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## CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.14 RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4.14.0 Introduction

This section describes the existing recreational facilities in the vicinity of the Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo) 625 and 650 Line Upgrade Project (project) and evaluates potential impacts to recreational resources that may result from construction, operation, or maintenance of the project. Recreational facilities may be disrupted or inconvenienced for a short period of time during construction of the new 625 Line and 132 Line, replacement of the 650 Line and Northstar Tap/Fold, and removal of the existing 625 and portions of the 650 Line. While impacts may result from the temporary closure of recreational facilities, these impacts will be less than significant with the incorporation of the measures outlined in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures.

#### 4.14.1 Methodology

The recreation analysis involved a review of aerial photographs of the project area and geographic information system (GIS) data from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and Placer County. The TRPA Regional Plan, Placer County General Plan, and Town of Truckee General Plan were reviewed for applicable recreation policies and plans. The Tahoe National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) were similarly reviewed for applicable plans and policies. Outdoor recreation maps of the Lake Tahoe area confirmed locations of recreation areas and facilities. Personal communication with local agency representatives and visits to the project site confirmed existing uses.

## 4.14.2 Existing Conditions

### Regulatory Background

As discussed in Section 4.9 Land Use and Planning, pursuant to Article XII, Section 8 of the California Constitution, the California Public Utilities Commission has exclusive jurisdiction, in relation to local government, to regulate the design, siting, installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of electric transmission facilities. As part of the environmental review process, SPPCo has considered relevant regional and county land use plans, policies, and issues, and has prepared this evaluation of the project's potential impacts to recreation. Attachment 4.9-A: Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.9 Land Use and Planning presents the applicable recreation-related policies and the project's consistency with those policies.

The project is, however, subject to the permitting requirements of federal and state agencies. Major portions of the project cross United States (U.S.) Forest Service (USFS) lands. These lands are located in the Tahoe National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The project is subject to the recreational policies contained in the Forest Plans for those areas. The Forest Plans offer standards, guidelines, and management practices for the management of forest ecology and recreational amenities within their jurisdiction.

Approximately 1.4 miles of the 650 Line traverse the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area (see Figure 4.14-1: Recreational Facilities Map). This recreation area is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There are no policy documents or management manuals for the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area.

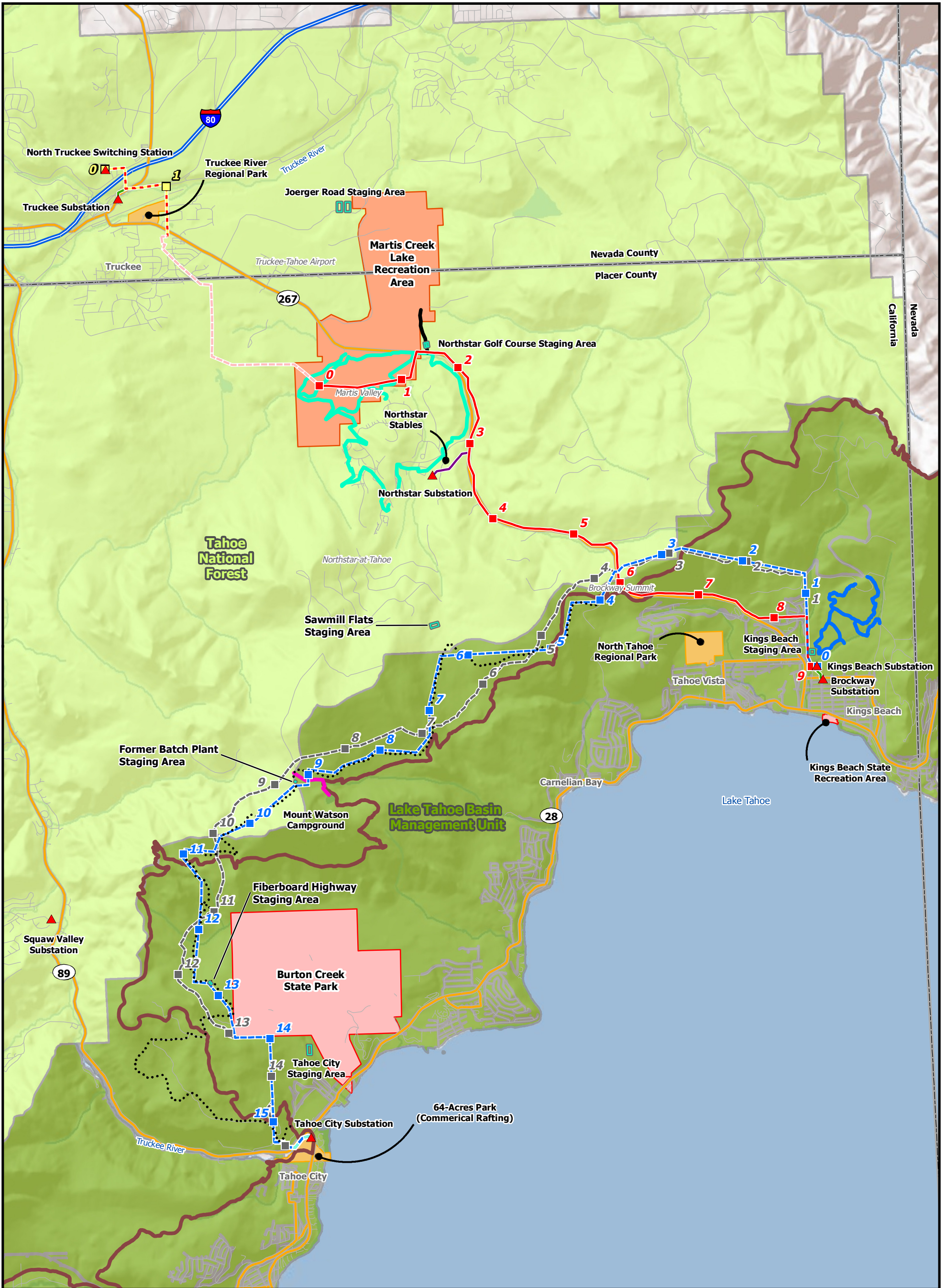
The project is also subject to recreation-related development policies of the TRPA contained in the TRPA Regional Plan and associated Plan Area Statements, as discussed further in Section 4.9 Land Use and Planning.

