# County of Yolo

## Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Scoping Meeting for the Environmental Impact Report on the Environmental Education and Sustainability Park

**Date:** Friday, July 20, 2012

**To:** Public Agencies and Interested Parties

**From:** Terry Vernon, Deputy Director

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Environmental Education and Sustainability Park

The County of Yolo (County) is the Lead Agency in charge of environmental review of the **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PARK PROJECT** (project). The County has determined that a project level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for the Project. The County is soliciting comments from reviewing agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the environmental information. For reviewing agencies, Yolo County requests comments that are germane to your agency's statutory responsibility as related to the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering relevant permits or other approvals for the project. The County is also seeking the views of residents, property owners, and concerned citizens regarding issues that should be addressed in the EIR.

**COMMENT PERIOD:** Comments may be sent anytime during the NOP review period. The NOP review and comment period begins **July 20, 2012**, and ends **August 20, 2012**, at **4:00 p.m**. All comments must be received within the comment period. Please include the name of a contact person for your agency, if applicable. All comments should be directed to:

Yolo County Department of General Services
Attention: Terry Vernon, Deputy Director
125 W. Main Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Comments may also be emailed to terry.vernon@yolocounty.org.

**LEAD AGENCY:** Yolo County Department of General Services

**SCOPING MEETING:** Oral comments may be provided at the Scoping Meeting to be held on Monday, July 30, 2012 at 4:30 pm in the County Administration Building's Atrium Training Room, 625 Court Street, Woodland, CA 95695.

**PROJECT TITLE:** Environmental Education and Sustainability Park Project

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The project consists of two separate sites: the Grasslands site, and the Beamer/Cottonwood site.

The Grasslands site is located at 30475 County Road 104, approximately 2.5 miles south of the City of Davis (Exhibit 1). The Grasslands site consists of approximately 30 acres of undeveloped land within Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 033-130-03. The Grasslands site is located within Yolo County's Grasslands Regional Park at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Mace Boulevard/County Road 104 and County Road 35 (Exhibit 2a). The Grasslands site is generally bounded by County Road 35 and agricultural land (north); Grasslands Regional Park (east); Yolo Bowmen Archery Range and Sacramento Valley Soaring Society Flying Field (south); and Mace Boulevard/County Road 104 and agricultural land (west).

The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located at southeastern corner of Ashley Drive and Woodland Avenue in the City of Woodland (Exhibit 1). The Beamer/Cottonwood site consists of an approximate 2-acre portion of undeveloped APN 064-010-32 (Exhibit 2b). The Beamer/Cottonwood site is generally bounded by Woodland Avenue and a residential neighborhood (north); Yolo County Health Department building (east); Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services building and JPA building (southeast); the County Corporation Yard (south); and Ashley Drive and a residential neighborhood (west).

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Both the Grasslands site and the Beamer/Cottonwood site are relatively flat and undeveloped. Both sites are currently undeveloped and do not contain active agricultural activities.

The Grasslands site is designated as Open Space (OS) by the County of Yolo General Plan, and is within the Agricultural General (A-1) zoning classification. Utility polls span the northern and western edges of the site. The vegetation onsite consists of native and non-native grasses, wildflowers, and several small trees located at the northwest corner of the site.

The Beamer/Cottonwood site is designated as Public Service by the City of Woodland General Plan, and is classified as Single-Family Zone (R-1). The vegetation onsite consists of native and non-native grasses.

**PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project consists of the development of a 5 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar array at the Grasslands site and a 0.8 MW PV solar array at the Beamer/Cottonwood Site. The Grasslands site will also include an environmental education center to be used for educational fieldtrips for K-12 students of Yolo County. The proposed project would be constructed over a period of approximately four months, commencing in March 2013, with full operation anticipated by July 2013.

Electricity produced at the Grasslands site will be fed into the grid at two PG&E interconnection points. Electricity produced at the Beamer/Cottonwood site will be used at the adjacent Yolo County Health Department building, Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services building and JPA building. Power generated at both sites would further the goals of the California Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and the Yolo County Climate Action Plan.

