



Public Notice

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Number: 200700565

Date: May 18, 2007

Comments Due: June 6, 2007

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to stabilize the north bank of the Truckee River adjacent to the Sierra Pacific Power Tracy plant. This work would result in impacts to approximately 3,000 feet of the Truckee River. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments.

The notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at:

<http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

APPLICANT: Sierra Pacific Power Company
Contact: Mr. Eric Weldon
6100 Neil Road
P.O. Box 10100
Reno, Nevada 89520
Telephone: (775) 834-4020

LOCATION: The project site is located at the Sierra Pacific Power Company Tracy Power Plant approximately 17 miles east of Reno, Nevada. The project is located in portions of Sections 28, 29, and 32, Township 20 North, Range 22 East.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to armor approximately 3,000 feet of the north bank of the Truckee River in order to halt erosion that is threatening plant infrastructure. Approximately 1,175 cubic yards of clean rock riprap would be placed below the ordinary high water mark of the Truckee River. Willow stakes would be planted in the riprap and cottonwood trees would be planted on the upper bank. The existing aboveground water pipeline would be buried as part of the project.

The north bank of the Truckee River has eroded approximately 100 yards since 1976. A water pipeline that is used for power plant operations is now within 15 feet of the bank at its closest point and an access road is located on the north side of the pipeline. If the erosion continues the pipeline and access road will be destroyed. Furthermore, an embankment on the south side of Interstate Highway 80 begins just north of the access road and the highway would eventually be at risk if erosion is allowed to continue. Based on the available information, the project purpose is bank stabilization. Project details are provided on the attached figures.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting: The north bank of the river is almost vertical and ranges from about three feet to at least 12 feet above the river. Except for a few isolated cottonwood saplings, riparian vegetation is lacking along the north bank because of the rapid loss of soil and depth to permanent water. The bank is mostly vegetated with invasive weeds. The current value of the wildlife habitat on the north bank is minimal because of the lack of trees and shrubs and the dominance of non-native plants that offer little forage and cover.

Alternatives. No practicable alternatives to armoring the north bank of the river have been identified that would fulfill the project purpose.

Mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant is proposing to incorporate approximately 2,600 willow staves into the new riprap in order to help stabilize the armor, provide wildlife habitat, and reduce heat transfer to the river. Approximately 300 cottonwood saplings would also be planted on the upper bank.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS: Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Quality Planning, is required for this project. The applicant has indicated they have applied for certification.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: Historic and cultural resources have been identified in the project area and the Corps will be consulting with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to fulfill our obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: No critical habitat has been identified in the project area but three listed species may be present: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*), and cui-ui (*Chasmistes cujus*). The Corps will be consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fulfill our obligations under the Endangered Species Act.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The proposed project will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, 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 activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps 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 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: Written comments, referencing Public Notice SPK-2007-565-NO must be submitted to the office listed below on or before June 6, 2007:

Kathleen A. Dadey, PhD, Acting Chief
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Reno Regulatory Office
300 Booth Street, Room 2103
Reno, Nevada 89509
Email: Kathleen.A.Dadey@usace.army.mil

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps 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. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager Kathleen.A.Dadey, at 775-784-5305, Kathleen.A.Dadey@usace.army.mil.

Attachments: 2 drawings