



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Public Notice Number: 200225083

Date: August 23, 2002

Comments Due: September 23, 2002

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

Subject: Department of the Army Permit Application. The District Engineer, Sacramento District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) is evaluating a permit application from The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of this notice is to inform interested parties of a proposed work activity and to solicit comments.

Participation is encouraged so that the District Engineer is better able to complete a more thorough public interest review. Comments assist the Corps to make a reasonable decision based on public interest factors. The District Engineer is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposals probable impacts on the affected aquatic systems functional values and the cumulative and secondary effects. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The proposed project is described below and shown on the attached drawings. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at:

<http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/cespk-co/regulatory/PNs/>.

Applicant: The Nature Conservancy, One E 1st St #500, Reno, NV 89501

Location: The project site is about 6 miles east of Sparks in Section 1, Township 19 North, Range 21 East, and Section 6, Township 19 North, Range 22 East, Washoe and Storey Counties, Nevada.

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed fill is to recreate a river meander.

Project Description: The Nature Conservancy is proposing to complete a Truckee River restoration project. The project will consist of re-meandering a 1.2-mile segment of the Truckee River. The new meander will be slightly narrower (120 feet) and deeper than the existing channel, and the length will be increased approximately 700 feet. The total surface area of the new channel will be slightly less than the existing channel. Approximately 9.81 acres of the old channel will be filled to create upland islands and adjacent wetlands (5.15 acres). The new meander will also permanently impact 0.38 acres of existing palustrine wetland by converting a wetland to a riverine system. Several areas adjacent to the river (see attached drawings) are wetland and will be enhanced (3.6 acres). Other riparian zone areas that are currently upland will be used to create additional wetlands (10.36 acres). Surrounding this new meander / wetland complex will be a restored upland riparian forest (approximately 66 acres).

The new meander will be constructed such that the river slope or gradient will be reduced to approximate historic slopes. The channel bottom, in effect, will be raised above the existing channel bottom to reconnect the river to the floodplain and reverse the effects of an artificially-induced river substrate incision and channelization. A series of natural rock drop structures will be used to control the gradient over the length of the project; these natural-rock design features will help create riffle-pool complexes in the new channel. The reduced slope and higher river substrate elevation is expected to allow a higher ground water table for a longer duration that will support a more hydrophytic vegetative community. Much of the wetland enhancement and creation will include reestablishing native riparian wetland species and excavating small oxbow-like depressions that will expose ground water. The attached drawings show

a typical cross-section through the project. The new channel and wetland complex is expected to slow down and store river flood stages longer than in the current condition.

The attached maps and drawings provide additional project details.

The applicant believes there is a need to restore historic river functions to ameliorate flooding impacts, reestablish riverine habitat for fish and wildlife, particularly for species of concern, facilitate river water quality improvement, and control and eradicate invasive weeds. The proposal will also increase recreational value of the river for those who fish, bird-watch, canoe, photograph, etc.

Environmental Setting: The project area is a typical Truckee River riverine area whose habitat and natural river functions have been drastically reduced from artificial manipulation. The riparian tree corridor has been greatly reduced and is now infested in tall white top and other invasive weeds with sparsely occurring native trees and shrubs. Consistent with this habitat degradation, the fish and wildlife use of the river system is a fraction of historic uses. Of particular concern are the very low numbers of leopard frogs, western pond turtles, and neo-tropical birds that were once abundant along the river. Additionally, the river has become more incised and less functional, particularly during high water stages. The ability for flood waters to disperse and be detained in adjacent wetlands is reduced, compared to historic times, because the channel is incised and adjacent wetland areas were removed. This is largely due to previous alterations to and straightening of the channel and increased flood discharges from upstream.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from The Nature Conservancy at 775-322-4990 in Reno or by calling Richard Gebhart, Project Manager, Corps of Engineers at 775-784-5304 in Reno.

Authority: This proposal is being evaluated under Section 404, Clean Water Act, for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

Water Quality Certification: A permit for the described work will not be issued until certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, has been granted or is waived from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP). A waiver will be deemed to occur if the state fails or refuses to act on the request for certification within 60 days.

Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation: The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the 404 (b) (1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

Public Hearing: Before the expiration date of this notice, anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the District Engineer determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location.

Endangered Species: Preliminary review, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844), indicates that the described activity will not affect listed endangered species or their critical habitat. Formal consultation under Section 7 of the Act is not required for the described activity.

Cultural Resources: In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, initial review of cultural resources information available in the National Register of Historic Places and its current supplements indicates that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed activity. This notice was sent to the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Evaluation: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and / or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Submitting Comments: Comments must be received on or before the expiration date (located above) to be considered in subsequent actions on this application. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. Anyone whose interests may be affected by the proposed work is invited to submit favorable or unfavorable written comments to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nevada Office (Gebhart)
300 Booth Street Room 2103
Reno NV 89509-1361
Email: richard.a.gebhart@usace.army.mil

Additional Requirements: State law requires that leases, easements, or permits be obtained for certain works or activity in the described waters. These state requirements must be met, where applicable, and a Department of the Army permit must be obtained before any work within the applicable statutory authority, previously indicated, may be accomplished. Other local governmental agencies may also have ordinances or requirements which must be satisfied before the work is accomplished.

Michael J. Conrad, Jr.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Attachments