

## **AGENDA**

### TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Friday, November 4, 2011  
10:00 A.M.**

### **KMPUD COMMUNITY SERVICES BUILDING, LOOP ROAD, KIRKWOOD, CA**

*For further information on any of the agenda items, contact the Alpine County Planning Department at (530)694-2140.*

Off-agenda items must be approved by the Tri-County Technical Advisory Committee pursuant to Section 54954.2(b) of the Government Code.

- A. Correspondence
- B. Minutes: September 23, 2011
- C. Public matters, information items and persons wishing to address the Committee regarding non-agenda items.
- D. Mitigation Monitoring Program- Status Update.

ITEM 1      Review and discussion of the Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District Powerline Reliability Project for consistency with the Scenic Highway Element of the Amador County General Plan. A preferred project alternative would install underground high voltage power facilities within the right of way along State Highway 88 from Bear River Road to Kirkwood Meadows Drive. The project's visual design criteria, visual simulations, and the concept level plans will be reviewed according to the 2003 Kirkwood Specific Plan and the objectives of the Highway 88 Planning Agreement. Applicant: KMPUD

**DRAFT  
MINUTES  
TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**September 23, 2011**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nathan Lishman Amador County  
Pete Maurer El Dorado County

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Nate Whaley KMR  
Ted Novelli Amador County BOS

The September 23, 2011 meeting was called to order by chair Nathan Lishman at 10:05 a.m.

**A. Correspondence:**

Peter Maurer noted a letter received by each County regarding a proposed land exchange between the National Forest System and Mammoth Mountain. The exchange would include the private land in Martin Meadows going to the Eldorado National Forest. He stated it would be good to hear from ENF what the future plans for that land would be. Nathan Lishman said he would contact the forest supervisor.

**B. Minutes:**

Peter Maurer moved to approve the minutes of August 5, 2011, noting that the date needed to be corrected. Nathan Lishman seconded the motion which carried 2-0.

**C. Public Matters:**

Nathan Lishman provided an update on the communication facilities installed at Silver Lake. He met with Caltrans officials who have agreed to relocate it to the westerly end of Kays Road. They are presently working with EID to identify a preferred site. It is expected to be completed before winter.

**D. Mitigation Monitoring**

No mitigation items were discussed.

**ITEM 1 – Review and recommendation to Alpine and Amador County of consistency with the 2003 Specific Plan for a proposal by Kirkwood Mountain Resort to provide children’s snowmobile riding activities. The activity would take place on Kirkwood Mountain Resort property adjacent to the existing villages. The activity would include four children’s snowmobiles driven inside of a fenced track. Applicant: Kirkwood Mountain Resort**

Nate Whaley, KMR, described the proposed project. It would be located at the Thunder Mountain Lodge site. Noise and air emissions would be very low based on test runs done. The noise was below the ambient noise when measured at Kirkwood Meadows Drive. Nathan Lishman said the issue was whether this, and similar uses are consistent with the specific plan or whether it triggers the need for a special use permit application. Peter Maurer stated that this type of use does not cross the threshold for needing a new use permit since there are no permanent improvements, tree removal, etc. A finding of consistency was sufficient. He moved that Tri-TAC find the proposed use consistent with the specific plan and all prior permits issued for operation of a ski resort. Mr. Lishman seconded the motion which carried 2-0.

**ITEM 2 – Review and discussion of a Cal Trans project to construct a vista point at the site of an existing gravel pull-out with a historic place marker for the Emigrant Trail on State Route 88 at post mile R63.7 near Silver Lake. The site would be improved with paved parking, limited amenities (picnic table, stone walls, and interpretive display panels) and would provide American's with Disabilities Act-compliant access.**

**Applicant: CalTrans**

Nathan Lishman described the project since no Caltrans personnel was present. He indicated that he would want to see more specifics before making a formal recommendation. Peter Maurer noted that it was presently being used as a vista point, but was concerned about the extent of improvements and visual impact of the vista point if they were bringing in fill to expand the parking area.

Nate Whaley encouraged the committee to strongly support the project. He felt that the scenic highway designation is a huge asset that should be promoted. Similar vista points should be developed all along the Highway 88 corridor to improve safety and visitor enjoyment. A logical place would be at Kirkwood Meadows, since many people stop and are often still in the travel lane. Ted Novelli concurred with Mr. Whaley's statements. He also expressed concerns that if a wall was put up that it would block the view of the driving public.