### Recreation Areas and Facilities

The project is generally located in the north Lake Tahoe Basin and the Town of Truckee. There are many recreational facilities located in the project area, including those located within USFS areas of the Tahoe National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Martis Lake Creek National Recreation Area, and Burton Creek State Park. There are also numerous local parks and private recreation facilities, such as ski resorts and golf courses. These facilities and their distance from the project are provided in Table 4.14-1: Recreational Areas in the Vicinity, and are further described in the following subsections.

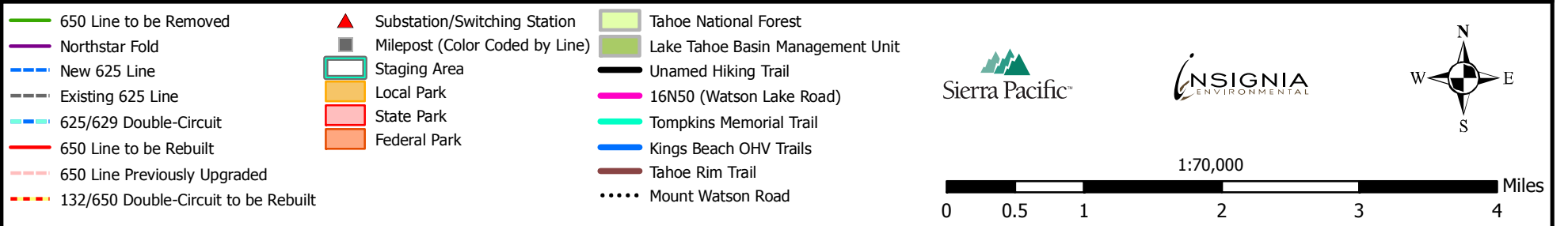
#### *Existing 625 Line*

As shown in Table 4.14-1: Recreational Areas in the Vicinity, the existing 625 Line originates at the Kings Beach Switching Station, which is surrounded by heavily forested USFS land that contains hiking and off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes. No trails or recreation facilities are crossed by the project in this area; however, the area contains a system of hiking trails/OHV routes available for recreational use by for the general public. The nearest trail is located 400 feet east of approximate milepost (MP) 0.0.



**Figure 4.14-1: Recreational Areas Map**

**625 and 650 Line Upgrade Project**





As the existing 625 Line travels southwest towards its termination point at the Tahoe City Substation, it crosses predominantly heavily forested areas of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Tahoe National Forest, which are managed by the USFS.

