

Appendices Part 5

Comments INDIV-600s

Comments INDIV-700s

Comments INDIV-800s Part 1

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:38 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: John OConnor <johnrusselloconnor@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:15 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A [This place is very important to me because my mental and physical health are very poor. Walking surrounded by nature helps ground and comfort me, and the walking is very good for my health.].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:38 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Marchelle DeClue <marchelledecclue@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:12 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I treasure the wildlife, especially the variety of fowl who would be negatively impacted by this proposal.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

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Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

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overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

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I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Marchelle DeClue

Dorff, Becky

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:37 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: cewillard66@comcast.net <cewillard66@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:55 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to us.

A The American River Parkway is known as the Crown Jewel of Sacramento for good reason. It is highly unusual in this Country to have a free-flowing river with high quality water flowing through a major metropolitan

area. The river has great value to those living in this area for recreation, escape from the urban environment and wildlife observation and encounters. It probably is even more valuable for the wildlife habitat for birds, mammals, and fish. We have spent a lot of time along and on the river in kayaks and canoes over the 50 plus years we have lived in Sacramento County. We are used to seeing lots of wildlife along the river. Unfortunately, the river has been changing for the worse with the flood control projects recently completed between the confluence with the Sacramento River up to Howe Avenue. We cannot image a project that could do more to damage the riparian vegetation, wildlife habitat and aesthetics than what has been done in that area. Claims that mitigation measures such a replanting these areas will make it acceptable are just plain wrong. The areas that have been completed are ugly, sterile, and largely devoid of wildlife. These areas were rich with wildlife prior to those projects. Sure, some plants will grow, but planting new trees to replace mature beauties will not happen in even young peoples' lifetime.

We strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

We do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and we do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a smaller scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

B The damages to the riparian areas and wildlife habitat from the proposed project are neither acceptable nor mitigatable. This is true particularly in the short run, but they will never be acceptable even in the long run. This is true for wildlife habitat, recreation experiences, and aesthetic values. Likewise, the river corridor as an attraction to live and work in Sacramento will be gone. Businesses consider community values when C deciding where to locate their businesses. We should care about attracting businesses to Sacramento. People also make these decisions when deciding where they want to live. One of the main reasons we have stayed in Sacramento after retiring is being able to enjoy the river. Please don't take that away.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is of great value to our community and state. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come (likely forever) and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Charlie and Joan Willard

February 22, 2024

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Department of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

RE: The lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

We have been residence of the Estates entrance to the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento” American River Parkway for over 24 years and regularly recreate along the 4B bike trails with our family and pets.

We were informed of the 3B,4A and 4B 2-mile levee bulldozing project on January 30, 2024 by our nearby good friends/neighbors Ken and Deedie Poelman. Since we became aware of the project, we have actively engaged with our neighbors on developing input communications and concerns to satisfy the public input deadline with the USACE.

We strongly question whether the “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River and have concerns the proposed clearcut approach with bare banks during two years of construction is just as likely to present high-risk river flows as no work at all.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the project impacts (Contracts 3B and 4) and not proceed until a more targeted and less destructive alternative erosion control solution is presented.

Our list of concerns includes the following:

- 1 • Trees are not a significant risk to levee stability. In fact, trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural banks armoring—removing trees would remove this natural protect benefit and make us less safe.
- 2 • Shorelines composed of large, angular rock makes recreating access very difficult and dangerous; furthermore, the rocks create a very unpleasant experience and limit launching kayaks and watercraft.
- 3 • The river’s Wild and Scenic designation is compromised by a rigid, artificial shoreline. Ripped shorelines are ugly and detract from the natural Lower American River feel—a special place and refuge in our city and surrounding area.
- 4 • The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new Folsom Dam spillways, operating protocols allow for better flows management, including early release based on storm forecast.

We request the following:

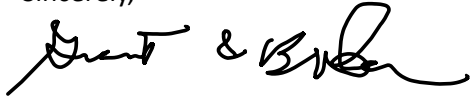
- 5 • We ask for a thorough demonstration of the spot-by-spot need and benefit analysis.
- 6 • Encourage the evaluation of targeted alternative methods resulting in less habitat and wildlife destruction.
- 7 • More detailed work scope be provided.

- 8 • Emphasize the importance of finding ways to achieve both tree preservation and any erosion work (if needed) for flood protection.
- 9 • Support of use stabilizing vegetation, aligning with the National Park Service's recommendations.

We appreciate a thoughtful review of our concerns and look forward to learning more about mitigation initiatives USACE will be implementing over the next two years.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant & Brenda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the names connected by an ampersand.

Grant & Brenda Deary

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:50 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway

From: Anne Shuck <anneshuck1017@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:47 AM
To: URCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway

To the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers:

1 | Removing heritage oaks along the American River Parkway cannot be the only way to reinforce the levy between Howe Avenue and Watt. There has to be another way to do it, and I urge you, as a 40-year Sacramento resident and frequent user of the bike trail, to do so.

Thank you for reading this and (hopefully) taking it under advisement.

Anne Shuck

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:49 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Destruction of Riparian habitat and tree on the American River 3B Project

From: Robert James <yubahills@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:43 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: yubahills <yubahills@yahoo.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Destruction of Riparian habitat and tree on the American River 3B Project

Dear Sirs;

1 I have walked and cycled along the American River for over 48 years. The Trees and riparian habitat have kept the river in check and prevented erosion all that time in extreme wet years and drought.

Do not destroy all this and put my home in danger of flooding from the raw and damaged river banks.

Sincerely,

William Appleby

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment

From: MaryAlice Keaton <maryalice.keaton@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:37 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment

Re: Contract3B

To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- 1 After viewing the plans for levee strengthening Contract 3B, we want to voice our strong disapproval for the removal of a significant number of trees along this portion of the ARP.
- 2 The nesting trees for the egrets and herons along this section are invaluable. Please send us your mitigation plans.
- 3 The levees in this area are vital for flood protection without a doubt. Strengthening the levees should have a better approach than decimating the existing area and then replanting.
- 3 The recent work by the Corps in along the banks of the river near Campus Commons and CSUS may be levee protection, but is not conducive to the other uses this area was designated for — recreation. By removing the trees and under brush the area is devoid of shade. Notwithstanding is the value of this scenic area for wildlife habitats.

We oppose this plan.

Please include us in your outreach notification process.

Kyle and MaryAlice Keaton

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Katherine Middlekauff <kmiddlekauff84@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:28 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis

overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

Katherine Middlekauff

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Joyce Hsiao <hsiao.joyce@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:24 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear Madam or Sir,

I have serious concerns with the proposed project on the lower American River, particularly Contracts 3B, 4 A, and 4 B. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable, not just to me and my family, but to all of the Sacramento Valley region and Northern California. It provides unmatched access, recreational opportunities, and scenic enjoyment for millions of people. Equally important, it is a vital riparian habitat for countless vegetation and wildlife species in an area that has already been irreversibly impacted by the upstream dams and "erosion control" projects. .

1 The removal of hundreds of century-old trees and destruction of a thriving habitat would be a travesty to the people of California--past, present and future-- as well as a dismal reflection of the short-sighted, single-minded decisions of the USACE. PLEASE don't let this happen.

After retiring from 44 years as an environmental engineer specializing in water resources and CEQA, I am finally able to enjoy the American River Parkway on a daily basis. My husband and I ride bicycles along the parkway every day, whether permitting, and the reach between Howe and Watt Avenues is one of the most beautiful. The tree-lined corridor is magical, filled with dappled light, wildlife and birds, that awes and inspires no matter what the season. PLEASE don't destroy this.

2 Aside from these very personal and aesthetic concerns, it baffles me to understand how the removal of an established, mature riparian forest can "protect" against erosion? The trees themselves are a stabilizing force, having withstood centuries of drought, floods, and storms. Replacing the trees with rock and riprap is not only short-sighted, but would clearly result in short-term vulnerability to increased erosion for decades before replacement vegetation can become established. The visual effects of losing the trees is horrifying. The project would also result in impacts on air quality (particulates, dust, and more dust) and water quality (erosion, turbidity, etc.) for years to come that would otherwise be

avoided without this project. Don't think you are providing any kind of "public service" with this project. PLEASE reconsider your options and stop this insanity while you still can.

3 | My 44 years as a CEQA project manager and analyst make me well aware that CEQA requires all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated into the final project, even for significant and unavoidable impacts. The SEIS/SEIR has not done that. The SEIS/SEIR needs to provide a much more comprehensive and detailed alternatives analysis, including alternatives that could avoid or minimize impacts to vegetation, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, air quality, water quality, and more. The ASCE needs to do much more work to identify an environmentally superior alternative, because the proposed project certainly is not. And CEQA also required a much more robust public involvement and input. PLEASE do your homework: analyze a wider range of alternatives, develop feasible, effective, and onsite mitigation measures, prepare a legally adequate SEIR/SEIS, and notify the concerned public, which includes the entire Sacramento region,

4 | Thank you for reading my email. And please include my name on any lists for public notification related to this project.

Sincerely,

Joyce Hsiao

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on the Draft American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, California Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

From: Susan Goodrich <magiclab@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:26 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on the Draft American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, California Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

To whom it may concern:

I am very strongly opposed to your proposed project that will destroy valuable riparian ecosystem in the American River Parkway. Flood mitigation does not have to be synonymous with eradication of landscape, including valuable wildlife habitat.

The draft SEIS/SEIR contains multiple serious flaws that must be addressed to meet the legal and procedural requirements of NEPA and CEQA. The process for involving the public and responsible agencies was inadequate to meaningfully involve them in the planning process. The SEIS/SEIR document is so poorly organized and presented that has been nearly impossible for all but the most experienced reviewers to navigate and understand.

The document is replete with errors and inconsistencies among various sections in describing the project and its impacts. The range of alternatives considered is artificially narrow, with no meaningful alternatives presented or evaluated for bank protection methods or mitigation site locations. The environmental analyses, including impact assessment for noise, air quality, recreation, and biological resources, are inconsistent in various sections of the document and misrepresent and omit numerous environmental impacts, including some that were clearly identified in public scoping. In particular, the impacts of bank protection to existing oak woodland and riparian habitat, and associated wildlife and recreation use, and

the effects of converting the Urrutia Pond to a mitigation area are either mischaracterized or ignored.

3 In short, the extensive deficiencies I and others have documented demonstrate that the document is inadequate to meet the legal requirements for public review under NEPA and CEQA. We request that the project partners reissue a new draft SEIS/SEIR that addresses the multiple deficiencies of this document, so that responsible agencies and the public can have meaningful input to the process, as is legally required. Should the project agencies not reissue the supplement, you should prepare an extensively revised version of the document that is organized in a comprehensible way and that fully corrects the many sufficiencies in the document, so we can properly evaluate its legal adequacy. More importantly, it should propose alternative actions that will reduce environmental impacts and serve the public interest.

Please reconsider the harmful and irreversible damage you are planning to do. Your wrong will not make a right.

Susan Goodrich

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Trees

From: Kevin Oleary <kevinoleary69@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:16 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Trees

1 I strongly object to the plans of removing trees along the river
[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Lower American River draft SEIS SEIR

From: Bob Stanley <stanleybob2010@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:03 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Lower American River draft SEIS SEIR

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

A My family and I consider the American River Parkway to be the best feature of the Sacramento region. We ride our bikes along the stretch between Watt Avenue and Howe Avenue at least 200 days a year, and the trees along that stretch provide the finest scenery on the whole 26 miles, as well as providing important shade in the summertime. For wildlife and for people, this section provides a haven right in the middle of our city. The recent levee work along the river has already destroyed much of this haven. The stretch on both sides of the river near Sacramento State University has been devastated - that section is now denuded. Please don't do the same kind of damage to another critical section of our American River Parkway. It is a treasure for our community. While levee work is very important, your plan should do everything possible to minimize impact on this valuable resource for our region.

The Corps of Engineers should perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more careful environmental approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings -- could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife.

A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional

Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B would affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Robert Stanley
Sacramento

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Ann Trowbridge <atrowbridge@daycartermurphy.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 10:51 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; Jonah.Knapp@CVFlood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov; repamibera@mail.house.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I lived on American River Drive and attended Rio Americano High School; I currently live near Ashton Park. In high school, we often visited

the Parkway for classwork in biology. There could not have been a more valuable way to learn and to instill an appreciation for all of the plants and animals that call the Parkway home. My husband and I specifically bought our current home so that we could access the Parkway without having to cross Fair Oaks. Our family uses it all the time, for exercise (we've put hundreds of biking, running and walking miles in!), recreation (picnics, canoeing, rafting) and to enjoy and appreciate the vast, beautiful and vitally important Parkway natural resources (herons, egrets, badgers, deer, doves, rabbits, coyotes, ducks, geese, turkeys, vultures, the occasional sea lion, heritage oaks, berry bushes, grasses, and on and wonderfully on). A daily walk along the river was a critically important respite for my husband while he went through a brutal course of chemotherapy and radiation. The Parkway is part of our home, and we are heartbroken to think that a bazooka might be taken to it when a toy Nerf gun would suffice.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel

exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

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bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

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Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded,

bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

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This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

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Thank you.

Ann Trowbridge

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:48 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: LESANN Dorffler <lesann@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:02 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

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I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

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hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

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Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior

contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the

most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these

locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Thanks!
LesAnn Giera

From: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:31 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River

From: Ray Rozema <rrozema54@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:06 AM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River

You don't often get email from rrozema54@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

1 | **"I am strongly opposed to your proposed project that will destroy valuable riparian ecosystem in the American River Parkway." It is very destructive and probably does very little for flood control.**

**Thankyou
Ray Rozema**

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:37 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Kent <wilsondk@surewest.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:43 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A Since the 1960's I have fished, run, walked, bird watched and in general enjoyed the American River Parkway on the north side of the river from Howe bridge upstream to Arden Way access. During this period vegetation along the river has been allowed to return to a natural state. I believe the trees and native vegetation have contributed significantly to an increase in bird and animal life, peaceful enjoyment by walkers, runners and cyclists, and helped reduce riverbank erosion. We have had numerous high water years and naturally some erosion has occurred. The bike trail has been moved higher up and there has been no material damage to private property.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the

Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Kent Wilson

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:36 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Larry Galizio <galiziolarry@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:29 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

A One of the primary reasons we moved near the River from South Land Park is so that our three children (and us) could enjoy the recreation and relaxation of this beautiful area. Our children ride their bikes, play around and on the river, and simply go to get away from the concrete and noise of the city. My wife and I take walks, run with our lab, and find ourselves by or on the river quite often.

We implore you to approach this project in a more targeted, ecologically-mindful way.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

Respectfully,

The Galizio Family

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:35 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: sacked <sacked@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:26 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A I moved to this neighborhood in 1993 because of the location so close to the lower American. I have loved being so close I can walk along the trails from Watt to Mayhew drain & not have to drive to the foothills or further upriver. I've had 6 dogs that also enjoy the great outdoors & Mother Nature. It would be devastating to see the kind of changes the corps wants. Being so close to downtown Sac, the forested banks along the river give such comfort and hope. My physical & mental well being thrives at the river in my neighborhood. I really can't imagine living here & not having access to the water.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

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The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

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Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.”

Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Kathy Downey

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:34 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Claire Smurr <cesmurr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:16 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

RE: The lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

DO NOT DESTROY THE CROWN JEWEL AREA OF THE WILD AND SCENIC LOWER AMERICAN RIVER

Your plans have literally brought myself and my family to tears! Do NOT turn the crown jewel area of the Lower American River ("LAR") into something resembling the Los Angeles River!!!