Mr. Maurer moved to support the project in concept, and that details should be brought to Tri-TAC for review. Mr. Lishman seconded the motion. It passed 2-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next meeting was scheduled for November 4, 2011

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## Overview

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The Kirkwood Meadows Power Line Reliability Project Draft EIS/EIR was published on April 1, 2011 as a joint document by the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) and Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District (KMPUD). Currently, KMPUD and the ENF are preparing the Final EIS/EIR, which identifies a Preferred Alternative that would locate a portion of the buried power line within the Highway 88 designated scenic corridor.

As a part of the project permitting and coordination, the proposed project must be in conformance with the Scenic Highway Element of the Amador County General Plan. The General Plan requires submittal of all development projects to the Tri-County Technical Advisory Committee for review and comment. In addition, in their formal comments to the Draft EIS/EIR, Caltrans requested coordination with Alpine, Amador and El Dorado counties and Caltrans to ensure the objectives of the Highway 88 Planning Agreement that include coordinating efforts to “ensure an natural landscape-visual experience” are maintained along Highway 88.

In preparation for a formal presentation to the Tri-County Technical Advisory Committee on November 4, 2011, the following information is being presented:

- Visual Design Criteria
- Visual simulations of structures within the Highway 88 corridor
- Overall Figures 1, 2, and 3 showing the Preferred Alternative
- Conceptual Level Plan Sheets (1 – 30) showing proposed work along the Highway 88 Scenic Corridor

Representatives from Resource Concepts, Inc. will be present at the November 4 meeting to make a presentation on the Power Line Reliability Project with specific focus on the visual components of the project within the Highway 88 scenic corridor.

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## Visual Design Criteria

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The project design incorporates a variety of applicant proposed environmental protection measures and procedures. The objective of these protection measures, or design criteria, is to avoid and reduce potential significant effects to environmental resources to less than significant levels. Design criteria were developed through public scoping and consultation with federal, state and local agencies. As a responsible municipal agency and with concern for the environment, KMPUD has incorporated the public and regulatory agencies' suggested and required measures into the project design.

To ensure that these protective measures are implemented as stated, the following design criteria would be included in the project plans, contract documents, and/or technical specifications. The design criteria, standard construction BMPs and other measures have been compiled through consultation with the USFS, Caltrans, Amador, Alpine and El Dorado Counties, and review of the following documents:

- *Water Quality Management for Forest Service Lands in California - Best Management Practices* (2000) describes the BMPs that are referenced in the Eldorado National Forest LRMP (1989);
- The Caltrans Construction Site BMP Manual (2003) includes instructions and illustrations for the selection and implementation of 41 construction site BMPs;
- The Kirkwood Specific Plan (2003);
- Amador County Guidelines for Grading and Erosion Control;
- Alpine County General Plan;
- El Dorado County Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance;
- El Dorado County Rule 223-1, Fugitive Dust - Construction, Bulk Material Handling, Blasting, Other Earthmoving Activities and Carryout and Trackout Prevention, Best Management Practices Tables 1 through 4: construction and other earthmoving activities, bulk material handling, removal and prevention of trackout, blasting activities; and
- California Stormwater Quality Association Stormwater BMP handbooks.

The project would be consistent with and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and county regulations, plans, objectives, and guidelines unless specifically noted. Select design criteria pertinent to visual resources are described below.