Several recreational trails and routes are crossed by the existing 625 Line, including the Tahoe Rim Trail, which is a 165-mile, single-track, multi-use trail encircling Lake Tahoe. The trail provides various recreational opportunities, including hiking, horseback riding, and limited mountain biking. The Tahoe Rim Trail is crossed by the existing 625 Line at three locations—approximate MP 2.9, MP 10.4, and MP 14.7. Two other USFS-managed paths are crossed by the existing 625 Line—an OHV route at approximate MP 10.9 and a hiking trail at approximate MP 11.3, which are both accessed from the Mount Watson Road (also known as the Fiberboard Highway).

Additionally, from approximate MP 13.1 to MP 13.6, the existing 625 Line runs adjacent to (but just outside of) the southwestern boundary of Burton Creek State Park, which contains more than 2,000 acres of forest and meadowland and provides recreational opportunities for cross-country skiers, mountain bicyclists, and hikers.

Near the southern terminus of the existing 625 Line, the alignment spans the Truckee River at approximate MP 15.1 and runs adjacent to the south side of the river (between 0 to 10 feet from the top of the bank) for approximately 0.2 mile. This portion of the line is also located within 64-Acres Park, which provides picnic facilities, hiking trails, and a rafting ramp for access to the Truckee River. This park is located on USFS land; however, it is operated and maintained by the Tahoe City Public Utility District. On the opposite side of the river from the existing 625 Line, there are several commercial rafting operations that run trips down the Truckee River. The rafts depart from piers that project out into the river in this area.

### ***New 625 Line***

The new 625 Line will generally follow the path of the existing 625 Line; therefore, similarly, the new 625 Line will cross through the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Tahoe National Forest. The new 625 Line will roughly parallel Mount Watson Road, which is an existing partially-paved road which is utilized for a variety of recreational activities, including snowmobiling, hiking, and cross country skiing. The road is also utilized by the USFS operation and maintenance staff and by commercial logging operations during the summer months.

The new 625 Line will cross the Tahoe Rim Trail at eight locations (at approximate MP 2.8, MP 3.9, MP 4.7, MP 5.0, MP 11.1, and MP 15.0). At approximate MP 9.1, the new 625 Line will span USFS Road 16N50, a paved roadway that provides public access to Watson Lake Campground located 0.25 mile southeast of MP 9.2. The new 625 Line will then run adjacent to the southwestern boundary of Burton Creek State Park from approximate MP 13.2 to MP 14.0.

From approximate MP 14.9 to the southern terminus at the Tahoe City Substation, the new 625 Line route will follow the same route as the existing 625 Line. The new line will span the Truckee River at approximate MP 15.5. The new line will run adjacent to the south side of the river for approximately 0.2 mile through 64-Acres Park in the same location as the existing 625 Line.

**Table 4.14-1: Recreational Areas in the Vicinity**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Approximate MP</b>	<b>Recreational Area</b>	<b>Approximate Location from the Project</b>
Existing 625 Line	0.0	Hiking/OHV Trails	400 feet east
	0.2	Old Brockway Golf Course	0.2 mile east
	2.9, 10.4, and 14.7	Tahoe Rim Trail	Crosses
	8.9	Watson Lake Campground	0.52 mile southwest
	10.9	OHV Route	Crosses
	11.3	Hiking Trail	Crosses
	13.1 to 13.6	Burton Creek State Park	Immediately adjacent to the southwest park boundary
	15.1	Truckee River	Crosses
	15.2 to 15.3	64-Acres Park	Crosses
New 625 Line	0.0	Hiking/OHV Trails	400 feet east
	0.2	Old Brockway Golf Course	0.12 mile east
	2.8, 3.9, 4.7, 5.0, and 15.0	Tahoe Rim Trail	Crosses
	9.2	Watson Lake Campground	0.25 mile southeast
	9.15	16N50 Road to Watson Lake Campground	Crosses
	13.2 to 14.0	Burton Creek State Park	Immediately adjacent to the southwest park boundary
	15.5	Truckee River	Crosses
	15.5 to 15.7	64-Acres Park	Crosses
	15.7	Private Rafting Facilities	30 feet west
650 Line	0.0 to 1.4	Martis Valley Recreation Area	Crosses
	0.7	USFS-Owned Parcel	Crosses
	0.0 and 0.9	Tompkins Memorial Trail	Crosses