My husband, Peter H. Smurr (1926-2006), was one of the founding members of SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION ("SARA"). He served as its President, and was an active member of SARA for over 25+ years (from the early 1960s through the mid to late 1980s). What was recently done to the LAR around the area of Sacramento State University is abhorrent and extremely concerning to everyone who frequents the LAR.

A I taught each of our five children how to swim at "Pirates Cove" in the 1960s which is located right at the entrance to the LAR at SARA Park on Rogue River Drive. This area is also where my two sons learned how to kayak in the 1970s. They were taught how to kayak by none other than William "Bill" Griffith (1925-2013), another early and longtime serving

member of SARA who also lived on Rogue River Drive. Bill died in the afternoon on January 13, 2013 after taking his daily morning kayak paddle.

If you proceed with your plans as they currently exist, my late husband and Bill will roll in despair from their graves—while those of us who remain in this world, will weep with deep sadness lamenting the destruction you will have wrought on us for the remaining days of our lives.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me, and everyone who knows it.

I Strongly oppose the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values (“ORVs”), for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I vehemently object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses)

for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee

conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models.

I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Elouise (Fowler) Smurr

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GORDON REES SCULLY MANSUKHANI, LLP
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From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:33 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Sara Forestieri <sara.forestieri@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:04 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. A big reason why I moved to the La Riviera neighborhood was its close proximity to the American River. The large majestic oak trees are what makes this area so special. This specific stretch of the river has personal significance to me as well. My first walks with my son shortly after he was born were along these riverbanks.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

1. Limited Evidence for Unnecessary Removal of Trees and Vegetation:

- Trees are not a significant risk to levee stability. In fact, trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural armoring of the banks that would be eliminated. Removing trees may make us less safe.
- Historically, levee failures were more associated with areas where riparian forests had been thinned or clear-cut.
- Inadequate environmental analysis of the removal of 200+ years old heritage oaks would constitute an “unmitigable” impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway
- Destruction of vegetation worsens the heat island effect.

- “Access ramps” will destroy additional trees but were not accounted for in the draft SEIS/SEIR.

2. Rip Rapped streambanks present significant negative consequences:

- Shorelines composed of large, angular rock make access by people for swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, and other uses dangerous at worst and highly unpleasant at best.
- The river’s Wild and Scenic designation is compromised by a rigid, artificial shoreline. Riprapped shorelines are ugly and detract from the natural feel of the Lower American River that makes it such a special place and refuge in our city and area.
- Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth. Heritage trees would be forever lost.
- The planting benches being proposed on top of the launchable rock toes and trenches will likely collapse (“launch”) when the launchable rock toes and trenches eventually launch. No provisions or commitments have been made to replace lost planting benches.

2. Erosion is minimal in USACE’s Contract 3B:

- Experts disagree about the erosion risk along this stretch of the river. More empirical data was recommended, but generally concluded that erosion resistant material was present and significant scour below it was not anticipated. Seepage data show no issue for seepage, especially after the deep slurry walls were added inside the levees.
- Modern, advanced modeling for peak 160,000 cubic feet per second flow predicts that water velocities are low at the levees. The older models used did not account for the protective effect of trees slowing the velocities at the edges.
- The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new spillway at Folsom dam and new operating protocols allow for better managing of flows, including earlier release of water when storms are forecast.

4. Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

- The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife
- Clear-cutting and rip rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon.
- Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.
- Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost.
- The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.
- The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.
- High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities.

5. Recreational Access:

- This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Why should we think that the Corps will do anything different than at River Park, where all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed? Sac State is used as a restoration example, but we know of no beaches, footpaths, fishing access points there, either. Why should we trust that 3B will be different when even the SEIS/SEIR does not address these issues?

- Installation of miles of angular rock (riprap) will make river access dangerous along large stretches of river, and will greatly impede swimming, fishing, and deployment of watercraft such as kayaks. This will be a permanent and significant loss of irreplaceable recreational amenities to the community that is not accounted for in the SEIS/SEIR, despite promises by the Corps in 2016 to address these significant issues.
- The permanent loss of mature trees, beaches, river access points, footpaths, and other recreational amenities is not “less than significant” as stated in the SEIS/SEIR. The Corps needs to document these losses and redo the SEIS/SEIR to account for them, including proposals to modify the project where possible to minimize losses.
- The public has a right to know how specific recreational amenities will be affected by this project. The level of detail in the SEIS/SEIR makes it impossible for the public to see what will be done, and all we can assume is everything in 3B upstream of Watt Avenue on the south side will be ripped out like at River Park. The public has a right to know the details at this stage of review and should not be required to “trust” the Corps. We want the Corps to document and justify specifically which of our trails, trees, beaches, fishing access, and riparian forest must be destroyed to keep us safe from floods, and how much of that destruction will be replaced, versus what will be lost permanently given current design.
- What mitigation for lost beaches, trails, forests, etc. will there be? The SEIS/SEIR does not discuss the loss of these features, so it also inappropriately fails to discuss mitigation for permanent impacts to features that the Corps cannot replace onsite. If beaches or trails are lost forever onsite, will other beaches or trails be installed?

6. Mental Health and Vegetation

- Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.

- Research has shown that “green exercise” may confer mental health benefits in addition to improving physical health.
- Natural park settings decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration and tranquility.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.
- Trees play a role in filtering air pollutants and absorbing noise. Their removal can contribute to increased levels of air pollution and noise, both of which have been associated with negative effects on mental health. Poor air quality and excessive noise can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
- Trees often serve as gathering places and contribute to the sense of community. The removal of trees can alter the social dynamics of an area, potentially reducing opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. Social connections are important for mental health, and changes in community dynamics can have psychological implications.

7. Cultural Restoration and Inclusion:

- Culturally significant plant species must be included in restoration and mitigation efforts, allowing for tribal ceremonies.

8. Air Quality

- For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is a carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), and OEHHA reports that between the ages of 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). I'm worried about how this air pollutant would impact my 2-year-old son's health.
- The project is large, with over 100 daily truck trips at each site and staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure

AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under CARB's Truck and Bus Regulation. The USACE mitigation measures should require much cleaner trucks -- 2014 or newer or, better yet, electrics.

- Even where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).
- Although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site would have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that travel through residential communities. USACE claims less than significant impacts of air pollution on sensitive receptors. However, the OEHHHA guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months ([OEHHHA, page 8-18](#)). USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA), to provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact.
- Using quarry rocks from unspecified quarry sources has not been adequately addressed for concerns that the rocks may contain asbestos content (given the prevalence of serpentine rocks in surrounding foothill sources). Dust from hauling and dumping asbestos-containing rocks within a quarter mile of a school requires further environmental impact analysis.

9. Environmental Justice

- The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged

populations. This environmental justice issue has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

We need more information. The importance of this area to the public and the ecology of the river merits MUCH more detail from the Corps about the work being proposed. The US Army Corp of Engineers should do a thorough spot-by-spot need and benefits analysis. I also encourage the evaluation of alternative methods that are targeted and less destructive to habitat and wildlife. Please consider "spot fixes," small equipment, and maintenance, as well as supporting the use of stabilizing vegetation, aligning with the National Park Service's recommendation. I believe US Army Corp of Engineers should find ways to both promote tree preservation and any necessary erosion work.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Sara Forestieri, PhD, PE

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:32 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Importance: High

From: Douglas Smurr <dsmurr@grsm.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: 'PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov' <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Importance: High

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

RE: The lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

DO NOT DESTROY THE CROWN JEWEL AREA OF THE WILD AND SCENIC LOWER AMERICAN RIVER

Your plans have literally brought myself and my family to tears! Do NOT turn the crown jewel area of the Lower American River ("LAR") into something resembling the Los Angeles River!!!

My father Peter H. Smurr (1926-2006), was one of the founding members of SAVE THE AMERICAN RIVER ASSOCIATION ("SARA"). He served as its President, and was an active member of SARA for over 25+ years (from the early 1960s through the mid to late 1980s). What was recently done to the LAR around the area of Sacramento State University is abhorrent and extremely concerning to everyone who frequents the LAR.

A I learned how to swim at "Pirates Cove" in the 1960s which is located right at the entrance to the LAR at SARA Park on Rogue River Drive. This area is also where I learned how to kayak in the 1970s. I was taught how to kayak by none other than William "Bill" Griffith (1925-2013), another early and longtime serving member of SARA who also lived on Rogue River Driver. Bill died in the afternoon on January 13, 2013 after taking his daily morning kayak paddle.

If you proceed with your plans as they currently exist, my father and Bill will roll in despair from their graves—while those of us who remain in this world, will weep with deep sadness lamenting the destruction you will have wrought on us for the remaining days of our lives.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me, and everyone who knows it.

Strongly oppose the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive

actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values (“ORVs”), for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational

use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway's wildlife. A "surgical approach", not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I vehemently object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak,

cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion

control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of

significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be

equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions

were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind

denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Respectfully submitted,

DOUGLAS SMURR (He/Him/His) | Of Counsel

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From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:30 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA); Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Tree Removal Along Lower American River, USACE Contract 3B Site

From: Cheryl Bly-Chester <cherylblychester@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; rahumada@sacbee.com; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Tree Removal Along Lower American River, USACE Contract 3B Site

To Whom it May Concern:

I am now and have always been opposed to the removal of any heritage trees along the Lower American River and believe that the Army Corps of Engineers Contract 3B project is in violation of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WRSA).

The lower American River was designated in 1972 as a California Wild and Scenic River and in 1981 under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. **The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the federal designation states that for recreational rivers:** “Future construction of impoundments, diversions, straightening, rip-rapping, and other modification of the waterway or adjacent land would not be permitted except in instances where such developments would not have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which that river area was included in the national system as determined by the Secretary charged with the administration of the area.” (Page J-9, emphasis added.)

In the final EIS, the flora and fauna resources of the Lower American River designated to be preserved were described as:

“Flora and Fauna. The Lower American River is lined with lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood, and sycamore trees. The riparian hardwood strip along the Lower American River supports a wildlife community similar to the North Coast, with differences associated with high use by the public and many years of influence by civilization. Because the riparian vegetation is carefully protected, birdlife, including raptors and wading birds, is uniformly dispersed along the river section. Small mammals and a

few deer exist in the less developed area; snakes and lizards thrive in the brushlands, dredger cobbles and along the river banks.” (Pg 26, Appendix E)

Both the federal and state WSRA place these values before any government-funded water resources projects and both state and federal acts contain prohibitions against governmental cooperation in projects adversely affecting the system, as well as establishing specific regulatory programs to preserve these values.

I am only an engineer and not a lawyer, but it seems straight forward to me that the proposed project to remove the valuable resources of lush riparian vegetation and hundreds of trees in order to place riprap rock armoring on the levee is a direct violation of both the California and Federal Wild and Scenic River Acts.

2

From my experience with other flood protection projects along the Lower American River corridor, this project approach is likely the most expedient and least expensive in a flawed cost/benefit analysis placing little monetary value on the less tangible aesthetic and recreational resources and riparian habitat losses of removing even a single heritage tree, much less hundreds of them.

I believe that the Army Corps of Engineers **must** reconsider their standardized approach to flood protection along the Lower American River in favor of tailoring their designs to meet the governmental obligations agreed upon to protect our valuable resources for generations to come.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Bly-Chester, P.E.

Cheryl Bly-Chester is a kayaker and the former Vice-Chair of the State Reclamation Board (now the Central Valley Flood Protection Board), and Past President of the Sacramento Post of the Society of American Military Engineers and can be reached at CherylBlyChester@aol.com.

Cheryl Bly-Chester, P.E.

Managing Principal Engineer

ROSEWOOD ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

1079-B Sunrise Boulevard # 168

Roseville, CA 95661

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:28 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Daugherty <missmarydaugherty@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:55 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A The American River Parkway is an extraordinary and fragile Treasure which my extended family and I have now enjoyed for three generations. The heritage oaks are ancient, and provide not just beauty and bank stability, but also vital shelter for river plants and animals—even my very young great nieces treasure all of this. The unique beauty of this stretch of the American River will never be recoverable if you callously destroy it. Please, please, please do not do this. The American is a living and wild River, not some culvert to be paid over and hosed down.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the

Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Mary T. Daugherty

Sent from my iPad

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:22 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re. American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project , Sacramento CA

From: Leo Winternitz <lwintern@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:46 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; Bellas. Liz <bellase@saccounty.net>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re. American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project , Sacramento CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown,

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, Contract 3B, 4A and 4B.

1 I have serious concerns with scoping and outreach for the proposed project, the lack of meaningful and significant content in the environmental analysis and the project's proposed mitigation using the Urrutia property without adequate analysis of the impacts themselves and alternatives for mitigation.

2 The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) states that during the scoping level, public involvement is encouraged to help identify impacts and alternatives regarding the proposed project as well as any existing studies or information that can be used during the NEPA review. The scoping for the SEIS/SEIR document was inadequate. The Army Corps failed to engage Regional Parks during the NEPA scoping process and the development of alternatives. The Central Valley Flood Protection Board failed to initiate a scoping process under CEQA and is relying on scoping that was done for the original 2015 ARCF General Reevaluation Report EIR, nearly 10 years ago.

3 The overall document itself is difficult and confusing to read. Some information is found in the text, but other related important details are missing, and found without reference, to tables elsewhere in the document. The document itself suffers from inconsistencies in its descriptions. As one example, Alternative 2 is identified as a proposed action in the text but the summary table lists it as Alternative 6. Without the benefit of proper scoping and sincere stakeholder meetings to understand the project and identify alternatives, how are the responsible resource agencies and the public expected to digest and understand this already complex project?

4 The SEIS/SEIR suffers from many inadequacies and inconsistencies. Regional Parks in their comment letter comprehensively identifies these significant issues in their remarks on Contract 3B North, 3B South and Contract 4B. My particular concern is with the American River Mitigation Site (Urrutia Site).

- The Urrutia Site was not authorized in the 2016 document.
- The Army Corps fails to realize the current important ecological values of the Urrutia site. The Urrutia site presents a limited amount of open water habitat within the Parkway that is important habitat for migrating birds and resident species of mammals and reptiles.
- The Army Corp did not coordinate with Regional Parks to discuss suitable alternatives for habitat mitigation within the American River Parkway (Parkway). In fact, an alternative proposed to the Army Corps to maintain some of the ecological benefits of the Urrutia Site were ignored.
- Protection of existing values at the Urrutia Site have not been seriously considered. In fact, no baseline studies of existing ecological resources at the Urrutia Site including birds, plants, reptiles or mammals have been conducted. The information is readily available. Despite not having information on this basic knowledge the Army Corps has determined that they can make habitat "better" here. Albeit a completely different type of habitat.
- A scientific paper (Airola et.al., 2023) documents the open water habitat (ponds) to wintering water birds along the American River. This paper has been provided to the Army Corps. The removal of Urrutia Pond results in a significant environmental impact and must be identified and mitigated as such in the SEIS/SEIR.
- The SEIS/SEIR does recognize that the Parkway is a state and federally designated Wild and Scenic River, which is managed by Regional Parks. It is unacceptable that the Army Corps can dismiss the existing resources identified by Regional Parks and stakeholders as negligible.
- Other opportunities exist that were not considered but could provide the needed habitat mitigation. These opportunities would not eliminate habitat with existing values that are important for the Parkway and region. Lack of scoping and stakeholder outreach foreclosed analyzing and developing these alternatives.
- Alternatives supposedly included in the document to provide for juvenile salmonid habitat mitigation include Rossmoor Bar and Sailor Bar. These alternatives appear to have been rejected. However there is no explanation or discussion related to these alternatives in the text. Without such an analysis how are we and the Army Corps to know that these alternatives are insufficient?
- In a September 2020 American River Common Features Mitigation Site Concept Development and Evaluation Report, six sites along the American River that could provide juvenile rearing habitat were identified. Why were these sites not considered and included as alternatives in the analysis?