Design Criteria	Description
<b>Aesthetics and Visual Resources</b>	
AES-1: Consistency VQOs and scenic highway element	Project implementation would be consistent with the Visual Quality Objectives (VQO) set forth in the ENF LRMP on federal lands, and the Scenic Highway Element of the Amador County General Plan.
AES-2: KM Green substation at FS Road 08N17	The KM Green substation location at FS Road 8N17 proposed under Alternatives 2 and 3 would be sited and designed in consultation with the ENF Landscape Architect. The substation would be sited to minimize removal of mature trees (24 inch dbh and greater) located down slope (northwest, north, and northeast) of the substation site. These trees provide critical screening of the substation from Forest Service managed viewsheds located within the Bear River Reservoir viewshed, which includes Peddler Hill Vista Point and Highway 88.
AES-3: KM Green at Cole Creek Rd	The KM Green substation location at Cole Creek Road proposed under Alternative 4 would be sited and designed in consultation with the ENF Landscape Architect. The substation would be sited to minimize removal of mature trees (24 inch dbh and greater) from the tree hazard zone.
AES-4: Substation color	The KM Green substation facilities that extend above the height of the chain link fencing would be dark in color (e.g. black, brown or dark grey). The chain link fencing surrounding the substation would be black with dark brown wooden slats.
AES-5: Minimize reflection	The KM Green substation facilities that extend above the height of the chain link fencing, and the chain link fencing surrounding the substation would be finished in a dull non-reflective surface to minimize the visibility of the facility by eliminating or reducing reflective light and glare. The overbuild of the existing lines would utilize non-specular (i.e. non-reflective) wire to minimize reflection from the conductors.
AES-6: Cabinet screening	Sectionalizing cabinets would not be visually evident to travelers on Highway 88, Bear River Road, and recreation use areas. Native elements in the landscape such as boulders and shrubs would be used to screen sectionalizing cabinets as approved by the Caltrans District Landscape Architect, ENF Landscape Architect, or County Planning Department, as appropriate. Where cabinets cannot not be screened, a vault would be used instead of a cabinet.
AES-7: Cabinet colors	All sectionalizing cabinets would be painted natural earth tones that blend well with the surrounding landscape not to be visually evident from Highway 88 as approved by the ENF Landscape Architect, Caltrans Landscape Architect, or Tri-TAC, as appropriate. Markers for the cabinets, vaults, and splice boxes would be predominantly dark brown, and where necessary, only the tip of the marker would be red
AES-8: Vegetation preservation	Sectionalizing cabinets would be sited to minimize damage to or loss of vegetation and avoid mature trees that are 24 dbh or greater in size.

Design Criteria	Description
AES-9: Minimize grading	Grading for the placement of sectionalizing cabinets, vaults, or buried power line would be minimized and would be done in consultation with Caltrans District Landscape Architect, ENF Landscape Architect, and County Planning Department, as appropriate. Where grading is necessary for cabinets and would be visible from Highway 88 in the long term, the graded slopes would blend into the existing terrain of the immediate area.
AES-10: Revegetation	Revegetation would occur at areas disturbed by the project such that cleared areas would not be visually evident from Highway 88 in the long term. A revegetation plan would be prepared and approved by the ENF and Caltrans District Landscape Architects and would comply with the Amador County General Plan's Scenic Highway Element.
AES-11: Transition to Hwy 88	When transitioning the power line from the Old Alpine Highway or other roadway onto Highway 88, removal of vegetation for construction would not occur outside the existing road prism, such that the appearance of the buried power line corridor from Highway 88 would not be noticeably different from the existing condition.
AES-12: Warning signs	Spacing of the warning signs along Highway 88 and Kirkwood Meadows Drive would be minimized by integrating vault and splice box warning signs into the line spacing so that the least number of signs would be used to mark the line.
AES-13: Aspen protection	Construction activities within Aspen stands visible from Highway 88 or other managed viewsheds would be reduced to the width of 15 feet or the width of the existing roadway, whichever is greater, to minimize impacts on the existing Aspen stands along the project corridor. These areas would be clearly marked on the construction drawings and flagged in the field.
AES-14: Cabinet SC-46b at Kirkwood Entrance	The sectionalizing cabinet located on Kirkwood Meadows Drive near the entrance to Kirkwood (SC-46b) would be located such that it would not be visually evident to travelers on Highway 88 or obstruct views of Kirkwood Meadows. If these conditions cannot be met, a below ground vault would be installed.
<b>Traffic, Transportation and Public Safety</b>	
TRA-14: Cabinet locations on Caltrans ROW	Aboveground sectionalizing cabinets within the Highway 88 and Bear River Road rights-of-ways would be outside the specific "clear zones" designated for each road for public safety and to allow for snowplowing.
TRA-15: Use of underground vaults	Underground vaults would be used where there are no feasible locations for aboveground sectionalizing cabinets outside the "clear zone" for Highway 88 and Bear River Road. Examples of infeasible locations include: narrow shoulder width due to the mountainous terrain, no existing alternate access road, or otherwise unacceptable resource impacts.

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## **Visual Simulations for Structures within the Highway 88 Corridor** \_\_\_\_

Due to the high visual sensitivity of the Highway 88 corridor and the Retention VQO management direction, four key observation points (KOPs) were selected to represent the stretches of Highway 88 where sectionalizing cabinets or vaults would be located. KOPs 5 through 8 represent the types of measures that would be taken to screen the sectionalizing cabinets and Volcano Telecommunications splice boxes from Highway 88 such that they would not be visually evident as called for under the Retention VQO. For each KOP there is an existing view of the alignment before the project construction, a view of the alignment immediately after project construction, and two years after construction.