Component	Approximate MP	Recreational Area	Approximate Location from the Project
650 Line (cont.)	0.7 to 1.4	Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort Golf Course	350 feet south and east
	4.6	Unnamed OHV Road	Crosses
	5.5	Martis Peak Road	Crosses
	6.4	Tahoe Rim Trail	Crosses
	7.0	North Tahoe Regional Park	0.45 mile south
	9.0	Old Brockway Golf Course	0.1 mile west
132 Line	1.2	Truckee River Legacy Trail	Crosses
	1.2 to 1.4	Truckee River Regional Park	Crosses
Northstar Fold	0.1	Northstar Stables	Crosses
Brockway Substation	Not Applicable (NA)	OHV/Hiking Trails	275 feet north
Northstar Substation	NA	Northstar Stables	200 feet east
		Northstar-at-Tahoe Ski Resort	1.4 miles west
Squaw Valley Substation	NA	Squaw Valley West Connection Trail	250 feet south
		Squaw Valley Ski Resort and Squaw Creek Golf Course	1.5 miles west
Tahoe City Substation	NA	64-Acres Park	Immediately adjacent to the south and southwest side of substation
Truckee Substation	NA	Truckee River Regional Park	0.5 mile south
North Truckee Switching Station	NA	Coyote Moon Golf Course	0.75 mile west
Kings Beach Substation	NA	OHV/ Hiking Routes	400 feet east
		Old Brockway Golf Course	0.16 mile west

### ***650 Line***

Approximately 1.4 miles of 650 Line to be rebuilt travel through the southern portion of the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area. The Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area contains a lake for swimming and boating, campgrounds, and hiking trails, though the majority of active recreational facilities are located in the northern portion of the park on the north side of State Route (SR) 267. Only one hiking/walking trail, the Tompkins Memorial Trail, exists in the southern portion of the recreation area where the alignment is located. The trail links the Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort area with the Martis Valley and is crossed by the 650 Line at approximate MP 0.0 and MP 0.9. Between approximate MP 0.7 and MP 1.4, the line is located approximately 350 feet north and west of the Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort Golf Course.

At approximate MP 1.4, the line spans SR 267 and travels east and then south before entering the Tahoe National Forest at approximate MP 2.1. The line generally travels immediately adjacent to SR 267 for approximately 4.0 miles where the line enters the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. No active recreational campgrounds or facilities are located adjacent to the alignment in this area. The line does, however, cross two dirt recreational access roads at approximate MP 4.6 (unnamed) and MP 5.5 (Martis Peak Road) and the Tahoe Rim Trail at approximate MP 6.2.

After entering the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, the 650 Line continues to follow SR 267 until approximate MP 7.8, where the line veers east and then south to its new termination point at the Kings Beach Substation. In this area, the line runs immediately adjacent to USFS forest land containing multi-purpose dirt trails used primarily for OHVs and hiking. The Old Brockway Golf Course is 0.1 mile west of the 650 Line at approximate MP 9.0.

### ***132/650 Line Double-Circuit***

The 132 Line begins at the North Truckee Switching Station in the Town of Truckee. Between approximate MP 0.0 and MP 1.1, there are no public or private recreation facilities in the area. While there are approximately 30 acres of state-owned land located 500 feet west of the line, there are no recreational facilities or designated trails in this area.

Just before approximate MP 1.2, the line spans the Truckee River and the Truckee River Legacy Trail, which is a 2-mile-long walking and biking trail along the Truckee River. Between approximate MP 1.3 and 1.4, the alignment traverses the westernmost edge of the Truckee River Regional Park, which contains ball fields, an amphitheater, a skate park, and rodeo grounds. The alignment does not span any of these active recreational facilities. Between approximate MP 1.4 and MP 1.5, the line crosses through private open space containing a drainage pond, but no recreational facilities. For the purposes of this project, the line terminates at approximate MP 1.6.

### ***Northstar Tap/Fold***

The Northstar Tap/Fold crosses through predominantly forested land located within the Tahoe National Forest; therefore, this land is available for recreational-use purposes by the public. However, the line does not cross through any designated campgrounds or recreational facilities. From approximate MP 0.1 to the western terminus of the line at the Northstar Substation, the existing Northstar Tap (which will be removed as a part of the project) spans the Northstar Stables, which is a horse stable and riding ring providing horse boarding and guided rides to the

public. The new Northstar Fold will be located approximately 35 feet south of the existing Northstar Tap.