**Grasslands Site Educational Center and Park:** The educational center, located at the Grasslands, site would consist of a environmentally sensitive modular building, and park host building. The park host building would be less than 500 square feet, and provide for typical park host administrative activities such as greeting guests and providing information about the park. The environmental education center would be no more than 2000 square feet and would host field trips from Yolo County elementary schools, and would be operated by the Yolo County Office of Education. The center would provide educational information regarding the solar array, energy conservation, sustainability, and habitat protection. The educational center would also operate in conjunction with a system of environmental educational placards educating the public about alternative energy and regional protected habitats and species. The park components will include walking trails and park benches connecting to the adjacent grasslands park. In connection with the environmental education center, the grasslands solar array would be used as a research laboratory for the feasibility of agricultural crop production and weed control beneath the solar panels.

**PROJECT ALTERNATIVES:** Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(f) and 15126.6, the environmental review process will include an analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives, as well as a "no project" alternative, which will include future development that could occur under current entitlements and infrastructure capacity. The EIR will include a description of each of the project alternatives, and the impacts of the alternatives will be quantitatively analyzed and/or qualitatively compared to those of the proposed project. The development and selection of alternatives to be evaluated will be informed by the comments received in response to this NOP.

**AREAS OF POTENTIAL IMPACT:** The County has determined that an EIR is required for this project. Therefore, as allowed under Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the County has not prepared an Initial Study and will instead begin work directly on the EIR, as allowed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15080. The EIR will focus on the significant effects of the project and will document the reasons for concluding that other effects will be less than significant or potentially significant. The topics listed below will be further analyzed in the EIR. However, individual environmental impact criteria within the topics listed below have been scoped out of further analysis, as detailed in the next section.

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utility Systems

**EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT:** Based on the site or project characteristics, the following environmental issue areas or specific environmental impact criteria will be scoped out to the Effects Found Not To Be Significant section of the EIR. A brief description of why each was found not be significant is provided below. Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, and Transportation and Traffic have been scoped out as environmental topics. For individual impact criteria, the corresponding CEQA Guidelines Appendix G impact reference label and question language is provided for clarity.

### Aesthetics

**I.b Substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway:** There are no state scenic highways near the project sites. The scenic highway nearest to the Grasslands site is South River Road from Jefferson Boulevard in the City of West Sacramento to the Sacramento County line, east of Clarksburg. The scenic highway nearest to the Beamer/Cottonwood site is State Route 16 from the Colusa County line to Capay, west of the project. Both are sufficiently far from the project sites that the proposed project will not be visible from the sections of scenic highway. Visibility was confirmed by site reconnaissance conducted by a qualified environmental professional. In addition, there are no rock outcroppings or historic buildings located on the project sites. Therefore, no potential impacts associated with damaging scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.

### Agricultural and Forestry Resources

**II.d Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use:** As discussed above, both sites are currently undeveloped fields with little to no native vegetation or trees. Therefore, no forest or timberland is present on the project sites, and no forest or timberland would be affected by the project. The County does not contain any forest land zoning. Therefore, no potential impacts to forest land would result during project construction or operation.

**II.e Involve other changes to the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use:** As stated above, the project sites do not contain forest lands or active agricultural activities. The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located in an urban setting within the City of Woodland. The site is surrounded by developed residential and public services uses. In addition, the site is designated Public Services and zoned Single-Family Zone by the City of Woodland. Therefore, construction and operation of the Beamer/Cottonwood PV facility would not result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

The Grasslands site is designated as Open Space by the County's General Plan, and zoned Agricultural General. The site would be developed with a PV facility and an experimental plot to research the compatibility of agricultural production, such as the sheep grazing. Therefore, the project would include agriculturally compatible energy uses in addition to educational and parks

uses. Further, land uses on the project site are restricted by the National Park Service through a quitclaim deed. Deed restrictions on the site require the property to be used and maintained for public purposes in perpetuity. As such, exclusive agricultural activities are not allowed onsite. Therefore, the project would not result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

### Air Quality

**III.e Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people:** PV facilities are not sources of objectionable odor. In addition, the agricultural, educational and park uses that would occur at the Grasslands site would not generate noticeable quantities of objectionable odor. Therefore, no potential impact associated with creating objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people would occur.