5 The SEIS/SEIR is replete with errors and inconsistencies among its various sections describing the project, its impacts and proposed mitigation. The range of alternatives is narrow and without rationale; important baseline data is not described, and the document itself is poorly organized making it very

difficult to read and understand. In addition, the scoping process for gathering information from responsible agencies and the interested public was deficient and did not allow for any meaningful involvement. Based on these extensive deficiencies it appears the foundational environmental analysis is inadequate for making an informed decision that would lead to project approval.

Sincerely,

Leo Winternitz

cc. Liz Bellas, Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:21 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Levee upgrades to the American River

-----Original Message-----

From: Scott Prentice <msprentice@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Levee upgrades to the American River

1 The cutting of up to 700 trees on the north and south shore of the American River would be an unmitigated disaster for the ecology of the American River Parkway. I vehemently oppose this massive reduction in the forest cover in and near the American River. What the Army Corps of Engineers proposes to do will render the flood plain a sterile, naked, ripped strip of land without any redeeming aesthetic or environmental value. Our beautiful American River Parkway will be reduced to an Army Corps of Engineers sluice box. Please resubmit the current plans to significantly reduce the deforesting of the American River Parkway.

Thank you.

M. Scott Prentice

Sent from my iPad

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:20 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Stephen Sax <s.sax@live.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 6:24 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me and to Sacramento in general.

When I talk about the great things about Sacramento, I always reference the American River. I kayak and SUP many different sections. I

walk and bring my family here when they are in town. I find it a great place to go when I need to decompress or just enjoy being outside. I love hearing and seeing all the different types of birds including the waterfowl and the birds of prey. I love seeing the otter and beavers. It is an incredible asset to the people in Sacramento our capitol of California.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

From what I understand you are using old models. Your maps are overgeneralized, which don't have the detail needed to do a good faith

analysis of the best approach to address the issues you are trying to achieve. I'd like to see more nature based solutions as well.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Stephen Sax 9407 Mira Del Rio Dr Sacramento, CA 95827 530-306-7389

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:19 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Mariah C <mariahzara@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 5:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. My children and I have enjoyed exploring this section of the river. We have seen many birds, deer, and other wildlife, along with many varieties of trees, the largest and most impressive of which are native and introduced oak. The tree canopy along this corridor is mature, and provides homes and protection for many animals, as well as shade for people recreating.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

- A | 1-The razing of the bank will decimate the local wildlife.
- B | 2-The rip rap will impact the ability of certain animals, like deer, to access the river. It will also prevent humans from being able to play on the shore or easily recreate on the river.
- C | 3-Removing the trees and, therefore, the developed root systems will make the banks less stable. Those roots already act as erosion protection and potential flood protection as well. Why can't we use what is already there rather than building something that may end up being no more protective?
- D | 4-The proposed work will significantly impact the beauty of the area for visitors and those that live in adjacent neighborhoods. It is protected as a scenic river and I'd like it to stay scenic.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Mariah Cosand

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:19 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Thomas Vigran <tvigran@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 5:12 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. My wife and I ride the bike trail on the Parkway nearly every morning. The variations in weather and river conditions are a joy and a great way for us to start our day. The nature and intrinsic qualities of the River would be forever changed by the current plans. Surely this plan can be changed. The additional time, trouble and broader collaboration would be well worth it, resulting in a "community owned" river project that would enjoy broad support. Below I'm copying a lot of the material written by those with more knowledge of the proposal. But in this case, fewer of the details should not be taken as having any less concern. Thanks for your efforts in truly, sustainably protect the Parkway.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

THANK YOU !!!

Thomas Vigran

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:18 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Attachments: FB_IMG_1661755043284.jpg; 20200808_194732 (1).jpg

From: Steven Benson <mrmastodn@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:32 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; mrmastodn <mrmastodn@aol.com>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; AmRivTrees@gmail.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed project and have serious concerns with the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is priceless to me.

I grew up along the American River off of Bradshaw Rd and Folsom Blvd where the American River Parkway has been a critical part of my entire life. This irreplaceable value of this beautiful and naturally vibrant stretch of the river cannot be overstated. After growing up here and going off to the Marine Corps I married my wife and shared this amazing stretch of nature with her. She fell as in love with the Parkway as I am and we dreamed of one day buying a house here so we could be near a place that brings us peace and joy like no other. Luckily, 7 years ago, our dream came true and we now live on Wausau Way, a 2 minute walk away from the levee steps in Larchmont Park. Now this project threatens not only the myriad wildlife and natural beauty along the Parkway, but it is causing emotional trauma and sleepless nights as we think about our dream being torn away. We walk these trails daily, we've become familiar with the cycle of wildlife we see through the seasons, and ALL of these trees are our friends. Especially the heritage oaks. Our connection to this stretch of the river and its natural biodiversity is so strong that we are absolutely crushed considering the clumsy destruction that is planned for this stretch of the project. I've personally witnessed the behavior of this river for almost 50 years and I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River. I have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut and leave bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings will just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. The cost of this unnecessary work being an immeasurable impact on the habitat for the biodiversity of wildlife, the destruction of natural corridors for wildlife, and radical devaluation of all of the homes in the area due to the loss of this natural wonder. The emotional impact for residents along the Parkway also cannot be over-stated. I have

attached to this email two images taken along the Parkway directly behind Larchmont Park to illustrate the natural beauty of this stretch of the Parkway.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, including considering planned alterations to Folsom Dam, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Steven Benson

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:31 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

From: Linda Collins <lmjcollins5253@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:23 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I am a regular bike rider and use the trail numerous times per week. It would be a terrible shame to lose the beautiful trees and endanger the wildlife they support.

I hope you can consider other means of addressing the river bank area concerns. It is counterintuitive to address erosion problems by removing trees. In fact the US Environmental Protection Agency states that:

Trees are increasingly recognized for their importance in managing runoff. Their leaf canopies help reduce erosion caused by falling rain. They also provide surface area where rain water lands and evaporates. Roots take up water and help create conditions in the soil that promote infiltration.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence

on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings -- could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an

urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:27 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Fwd: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca
Attachments: Joshua Thomas Comment 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS SEIR.pdf

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:11 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Fwd: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers comment recipients,

I messed up the address in my original email, so I'm forwarding you this email with my comment letter for the December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca.

Sincerely,
Joshua Thomas

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 22, 2024, 1:10 PM
Subject: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca
To: <ARC_SEIS@usace.army.mil>, <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Cc: <bellase@saccounty.gov>, <sorgenkc@saccounty.gov>, <susan_rosebrough@nps.org>, <barbara_rice@nps.gov>

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers and CA Dept. of Water Resources public comment recipients,

I've attached a letter which reviews the environmental analysis and alternatives provided within the December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project. I look forward to your response and hope that you will in good faith consider the critiques and suggestions in my letter.

Sincerely,
Joshua Thomas (He/Him)
Ph.D Candidate, History Department
University of California Davis

February 22, 2024

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
Central Valley Flood Protection Board/California Dept of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, California 95821
Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov

Submitted via email: ARC_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown,

In this letter I critique the incomplete and insufficient environmental analysis provided by the December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR and the documents it supplements, the 2016 *General Reevaluation Report* (GRR) and the 2016 Final EIS/EIR.¹ In these documents, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) uses biased data and outdated modeling to justify one-size-fits-all riprap erosion measures to the exclusion of less environmentally destructive bioengineering alternatives, ignores and minimizes important environmental impacts, offers inadequate mitigation, and disregards public apprehension about the ecological implications of USACE's proposals. With an understanding that the most durable and effective flood control systems work with nature rather than against it, I respectfully ask that USACE and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board consider less destructive bioengineering erosion prevention measures that are better justified by more up-to-date modeling and by more complete data. The risk to the safety of the Sacramento Region, to precious resources of the American River Parkway, to our Wild and Scenic River, and to endangered species are too great for USACE to follow through with their current proposed measures for American River Erosion Contract 3B in the December 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR.

¹ I understand that detailed technical analysis is meant for the appendices rather than the main EIS/EIR report. For the sake of brevity and flow, I only refer to the GRR, Final EIS/EIR, and 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR, but statements about inadequacy, insufficiency, or incompleteness in the GRR, Final EIS/EIR, and the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR include their appendices. If, for example, I state that "heritage oaks were only mentioned 9 times in the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR," I am referring to the total number of mentions of heritage oaks in the SEIS/SEIR and its appendices.

Before I delve into the analysis, I want to thank USACE and CVFPB for the critical work they have done keeping the Sacramento Region safe. As a PhD candidate who just finished a dissertation on the history of flood control in the Sacramento Valley, I understand that without extensive and well-maintained flood control infrastructure, the Sacramento Valley could not be home to over a million people.

From my research I also know that before flood control engineers get things right, they often get them disastrously wrong. It is an unfortunate rhyme of history that humans increasingly believe they can dominate nature until nature loses patience with their hubris. Such was the case before 1927, when USACE rejected as “chimerical” and “dangerous” the belief that humans could never control rivers but only accommodate them with multitiered systems that incorporated spillways and outlets.² USACE insisted that engineering science allowed for the use of only levees to prevent floods, despite evidence that building levees ever higher just increased flood heights.³ Then stormwaters blasted through Mississippi River levees in 1927, killing hundreds and displacing a quarter of a million people.⁴ Gifford Pinchot later deemed the levees-only policy a “complete engineering blunder and failure.”⁵ After the Great Flood of 1927, USACE pledged to work in harmony with the Mississippi in the future and started incorporating spillways and outlets in their designs.⁶

Fortunately, the Sacramento Region broke from the levees-only orthodoxy early with the Sacramento River Flood Control Project, initiated at the state level in 1911.⁷ From observing that the Sacramento Region consists of basins which naturally take in waters from overflowing rivers during storms, the designers of the Sacramento River Flood Control Project devised a system which mimics the regions natural tendency for overflow by using bypasses and weirs to allow for controlled flooding.⁸ This nature-based system has worked for over a century; however, California came close to implementing a blundering levees-only system with the Dabney Plan, which a commission of USACE engineers devised.⁹ In 1905 California tasked the newly created Sacramento Drainage District with implementing the Dabney Plan.¹⁰ But landowners derided by Dabney Plan proponents as scientific illiterates delayed the Plan’s

² Ari Kelman, *A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 163.

³ *Ibid.*, 164-169.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 192-195.

⁷ “An Act Approving the Report of the California Debris Commission,” *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Constitution Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature, 1911*, Chapter 25, (Approved December 24, 1911).

⁸ *Reports on the Control of Floods in the River Systems of the Sacramento Valley and the Adjacent San Joaquin Valley, Cal. June 29, 1911, Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors* (Washington, 1911), 7-15.

⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Public Works to the Governor of California, Together with the Report of the Commission of Engineers to the Commission of Public Works Upon the Rectification of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their Principal Tributaries, and the Reclamation of the Overflowed Lands Adjacent Thereto* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing, 1905).

¹⁰ “An Act to Create a Drainage District to be Called ‘Sacramento Drainage District,’” *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Thirty-Sixth Session of the California Legislature, 1905*, Chapter CCCLXVIII, (Approved March 20, 1905), 456.

implementation until the 600,000 cfs events of 1907 and 1909, which were twice as much as the 300,000 cfs estimates from bypass proponents that Major T.G. Dabney dismissed as impossibly high, demonstrated the infeasibility of a levees-only approach on the Sacramento River.¹¹ Had the state of California carried out the Dabney Plan, it would have expended millions on levees which the storms of 1907 and 1909 would have obliterated or overtopped.¹²

I mention this history because once again USACE engineers seem intent on brute-forcing flood control, this time by armoring the banks of the Lower American River with riprap. FEMA frequently repairs riprap facilities and has remarked that “the very nature of having to repair these facilities counters the popular engineering belief that riprap is the best solution for mitigating stream bank erosion.”¹³ Neither the *General Reevaluation Report* nor the December 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR seriously considered less destructive, nature-based alternatives to riprap. The “no-action alternative” in the Draft SEIS/SEIR is simply the proposal of the 2016 GRR, which includes “bank protection” (i.e. riprap armoring) and launchable rock trenches.¹⁴ Moreover, despite the outdated 2016 analysis, and new information demonstrating the feasibility of less destructive alternatives for this beloved stretch of Wild and Scenic River, USACE excludes any nature-based alternative to riprap. Instead, USACE only presents minor alternatives for individual projects, while “all other projects remain the same.”¹⁵

¹¹ On the 1895 bypass plan designed for 300,000 cfs: “Report of the Commissioner of Public Works,” *Appendix to the Journals of the Senate and Assembly of the Thirty-First Session of the Legislature of the State of California, Volume IV* (Sacramento, 1895). Dabney’s critique of the 1895 plan: T.G. Dabney, *Report of the Commissioner of Public Works*, 33-35. On the 1907 and 1909 floods: Robert Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea: Floods, Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 277-278.

¹² Robert Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea*, 277-278.

¹³ FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*, 7.

¹⁴ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, 3-48.

¹⁵ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-7 and 3-8.

3.3.3 Alternatives Considered in Detail in the SEIS/SEIR

The following alternatives are evaluated at an equal level of detail in this SEIS/SEIR:

- **Alternative 1:** No Action Alternative (NEPA baseline project as presently constructed / to be completed through performance of contracts underway or presently authorized)
- **Alternative 2:** Proposed Action (American River Erosion Contract 3B, American River Erosion Contract 4A, American River Erosion Contract 4B, Sacramento River Erosion Contract 3, MCP, ARMS, SRMS, and the Piezometer Network)
- **Alternative 3** (Alternative Designs for American River Erosion Contract 4A all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 3a:** Landside Berm to Avoid Bike Trail Reroute
 - **Alternative 3b:** Permanent Bike Trail Reroute

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Description of Project Alternatives

- **Alternative 3c:** Bike Trail Reroute and Bridge
- **Alternative 3d:** Bike Trail Reroute Along Railroad
- **Alternative 4:** (Alternatives Designs of ARMS – CEQA-Only all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 4a:** ARMS Pond Retention (CEQA-Only)
 - **Alternative 4b:** ARMS Pond Retention (CEQA-Only)
- **Alternative 5:** (Alternatives to SRMS all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 5a:** Purchase Mitigation Credits
 - **Alternative 5b:** Watermark Farms Mitigation Site
 - **Alternative 5c:** Delta Smelt Bank and Sunset Pumps Mitigation Credits
- **Alternative 6:** No Project Alternative (CEQA). This alternative assumes that none of the improvements identified in the Action Alternatives would be constructed.

Figure 1

For Contract 3B, which covers both banks between Howe Avenue and Larchmont Community Park, the 2023 proposal is just the 2016 preferred alternative with the addition of launchable rock toes and tiebacks.¹⁶ Launchable rock toes are functionally the same as launchable rock trenches except they are placed at rivers edge instead of higher up the bank.¹⁷ Tiebacks are riprap laid perpendicular instead of parallel to the river.¹⁸ USACE explores no

¹⁶ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-11, 3-25, and 3-26.

¹⁷ Ibid, 3-29.

