

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Burnout Ridge (Viewpoint BOR-2)
Figure 3.10.2-27

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Burnout Ridge (Viewpoint BOR-3)
Figure 3.10.2-28

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Existing



Simulated



Simulated with Indicators

Simulated View of Burnout Ridge (Viewpoint BOR-4)
Figure 3.10.2-29

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