### Biological Resources

**IV.c Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (Including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrologic interruption, or other means:** A review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory shows that no wetlands occur on either project site. In addition, the project is not located in a coastal zone. This condition precludes an impact on wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

### Geology and Soils

**VI.a Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**

**i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault:** The East Valley fault terminates approximately 4 miles west of the Grasslands site. In addition, the Dunnigan Hills faults are located approximately 6 miles northwest of the Beamer/Cottonwood site. Therefore, the project sites are not subject to rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning map.

**iv. Landslides:** The relatively flat, featureless topography of the project sites and adjacent properties reduces the opportunities for landslides to occur and, therefore, no impacts would result during the project construction or operation.

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

**VIII.d Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or environment:** A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was prepared for the Grasslands site, which includes a review of federal and state databases, and confirmed that the site would not contain a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to the California Government Code Section 65962.5. In addition, a review of the

California Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor database confirmed that there are no identified hazardous materials sites on the Beamer/Cottonwood site. Therefore, no impact associated with hazardous material sites would occur during the project construction or operations phase.

**VIII.e For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project site:** Neither project site are located within an airport land use plan area, or are located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. This condition precludes the potential to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working at the project site.

**VIII.f For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project site:** Neither project site are located near a private airstrip, or are located within two miles of a private airstrip. This condition precludes the potential to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working at the project site.

### Hydrology and Water Quality

**IX.c Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner, which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site:** Both project sites are relatively flat. Although the project would involve a minimal amount of grading, construction activity would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the area. Each site would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would percolate into the ground on the project site; therefore, the project would result in no impact to the drainage pattern of the area, or result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite.

**IX.d Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site:** Both project sites are relatively flat. Although the project would involve a minimal amount of grading, construction activity would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the area. Each site would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would percolate into the ground on the project site; therefore, the project would result in no impact to the drainage pattern of the area, or result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite.

**IX.g Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map:** The project would not construct any housing. This condition precludes the possibility of placing housing within a 100-year floodplain.

**IX.h Place within 100-year flood hazard area structures, which would impede or redirect flood flows:** A review of revised Figure HS-4 of the Yolo County General Plan and the Yolo County Online Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Viewer shows the Grasslands site is

located outside the 100-year floodplain in Flood Zone D. The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located with the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain. However, the proposed structures at the Grasslands site, PV arrays, would not impede or redirect flood flows. Therefore, no impacts would result for this impact criterion.

**IX.j Inundation by Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow:** People or structures would not be exposed to hazards associated with seiche, tsunami, or mudflow since no large bodies of water existing near the project sites. The Pacific Ocean is approximately 70 miles from the project sites. No water bodies capable of producing a seiche are located near the project sites. The relatively flat, featureless topography of the project sites and adjacent properties reduces the opportunities for landslides to occur and, as such, reduces the opportunity for mudflow to occur. Therefore, no impacts would result during the project construction or operation.

### Land Use and Planning

**X.a Physically divide an established community:** The Grasslands site is surrounded by general agricultural and recreational land uses and is not located within any designated planning boundary. Only limited residential uses occur in the vicinity of the Grasslands site, consisting of scattered rural farm residences. As a whole, the Grasslands site area lacks any established community. The Beamer/Cottonwood site is located within the City of Woodland, and is surrounded by existing residential and public services land uses. However, development of the Beamer/Cottonwood site would not split neighborhoods or divide an existing identifiable community of interest. As such, development of the proposed project would not physically divide any community, and no impacts would occur.

### Mineral Resources

The project sites do not contain any known mineral deposits or active mineral extraction operations. This condition precludes the possibility of the loss of important mineral resources as a result of development of the proposed project.

### Noise

**XII.e For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project site to excessive noise levels:** Neither project site are located within an airport land use plan area, or are located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. This condition precludes the potential to result in an exposure of people residing or working at the project site to excessive noise.

**XII.f For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project site to excessive noise levels:** Neither project site are located near a private airstrip, or are located within two miles of a private airstrip. This condition precludes the potential to result in an exposure of people residing or working at the project site to excessive noise.

### Population and Housing

The project sites do not contain any residential uses and no residential uses are included in the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to displace people or housing. The proposed project would generate temporary construction jobs that would be expected to be filled by the local workforce. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to cause substantial direct or indirect population growth.

### Public Services

**XIV Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

**Schools:** Operation of the proposed project may require up to two employees to manage and maintain the solar facility. The proposed project would not increase either directly or indirectly the school-aged population in the region and, thus, would not require the construction of new or the expansion of existing school facilities. Therefore, project would not result in potential impacts associated with schools.