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*KOP 4: Peddler Hill Vista Point and Highway 88*

KOP 4 is located at the Peddler Hill Vista Point on Highway 88. The vista point is a very large pullout on the south side of Highway 88, over 1000 feet above Bear River Reservoir. It is about one mile east of the Highway 88 intersection with Bear River Road and about 1.5 miles west of the Caltrans Peddler Hill Maintenance Station. KOP 4 is located at the southwest end of the vista point, in front of the interpretative panels. From the vista there are panoramic views of the Bear River watershed. The project view is to the southeast towards the existing power line corridor on the north-facing slope above Bear River Reservoir. KOP 4 depicts a middle-ground view of Segment 2 and the southern end of Segment 1. Travelers visiting the Vista Point would experience short-to-long duration views of the area, whereas travelers on Highway 88 would experience views of brief-duration (a few seconds) when driving past the vista point on Highway 88. Photo 3-10 depicts the existing view of the PG&E power line corridor and Photo 3-11 depicts the simulated view. The photo used for the simulation was taken when there was a light dusting of snow on the ground which shows how snow cover conditions would strengthen the visual effect of the cleared corridor, whereas non-snow conditions would have less of a visual effect.

The widening of the vegetation management corridor would strengthen the visual line of the corridor as seen from KOP 4. The poles and non-specular lines of the project power line would not be easily noticed, but the specular lines of the existing PG&E line would continue to be highlighted during certain times of the day. The project would be noticeable, but would not dominate the existing visual character due to the small scale of the feature as seen in the panoramic view from the vista. The project power line as seen from KOP 4 would achieve the Partial Retention VQO, just as the EVC of the PG&E power line achieves the Partial Retention VQO.

**Short Term Effects** - In the short term, the project power line would be more noticeable than the existing PG&E power line due to the widening of the corridor, and loss of vegetation and exposure of soils within it. However, from the middleground distance zone of the vista point, the project power line would not appear substantially different from the existing PG&E power line and would continue to achieve the Partial Retention VQO since the project would attract attention but would not dominate the characteristic landscape in the short term.

**Long Term Effects** - In the long term, the project power line would become less noticeable as the vegetation management corridor greens up and the edges of the corridor soften. The project power line would continue to be visually evident, but not easily noticed by most viewers taking in the panoramic view. In the long term the project would maintain the existing Partial Retention VQO achieved by the existing PG&E power line.



Photo 3-10. KOP 4: Peddler Hill Vista Point – Existing Condition. View to the south of Bear River Reservoir and the existing PG&E power line in Segments 1 and 2.



Photo 3-11. KOP 4: Peddler Hill Vista Point – Simulated Condition. View to the south of Bear River Reservoir and the project power line in Segments 1 and 2.

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*KOP 5: Highway 88 Corridor, Project Segment 7 - Vault #23*

KOP 5 is located in the Segment 7 (Devil's Garden Ridge), about a quarter mile west of the Devil's Garden Ridge pullout, located within the Caltrans right-of-way. The view from KOP 5 is of the westbound lane of travel within Highway 88, looking northwest at the immediate foreground of the road shoulder (Photo 3-12, Photo 3-13 and Photo 3-14). In the short term the vault would not be readily noticed, but the removal of roadside vegetation for trench excavation would create a noticeable line along the roadside. In the long term, roadside vegetation would be revegetated, and the line would become less discernable. The vault marker would blend in with the snow poles along the side of the road and the project would not be visually evident, achieving the Retention VQO. The project would not significantly impact the visual character or quality of the scenic highway corridor.



Photo 3-12. KOP 5: Highway 88 Project Segment 7. Existing Condition.



Photo 3-13. KOP 5: Highway 88 Project Segment 7 – Vault #24 and communication handhole. Immediately after construction.



Photo 3-14. KOP 5: Highway 88 Project Segment 7 – Vault #24 and communication handhole. Two years post construction.

