

### On-going and Up-coming Work

Environmental surveys were conducted this autumn. Results of the surveys have recently been presented to the FHWA and are under review. Public comments, the findings of environmental studies, and results of fifteen-percent engineering will be factored into decisions on whether to consider all preliminary alternatives through the thirty-percent design phase of the project, or whether to eliminate some. We anticipate holding a public meeting next spring to discuss the results of our studies, the status of the project at that time, and how the project will likely progress.

We value your comments. If you have any questions or would like to provide additional comments, please contact Teresa Engles, Environmental Protection Specialist at the address below or at the following:

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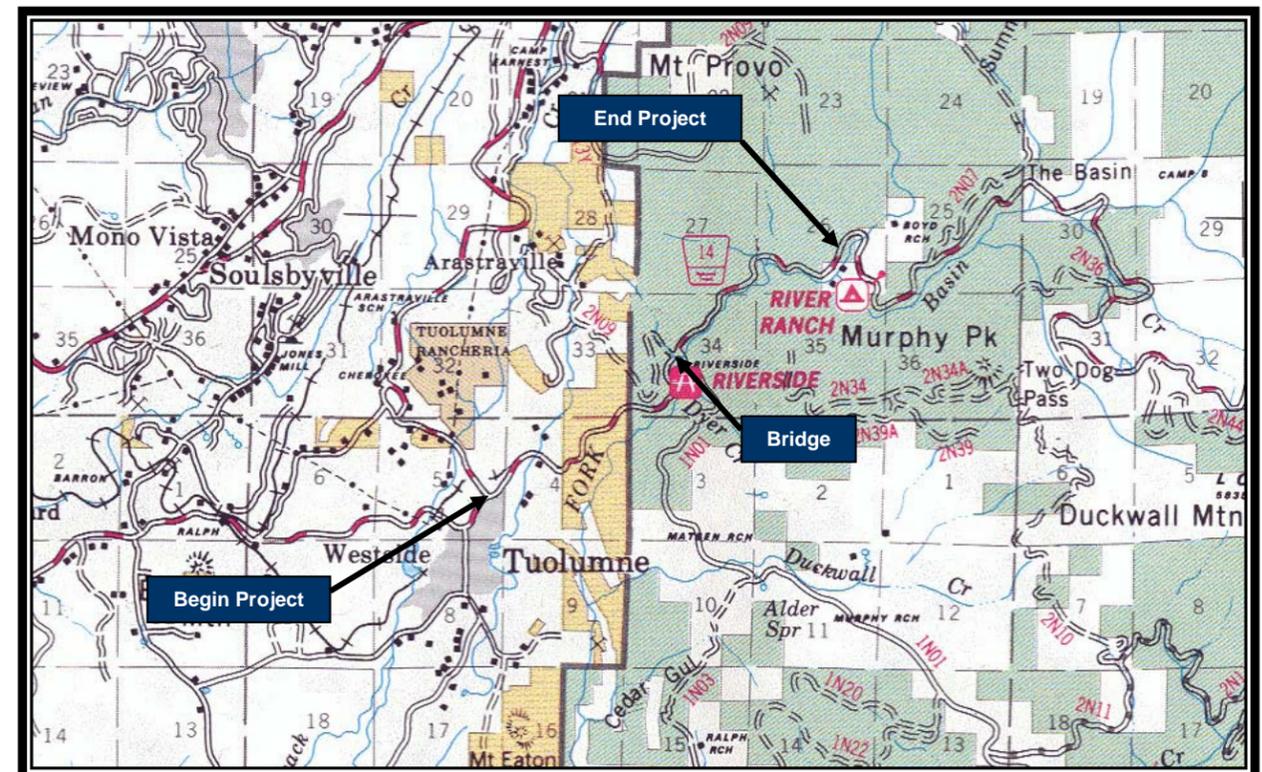
# Buchanan and Fish Hatchery Roads Project Update

California Forest Highways 191 and 190.  
 Tuolumne County  
 Stanislaus National Forest

December 2006

### Project Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with Stanislaus National Forest and Tuolumne County, is performing environmental, design, and preliminary engineering studies for a proposed improvement of California Forest Highways 191 and 190, also known as Buchanan Road and Fish Hatchery Road. The portion of Buchanan Road under consideration for improvement begins in Tuolumne at Carter Street and extends 2.5 miles easterly, staying on the north side of the North Fork Tuolumne River. Also under consideration for improvement is the bridge over the North Fork Tuolumne River and 1.8 miles of Fish Hatchery Road beginning at the bridge. In March 2006, a public meeting was held to discuss the purpose and need for these improvements. The purpose and need for the project are to 1) improve safety, 2) correct road-surface and structural deficiencies, and 3) improve the efficiency of maintenance operations.



