



City of Portola

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January 9, 2025

Robert Larsen
Public Assistance Officer
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA

Re: Critical Emergency Services Infrastructure- FEMA Project #743764, DR-4699-CA

Mr. Larsen,

Critical Infrastructure

The Gulling Street Bridge (Bridge # 09C0130) is a critical infrastructure asset for the City of Portola that historically has been inspected on a five-year interval through Caltrans Underwater Dive Inspections. This bridge is a matter of urgent public safety, addressing an imminent threat to life and property for the City. The bridge is the sole viable access route connecting the northern and southern regions of the City, serving as a lifeline to essential emergency services, including Eastern Plumas Health Care Hospital, the Fire Station, the Plumas County Sheriff's Office, Portola High School, City Hall, and the core business district. The Eastern Plumas Health Care Hospital services the City of Portola as well as all eastern Plumas County and parts of eastern Sierra County, including the city of Loyalton. Any closure or failure of the bridge would cut off access to these critical facilities, jeopardizing the health, safety, and well-being of the community.

Moreover, in the event of a wildfire—such as the one experienced last summer—residents on the southern side of the City would lose all viable evacuation routes if the bridge were to fail or be closed. The city had to evacuate roughly 931 residents utilizing the bridge as the only emergency egress during the most recent Gold Complex wildfire in 2024 due to County Road A-15 being closed.

In addition to the above, our area has experienced multiple seismic events over the past year, further increasing the risk of failure for this critical piece of infrastructure. Given the propensity for seismic activity in our area, we are extremely concerned about the inevitability of future events and their impact on the bridge.

The Gulling Street Bridge's compromised condition, as noted in the Caltrans BIRIS Report from 12/06/2023 (Substructure as "2 CRITICAL"), poses an unacceptable risk to the City of Portola, Eastern Plumas County, Sierra County, and the City of Loyalton emergency response capabilities and the safety of its residents, making this project a top priority.

Disaster Declarations and City Proclamation

The State of California issued the *California Server Winter Storms, Straight-line Winds, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides Disaster Declaration (DR-4699-CA)* on 04/03/2023 for incident period 02/21/2023 through 07/10/2023. The City of Portola issued a Proclamation proclaiming existence of a local emergency on 03/08/2023.

DR-4699-CA Influence on Bridge Condition

We believe, and have evidence supporting our belief, that the severe winter storms reported by the DR-4699-CA disaster declaration resulted in the current undermined condition of the bridge. The severely undermined condition was first documented in the 9/26/2023 Underwater Dive Inspection (UWI) Report, which occurred after the disaster.

Event Timeline

- 09/06/2018 UWI Report: Documented spread footing exposure at both Piers 3 and 4. **No undermining was documented at that time.**
- Caltrans Bridge Inspection Reports (BIRIS) from September 7, 2022, rate the **Substructure as “5 FAIR”**:


Department of Transportation - Division of Maintenance

Structure Maintenance & Investigations



BRIDGE INSPECTION REPORT

Routine Inspection



BRIDGE NO.:
09C0130

STRUCTURE NAME:
MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER

INSPECTION DATE:
September 7, 2022

BRIDGE LOCATION INFORMATION

(9) LOCATION	0.2 MI S SH 70	(7) FACILITY CARRIED	GULLING STREET
(11) POSTMILE	0	(6) FEATURE INTERSECTED	MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIV
(16) LATITUDE	39°48'31.86"	(5) INVENTORY RTE(ON/UNDER)	ON 150000000
(17) LONGITUDE	120°28'06.11"	(104) ON NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM	NOT ON NHS

STRUCTURAL HEALTH CONDITION SUMMARY INFORMATION


(58) DECK	7 GOOD	DECK AREA (M) ²	890
(59) SUPERSTRUCTURE	7 GOOD	SUFFICIENCY RATING	57.0
(60) SUBSTRUCTURE	5 FAIR	PAINT CONDITION	N/A
(62) CULVERT	N N/A (NBI)	STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT (SD) STATUS	NOT SD
(67) STRUCTURE EVALUATION	5 ABOVE MIN TOLERABLE	(113) SCOUR	3 SC - UNSTABLE

- 09/26/2023 UWI Report: Documented spread footing exposure at both Piers 3 and 4 **with undermining at Pier 3** on the south side of the footing.