¹⁸ Ibid.

biotechnical or bioengineering alternatives, even though the lower American River is a protected area. USACE is only offering the public a choice between riprap and more riprap. This choice, according to a USACE presentation to the Lower American River Task Force in December of 2023, could remove 685 trees.¹⁹ For American River Erosion Contract 3B South, where USACE plans to remove 522 trees, the 2023 SEIS/SEIR simply states that “one alternative was considered but rejected due to having additional environmental impacts.” USACE did not even briefly indicate what that alternative entailed.²⁰

USACE’s choice to give the public no alternative besides riprap makes a mockery of the review process. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) calls the alternatives section “the heart of the EIS.”²¹ This section, according to CEQ, is supposed to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives.²² The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an EIR provide a range of alternatives to a project that “will feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project.”²³ Note that CEQA only mandates that alternatives feasibly attain “most,” not all, of a project’s basic objectives. This indicates that CEQA intends that lead agencies offer a range of choices. Whereas a single proposal precludes public engagement, a range of choices can “foster informed decision making and public participation.”²⁴ The intention to foster public participation and informed decision making through discussion of a meaningful range of alternatives was articulated by the Third District of Appeal, whose jurisdiction includes Sacramento County. In *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou*, the Court ruled that making project objectives so narrow “as to preclude any alternative other than the Project” violated CEQA.²⁵ In particular, the Court criticized Siskiyou County for ensuring that “the results of its alternatives analysis would be a foregone conclusion.”²⁶ In making the alternatives a foregone conclusion, the County “transformed the EIR’s alternatives section—often described as part of the ‘core of the EIR’—into an empty formality.”²⁷ Here too, by limiting the public’s choice to nothing but riprap and more riprap for Contract 3B, USACE has turned the public review process for the December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR into an empty formality.

The alternatives of riprap or more riprap not only mocks the review process, but it runs afoul of both the National and State Wild and Scenic River Acts. The Lower American River from the confluence to the Nimbus Dam is designated as a protected river under both the California and the National Wild and Scenic River Acts.²⁸ These Acts require preserving

¹⁹ Lower American River Task Force, December 12, 2023. <https://waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/LARTF-Dec-2023-Slides.pdf>

²⁰ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-5.

²¹ Council on Environmental Quality, *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations*, (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou* (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th 683.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

protected rivers “in free flowing condition.”²⁹ The National Wild and Scenic River Act (NWSRA) defines free flowing as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, **rip-rapping**, or other modification of the waterway.”³⁰ The NWSRA allows for the existence of riprap on the waterway at the time of a river’s inclusion, but clarifies that “this shall not be construed to authorize, intend, or encourage future construction of such structures within components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.”³¹ The California Wild and Scenic River Act (CWSRA) only permits new riprap on the Eel River, stipulating that “nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any measures for flood protection, structural or nonstructural, necessary for the protection of lives and property along the Eel River.”³² The explicit exclusion of the Eel River from the riprapping prohibition indicates that the CWSRA was meant to prohibit riprapping on all the other rivers included in the CWSRA system. This interpretation is reinforced by the legislature’s declaration that the use of these rivers in “their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environment,” is of the “highest and most beneficial use.”³³

USACE claims that river velocities ruled out less destructive alternatives, but that assertion is not justified by the technical documents they cite. As USACE explained in letters to apprehensive citizens in the 2016 Final EIS/EIR Public Involvement Appendix:

“The proposed bank protection and launchable rock trench measures are the only two possible measures that could address the significant erosion problem on the American River. **Other measures were eliminated from consideration because the river velocities render them infeasible.** More information on the erosion problem on the American River can be found in the Erosion Protection Appendix to the GRR (GRR Appendix C, Attachment E).”³⁴

The document USACE advised apprehensive citizens to read, the *Erosion Protection Report*, indicates that USACE could avoid a lot of devastation in the Contract 3B area. The experts consulted in the *Erosion Protection Report* understood that to properly prioritize work, USACE should develop “systematic and justifiable criteria for site stabilization.”³⁵ For that to be achieved, USACE would need to analyze lots of soil samples, called borings, due to a “high degree of variability in the bed materials.”³⁶ The experts believed that USACE could not “assure continuity of various layers” without analyzing more borings than they had already, and the experts warned USACE that “interpretations made of connecting the dots between borings could be erroneous.”³⁷ Analyzing more borings could further avoid needless devastation by accounting for “the horizontal and vertical location of the scour resistant clay” for project

²⁹ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 1(b). California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.50.

³⁰ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 15(b).

³¹ Ibid.

³² California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.57.

³³ Ibid, 5093.50.

³⁴ ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement.

³⁵ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 15.

³⁶ Ibid, 17.

³⁷ Ibid.

designs.”³⁸ **Instead of following their expert panel recommendations to analyze borings from possible erosion resistant places along the Lower American River, USACE instead resorts to overgeneralized data to justify a one-size-fits-all approach to erosion protection.** USACE did hire consultants to map out the stratigraphic layers of the Lower American River.³⁹ Fugro Associates collected dozens of borehole samples, including 5 on the south bank between the Mayhew Drain and the Watt Bridge.⁴⁰ While this is too few borings, it is 5 more than USACE used in the *Geotechnical Report* for the area of Contract 3B South. USACE briefly summarized the Fugro Report, noting that the “study demonstrated the presence of two potentially erosion-resistant units,” including widespread “relatively erosion-resistant deposits associated with the Pleistocene-aged Fair Oaks Formation.”⁴¹ Nevertheless, USACE’s geotechnical analysis eschewed Fugro’s geologic mapping for the Contract 3B South area. Instead, its analysis only considered two index points along the entire Lower American River, none upstream of Howe Bridge.⁴²

Table 8-1: Index Point Locations

Basin	Reach	Channel	Bank	Unit	Levee Mile
ARN	A	American River	North	9	1.32
ARN	E	Arcade Creek	North	7	0.90
ARS	B	American River	South	4	3.90
ARS	F	Sacramento River	East	1	5.92
NAT	D	NCC	South	2	1.17

Figure 2: Index point locations in Geotechnical Report used to determine probability of levee failure under different high-water flows.

³⁸ Ibid, 15.

³⁹ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25.

⁴⁰ Fugro Consultants, *Lower American River Stratigraphic and Geomorphic Mapping Report* (2012), Figure 4.10.

⁴¹ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25.

⁴² *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 18.

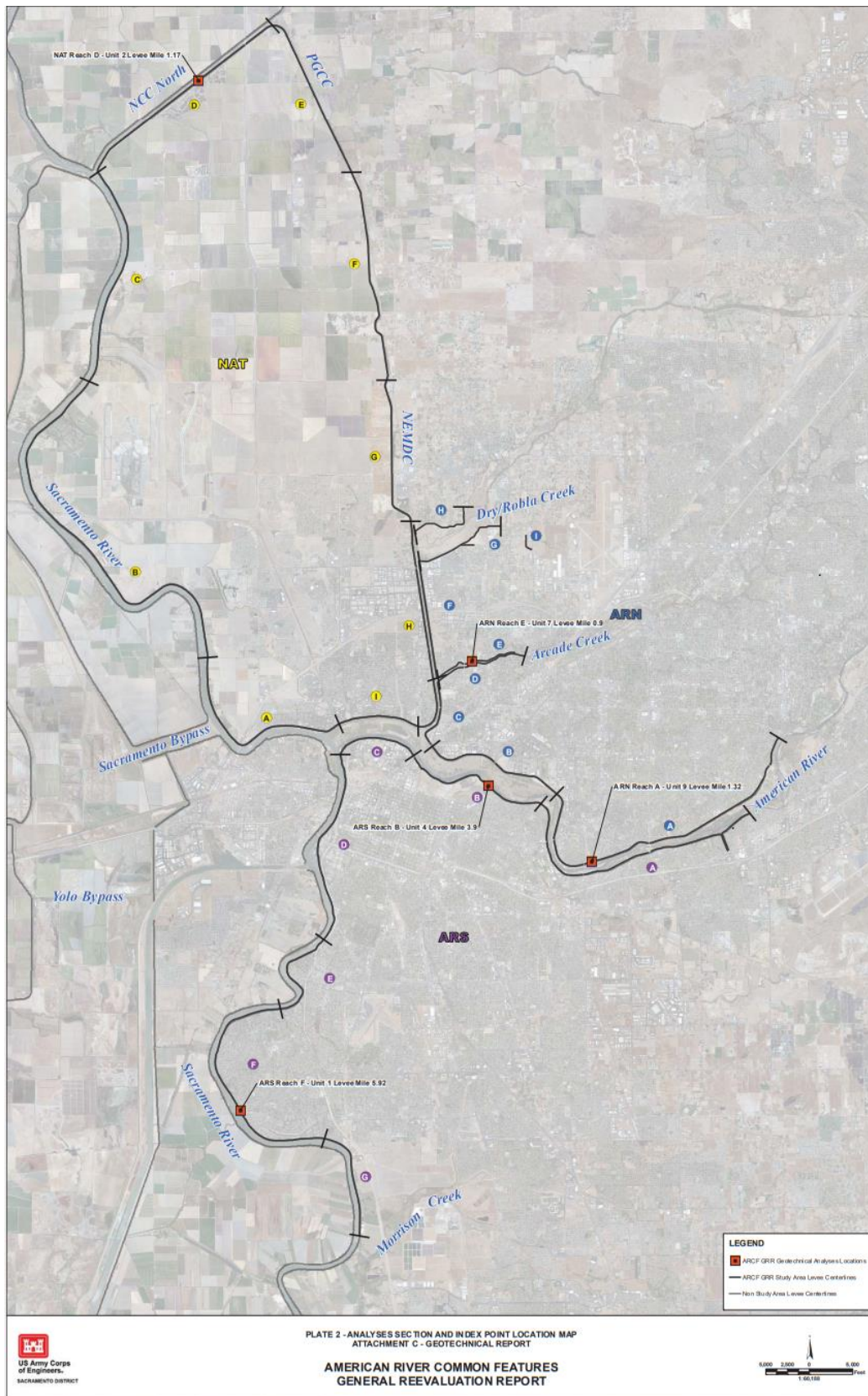


Figure 3: Map of Index Point Locations Considered in Geotechnical Report. Only 2 index points are used for the entire Lower American River

The use of a boring near Howe Avenue Bridge to justify work two miles upstream is especially egregious because the *Erosion Protection Report* indicates that the banks upstream of Howe Avenue consist of fundamentally different bed materials than the banks downstream of Howe Avenue. According to the *Erosion Protection Report*, the area between river mile 6.6-7.5 contains “broader areas of scour where the formation is likely more widely exposed in the channel bed or lies concealed beneath a thin cover of active channel only a few feet thick.”⁴³ This unit “contains no bank resistance to lateral erosion and will not contribute to levee stability.”⁴⁴ This is, in other words, an area with highly erodible bed materials. However, the area upstream of Howe Avenue, especially near the entrance of SARA Park (left bank river mile 10.0-10.3) where the Corps proposes to install a launchable rock trench and launchable rock toe, contains significant amounts of erosion-resistant clay hardpan, which the technical documents refer to as the “Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation.”⁴⁵ The only modeling results USACE provides for the area containing Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation, between river mile 7 and river mile 11, indicate that “for all the flows simulated the sheer stress in the reach with locally exposed hard material is below the critical stress for erosion of moderately resistant material (clay and cemented sand with silt). **Therefore, significant scour below this erosion resistant material/surface is not anticipated.**”⁴⁶

⁴³ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25, 38. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 12, 31, 32.

⁴⁶ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 24.



Figure 4: Erosion Resistant Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation within the left bank river mile 10.0-10.3 area where USACE proposes 2 Launchable Rock Toes and a Launchable Rock Trench. The launchable rock trench, adjacent to this formation, cuts through a forest.



Figure 5: Forest that launchable rock trench at left bank river mile 10.0-10.3 would remove.

Yet in the appendices for the 2016 Final EIS-EIR, USACE only provided specific velocity data for RM 6 and RM 7.5.

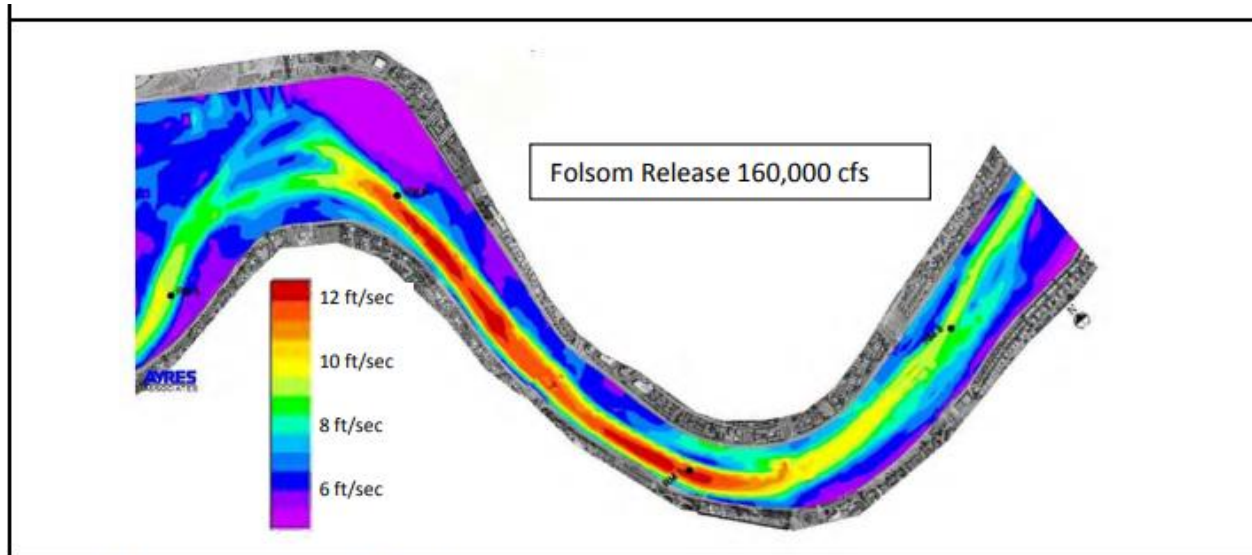


Figure 21. American River Velocity Contours.

Figure 6

As for the rest of the Lower American River, USACE simply states that average velocities range from 6 to 9 ft/sec.⁴⁷ Even at those velocities, biotechnical and bioengineering measures are feasible. Given that velocities along the banks can vary from 0-12 ft/sec during a 160,000 cfs event, an average velocity for the entire LAR cannot meaningfully justify nor exclude particular measures for particular segments.

Proposing destructive launchable riprap for Contract 3B after failing to follow their expert recommendations conflicts with the laws which aim to protect the environment in general and the Lower American River in particular. The American Parkway Plan requires designing erosion projects “to minimize damage to riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat.”⁴⁸ CEQ demands agencies consider feasible mitigation that will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment.⁴⁹ Mitigation includes “avoiding an impact by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.”⁵⁰ Without carefully accounting for the erosion resistant areas of the LAR in its analysis, USACE is proposing potentially unnecessary erosion measures and therefore failing to minimize damage to the environment. CEQA makes it “a duty for public agencies to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible.”⁵¹ According to the California Supreme Court, CEQA was intended to be interpreted in such a manner as to afford the fullest possible protection to

⁴⁷ ARCF 2016 Final EIS-EIR (Updated May 2016), Appendix G – Biological Assessment, p. 93-94.

⁴⁸ *Sacramento County American River Parkway Plan 2008*, Section 4.16, p. 85.

⁴⁹ Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

⁵¹ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15021(a).

the environment within the reasonable scope of the statutory language.⁵² It is not unreasonable for USACE to carefully determine where they can avoid environmentally destructive measures by taking into account geologic mappings already in its possession. Ignoring those geologic mappings, intentionally or not, biases USACE towards the most sweeping and environmentally destructive erosion measures.