### Transportation Traffic

Project construction would have overlapping phases, with the total number of construction workers expected to range between 5 and 15 personnel per day. In addition, during the 4-month construction period, approximately 200 deliveries are expected to be required to deliver panels and construction materials to both project sites combined, representing an average of under 5 delivery trips per construction workday. However, no construction activities are anticipated to occur within the public right of way, and no physical changes to surrounding roadways would occur.

Project operation would result in periodic trips for solar facility site inspection and panel washing for both project sites. In addition, the Grasslands site would maintain an onsite park host and receive seasonal trips from Yolo County schools. Based on the number of K-12 students in Yolo County, an average bus capacity of 52 students, and assuming that educational trips to the Grasslands site would only occur half of the school year, the Grasslands site could host up to 28 peak-day trips, assuming PV site inspectors and panel washers would also visit the project site at the same time. However, the average daily trip generation would be less than 10 trips per day, conservatively.

Although the project requires discretionary permits, the land uses and proposed land use intensities are such that the project would be less than the County's Vehicle and Truck Trip Equivalencies for auto and small truck vehicle classifications, even when aggregated together. As provided within the County of Yolo Transportation Impact Study Guidelines, the trigger for requiring a project-specific Transportation Impact Study (TIS) is 100 new vehicle trips per day for autos of 2 axes, and 50 new trips per day for small trucks (which are 2 axles/6 tires and includes buses). At up to 28 peak-day

trips and less than 10 annual average daily trips, the project would generate substantially fewer trips than the County's trigger for requiring a TIS.

As stated above, the project would not result in offsite construction activities and, therefore, would not affect offsite transportation facilities or services, including transit, rail crossings, roadways, bikeways or sidewalks. The project would not alter physical or operational conditions on a County roadway, bikeway, sidewalk, or other transportation facility. In addition, the project would not conflict with an applicable transportation plan, congestion management plan, or result tin a change in air traffic patters. The project would not increase hazards due to a design feature (such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses, nor would it result in inadequate emergency access. The project does not have the potential to create a significant environmental impact for the transportation impact criteria.

### Utilities and Service Systems

**XVII.b Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects:** The educational center at the Grasslands site would not include a restroom facility onsite. It is anticipated that visitors and the park host would utilize existing temporary toilet facilities within the main Grasslands Regional Park. The temporary facilities would be serviced by an appropriate licensed waste hauler, and disposed of according to state law. At such time that the County determines the level of use warrants additional facilities, it is anticipated that the County would construct permanent toilet facilities, with wastewater needs addressed through a septic system. During the operational phase of the proposed project, the solar PV panels would be washed two times per year. Since the water used would either soak into the soil or evaporate, no wastewater would be generated during panel washing. The project would not result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or existing facilities.

**XVII.c Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects:** No existing stormwater drainage infrastructure is currently found on the project sites, and no backbone infrastructure would be required as part of the proposed project. In addition, the project sites would be designed and constructed such that precipitation would percolate onsite and not contribute to new stormwater runoff. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, and no impact would occur.

**XVII.f Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs:** Both project sites would not generate any substantial quantity of construction or operational waste and the waste that is generated would be separated and recycled on site and then delivered to a County landfill facility. The Grasslands site has the potential to generate occasional waste and recycling needs, however these needs will be serviced by the Yolo County parks department. Specifically, the educational activities on the Grasslands

site would be seasonal and periodic in nature, and not result in a substantial quantity of operational waste. Therefore, the project would create no impact to the available capacity of existing landfills.