Department of Transportation - Division of Maintenance	Structure Maintenance & Investigations
CONDITION INFORMATION	
INSPECTION COMMENTARY	
SCOPE AND ACCESS	
This inspection was performed by the Hydraulics Branch for a scour assessment in response to the Underwater Inspection dated 9-26-2023 in which undermining of the Pier 3 spread footing was documented.	

- Caltrans Bridge Inspection Reports (BIRIS) from December 6, 2023, rate the **Substructure as “2 CRITICAL”**:

Department of Transportation - Division of Maintenance
Structure Maintenance & Investigations



BRIDGE INSPECTION REPORT

Hydraulic Inspection

BRIDGE NO.:
09C0130
STRUCTURE NAME:
MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER

INSPECTION DATE:
December 6, 2023

BRIDGE LOCATION INFORMATION

(9) LOCATION	0.2 MI S SH 70	(7) FACILITY CARRIED	GULLING STREET
(11) POSTMILE	0	(6) FEATURE INTERSECTED	MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIV
(16) LATITUDE	39°48'31.86"	(5) INVENTORY RTE(ON/UNDER)	ON 150000000
(17) LONGITUDE	120°28'06.11"	(104) ON NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM	NOT ON NHS

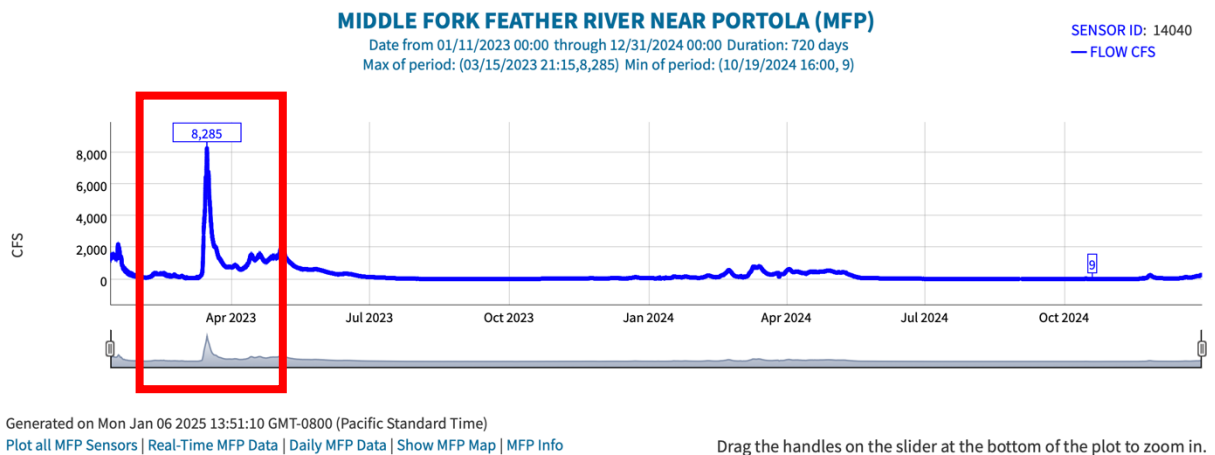
STRUCTURAL HEALTH CONDITION SUMMARY INFORMATION

(58) DECK	7 GOOD	DECK AREA (M) ²	890
(59) SUPERSTRUCTURE	7 GOOD	SUFFICIENCY RATING	9.0
(60) SUBSTRUCTURE	2 CRITICAL	PAINT CONDITION	N/A
(62) CULVERT	N N/A (NBI)	STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT (SD) STATUS	SD
(67) STRUCTURE EVALUATION	2 INTOLERABLE - REPLACE	(113) SCOUR	2 SC - EXTENSIVE SCOUR

Flow Rates

As an additional point of analysis and evidence to the impact of the DR-4699-CA disaster on the bridge, the City has reviewed the MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER NEAR PORTOLA (MFP) historical flow data provided by the California Department of Water Resources. The flow data referenced below indicates a **peak flow of 8,285 CFS during March of 2023**, which aligns with the incident period from DR-4699-CA. We have also provided historical data back to 2018 illustrating normal flows for the river.