Bias for riprap is also evident in the expert opinions USACE decided to share, and withhold, about erosion risk in the Lower American River. To determine risk of levee failure for each segment of the Lower American River, USACE contracted with HDR Ford Engineers, who elicited expert opinions and then used those opinions to estimate probabilities of levee failure.⁵³ USACE incorporates by reference the *Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4* technical memorandum but not the more expansive document from which the memo is based, *Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4*.⁵⁴ This is a regrettable decision considering the latter document contains the full range of expert opinions for tier classification, including what they see as favorable conditions. By contrast, the technical memo typically only pulls opinions on the adverse conditions for the highest risk segments, classified as tier 1. Not citing the document with the full range of expert opinions on both adverse and favorable conditions creates the illusion that there is consensus for USACE's singular measure of launchable rock where none exists. Experts might have agreed on risk rating, although even this proposition is dubious. For left bank river mile 9.8-10, one expert wrote "yikes" while another indicated he was a no-vote on intervention.⁵⁵ Likewise, despite its tier 1 classification, one expert noted that the left bank river mile 10.4-10.5 segment enjoyed a history of good performance.⁵⁶ CEQA does not require "technical perfection in an EIR, but rather adequacy, completeness, **and a good faith effort at full disclosure**."⁵⁷ CEQA also concedes that "disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate."⁵⁸ Nevertheless, CEQA requires that the EIR "summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts."⁵⁹ **Neglecting to cite "Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment," as well as neglecting to summarize the substantial points of disagreement among the experts it elicited, deprives the public and policy makers of necessary information to determine the adequacy of USACE's very limited proposals which lack biotechnical and bioengineering alternatives.**

Experts notably disagreed about USACE's insinuation that the banks all along the Lower American River are subject to high river velocities. Some of the experts noted low velocities for several areas where USACE has proposed launchable riprap. For left bank river mile 9.8-10.0, where USACE proposes a launchable rock toe, one expert stated that water velocities were too

⁵² *Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors*, 8 Cal. 3d 247.

⁵³ HDR and Ford Engineers, *Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4 Tier Classification Technical Memorandum*, (Sacramento, November 13, 2019).

⁵⁴ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 10-1.

⁵⁵ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, *Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4*, (2019), E38.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, E48.

⁵⁷ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15003.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 15151.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

low on levee at 200 year flood flows, 160,000 cfs, to cause serious damage.⁶⁰ For left bank river mile 10.0-10.3, where USACE proposes two launchable rock toes and a launchable rock trench, two of the experts cited low velocities on levee and upper bank, with one noting “water velocities low on levee face at 160 kcfs.”⁶¹ For left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, an expert stated that water velocities were low on the levee at 160 kcfs.⁶²

Such observations are consistent with the velocity contour maps in the *General Reevaluation Report*.⁶³ While these maps show that at 160,000 cfs velocities along the some of the LAR’s banks can reach a significant velocity of 12-13 ft/sec, between left bank river miles 10 and 11, which comprises most of Contract 3B South, estimated velocities along the banks during a 200 year, 160,000 cfs event only range from 0-1 ft/sec to 6-7 ft/sec. At these velocities

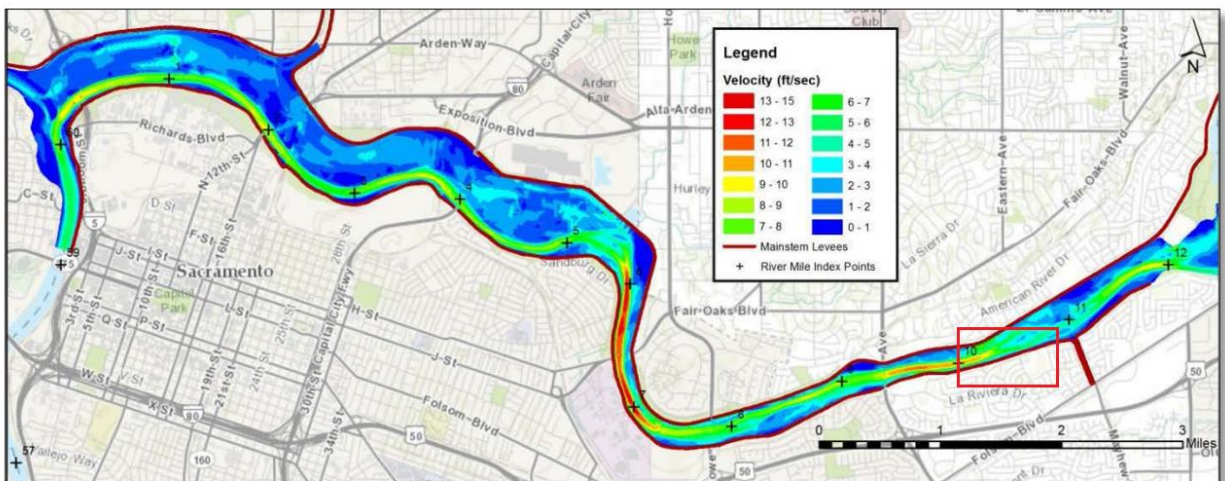


Figure 2-8: Velocities in the Lower American River at a discharge of 160,000 cfs

Figure 7

USACE could have considered several types of lining materials for erosion protection, at least according to table 4-4 of the *Erosion Protection Report*. The permissible velocity for 6-inch gravel/cobble is 4-7.5 ft/sec, 6-8 ft/sec for class a turf vegetation, and some types of soil bioengineering can withstand up to 12 ft/sec.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, *Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4*, (2019), E38.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, E46.

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, 2-21.

⁶⁴ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 43.

Table 4-4. Permissible shear and velocity for selected lining materials (Fischenich 2001)

Permissible Shear and Velocity for Selected Lining Materials ¹				
Boundary Category	Boundary Type	Permissible Shear Stress (lb/sq ft)	Permissible Velocity (ft/sec)	Citation(s)
<u>Soils</u>	Fine colloidal sand	0.02 - 0.03	1.5	A
	Sandy loam (noncolloidal)	0.03 - 0.04	1.75	A
	Alluvial silt (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	2	A
	Silty loam (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	1.75 - 2.25	A
	Firm loam	0.075	2.5	A
	Fine gravels	0.075	2.5	A
	Stiff clay	0.26	3 - 4.5	A, F
	Alluvial silt (colloidal)	0.26	3.75	A
	Graded loam to cobbles	0.38	3.75	A
	Graded silts to cobbles	0.43	4	A
	Shales and hardpan	0.67	6	A
	1-in.	0.33	2.5 - 5	A
<u>Gravel/Cobble</u>	2-in.	0.67	3 - 6	A
	6-in.	2.0	4 - 7.5	A
	12-in.	4.0	5.5 - 12	A
	Class A turf	3.7	6 - 8	E, N
<u>Vegetation</u>	Class B turf	2.1	4 - 7	E, N
	Class C turf	1.0	3.5	E, N
	Long native grasses	1.2 - 1.7	4 - 6	G, H, L, N
	Short native and bunch grass	0.7 - 0.95	3 - 4	G, H, L, N
<u>Temporary Degradable RECPs</u>	Reed plantings	0.1-0.6	N/A	E, N
	Hardwood tree plantings	0.41-2.5	N/A	E, N
	Jute net	0.45	1 - 2.5	E, H, M
	Straw with net	1.5 - 1.65	1 - 3	E, H, M
<u>Non-Degradable RECPs</u>	Coconut fiber with net	2.25	3 - 4	E, M
	Fiberglass roving	2.00	2.5 - 7	E, H, M
	Unvegetated	3.00	5 - 7	E, G, M
	Partially established	4.0-6.0	7.5 - 15	E, G, M
<u>Riprap</u>	Fully vegetated	8.00	8 - 21	F, L, M
	6 - in. d_{50}	2.5	5 - 10	H
	9 - in. d_{50}	3.8	7 - 11	H
	12 - in. d_{50}	5.1	10 - 13	H
<u>Soil Bioengineering</u>	18 - in. d_{50}	7.6	12 - 16	H
	24 - in. d_{50}	10.1	14 - 18	E
	Wattles	0.2 - 1.0	3	C, I, J, N
	Reed fascine	0.6-1.25	5	E
<u>Hard Surfacing</u>	Coir roll	3 - 5	8	E, M, N
	Vegetated coir mat	4 - 8	9.5	E, M, N
	Live brush mattress (initial)	0.4 - 4.1	4	B, E, I
	Live brush mattress (grown)	3.90-8.2	12	B, C, E, I, N
	Brush layering (initial/grown)	0.4 - 6.25	12	E, I, N
	Live fascine	1.25-3.10	6 - 8	C, E, I, J
	Live willow stakes	2.10-3.10	3 - 10	E, N, O
	Gabions	10	14 - 19	D
	Concrete	12.5	>18	H

¹ Ranges of values generally reflect multiple sources of data or different testing conditions.

A. Chang, H.H. (1988). F. Julien, P.Y. (1995). K. Sprague, C.J. (1999).
B. Florineth. (1982). G. Kouwen, N.; Li, R. M.; and Simons, D.B., (1980). L. Temple, D.M. (1980).
C. Gerstgraser, C. (1998). H. Norman, J. N. (1975). M. TXDOT (1999)
D. Goff, K. (1999). I. Schiechl, H. M. and R. Stern. (1996). N. Data from Author (2001)
E. Gray, D.H., and Sotir, R.B. (1996). J. Schoklitsch, A. (1937). O. USACE (1997).

ERDC TN-EMRRP SR-29

Figure 8

Launchable riprap, in short, was most certainly not the only option USACE could consider. USACE instead chose to use overgeneralized data which biases their proposals towards the sole possibility of launchable riprap. Local flood control experts, on the other hand, recognized the feasibility of less destructive biotechnical measures. For left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, the consultants who put together the 2017 *Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring*

Report for the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency recommended as a possible solution “cobbles with vegetation or other biotechnical measures such as brush mattress, willow waddles or brush boxes (all supplemented with plantings).”⁶⁵ This is a recommendation USACE should explore in a new SEIS/SEIR.

USACE’s velocity contour maps may show even lower velocities along the banks. The quality of the maps seems biased towards justifying the most extreme possible erosion measures, as the maps are too zoomed out to precisely ascertain river flow velocities along the banks, except for river mile 6.6-7.5, which happens to be part of the Lower American River where velocities are fastest along the banks. For this segment of the river, USACE provided high quality, zoomed in maps (Figure 4). None of the other sub-reaches of the Lower American River got such scrupulous treatment. For left bank river mile 10-11, where USACE proposes three launchable rock toes and a launchable rock trench, we can better perceive the river’s flow behavior by looking at the velocity contour maps from the *2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report*, which were derived from the same hydraulic modeling as the velocity contour maps provided in the 2016 *General Reevaluation Report* (GRR).⁶⁶ The more high quality maps from the 2017 report show that from 115,000 cfs to 145,000 cfs, there is little change in the velocity of flows along left bank river mile 10 to 11. In both cases, the water is almost stagnant, moving at 0-2 ft/sec for most of the river mile and rising to only about 4-6 ft/sec at around left bank river mile 10.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ MBK Engineers, *2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report*, (May 2018), 10.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Appendix B, Velocity Contours. December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 4-150, 4-151, 3.3-5. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, 4-7. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Appendix, 47.

⁶⁷ MBK Engineers, *2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report*, (May 2018), Appendix B, Velocity Contours, Applied Velocity Lots 115,000 cfs plate 8 and Applied Velocity Plots 145,000 cfs plate 8.

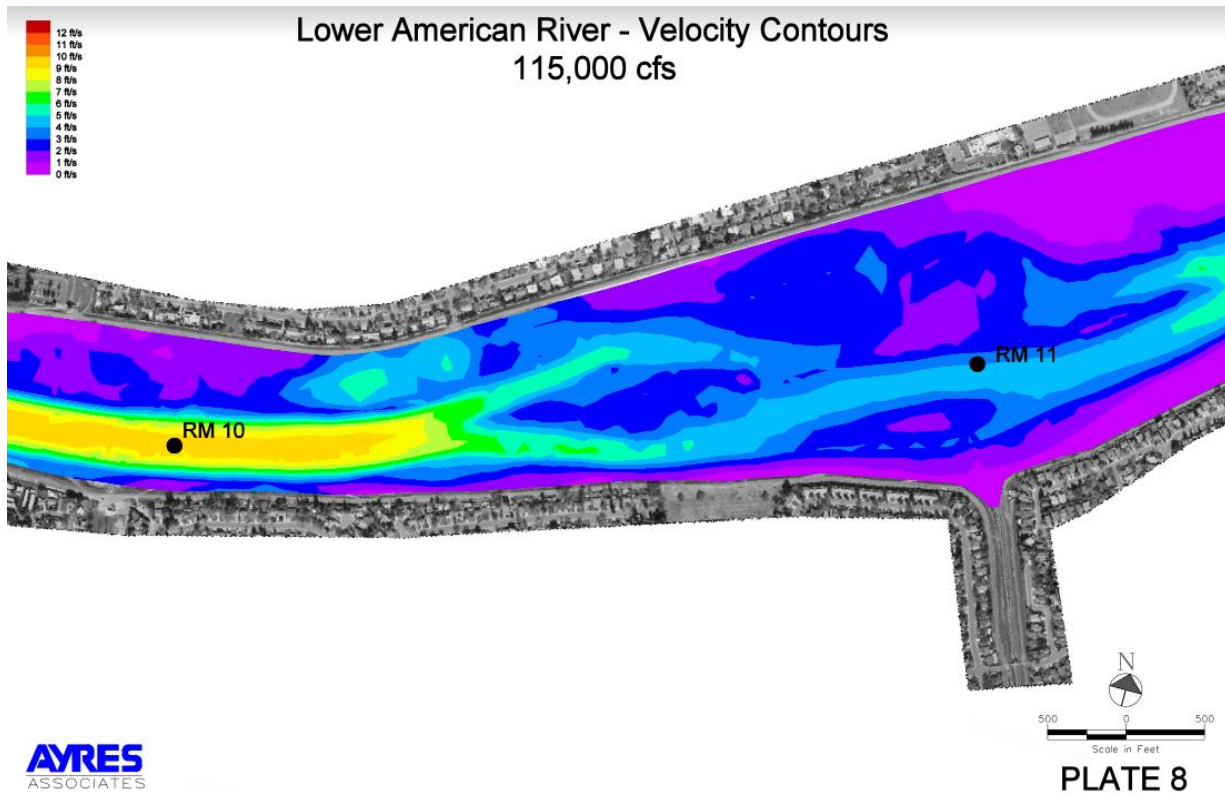


Figure 9

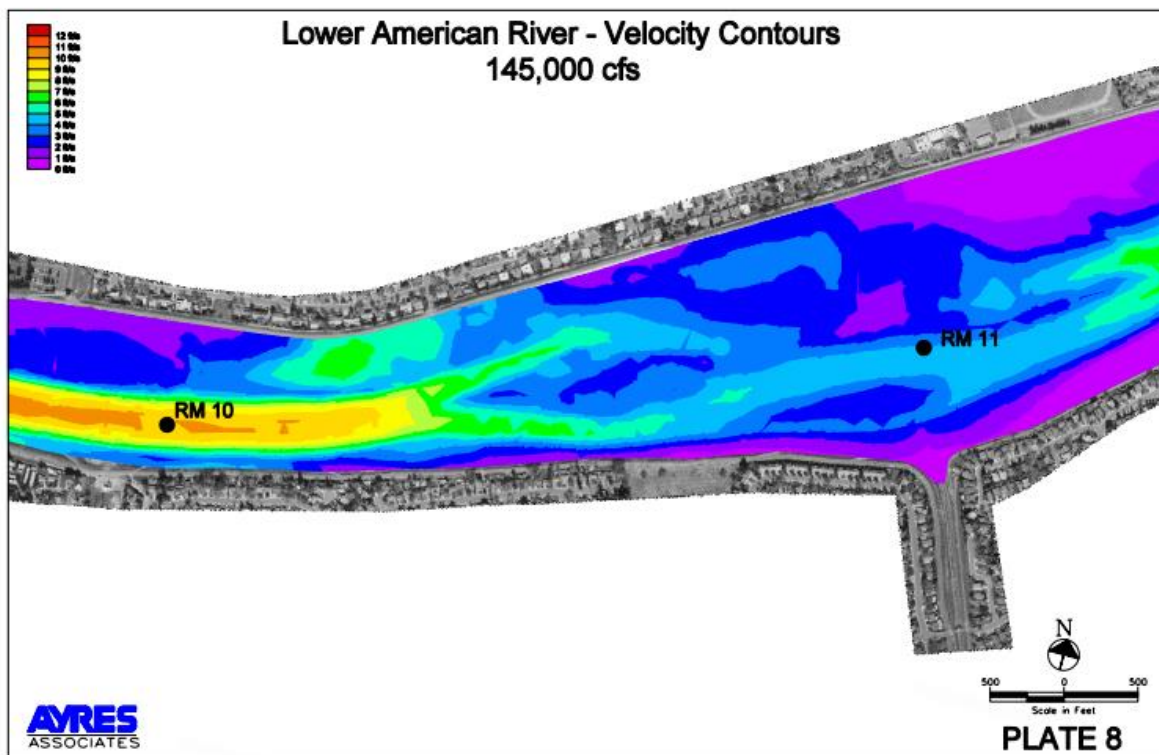


Figure 10

145,000 cfs does not quite get us to the 160,000 cfs mark, but it should be emphasized that there was very little change from 115,000 to 145,000 cfs, that some of USACE's experts noted low velocities near levees at 160,000 cfs between river miles 9.8 and 10.5, and that even the discernable part GRR's low resolution velocity contour maps show that at worst river velocities reach 6-7 ft/sec around left bank river mile 10.

