

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**

Notice is hereby given that the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is issuing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in connection with possible impacts related to the Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD or District) Sierra Pines Regional Water Treatment Facility Project (proposed action or project). The EA and documents referenced in the EA are available for review at the Tuolumne Utilities District Offices or on the District's website (<https://tudwater.com/development-services/environmental-documents/>).

**NEPA Lead Agency:** Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service

**Project Title:** Sierra Pines Regional Water Treatment Facility Project

**Project Location:** The project site is located north of the intersection of South Fork and Middle Camp/ Sugar Pine Roads approximately one mile north of the unincorporated community of Twain Harte. The project site is located within Sections 4 and 5, Township 2N, Range 6E (M.D.B. & M.) County of Tuolumne, State of California. APN 040-130-009. Offsite water transmission pipelines are also proposed in Middle Camp Road, Ridgewood Drive, Phoenix Lake Road, and Sommette Drive.

**Project Description:** TUD is proposing to construct and operate a new consolidated water treatment facility upon 46 acres of land owned by TUD. The site for the proposed action was formerly a golf course and is currently zoned for public uses. The proposed action includes construction and operation of a new water treatment facility with an initial operating capacity of 3 million gallons per day (mgd). The proposed action is comprised of water treatment facilities to include a new 25-acre-foot-capacity raw water reservoir, a raw water pump station, associated appurtenances and electrical structures, water conveyance pipelines, a stormwater detention basin, new recreational trails, and amenities upon the Sierra Pines site. New water transmission pipelines would be installed offsite (within the franchise position of roadways and other public rights of way) to convey treated water to existing TUD facilities. The District has submitted a funding application to USDA RUS to develop the Project.

ESA, an environmental consultant, prepared an environmental assessment for USDA-RUS that describes the action, assesses the proposed project's environmental impacts, and summarizes as applicable any mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. If implemented, the proposed action will permanently convert 0.396 acre of (marsh, seasonal, or pond) wetlands to open water to construct the raw water reservoir. An additional 0.065 acre of temporary impacts to wetlands is also anticipated during construction. Temporarily impacted wetlands will be replanted with native seed and restored to pre-project conditions. In accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, and USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of this proposed conversion or effect and request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts. USDA-RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed action. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction and operation of the project.

<https://tudwater.com/development-services/environmental-documents/>

Questions and comments should be sent to Tuolumne Utilities District at the address provided. TUD will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the first date of publication of this notice. Any final action by USDA RUS related to the proposed action will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

**For further information, please contact** Sara Brookes, Community Programs Specialist, USDA Rural Development, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Ste. E, Modesto, CA 95358, Phone: 209-287-3639, [sara.brookes@usda.gov](mailto:sara.brookes@usda.gov) -or- Erik D. Johnson P.E., District Engineer, Tuolumne Utilities District, 18885 Nugget Blvd. Sonora, CA 95370. Phone: 209-532-5536 [ejohnson@tudwater.com](mailto:ejohnson@tudwater.com)

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