



Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study

Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration, California

Location: Hamilton City and vicinity, Glenn County, California (CA Congressional District 2)

Purpose: Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration

Phase: Feasibility Study

Background: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and The Reclamation Board of the State of California are conducting a feasibility study to develop and evaluate potential alternative plans to reduce flood damages and restore the ecosystem along the Sacramento River near Hamilton City. The goal of the study is to identify a cost effective, technically feasible, and locally acceptable project that best meets the dual objectives of reducing flood damages and restoring the ecosystem and is in compliance with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. The study will culminate in completion of an integrated feasibility report and environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (EIS/EIR) documenting the study findings. The report will be submitted to Congress in 2004 for consideration for Federal authorization to implement the project. The costs to conduct the study and implement a project will be shared between Federal, State, and local interests. State and/or local interests would be responsible for operation and maintenance of a project if implemented.

Study Area Description: Hamilton City is located in Glenn County, California, along the right bank of the Sacramento River, about 85 miles north of the City of Sacramento. The study area includes Hamilton City and the surrounding rural area (see attached map). The study area is bounded by the Sacramento River to the east and the Glenn Colusa Canal to the west and extends about two miles north and six miles south of Hamilton City. Hamilton City has a population of about 1,800 people. Surrounding land use is primarily agricultural with fruit and nut orchards being the primary crops.

An existing private levee, constructed by landowners in about 1904 and known as the “J” levee, provides some flood protection to the town and surrounding area. The “J” levee, however, is not constructed to any formal engineering standards and is largely made of silty sand soil. It is extremely susceptible to erosion and flood fighting is necessary to prevent flooding when river levels rise. Since the construction of Shasta Dam in 1945, which significantly reduced the frequency of high flows in the Sacramento River near Hamilton City, flooding due to failure of the “J” levee has occurred twice (1970 and 1974). In addition, extensive flood fighting has been necessary to avoid flooding in 1983, 1986, 1995, 1997, and 1998. Currently, the Sacramento River is actively eroding into the toe of the levee at the northern end of the study area.

Native habitat and natural river function in the study area have been altered by construction of the “J” levee and conversion of the floodplain to agriculture and rural development. Construction of the “J” levee and hardening of the river bank and levee in several locations through the years (typically with rock) have constrained the ability of the river to meander and overflow its banks and promote propagation and succession of native vegetation. Conversion of the floodplain to agriculture and rural development has reduced the extent of native habitat to remnant patches along the river and in historic oxbows. These alterations to the ecosystem have

greatly diminished the abundance, richness, and complexity of riparian, wetland, and floodplain habitat in the study area and the species dependent upon that habitat.

Potential Measures and Alternative Plans: An array of alternative plans to reduce flood damages and restore the ecosystem will be developed and evaluated during the study. Each alternative plan will consist of one or more measures. A measure is an activity or physical feature that achieves one or more of the study objectives. Potential measures include, but are not limited to, flood proofing and/or relocating structures, constructing a new levee along an alignment setback from the river, and restoration of native vegetation and habitats. Measures and alternative plans will be developed in collaboration with Federal, State, and local interests. The array of alternative plans will include doing nothing (no-action alternative), which will provide a baseline to evaluate all other alternative plans.

Coordination: The Corps and Reclamation Board are collaborating with the Hamilton City Community Services District, Glenn County, and other Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations to conduct the study. The Reclamation Board has received a grant from CALFED to fund the non-Federal portion of the study costs. The study is being closely coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento River Partners, and The Nature Conservancy who are working to restore native habitat adjacent to and within portions of the study area. The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum is helping to facilitate open discussion between all interests. Two public workshops will be held to solicit input to the study and a public meeting will be held to solicit comments on the draft Feasibility Report/EIS/EIR.

Schedule:	Public Workshop #1 (Scoping)	9 January 2003
	Public Workshop #2 (Alternatives)	May 2003
	Draft Feasibility Report/EIS/EIR	September 2003
	Public Meeting	October 2003
	Final Feasibility Report/EIS/EIR	December 2003

Status: To date, the existing social, economic, physical, and biological conditions for the study area have been defined and a preliminary array of alternative plans has been developed and evaluated. Remaining work includes refining the existing conditions, refining the array of measures and alternative plans, evaluating and comparing the effects of alternative plans, selecting a recommended plan, and completing a feasibility report/EIS/EIR for submittal to Congress for consideration for Federal authorization.

For more information about the study, please contact:

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Information about the Hamilton City study can also be found on the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study website at www.compstudy.org.