The expert opinions on the favorable conditions created by bank vegetation reinforce the imperative that USACE should and could explore bioengineering alternatives. For left bank river miles 9.8-10, 10.0-10.3, and 10.4-10.5, experts noted the presence of vegetation as a favorable condition. For left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, one expert observed that a favorable condition was "dense veg/root mats" that cover much of the bank, as well as a fully grass levee and a dense shrub mass at the top of the bank that attenuates velocity and wind wave.⁶⁸ Yet another expert highlighted "good past performance" and "vegetation on berm" as a favorable condition for this segment.⁶⁹ According to table 2 of the *2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report*, soils with good vegetative cover are resistant against erosion for up to 6-7 ft/sec.⁷⁰



Channel Material	Mean Channel Velocity (fps)
Fine Sand	2
Course Sand	4
Sandy Silt	2
Silt Clay	3.5
Clay	6
Soils with good vegetative cover	6-7
Poor rock (usually sedimentary)	10
Good rock (usually igneous or hard metamorphic)	20

Figure 11: Table 2 - Suggested Maximum Channel Water Velocities

The experts did warn that if erosion took bank vegetation, the risk of levee failure could increase.⁷¹ Experts also expressed concern about encroachment, sill degradation, and bed lowering.⁷² But given that velocities in this area are low and vegetation already protects the

⁶⁸ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, *Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4* (2019), E48.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ MBK Engineers, *2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report*, (May 2018), 5.

⁷¹ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, *Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4* (2019), E46.

⁷² Ibid.

bank, USACE could explore alternatives that preserve, enhance, and augment on-site vegetation instead of removing almost all vegetation. USACE could even explore the possibility of enlisting the public—such as environmental volunteer organizations—in plans to maintain the vegetation on streambanks. This would fulfill CEQ's command that public involvement “should be fully provided for in the development of mitigation and monitoring procedures.”⁷³ USACE could also consider techniques which recruit sediment. One example of this being done in a high energy river downstream of a dam (such as the Lower American River) was on the Middle Green River in Washington, where, instead of hard armoring, King County built a bioengineered bank stabilization project by using logs at the river's toe secured to the bank with coir fabric, soil wraps, and vegetation, adding roughness and recruiting sediment. One of the project designers assured that “this type of technique is what I would advocate even in a high energy environment.”⁷⁴

Much is at risk if USACE neglects to explore bioengineering alternatives that will work with nature instead of against it, including public safety. **Research going back nearly a century indicates that riparian forests play a vital role in bank stability and flood control.** Over 95 years ago an engineer observed that during the Great Mississippi flood of 1927, levees only failed where trees had been removed:

“It was interesting to inspect various sections of the big flood. Wherever a heavy stand of native willows or other forest trees were growing in the burrow pit and on the land between the river the erosion from wave action and current was very slight and on miles of levee where tree growth existed no injury was caused whatsoever. **On the contrary, where land was cleared and there were no obstructions to break the waves, injury and destruction were evident along the entire distance.**”⁷⁵

Likewise, studies of the catastrophic 1993 Missouri Flood found a direct correlation between the width of riparian forest and the likelihood of levee failure. Where riparian forest had been cleared or thinned, levees were 74-88% more likely to fail.⁷⁶ Trees also play a preeminent role in armoring banks from erosion. According to Rood et al (2014) mature riparian trees are highly effective at preventing erosion, even superior to grass, and they recommend that “riparian forests should be conserved to provide bank stability and to maintain an equilibrium of river and floodplain dynamics.”⁷⁷ Besides armoring banks, trees make armor less necessary by

⁷³ Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011, p. 13.

⁷⁴ FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*, 11-12.

⁷⁵ O.S. Scheifele, 1928. “Protection of River Banks and Levees.” *The Canadian Engineer*: 123.

⁷⁶ J.P. Dwyer and D.R. Larsen, 1997. “Value of Woody River Corridors in Levee Protection Along the Missouri River in 1993.” *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230348698_Value_of_Woody_River_Corridors_in_Levee_Protection_Alone_the_Missouri_River_in_1993. Stephen B. Allen, John P. Dwyer, Douglas C. Wallace, and Elizabeth A. Cook, 2023. “Missouri River Flood of 1993: Role of Woody Corridor Width in Levee Protection.” *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1752-1688.2003.tb04416.x>

⁷⁷ S.B. Rood, S.G. Bigelow, M.L. Polzin, K.M. Gill, and C.A. Coburn. (2015). “Biological bank protection: trees are more effective than grasses at resisting erosion from major river floods.” *Ecohydrol*, 8: 772–779. Doi: [10.1002/eco.1544](https://doi.org/10.1002/eco.1544).

redirecting the energy of rivers from the banks towards the center of the channel, thereby reducing scour and erosion. Such a phenomenon was observed almost a century ago by the aforementioned engineer, who remarked: “experience has shown that where a clump of trees were allowed to spring up on the river face of levees eddies were caused and erosion started down stream from trees.”⁷⁸ Late twentieth century modeling has confirmed early twentieth century observations. When Johannes DeVries applied vegetation models specifically for the dimensions of the Sacramento River, looking at areas with and without vegetation on levees, he found that reducing dense vegetation next to levees generally increased the velocity of water, and therefore, the potential for scour.⁷⁹ In 2021 and 2023, an academic team which had worked with the California Department of Transportation incorporated vegetation into a high-fidelity model to account for trees in large-eddy simulations of the Lower American River. They found that dense strands of mature trees had “a significant impact on the computed flow field by diverting the high-velocity core of the flood away from the banks toward the center of the channel.”⁸⁰ Results showed that “velocities in the center of the river increased by approximately 50%” but “were nearly damped out entirely along the banks.”⁸¹ For the case without trees, the flow was “distributed throughout the full river width, with high velocities near the banks.”⁸²

FIGURE 7 Cross-sections were compared along three locations of the American River (a). At Section 1-1, the vegetation model significantly damped out flows along both banks (blue regions) and increased velocities in the centre of the channel (red region) compared to LES without trees (b).

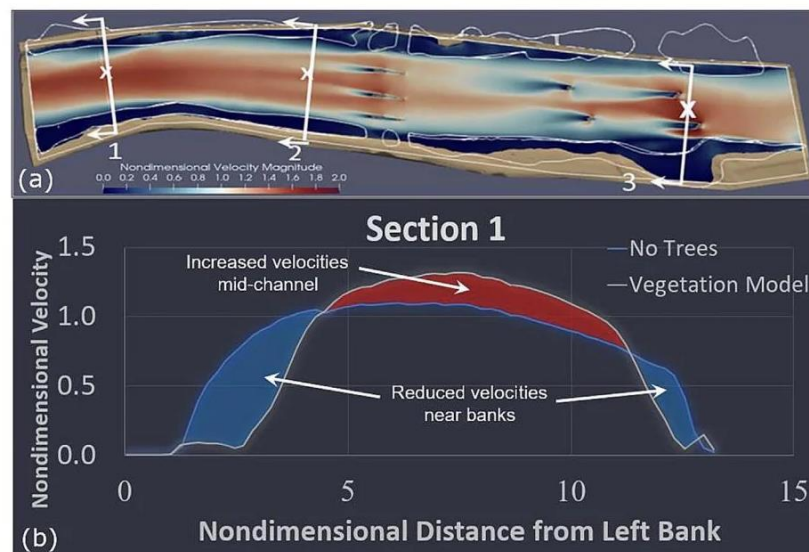


Figure 12

⁷⁸ O.S. Scheifele, 1928. “Protection of River Banks and Levees.” *The Canadian Engineer*: 122.

⁷⁹ Johannes DeVries, *Vegetation Effects on River Hydraulics, Floodway Conveyance & Velocity Response*, SACRAMENTO AREA FLOOD CONTROL AGENCY (Aug. 28, 2007).

⁸⁰ Kevin Flora, Christian Santoni, and Ali Khosronejad. 2021. “Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River Under Flood Conditions.” *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering*: 05021006-8. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)HY.1943-7900.0001912](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)HY.1943-7900.0001912). Kevin Flora and Ali Khosronejad. 2023. “Uncertainty Quantification of Bank Vegetation Impacts on the Flood Flow Field in the American River California Using Large-Eddy Simulations.” *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/esp.5745>: 7

⁸¹ Flora, Santoni, and Khosronejad, 05021006-12.

⁸² Ibid, 05021006-8.

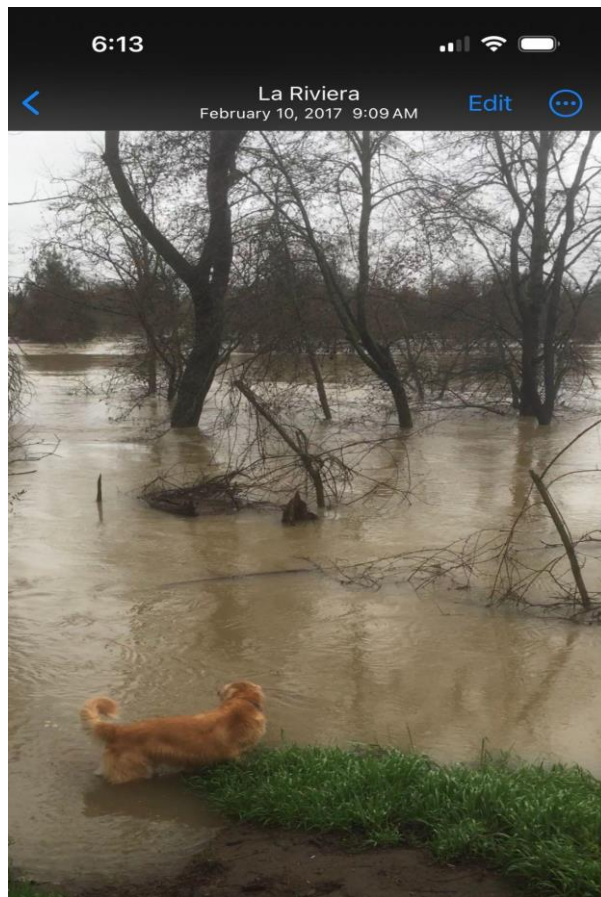


Figure 13: Resident picture of left bank river mile 10.4-10.5 during the 2017 high water event (80,000 cfs). The water was so stagnant his dog could wade in it.

USACE still cites as the basis for its Contract 3B proposal the 2-D hydraulic modeling from the 2004 Ayres Report, *Lower American River, Erosion Susceptibility Analysis for Infrequent Flood Events*.⁸³ This outdated 2-D hydraulic model almost certainly overestimates velocities along banks with large trees. As Khosronejad's team explained:

Incorporating vegetation into high-fidelity computational models is imperative for obtaining accurate modeling results. In this study, when trees were accounted for in large-eddy simulations, a drastic effect on redistributing the high-velocity flow away from the banks and increasing its magnitude near the center of the American River was observed.⁸⁴

Based on modern, advanced scientific hydraulic modeling simulations on the Lower American River, we can expect that removing 685 trees will make erosion much worse for years to come by allowing river flows to crash against the banks during high water events. Such a

⁸³ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 4-150, 4-151, 3.3-5. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Appendix, 47.

⁸⁴ Kevin Flora, Christian Santoni, and Ali Khosronejad. 2021. "Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River Under Flood Conditions." *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering*. 05021006-12. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)HY.1943-7900.0001912](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)HY.1943-7900.0001912).

phenomenon is already coming to fruition. Some of USACE's soil-filled revetments suffered significant erosion in 2023 from just 30,000 cfs flows.



Figure 14

Therefore, USACE risks increasing erosion potential with mass tree removal in the Contract 3B area.

Even though USACE obtained approval for the 2016 Record of Decision, they should still explore a full range of alternative measures, especially considering the significant passage of time since 2016 and the fact that new information is available (e.g. the 2021 and 2023 Khosronejad studies discussed above) contradicting the 2016 findings. CEQ directs agencies to carefully reexamine an EIS when a proposal has not been implemented within five years of the Record of Decision to account for new “information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.”⁸⁵ As already outlined, **in the 7+ years since the Chief of Engineers issued the 2016 ROD, new Caltrans commissioned research has shown that river velocities along the banks of the Lower American River are significantly slower where there are mature trees than what had been previously indicated by older models. Considering that USACE ruled out alternative measures because of fast river velocities, it is critical for them to now consider this more recent research.** Furthermore, the mandate to identify the least environmentally destructive approach applies whenever during any public review process. As CEQ makes clear, the purpose of the review process is for the

⁸⁵ Council on Environmental Quality, *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations*, (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

public and other agencies to assist the lead agency in developing and determining environmentally preferable alternatives.⁸⁶ If an alternative is identified in public comments that is not unreasonable, CEQ demands lead agencies to issue a new SEIS to explore that alternative.⁸⁷ Finally, USACE assured citizens concerned about their overly broad, one-size-fits all proposals in the 2016 EIS/EIR that before initiating work on individual contracts and project segments, USACE would explore a fuller range of alternatives. As USACE wrote to Matthew Carr, after analyzing individual segments of the LAR, “if some sort of bank protection is determined to be necessary, other options to reduce impacts, including bioengineering measures, will be analyzed.”⁸⁸ Not only did USACE break its promise to analyze bioengineering measures in supplemental EIS/EIR’s, but when the EPA suggested in the 2022 Public Scoping comments that USACE offer bioengineering alternatives in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR, USACE dismissively responded that it had already explored alternatives measures in the 2016 GRR.⁸⁹ USACE should heed the EPA’s suggestions. If USACE installs launchable rock toes and trenches where alternative measures were feasible, it not only risks exacerbating erosion, but it could also irreparably damage precious resources of the American River Parkway.