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*KOP 6: Highway 88, Project Segment 15 – Sectionalizing Cabinet #37*

KOP 6 is located in Segment 15, less than a quarter mile east of Kit Carson Road at Silver Lake. Segment 15 is within the Caltrans right-of-way, and sectionalizing cabinet #37 would be placed approximately 20-feet to the north of the lane of traffic. The view is from the center of Highway 88, looking northwest at the immediate foreground of the road shoulder (Photo 3-15, Photo 3-16 and Photo 3-17). In the short term the vault would be screened by placement of boulders in front of it. The removal of roadside vegetation would create a noticeable line along the roadside. In the long term, roadside vegetation would reestablish itself, the line would fade away, and the project would not be visually evident, achieving the Retention VQO. The project would not significantly impact the visual character or quality of the scenic highway corridor.



Photo 3-15. KOP 6: Highway 88, Project Segment 15. Existing Condition.



Photo 3-16. KOP 6: Highway 88, Project Segment 15 - Sectionalizing Cabinet #37 and communication handhole. Immediately after construction.



Photo 3-17. KOP 6: Highway 88, Project Segment 15 - Sectionalizing Cabinet #37 and communication handhole. Two years after construction.

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*KOP 7: Highway 88 Corridor – Vault #43*

KOP 7 is located in Segment 20, at the north end of the pullout areas along Carson Spur. Segment 20 is within the Caltrans right-of-way. The view is from the pullout directly north of the vault and next to Highway 88, looking north at the immediate foreground of the road shoulder (Photo 3-18, Photo 3-19 and Photo 3-20). In the short term the vault would not be readily noticed, but the removal of roadside vegetation would create a noticeable line along the roadside. In the long term, roadside vegetation would reestablish itself and the line would fade away. The vault marker would blend in with snow poles along the side of the road and existing Volcano splice box (shown to the left of proposed Vault #43). The project would not be visually evident, achieving the Retention VQO. The project would not significantly impact the visual character or quality of the scenic highway corridor.



Photo 3-18. KOP 7: Highway 88, Project Segment 20. Existing condition.



Photo 3-19. KOP 7: Highway 88, Project Segment 20 – Vault #43 and communication handhole. Immediately after construction.



Photo 3-20. KOP 7: Highway 88, Project Segment 20 – Vault #43 and communication handhole. Two years post construction.

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*KOP 8: Highway 88 Corridor – Sectionalizing Cabinet #47*

KOP 8 is located in Segment 21, next to the western entrance to the Kirkwood Inn on the north side of Highway 88. Segment 21 in the preferred alternative has been revised to enter Kirkwood at Kirkwood Meadows Drive and no longer includes a sectionalizing cabinet at this location. This information is presented to further illustrate how the proposed sectionalizing cabinets will be visually screened.

This KOP shows a sectionalizing cabinet located greater than 20-feet from the edge of the road. The view is from the north side of the road, east of the cabinet location, looking north at the immediate foreground of the road shoulder (Photo 3-21, Photo 3-22 and Photo 3-23). In the short term the above ground sectionalizing cabinet and buried splice box would not be readily noticed due to screening, but the removal of roadside vegetation would create a noticeable line along the roadside. The sectionalizing cabinet and splice box would be screened from the highway by the placement of large granite boulders. In the long term, roadside vegetation would be reestablished and the line would not be visually evident from Highway 88 and would achieve the Retention VQO. The project would not significantly impact the visual character or quality of the scenic highway corridor.