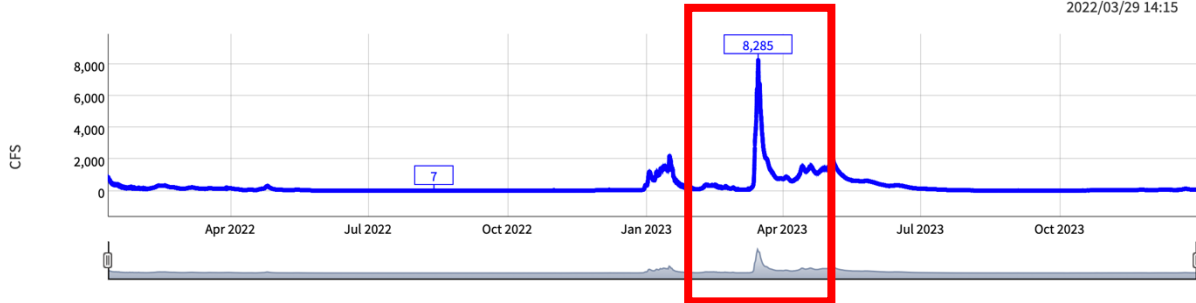
March 2023 Peak Flow



MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER NEAR PORTOLA (MFP)

Date from 01/10/2022 00:00 through 12/31/2023 00:00 Duration: 720 days
Max of period: (03/15/2023 21:15,8,285) Min of period: (08/13/2022 15:30, 7)

SENSOR ID: 14040
— FLOW CFS: 170
DATETIME:
2022/03/29 14:15



Generated on Mon Jan 06 2025 13:51:41 GMT-0800 (Pacific Standard Time)

[Plot all MFP Sensors](#) | [Real-Time MFP Data](#) | [Daily MFP Data](#) | [Show MFP Map](#) | [MFP Info](#)

Drag the handles on the slider at the bottom of the plot to zoom in.

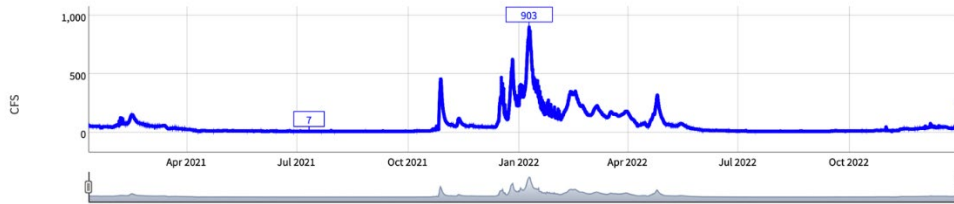
Plot from ending date: 12/31/2023 Span: 720 days

Historical Flow

MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER NEAR PORTOLA (MFP)

Date from 01/10/2021 00:00 through 12/31/2022 00:00 Duration: 720 days
Max of period: (01/09/2022 12:45,903) Min of period: (07/11/2021 15:00, 7)

SENSOR ID: 14040
— FLOW CFS



Generated on Mon Jan 06 2025 13:52:12 GMT-0800 (Pacific Standard Time)

[Plot all MFP Sensors](#) | [Real-Time MFP Data](#) | [Daily MFP Data](#) | [Show MFP Map](#) | [MFP Info](#)

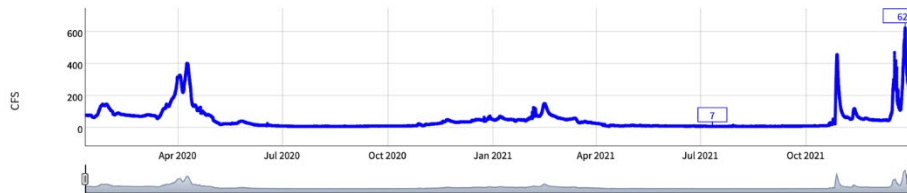
Drag the handles on the slider at the bottom of the plot to zoom in.