## Preliminary Alternatives

A number of conceptual alternatives were developed by the FHWA engineering staff to address the purpose and need for the project. Some of these alternatives were presented at the public meeting and some were developed after the meeting during the fifteen-percent design phase of the project. The preliminary alternatives that are being studied are listed below.

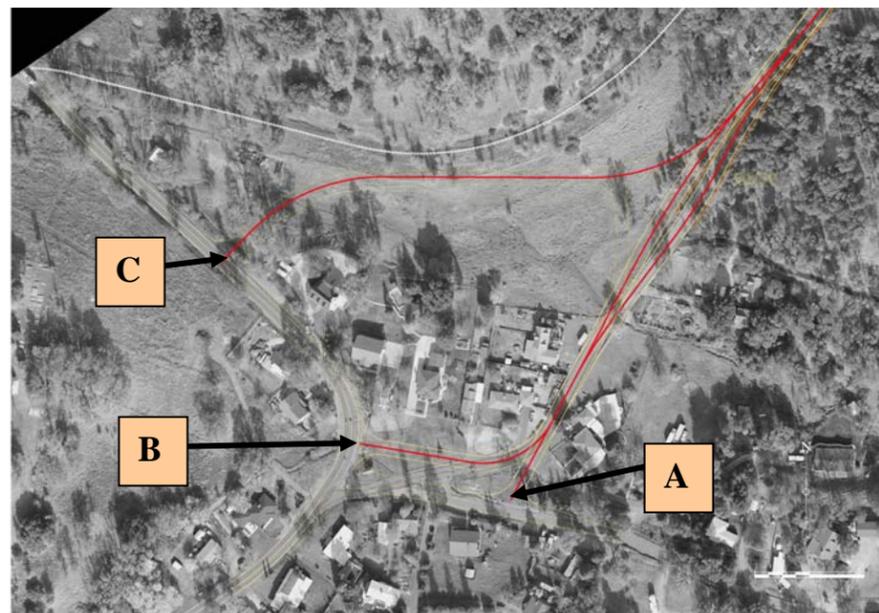
### Buchanan Road–Residential Area (See Figure)

- Rehabilitate the existing roadway (maintaining the existing alignment).
- Reconstruct the roadway for a 25 mile-per-hour (mph) design speed\*.
- Reconstruct the roadway for a 35 mph design speed.

Alternative alignments (in addition to maintaining the existing alignment) that are also currently under consideration in this area include:

- A) Realign Buchanan Road to create a T-intersection with 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and extend 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Carter Street.
- B) Realign Buchanan Road through the park to create a T-intersection with Carter Street.
- C) Construct a new roadway in the vicinity of the railroad grade to divert traffic around the residential area and create a T-intersection with Carter Street.

The current width of the roadway in the residential area ranges from 20 to 24 feet. For all of the above alternatives, the originally proposed width was to be increased to 32 feet (12-foot lanes and 4-foot shoulders). This has since been reduced to 26 feet (11-foot lanes and 2-foot shoulders).



\* Design speed is the maximum safe speed during ideal conditions. Higher design speeds generally mean a straighter road, which requires more earth work to construct.



### Buchanan Road – Canyon Area

- Reconstruct the roadway for a 25 mph design speed
- Reconstruct the roadway for a 30 mph design speed
- Resurface with gravel the west-side trailhead and improve the distinction between roadway and parking area.

For the first two alternatives, the proposed width was originally 26 feet (11-foot lanes and 2-foot shoulders). This has since been reduced to 24 feet (11-foot lanes and 1-foot shoulders).

### Bridge

- Build a new bridge over the North Fork Tuolumne River for a 25 mph design speed to replace the existing bridge.
- Build a new bridge over the North Fork Tuolumne River for a 30 mph design speed to replace the existing bridge.

### Fish Hatchery Road

- Rehabilitate 1.8 miles of the existing roadway from the bridge to the end of county maintenance. The current design speed of 35 mph will be maintained. Because this portion of roadway currently ranges in width from 24 to 27 feet, minimal widening would be required.

## Public Comments

Eleven written comments have been received since the public meeting. The predominant comment was to minimize private property acquisition that would result either from widening the road or from constructing new alignments. Other concerns raised included those related to potential impacts to: speeds traveled on the roadway, the park located at Buchanan Road and Carter Street, the west-side trailhead, and certain sensitive species that may be located in the project area.

Our engineers have reduced several roadway design widths as a direct result of your comments. We hope to continue in a fair manner on this project and to design a road that will meet the project's purpose and need, while causing the least amount of adverse impacts.