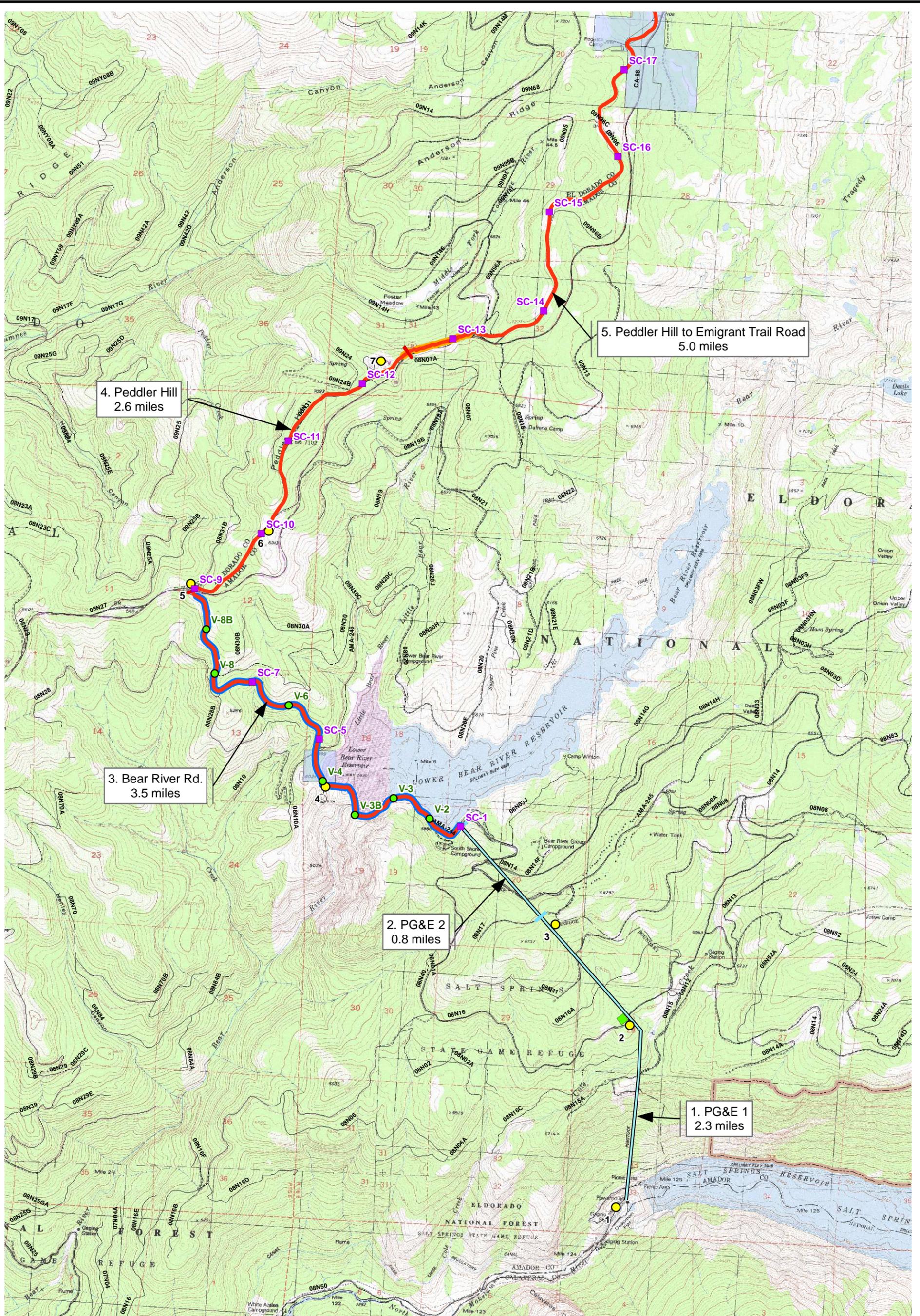
Photo 3-21. KOP 8: Highway 88, Project Segment 21. Existing condition.



Photo 3-22. KOP 8: Highway 88 Corridor – Highway 88, Project Segment 21– Sectionalizing cabinet #47 and communication handhole. Immediately after construction.



Photo 3-23. KOP 8: Highway 88 Corridor – Highway 88, Project Segment 21– Sectionalizing cabinet #47 and communication handhole. Two years post construction.



4. Peddler Hill  
2.6 miles

5. Peddler Hill to Emigrant Trail Road  
5.0 miles

3. Bear River Rd.  
3.5 miles

2. PG&E 2  
0.8 miles

1. PG&E 1  
2.3 miles

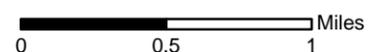
- Legend**
- Preferred Underground
  - Overbuild of Existing Line
  - County Road ROW (Buried Conduit)
  - Caltrans Row (Buried Conduit)
  - Private Land
  - Mokelumne Wilderness Area
  - Potential Staging Areas
  - Sectionalizing Cabinets
  - Buried Vaults
  - ◆ KM Green Substation
  - FS Roads