One of the American River Parkway’s precious resources that USACE’s proposal endangers is heritage oak trees. CEQA states that “knowledge of the regional setting is critical to the assessment of environmental impacts.”⁹⁰ Thus, **“special emphasis should be placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to that region and would be affected by the project.”**⁹¹ **Heritage Oaks constitutes such a rare and special resource for Sacramento County, so much so that they are protected by law.** The Sacramento County Code defines a “heritage tree” as a “California oak tree growing on any land in Sacramento County, including privately owned land, with a trunk sixty inches or greater in girth measured four and one-half feet above the ground.”⁹² The Sacramento County Tree Ordinance decrees that “in order to promote the health, safety, and enhance the beauty and general welfare of Sacramento County,” it shall be the policy of the County “to provide for the **special protection** of heritage and landmark trees within the unincorporated area of the County.”⁹³ Contract 3B South applies entirely within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. The December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR lists the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance as one of the state and local plans which govern activities within this project area.⁹⁴ There is no other mention of the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR, even though USACE’s proposal to remove hundreds of trees in the Contract 3B South Area is inconsistent with the

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Letter to Matthew Carr from Josephine R. Axt, May 24, 2016, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement. P. 1.

⁸⁹ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendix A. Nepa Scoping Materials, Appendix D. Response to Comment Number 15-1.

⁹⁰ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15124(c).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Sacramento County, California County Code, Chapter 19.04.030.

⁹³ Ibid, Chapter 19.04.010.

⁹⁴ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 1-7.

goals and purpose of Sacramento County's tree code. **Considering that some of the heritage trees in the area of Contract 3B South are over 300 years old, their removal would constitute an essentially "unmitigable" impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway.**



Figure 15: Heritage Trees in the Project Area of Contract 3B South

Given that the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance affords special protection to heritage trees within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County, dozens of which live in the Contract 3B South area, one would expect the SEIS/SEIR to address potential impacts that pertain specifically within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. There is no distinction in this SEIS/SEIR made between the impacts on heritage trees in unincorporated Sacramento County and in the city of Sacramento, which does not provide for the same level of protection to heritage trees. USACE treats the environmental impacts of Contract 3B North, which is in Sacramento City, and Contract 3B South, which is in unincorporated Sacramento County, together. This inadequate level of environmental analysis fails to account for how different areas within the project study protect and regard their environmental resources.

The actual discussion of what proportion of heritage trees this project would impact is vague, unclear, and inadequate. In the entire SEIS/SEIR, heritage trees are mentioned on 9 pages.⁹⁵ On some of those pages those mentions are only incidental. As for Contract 3B South specifically, where heritage trees enjoy special protection, the heritage oaks are mentioned on two pages. The first mention, on page 3-5, is that one alternative was dismissed as “it would have required removal of heritage oaks.”⁹⁶ The second mention is on page 3.1-23, where it states that “a buffer of heritage oaks would be kept in place near both Oak Meadow Park and Larchmont Park, so the viewshed of trees from those parks would not be affected.”⁹⁷ The language of the first mention of heritage oaks for Contract 3B South implies USACE has designed the project to avoid removing any heritage oaks. But the language of the second mention implies USACE is only keeping heritage oaks in select areas, such as in front of parks to preserve their “viewshed.” If USACE was not removing heritage oaks in other areas of the project footprint, why would USACE mention keeping a buffer of heritage oaks near Larchmont Park?

USACE simply fails to accurately and concretely communicate likely impacts to large woody vegetation, including heritage trees. The SEIS/SEIR mentions selecting designs to “minimize impacts to heritage oaks” or to “reduce impacts to heritage oaks” or making refinements that would “substantially reduce or avoid several of the significant impacts” to “riparian vegetation, and loss of heritage oaks.”⁹⁸ But does this language of reduction, minimization, and avoidance really convey anything coherent to apprehensive citizens? Would the results resemble reasonable expectations based on USACE’s language? We can use the 2016 FEIS/FEIR, as well as American River Contract’s 1 and 2, to explore the consistency between USACE’s language and what the public might reasonably expect. In the 2016 FEIS/FEIR, USACE asserted that for erosion measures on the American River, removal of waterside vegetation “would primarily consist of shrubby vegetation and grasses” and that “larger trees in the bank protection project” would be “protected in place.”⁹⁹ USACE’s diagrams of a launchable rock trench and of bank protection indicate that most trees would remain on the banks after the installation of riprap. For the “American River Launchable Trench Scenario,”

⁹⁵ Ibid, 3-4, 3-5, 3-42, 3-107, 4-144, 3. 1-3, 3.1-23, 3.1-25, 4.1-40.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 3-5.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 3.1-23.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 3-5, 3-107.

⁹⁹ ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), 104. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, 4-12.

figure 1 of the Final EIS/EIR (figure 4-9 in the *General Reevaluation Report*) shows that tree removal would only occur on the levee itself and at the base of the levee.¹⁰⁰ It indicates that USACE would spare most trees on the riparian bench and on the natural levee slope. For “American River Bank Protection Scenario,” no part of the bank is highlighted for vegetation removal or tree clearing.¹⁰¹ From these diagrams, an apprehensive citizen could reasonably conclude USACE would remove few trees, if any at all, while installing either launchable rock trenches or bank protection.

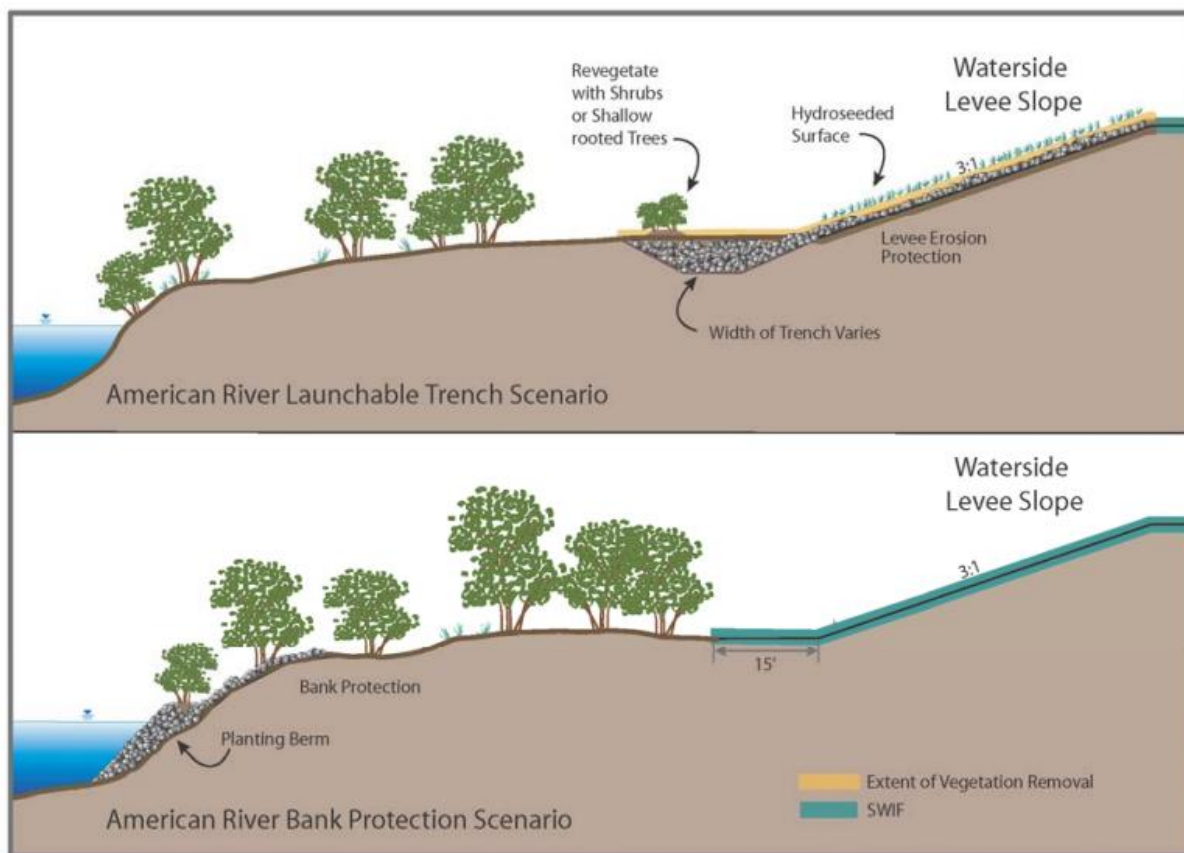


Figure 1. Bank Protection and Launchable Rock Trench Typical Design.

Figure 16

USACE has added new kinds of riprap since the 2016 FEIS/FEIR, but site 2-1 of American River Contract 1 contained the measures proposed for the Lower American River in 2016, Bank Protection and Launchable rock trenches.¹⁰² Because it contained no new measures, USACE issued a supplemental environmental assessment for American River Contract 1 instead of a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 37.

¹⁰¹ ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016)

¹⁰² American River Contract 1 Final SEA/SEIR (April 2022), 2-2, 2-8.

supplemental environmental impact statement, which NEPA would require if there were significant impacts not anticipated in the original environmental impact statement.¹⁰³ In other words, American River Contract 1 is what USACE envisioned when it proposed bank protection riprap and launchable rock trenches for the Lower American River in the *General Reevaluation Report*. Here are some pictures USACE provided for the Lower American River Task Force at their March 2023 public meeting.¹⁰⁴



Figure 17

¹⁰³ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Sec. 106(a)(2).

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LARTF-Mar-2023-Slides-upd-3-23-23rdx.pdf>.



CONTRACT 1 (SITE 2-1)

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Figure 18

Not a single shrub nor tree remained at site 2-1 after USACE installed the launchable riprap. In the SEIS/SEIR for American River Contract 2, USACE stated it would “minimize the removal of existing riparian vegetation” and that “impacts to forested wetlands will be minimized to the greatest extent feasible.”¹⁰⁵ The following picture shows the most extensive work USACE did under American River Contract 2 at Site 2-3.



Figure 19

¹⁰⁵ American River Contract 2 Final SEIS/SEIR - September 2021, 3-97, 5-7.

Once again, USACE's measures left not a single shrub nor tree. Based on the little information USACE provides to the public, I cannot determine whether USACE could have saved at least one tree on these slopes. What I can say is that if somebody told me they were going to minimize forest tree removal, or that large trees would be protected in place, and in the end no trees remained, I would feel like I had been bamboozled. The aftermath of these projects contradicts USACE's figures on launchable rock trenches and bank protection when it comes to trees. As for minimizing vegetation loss on American River Contract 2, whose designs deviated from the 2016 GRR, USACE's language may or may not be technically accurate, but it conveyed nothing of the actual impacts. **If no trees will remain in a segment, USACE should state that. If only a few trees will remain in a section after construction, USACE should state that.** Likewise, if most of the trees will remain, USACE should state that. But "minimizing vegetation loss" tells the public nothing about how much forest will be lost and how much the visual resources of the Parkway will be impacted.

For the 2023 SEIS/SEIR, USACE adds launchable rock toes and tiebacks, features not included in the *General Reevaluation Report*, but USACE claims these new measures "are similar enough in method and location on the levee to the erosion protection methods described in the No Action Alternative that the visual impact from the design refinements would be similar to what was already analyzed in the No Action Alternative."¹⁰⁶ Based on the denuded landscapes of American River Contract's 1 and 2, the projected similarity of the 2023 proposed measures to the 2016 proposed measures is very concerning. The results of past ARCF projects make it reasonable to assume that USACE will remove virtually all the riparian forest, including dozens of beloved heritage oak trees, in the Contract 3B area despite the language of avoidance and minimizing damage.

USACE should consider that, in the words of the California Supreme Court, an "EIR is intended to demonstrate to an apprehensive citizenry that the agency has in fact analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action."¹⁰⁷ USACE's vague and contradictory language as regards trees in general and heritage trees in particular for the 2023 SEIS/SEIR does not demonstrate more than a perfunctory consideration of ecological implications, especially since concerns about riparian forest removal were raised for the 2016 EIS/EIR. In a letter dated February 22, 2016, an apprehensive citizen lamented that it would not be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of USACE's mitigation for cutting down forest "without knowing what sections of forest will be cut and what sections will be replaced on the same site versus replaced nearby versus replaced on a distant site. In short, the Corps is saying, 'trust us to do the right thing.'"¹⁰⁸ With so little detail on heritage oaks, USACE is still asking the public to just trust it to do the right thing. CEQA requires that the degree of specificity in an EIR "correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR."¹⁰⁹ USACE is cutting down specific forests and specific heritage oaks, but it provides few details on its removals in the SEIS/SEIR. Based on the discrepancy between its language in the 2016

¹⁰⁶ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3.1-24.

¹⁰⁷ *People ex rel. Department of Public Works v. Bosio*, 47 Cal. App. 3d 495.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Matthew Carr, Graham Brownstein, et al, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement.

¹⁰⁹ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15146(a).

Final EIS/EIR, the language in American River Contract 2, and the actual denuded landscapes around Sac State, an apprehensive citizen will find no relief when USACE assures them that they are designing these projects to minimize loss to vegetation and heritage oaks.

Providing the public a clearer indication in the SEIR/SEIS of how many trees USACE will remove, what type of trees they will remove, and which segments of the LAR will suffer the most tree removal is feasible for USACE. At the December 12, 2023 public presentation for the Lower American River Task Force, USACE told the public they were going to remove 522 trees for Contract 3B South and 163 trees for Contract 3B North.¹¹⁰ USACE could not provide this information to the public unless they knew either exactly every tree they were going to cut down, or at least mapped out all the areas in the project footprint and estimated the relative density of trees in each segment. USACE neglected to provide the data on tree removal in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, even though CEQA requires that an EIR include “relevant information sufficient to permit full assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and **members of the public.**”¹¹¹ Relevant information also includes “maps, plot plans, and diagrams.”¹¹² CEQA clarifies that an EIR’s sufficiency is to be reviewed in light of what is feasible. USACE could easily provide the public with a tree inventory map, or a map which indicates through a color-coded intensity key what minimum proportion of trees they plan to remove in each segment. No such map exists in the SEIS/SEIR, although USACE was able to provide a tree inventory map upon request in September of 2023 that marked every tree in the Contract 3B area along with their size. Such a map would bring USACE closer to the “sufficient degree of analysis” necessary for decision makers and the public to “make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Lower American River Task Force, December 12, 2023. <https://waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/LARTF-Dec-2023-Slides.pdf>.

¹¹¹ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15147.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, 15151.



Figure 20: Tree Inventory Map

A week before the end of the public comment period USACE did publish a basic tree survey map to sacleveeupgrades.org. Unlike the map at figure 19, the map USACE publicly posted lacks any detail on tree size.¹¹⁴ It also made no attempt to communicate the extent of tree removal in the project area.

¹¹⁴ LAR C#B trees upstream 20240126, https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20upstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=g77S56NJfmSgxT4fSmikkQ%3d%3d. LAR C3B trees downstream 20240126, https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20downstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=TEZUt9K9zHjOiXVcV-fdXw%3d%3d.



Figure 21

There is simply insufficient detail in USACE’s tree survey map for an apprehensive citizen to form any coherent notion of how USACE’s erosion measures will impact the riparian forest. It indicates nothing about the size of trees nor which trees will be removed or what proportion of trees in any of the project segments will be removed. An apprehensive citizen could interpret USACE’s parenthetical assurance that “not all trees are to be removed” to mean anything from most trees will remain to all but one tree will be removed. Such a broadly interpretable statement is meaningless. It is a perfunctory disclaimer rather than a sincere attempt at communicating to the public the environmental impacts they could expect on a forest that they hold dear.

USACE provides a low-quality image of the various habitats in the project footprint but fails to distinguish with any detail the different habitats and how much tree loss each segment will suffer.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 4.1-2.