## **Substations and Switching Stations**

### ***Brockway Substation***

The Brockway Substation (to be decommissioned) is located in a developed area of Kings Beach and is entirely surrounded by industrial and residential uses. The nearest recreational area is located approximately 275 feet north of the substation where there is forested, USFS land that contains OHV trails and hiking trails.

### ***Northstar Substation***

The Northstar Substation is located within the Tahoe National Forest. The substation is located within forested area. The nearest recreational facility is the Northstar Stables, located approximately 200 feet east of the substation. The Northstar Stables, as discussed previously, offers horse boarding and guided riding.

### ***Squaw Valley Substation***

The Squaw Valley Substation is located within the Tahoe National Forest; however, there are no recreational facilities located immediately adjacent to the substation. A portion of the Squaw Valley West Connection Trail is located approximately 250 feet south of the substation, across Squaw Valley Road. The nearest private recreational facilities are the Squaw Creek Golf Course and the Squaw Valley Ski Resort, both located approximately 1.5 miles west of the substation.

### ***Tahoe City Substation***

The Tahoe City Substation is located adjacent to several recreational facilities. Immediately adjacent to the south and southwest is the 64-Acres Park with associated day use picnic facilities, restrooms, hiking trails, and Truckee River recreational access points. The Truckee River is located to the north and northwest of the substation. In addition, several commercial outfitters launch rafting trips down the Truckee River approximately 200 feet northwest of the substation.

### ***Truckee Substation***

The Truckee Substation is located in a developed area in the Town of Truckee. The site is surrounded by industrial and commercial uses. There are no adjacent recreational facilities. The nearest recreation facility is the Truckee River Regional Park located approximately 0.5 mile south of the substation.

### ***North Truckee Switching Station***

The North Truckee Switching Station is located in an industrial area in the Town of Truckee. There are no recreational facilities adjacent to the site. The nearest recreational facility to the site is the Coyote Moon Golf Course located approximately 0.75 mile to the west. While there are approximately 30 acres of state-owned land approximately 500 feet from the station, there are no official recreational trails or facilities located there.

### ***Kings Beach Substation***

The Kings Beach Substation (currently a switching station) is located in a forested area immediately north and east of residentially and industrially developed areas of Kings Beach. USFS land, considered a part of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, is located to the north and east of the switching station. Within this adjacent USFS land, there are hiking and OHV trails. The Old Brockway Golf Course (a private facility) is located approximately 0.16 mile west of the substation.

### **Staging Areas**

#### ***Joerger Road***

The Joerger Road Staging Area will be located off of an existing dead-end paved road and will be accessed using Joerger Road. This approximately 600-foot by 600-foot staging area will be used as a material staging area and a helicopter landing, storage, and refueling area. The site is located within the Town of Truckee, north of the Truckee-Tahoe Airport. There are no recreational facilities located on, or adjacent to, the site. The Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area is the nearest recreational area and is located approximately 0.5 mile east of staging area.

#### ***Northstar Golf Course***

The Northstar Golf Course Staging Area is located just north of SR 267 and the Northstar Golf Course. This approximately 300-foot by 300-foot staging area will be used to store materials and stage equipment. The site is located within an unincorporated portion of Placer County. The site is accessed by a dirt road that is utilized by hikers and walkers but kept gated to prohibit automobile traffic.

#### ***Kings Beach***

The Kings Beach Staging Area is located just north of the Kings Beach Substation and is accessed using an existing dirt access road located at the end of Canterbury Drive. This location was formerly used as a landfill and as a result, has a previously disturbed area that measures approximately 300 feet by 300 feet. The site is located on USFS-managed lands. There are no active recreational uses or facilities within, or adjacent to, the staging area; however, a multi-purpose dirt path used for hiking, OHV use, and mountain biking is located approximately 200 feet east of the site.

#### ***Sawmill Flats***

The Sawmill Flats Staging Area is located approximately 0.4 mile north of the new 625 Line near approximate MP 6.2 and is accessed via an existing dirt access road from Mount Watson Road. This approximately 500-foot by 260-foot area is previously disturbed and denuded. The staging area is not located on lands currently utilized for active recreational uses. However, there are trails located approximately 200 feet north and south of the staging area that are utilized for hiking, mountain biking, and OHV use.