**Figure 1**  
**Preferred Alternative**

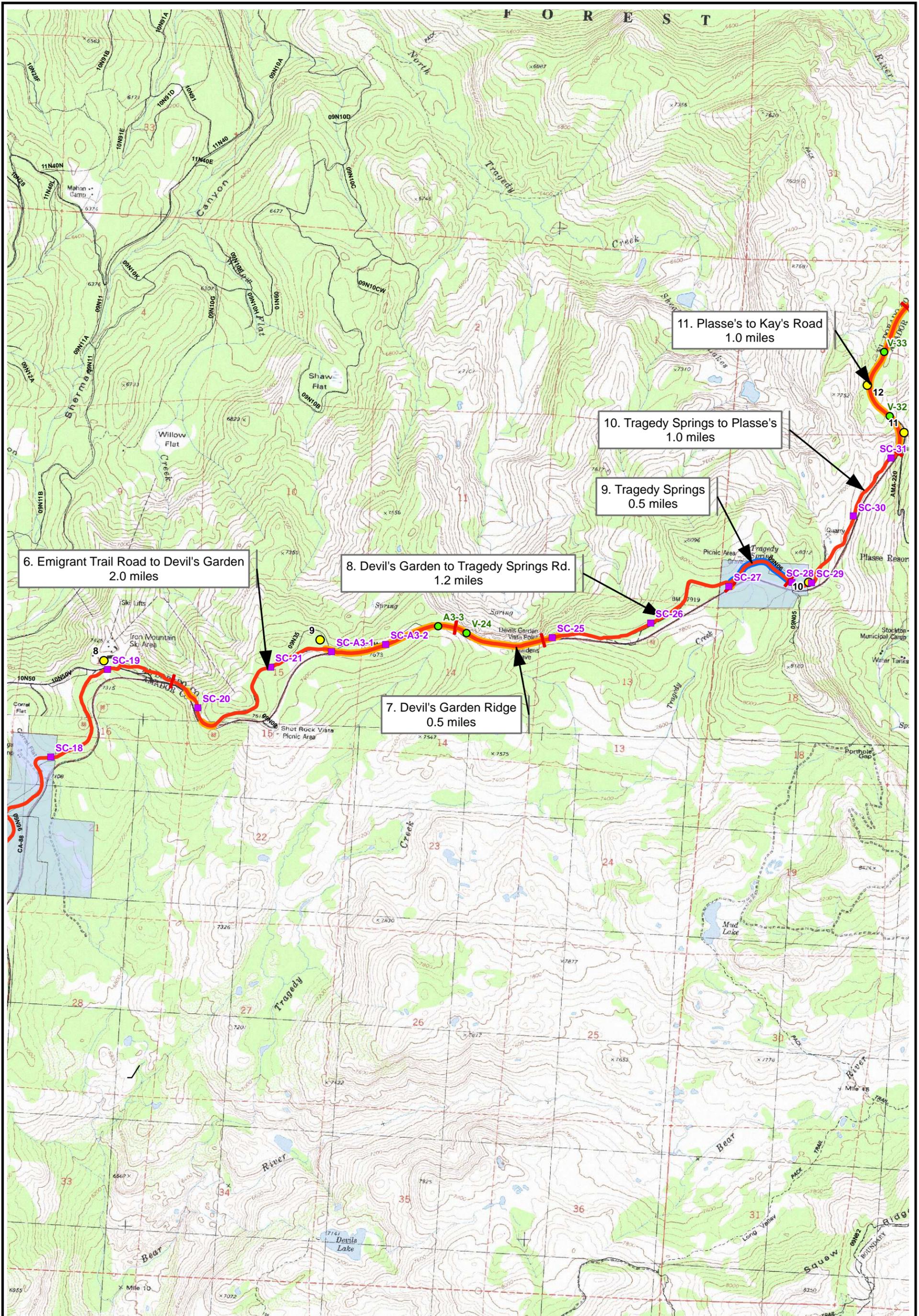
Kirkwood Meadows Power Line Reliability Project



This Map was Prepared by:  
**Resource Concepts, Inc.**



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6. Emigrant Trail Road to Devil's Garden  
2.0 miles

8. Devil's Garden to Tragedy Springs Rd.  
1.2 miles

7. Devil's Garden Ridge  
0.5 miles

9. Tragedy Springs  
0.5 miles

10. Tragedy Springs to Plasse's  
1.0 miles

11. Plasse's to Kay's Road  
1.0 miles

- Legend**
- Preferred Underground
  - Caltrans Row (Buried Conduit)
  - County Road ROW (Buried Conduit)
  - Private Land
  - Potential Staging Areas
  - Sectionalizing Cabinets
  - Buried Vaults
  - FS Roads