Plot from ending date: 12/31/2022 Span: 720 days

MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIVER NEAR PORTOLA (MFP)

Date from 01/11/2020 00:00 through 12/31/2021 00:00 Duration: 720 days
Max of period: (12/26/2021 19:15,625) Min of period: (07/11/2021 15:00, 7)

SENSOR ID: 14040
— FLOW CFS

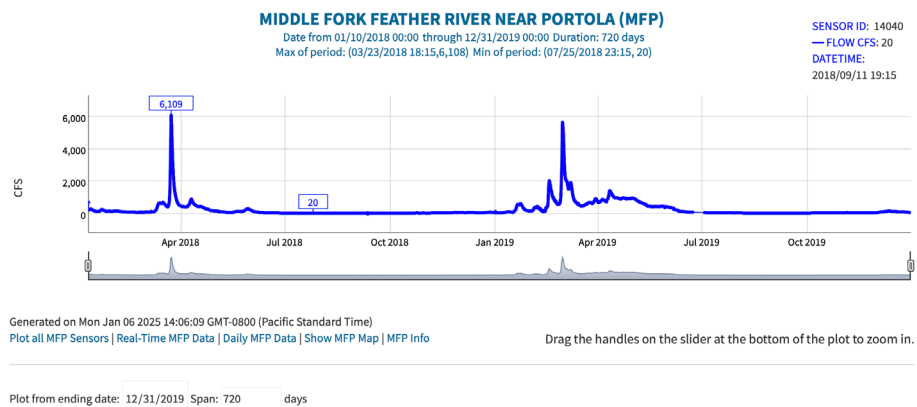
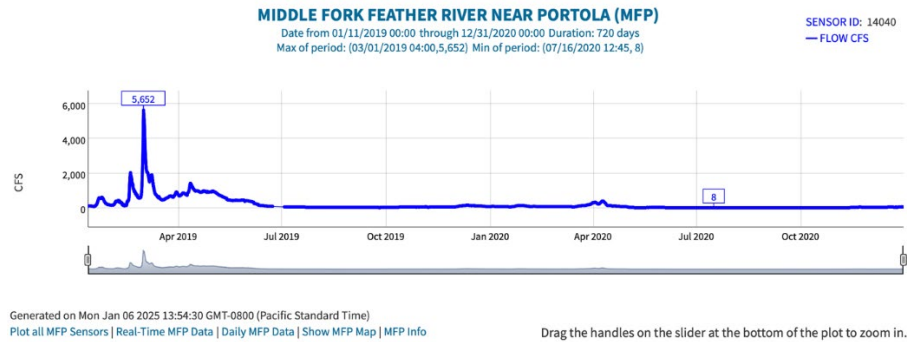


Generated on Mon Jan 06 2025 13:52:41 GMT-0800 (Pacific Standard Time)

[Plot all MFP Sensors](#) | [Real-Time MFP Data](#) | [Daily MFP Data](#) | [Show MFP Map](#) | [MFP Info](#)

Drag the handles on the slider at the bottom of the plot to zoom in.

Plot from ending date: 12/31/2021 Span: 720 days



While there have historically been instances of increased flow during the spring season, **none of the flow increases from 2018 to 2024 compare to the significant spike experienced in March 2023, which was caused by the winter storm disaster.**

In addition, the UWI report from 2018 **showed no evidence of undermining even with a larger flow** whereas the UWI in 2023 documented the first instance of this undermining after the severe winter storms disaster of 2023.