***Former Batch Plant***

The Former Batch Plant Staging Area is located approximately 300 feet north of the new 625 Line near approximate MP 9.3 and is accessed from Mount Watson Road. This approximately 120-foot by 80-foot area is previously disturbed and has little natural vegetation directly within the staging area. The staging area is located on USFS-managed land and is immediately adjacent to the east of Mount Watson Road, which is used for hiking, mountain biking, and OHVs. However, there are no active recreational uses located at the staging area.

***Fiberboard Highway***

The Fiberboard Highway Staging Area is located approximately 200 feet east of the new 625 Line near approximate MP 12.8 and is accessed from Mount Watson Road. This approximately 200-foot by 100-foot area is previously disturbed, but has some vegetative cover. The staging area is located on USFS-managed land and is immediately west of Mount Watson Road. Burton Creek State Park is located approximately 0.15 mile to the east. No active recreational uses currently exist within the staging area, though the adjacent Mount Watson Road is used for hiking, mountain biking, and for OHVs.

***Tahoe City***

The Tahoe City Staging Area will be located on an undeveloped, but previously disturbed parcel approximately 1 mile north of the Tahoe City Substation. The site is accessed by an existing unpaved road that connects to Jackpine Street in Tahoe City. The nearest recreational facility is the Burton Creek State Park located immediately adjacent to the east and approximately 0.15 mile north and east of the staging area. The nearest trail is within the park and is located approximately 0.2 mile to the north of the staging area.

**4.14.3 Impacts****Significance Criteria**

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. Impacts to recreation will be considered significant if the project:

- Increases the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities to the extent that substantial physical deterioration of the facility will occur or be accelerated
- Requires the construction or expansion of recreational facilities to meet population demand, potentially resulting in an adverse physical effect on the environment
- Restricts access or causes a closure of recreational facilities for an extended duration of time with limited access to alternative facilities in the area

**Question 4.14a – Recreational Facilities Use – *No Impact***

The majority of workers will commute to the project area from neighboring communities or stay at local lodging establishments during construction. Permanent relocation of workers will not occur due to the short-term nature of project construction. It is anticipated that there will be up to

63 construction workers commuting to the area for the approximately 14 months within the 3-year construction period. Because the local population will not increase, there will be no additional demand placed on existing recreation facilities that would cause a physical deterioration of those facilities. Thus, no impact is anticipated.

Project operation and maintenance activities will not create a need for additional housing or the need for long-term population immigration sufficient to result in a permanent increase in park use. No new employees will be hired to operate or maintain the project. All facilities will be operated and maintained by existing SPPCo personnel. Therefore, there will be no impact.

#### **Question 4.14b – Recreational Facilities Changes**

##### ***Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact***

As discussed in the response to Question 4.14a and in Section 4.12 Population and Housing, the local population will not increase as a result of the project on a temporary or a permanent basis. Therefore, there will be no additional demand for the expansion of recreational facilities in the north Lake Tahoe area and no impact will occur.

Recreationists may be exposed to increased noise, dust, and odors during construction. These impacts are further described in Section 4.3 Air Quality and Section 4.11 Noise. Specific recreation impacts are described in the following subsections by project component.

##### *Existing and New 625 Line*

The removal of the existing 625 Line and construction of the new 625 Line will occur at the in generally the same area in the north Lake Tahoe Basin. The existing and new 625 lines either share the same alignment, or run within 1,000 feet of each other through the same existing land uses, recreational areas, and types of terrain. Therefore, impacts potentially occurring as a result of the existing 625 Line and new 625 Line are discussed together.

The existing and new 625 lines are located adjacent to several USFS recreational trails and facilities, as shown in Table 4.14-1: Recreational Areas in the Vicinity. Potential impacts to these trails and campgrounds will result from temporary closures (anywhere between one day and two weeks) as a result of tree clearing, grading, pole installation, and pulling of conductor. Various trails in the north Lake Tahoe area are also accessible to equestrians, in particular the Tahoe Rim Trail. Horses are sensitive to helicopter noise and vibration and, as a result, equestrian use may be limited on trails crossed by the alignment due to potential safety issues. The final 0.2 mile of the alignment parallels the bank of the Truckee River. The proposed construction schedule coincides with the peak rafting season (June to September). Because a temporary closure of the river to recreationists will be required when the conductor is pulled across, rafting tour operators and recreational users could be affected. Access to the raft launching points into the Truckee River from the 64-Acres Park may also be impacted temporarily; however, there are alternate raft launching points located southwest of the alignment.