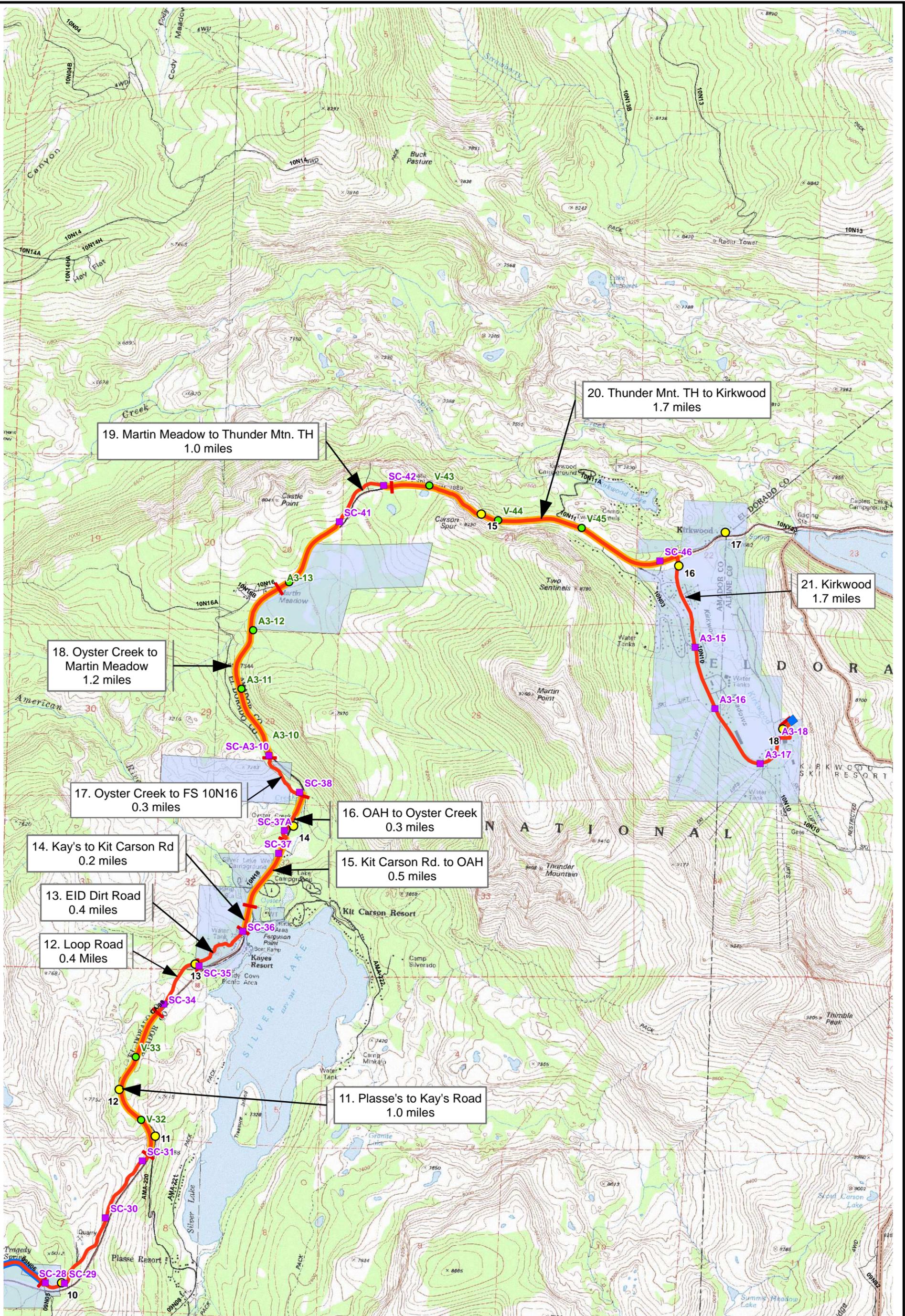
**Figure 2**  
**Preferred Alternative**

Kirkwood Meadows Power Line Reliability Project

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- Legend**
- Preferred Underground
  - County Road ROW (Buried Conduit)
  - Caltrans ROW (Buried Conduit)
  - Private Land
  - Mokelumne Wilderness Area
  - ◆ KM Blue Substation
  - Potential Staging Areas
  - Sectionalizing Cabinets
  - Buried Vaults
  - FS Roads

**Figure 3**  
**Preferred Alternative**  
 Kirkwood Meadows Power Line Reliability Project

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0      0.5      1 Miles