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INSPECTION COMMENTARY

performed on the steel beams with pin and hanger assemblies in Spans 1 and 5. No fractures or cracks were found. The pins in Span 1, Hinge 1, Girders 4 and 5 were tested ultrasonically. No indications of defects were found.

An underwater inspection was done on 09/06/2018 for both Piers 3 and 4. The inspection of all other elements within the waterway is the responsibility of the ABME. This structure was accessed from the bank and inspected using the wade dive mode.

STRUCTURE INVENTORY AND APPRAISAL REPORT

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***** IDENTIFICATION *****
(1) STATE NAME- CALIFORNIA 069
(8) STRUCTURE NUMBER 09C0130
(5) INVENTORY ROUTE (ON/UNDER)- ON 150000000
(2) HIGHWAY AGENCY DISTRICT 02
(3) COUNTY CODE 063 (4) PLACE CODE 58352
(6) FEATURE INTERSECTED- MIDDLE FORK FEATHER RIV
(7) FACILITY CARRIED- GULLING STREET
(9) LOCATION- 0.2 MI S SH 70
(11) MILEPOINT/KILOMETERPOINT 0
(12) BASE HIGHWAY NETWORK- NOT ON NET 0
(13) LRS INVENTORY ROUTE & SUBROUTE 0
(16) LATITUDE 39 DEG 48 MIN 31.86 SEC
(17) LONGITUDE 120 DEG 28 MIN 06.11 SEC
(98) BORDER BRIDGE STATE CODE % SHARE %
(99) BORDER BRIDGE STRUCTURE NUMBER

***** STRUCTURE TYPE AND MATERIAL *****
(43) STRUCTURE TYPE MAIN:MATERIAL- STEEL CONT
TYPE- STRINGER/MULTI-BEAM OR GDE CODE 402
(44) STRUCTURE TYPE APPR:MATERIAL- OTHER/NA
TYPE- OTHER/NA CODE 000
(45) NUMBER OF SPANS IN MAIN UNIT 5
(46) NUMBER OF APPROACH SPANS 0
(107) DECK STRUCTURE TYPE- CIP CONCRETE CODE 1
(108) WEARING SURFACE / PROTECTIVE SYSTEM:
A) TYPE OF WEARING SURFACE- NONE CODE 0
B) TYPE OF WEAREAMS- NONE CODE 0
C) TYPE OF DECK PROTECTION- NONE CODE 0
***** AGE AND SERVICE *****
(27) YEAR BUILT 1954
(106) YEAR RECONSTRUCTED 0000
(42) TYPE OF SERVICE: ON- HIGHWAY-PEDESTRIAN 5
UNDER- WATERWAY 5
(28) LAMES:ON STRUCTURE 02 UNDER STRUCTURE 00
(29) AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC 10046
(30) YEAR OF ADT 2017 (109) TRUCK ADT 8 %
(19) BYPASS, DETOUR LENGTH 31 KM
***** GEOMETRIC DATA *****
(48) LENGTH OF MAXIMUM SPAN 15.2 M
(49) STRUCTURE LENGTH 76.8 M
(50) CURB OR SIDEWALK: LEFT 1.8 M RIGHT 0.0 M
(51) BRIDGE ROADWAY WIDTH CURB TO CURB 9.1 M
(52) DECK WIDTH OUT TO OUT 11.6 M
(32) APPROACH ROADWAY WIDTH (M/SHOULDERS) 8.5 M
(33) BRIDGE MEDIAN- NO MEDIAN 0
(34) SKEW 0 DEG (35) STRUCTURE FLARED NO
(10) INVENTORY ROUTE MIN VERT CLEAR 99.99 M
(47) INVENTORY ROUTE TOTAL HORIZ CLEAR 9.1 M
(53) MIN VERT CLEAR OVER BRIDGE RDWY 99.99 M
(54) MIN VERT UNDERCLEAR REP- NOT N/RR 0.00 M
(55) MIN LAT UNDERCLEAR RT REP- NOT N/RR 0.0 M
(56) MIN LAT UNDERCLEAR LT 0.0 M
***** NAVIGATION DATA *****
(38) NAVIGATION CONTROL- NO CONTROL CODE 0
(111) PIER PROTECTION- CODE
(39) NAVIGATION VERTICAL CLEARANCE 0.0 M
(116) VERT-LIFT BRIDGE NAV MIN VERT CLEAR M
(40) NAVIGATION HORIZONTAL CLEARANCE 0.0 M