Because of the popularity of the trails in the north Lake Tahoe area, especially the Tahoe Rim Trail, trail and campground closures lasting more than one day could be potentially significant when viewed individually. However, due to the numerous alternate camping and hiking

opportunities in the project area and region as a whole, temporary trail closures will be less than significant. SPPCo will implement applicant-proposed measure (APM)-REC-01, APM-REC-02, and APM-REC-03, as outlined in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures to further reduce impacts to recreational users. These measures include keeping the public informed of closures and ensuring that alternative recreational facility locations in the area are provided. Where helicopters are proposed for use, APM-REC-04 requires that signage advising equestrians of construction timeframes with helicopter use be posted at all equestrian trail-access points within the vicinity of the flight paths. Potential impacts to rafting outfitters will also be minimized by scheduling conductor pulling across the Truckee River during off-peak months (April, October, or November) as outlined in APM-REC-05, in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures.

### *650 Line*

Construction of the 650 Line involves rebuilding the existing line generally along the same alignment. In most locations, the new steel poles will be located within 10 feet of the existing wood poles. However, some poles may be situated further than 10 feet from the existing poles in order to maximize the efficiency of pole placement, and to avoid sensitive resources or geological impediments to construction. The 650 Line runs through portions of the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area, Tahoe National Forest, and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. While no active recreational facilities, such as campgrounds, picnic facilities, or publicly accessible bodies of water, are located along the alignment, the 650 Line crosses the Tompkins Memorial Trail in two places in the Martis Valley National Recreation Area (at approximate MP 0.0 and MP 0.9). The line also crosses an unnamed recreational dirt access road/trail at approximate MP 4.6, Martis Peak Road at approximate MP 5.5, and the Tahoe Rim Trail at approximate MP 6.4. No private recreational facilities will be impacted by construction because none are crossed or immediately adjacent to the alignment.

Because the 650 Line crosses the Tompkins Memorial Trail, an unnamed dirt road/trail, and the Tahoe Rim Trail, access may be limited or trails may be closed for a short period of time during construction. Closures will be expected to last anywhere between one day and two weeks. Because of the popularity of trails in the north Lake Tahoe area, especially the Tahoe Rim Trail, trail closures could be considered a potentially significant impact when viewed individually. However, as discussed previously, due to the abundance of alternate camping and hiking opportunities in the project area, and region as a whole, temporary trail closures will be less than significant. To further reduce impacts, SPPCo will implement APM-REC-01, APM-REC-02, and APM-REC-03, as outlined in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures, which include public noticing of upcoming construction schedules and installing signage at trail-access points. As a result, the impact will be less than significant.

### *132/650 Line Double-Circuit*

On the 132 Line, approximately 32 poles will be replaced and the line will be reconfigured to allow a double-circuit configuration with the 650 Line and operation at 120 kilovolts. The new, steel poles will be located within the existing 40-foot-wide easement. The line passes through the Truckee River Regional Park for approximately 0.2 mile then through private open space for approximately 0.1 mile. There are no active recreational facilities in the path of the alignment in these areas and construction will not impact access to existing recreational facilities.

The project passes over the Truckee River Legacy Trail at approximate MP 1.2. During construction, this 4-mile-long multi-purpose trail will need to be closed for short periods of time. However, there are alternate biking and walking routes available in this area. In addition, SPPCo will implement APM-REC-03, contained in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures, including public noticing of upcoming construction schedules and installing signage at trail-access points. As a result, the impact will be less than significant.

#### *Northstar Tap/Fold*

Activities associated with the removal of the Northstar Tap and construction of the Northstar Fold will affect the Northstar Stables. The existing Northstar Tap spans the stable facility, and construction activities involving the new Northstar Fold will occur approximately 35 feet south of the existing tap. SPPCo estimates that work near the stables will last approximately two weeks. While the use of helicopters is not proposed along the Northstar Tap/Fold, noise from construction vehicles and equipment has the potential to disturb the horses at this facility. As a result, the facility will need to be closed for the duration of construction in this area and the horses may need to be temporarily relocated. To minimize any potential impact, SPPCo will implement APM-REC-06, as described in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures. The measure requires SPPCo to provide adequate financial compensation for any lost revenue during construction near the Northstar Stables. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

#### *Substations and Switching Stations*

All substation work will occur within SPPCo-owned substation parcels or on adjacent, previously disturbed parcels (as with the Tahoe City Substation where generators will be temporarily placed on an adjacent parcel during construction). Due to the lack of recreational opportunities within and adjacent to the substations and switching stations, there will be no impact.