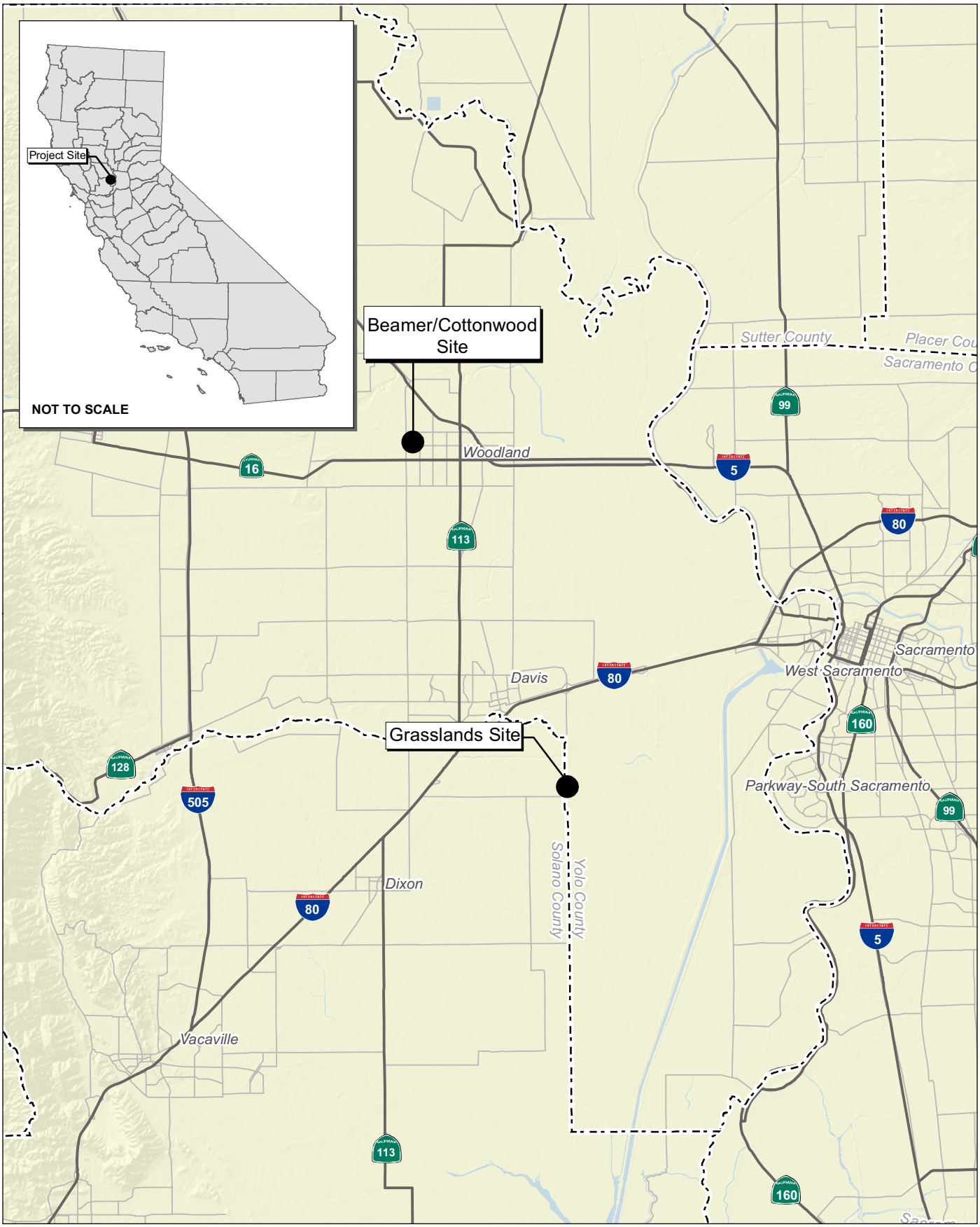
**XVII.g Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste:** All solid waste generated by the proposed project would be handled, transported, and disposed of according to all applicable federal, State, and local regulation pertaining to municipal waste disposal. The collection of solid waste from the proposed project, the transportation of the waste to the disposal facility, and the eventual disposal of the waste would be conducted by a licensed and permitted agent. Therefore, no potential impacts associated with solid waste statutes and regulations would occur as a result of the project.

Date: July 20, 2012

Name and Title: Terry Vernon, Deputy Director
Yolo County General Services, Facilities and Parks Department

Contact: (530) 406-4895
Terry.vernon@yolocounty.org

Signature: TERRY VERNON




Source: Census 2000 Data, The CaSIL, MBA GIS 2012.