***** SUFFICIENCY RATING *****
SUFFICIENCY RATING = 57.0
STATUS
HEALTH INDEX 95.5
PAINT CONDITION INDEX = N/A
***** CLASSIFICATION *****
(112) NB1S BRIDGE LENGTH- YES Y
(104) HIGHWAY SYSTEM- NOT ON NHS 0
(26) FUNCTIONAL CLASS- MINOR COLLECTOR RURAL 08
(100) DEFENSE HIGHWAY- NOT STRAIGHT 0
(301) PARALLEL STRUCTURE- NONE EXISTS N
(102) DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC- 2 WAY 2
(103) TEMPORARY STRUCTURE-
(105) FED. LANDS HWY- NOT APPLICABLE 0
(110) DESIGNATED NATIONAL NETWORK - NOT ON NET 0
(20) TOLL- ON FREE ROAD 3
(21) MAINTAIN- CITY OR MUNICIPAL HIGHWAY AGENCY 04
(22) OWNER- CITY OR MUNICIPAL HIGHWAY AGENCY 04
(37) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE- NOT ELIGIBLE 5
***** CONDITION *****
(58) DECK 7
(59) SUPERSTRUCTURE 7
(60) SUBSTRUCTURE 5
(61) CHANNEL & CHANNEL PROTECTION 6
(62) CULVERTS N
***** LOAD RATING AND POSTING *****
(31) DESIGN LOAD- MS-18 OR HS-20 5
(63) OPERATING RATING METHOD- LOAD FACTOR 1
(64) OPERATING RATING- 59.9
(65) INVENTORY RATING METHOD- LOAD FACTOR 1
(66) INVENTORY RATING- 36.0
(70) BRIDGE POSTING- EQUAL TO OR ABOVE LEGAL LOADS 5
(41) STRUCTURE OPEN, POSTED OR CLOSED- A
DESCRIPTION- OPEN, NO RESTRICTION
***** APPRAISAL *****
(67) STRUCTURAL EVALUATION 5
(68) DECK GEOMETRY 4
(69) UNDERCLEARANCES, VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL N
(71) WATER ADEQUACY 8
(72) APPROACH ROADWAY ALIGNMENT 8
(36) TRAFFIC SAFETY FEATURES 1111
(113) SCOUR CRITICAL BRIDGES 3
***** PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS *****
(75) TYPE OF WORK- CODE
(76) LENGTH OF STRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT M
(94) BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT COST
(95) ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT COST
(96) TOTAL PROJECT COST
(97) YEAR OF IMPROVEMENT COST ESTIMATE
(114) FUTURE ADT 9430
(115) YEAR OF FUTURE ADT 2037
***** INSPECTIONS *****
(90) INSPECTION DATE 09/18 (91) FREQUENCY 24 MO
(92) CRITICAL FEATURE INSPECTION: (93) CFI DATE
A) FRACTURE CRIT DETAIL- NO MO A)
B) UNDERWATER INSP- YES 60 MO B) 09/18
C) OTHER SPECIAL INSP- NO 48 MO C) 06/17

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Printed on: Thursday 12/13/2018 06:40 AM

09C0130/AAAN/46935

Request and Next Steps

Given the life-safety criticality of this infrastructure to our community, the City of Portola respectfully requests that FEMA expedite the review of our active application under project #743764.

We stand ready to promptly provide any additional information or documentation needed to support and complete this request.

Sincerely,

Ryan N. Bonk

Ryan N. Bonk
City Manager