#### *Staging Areas*

Five of the staging areas—the Northstar Golf Course Staging Area, the Kings Beach Staging Area, the Sawmill Flats Staging Area, the Former Batch Plant Staging Area, and the Fiberboard Highway Staging Area—are located in areas that contain active recreational amenities. The Northstar Golf Course Staging Area is located approximately 0.1 mile east of the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area along a dirt access road that is inaccessible to public vehicles and gated near the intersection with SR 267. While hikers and walkers that use the road may be impacted on a short-term basis during construction, there are a variety of other trails in the vicinity for walkers to utilize.

One hiking trail is located approximately 200 feet east of the Kings Beach Staging Area. However, the project will neither result in the closure of the trail, nor in the closure of any access point to the trail. In addition, SPPCo will implement APM-REC-03, which includes public noticing of upcoming construction schedules and installing signage at trail-access points. As a result, the impact will be less than significant.

The Sawmill Flats Staging Area, the Former Batch Plant Staging Area, and the Fiberboard Highway Staging Area are all located on USFS lands within the Tahoe National Forest or the



Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The three staging areas are accessed by Mount Watson Road, which is a partially-paved road also used by recreational hikers, mountain bikers, and OHV users. In addition, there are various hiking trails located near the staging areas. Access to the Mount Watson Road and hiking trails in the area may be limited or closed for a short period of time during construction. As discussed previously, closures would be short-term and would be expected to last anywhere between 1 day and 2 weeks. Trail closures could be considered a potentially significant impact. However, there are abundant hiking trails in the project area and in the greater north Lake Tahoe region. In addition, with the implementation of APM-REC-03, as contained in Section 4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures, the impact will be less than significant.

### ***Operation and Maintenance – Less-than-Significant Impact***

While operation and maintenance of the proposed transmission lines will not change significantly from those activities already occurring along the existing lines, maintenance of the new 625 Line could potentially restrict recreational activities and access on USFS-managed land, particularly along Mount Watson Road. Maintenance activities include tree trimming, component replacement and repair, and hazardous tree removal. Equipment and work areas for this type of activity could temporarily limit trail use or access in limited areas. However, inspections only occur annually, and maintenance activities typically last for no more than a few days. In addition, there are many other recreational trails and facilities that could be utilized in the event of unlikely temporary trail closure for maintenance work. As a result, the impact will be less than significant.

Operation and maintenance of substations will not change from those activities already occurring at the facilities. The substations are unmanned and operation and maintenance activities do not currently impact recreation facilities; therefore, future operation and maintenance activities will have no impact.

#### **4.14.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures**

The following applicant APMs will be implemented to further reduce impacts associated with construction:

- APM-REC-01: A public-liaison will be assigned by SPPCo to provide the public with advance notification of construction activities at least 15 days prior to the start of construction activities. A project website will be developed for the public to ask questions about the construction process and schedule. Concerns related to dust, noise, odor, trail closures, and access restrictions associated with construction activities will be addressed within this program.
- APM-REC-02: SPPCo will provide the USFS with advance notice of all construction activities within its jurisdiction and affecting recreation areas and trail systems, including temporary trail closures, within the forest. Notification to USFS officials will be provided at least 30 days before construction begins in these areas.
- APM-REC-03: Signs advising recreationists of construction activities and directing them to alternative trails or bikeways will be posted at all trail access points or in locations as

determined through coordination with the respective jurisdictional agencies. Signage describing the closures shall be posted at trail access points one week prior to closures and shall remain posted during the entire closure period.

- APM-REC-04: Where helicopters will be used for construction, signage advising equestrians of the schedule for helicopter use will be posted at all equestrian trail-access points within the vicinity of the flight paths one week prior to helicopter activity. These signs will be checked and maintained daily until helicopter operation in the area ceases.
- APM-REC-05: Pulling of conductor over the Truckee River will occur during the months of April, October, or November to minimize impacts to rafting operations.
- APM-REC-06: SPPCo will coordinate the closure of the Northstar Stables with the facility's manager in advance of construction activities involving the Northstar Tap/Fold. SPPCo will provide adequate financial compensation for the temporary relocation of the horses during construction, should it be necessary, and for any lost revenue as a result of the closure.

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