Michael Brandman Associates

NORTH

5 2.5 0 5 Miles

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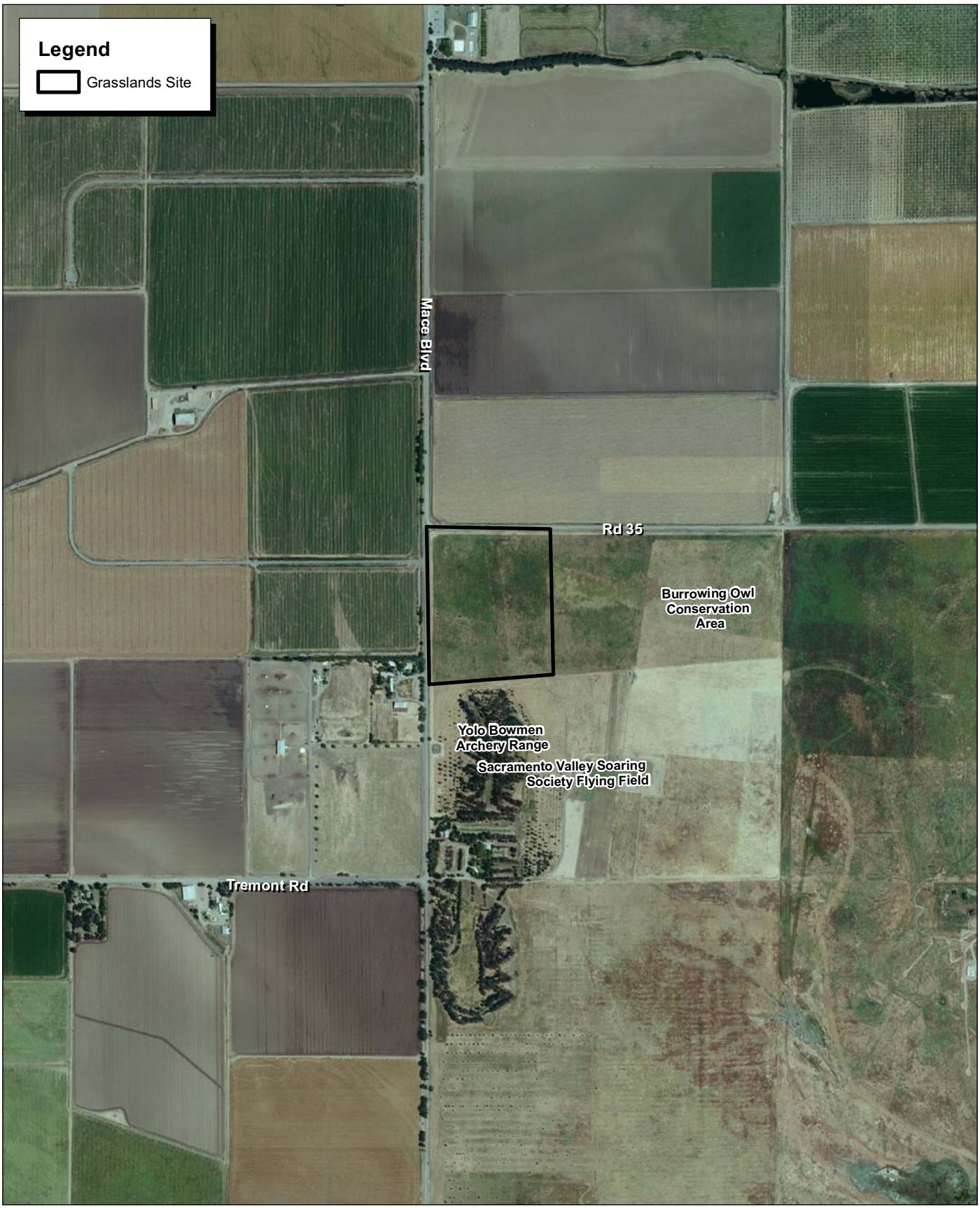
# Exhibit 1
## Regional Location Map

YOLO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PARK PROJECT
NOTICE OF PREPARATION




Source: ESRI Aerial, MBA Field Survey and GIS Data, 2012.

# Exhibit 2a - Grasslands Site Local Vicinity Map Aerial Base

NORTH

1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet

Michael Brandman Associates

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YOLO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PARK PROJECT
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Source: ESRI Aerial, MBA Field Survey and GIS Data, 2012.

# Exhibit 2b - Beamer/Cottonwood Site
## Local Vicinity Map
## Aerial Base

NORTH

700 350 0 700

Feet

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