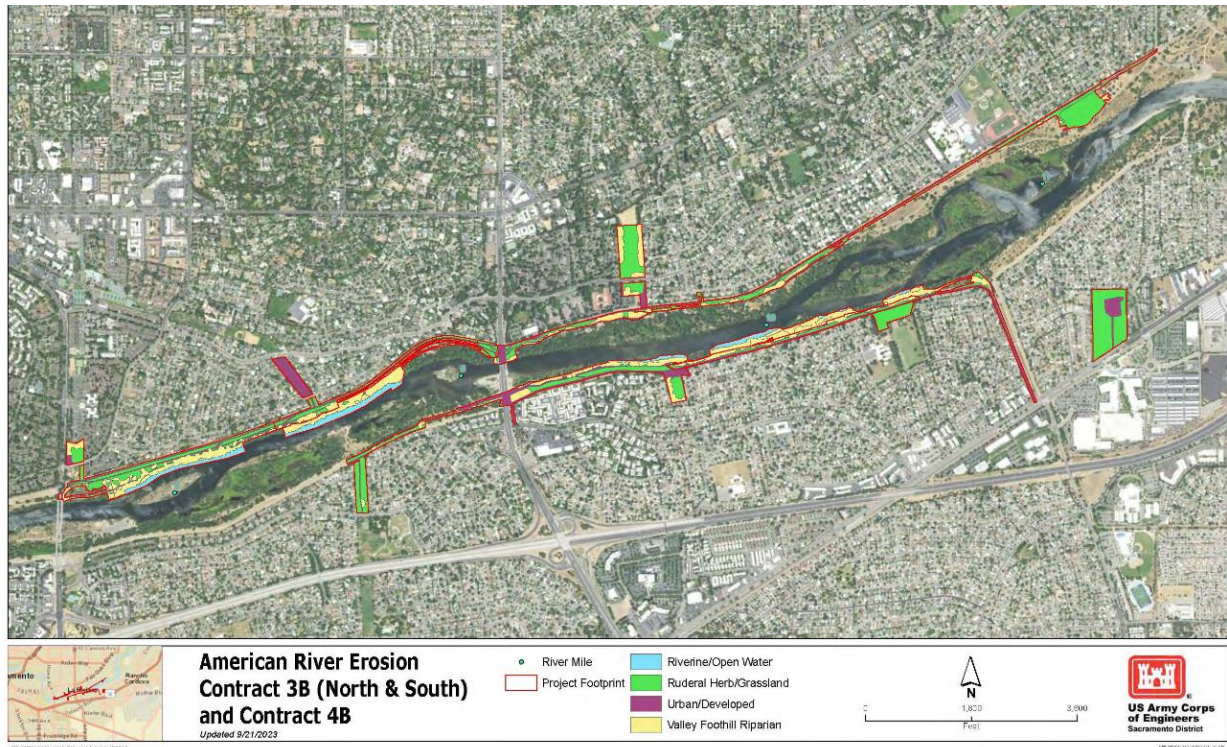


Figure 4.1-1. American River Erosion Contract 3B and 4B Land Cover Types

Figure 22

In addition to the low-quality image of the various habitats in the project footprint, USACE provides a vague and confusing map of “project impacts.”¹¹⁶ The project impacts maps identify three kinds of areas within the project footprint: construction access, construction buffer, and staging. USACE leaves it up to the public to interpret these terms. Contrary to standard practice, USACE does not define these terms in the SEIS/SEIR. An apprehensive citizen could reasonably surmise that construction access refers to where construction equipment will be moving and construction buffer to the areas where construction will occur. Yet consider the project impact map for Contract 3B South.

¹¹⁶ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-30.

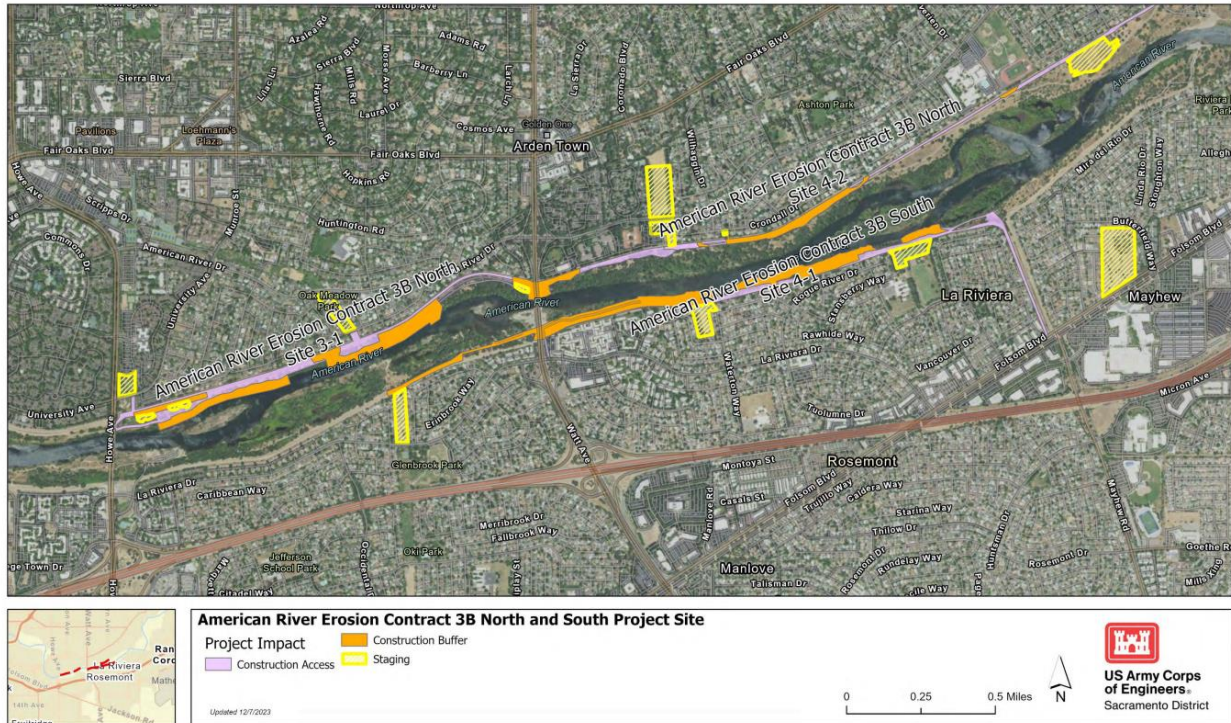


Figure 3.5.2-3. American River Erosion Contract 3B Project Footprint

Figure 23

On the south bank (Contract 3B South) all the bank protection and launchable riprap are proposed for the area between Larchmont Community Park and the Watt Bridge. However, there are staging areas to the west of the project area at Glenbrook Park Access and to the east of the Project area at a private parcel. The area between Larchmont Community Park and the Mayhew Canal is colored purple, indicating “construction access.” This makes sense. Though no construction is scheduled between Larchmont Park and the Mayhew Canal, trucks may have to use the canal and the levee leading to Larchmont Park to transport materials to and from the staging area along Folsom Blvd.



Figure 24

As with the area between Larchmont Park and Mayhew Canal, the area between Watt Bridge and Glenbrook River Access is not slated for erosion protection measures, but trucks will need to use this area to transport materials to and from the project area. Unlike the area between Larchmont Park and Mayhew Canal, the area between Watt and Glenbrook River Access is colored orange, indicating it is a “construction buffer” zone.

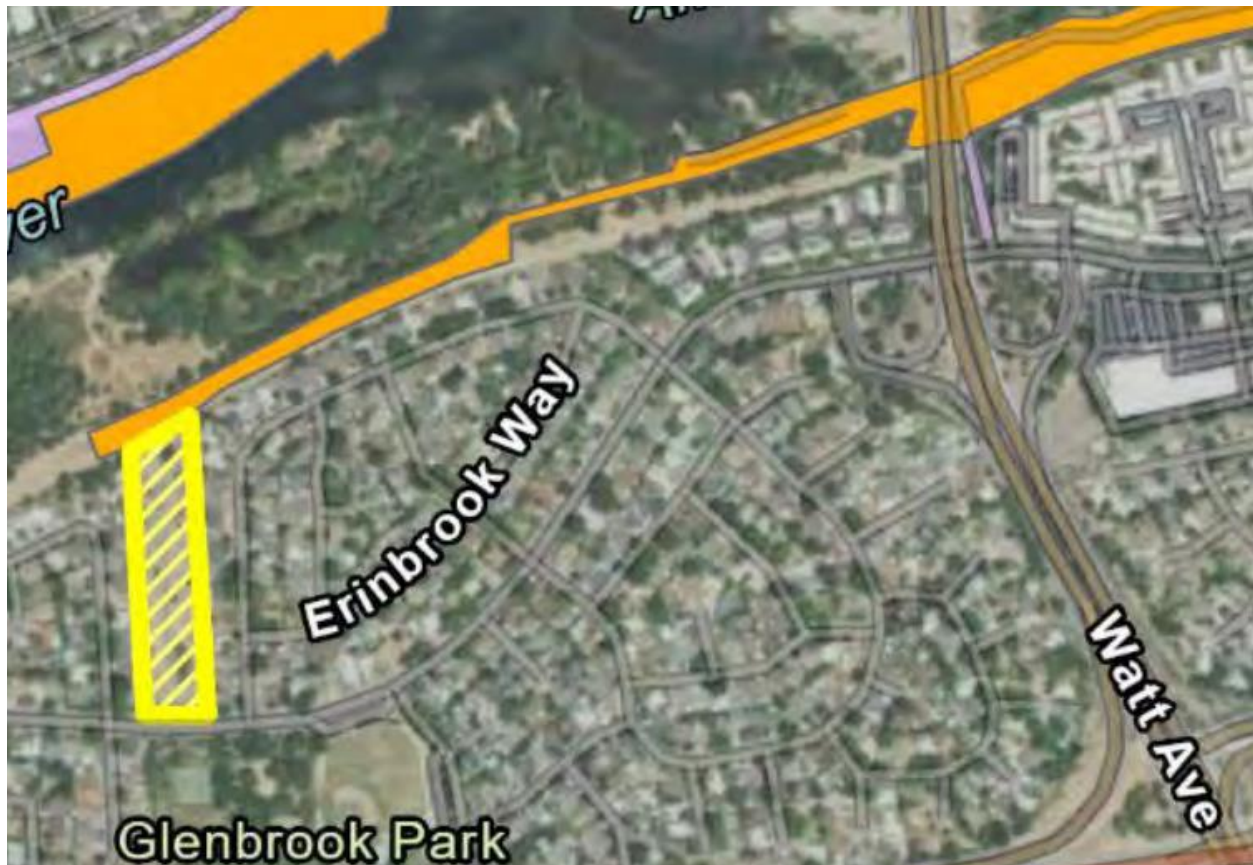


Figure 25

What is an apprehensive citizen supposed to make of these differences? Why is the non-project area between Watt and Glenbrook River Access labeled a construction buffer zone while the non-project area between the Mayhew Drain and Larchmont Park is labeled a construction access zone? There is no effort on USACE’s part to clearly communicate what this figure means and what implications construction access and construction buffer zones will have for residents near the Contract 3B South footprint.

USACE’s disregard for public apprehension is evident in their decision to include so many projects/contracts in this one SEIR/SEIS. Whereas all previously proposed ARCF contracts received their own SEIS/SEIR or SEA/SEIR—including Reach D Contract 1, Sacramento River East Levee Contract 1, Sacramento River East Levee Contract 2, Sacramento River East Levee Contract 3, Sacramento River East Levee Contract 4, American River Contract 1, American River Contract 2, Sacramento River Erosion Contract 1, American River Contract 3A, and Sacramento River Contract 2—the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR

contains no less than eight major projects, contracts, and subcontracts—including American River Erosion Contract 3B North, American River Erosion Contract 3B South, American River Erosion Contract 4A, American River Erosion Contract 4B, American River Mitigation Site, Maggie Creek Project, American River Erosion Contract 3, and Sacramento River Mitigation Site.¹¹⁷ The consequences of this decision is that the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR is both exceedingly long (over 1700 pages of report and appendix) and exceedingly superficial. The main Draft SEIS/SEIR report may be over 900 pages, but that is only an average of 117 pages per contract/project. The Draft SEIS/SEIR Report for American River Contract 2 is just 311 pages, but since it only covers one contract, its analysis is almost three times as long as the average for the projects/contracts included in the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR. This more thorough and thoughtful analysis is evident in the detailed site by site diagrams found in the Draft Report for American River Contract 2, which are lacking in the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR. For instance, the following diagram from the Draft SEIS/SEIR for American River Contract 2 shows exactly how the soil filled revetments will look like under the Howe Avenue Bridge.¹¹⁸

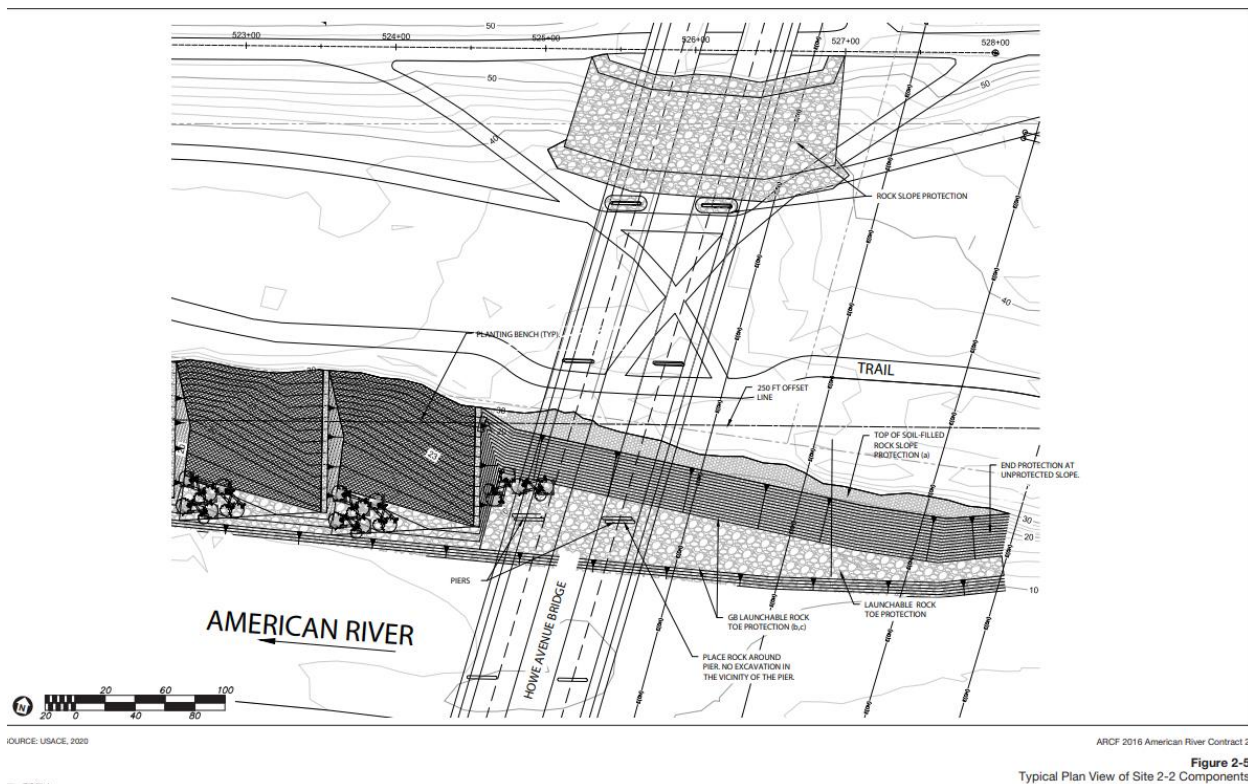


Figure 26

By contrast, the visual projections of USACE’s proposed work for the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR are vague and overly generalized.¹¹⁹ Instead of site-by-site diagrams for Contract 3B South, USACE provides a zoomed-out map with lines indicating where launchable rock toes, trenches, and bank protection will be implemented. It is impossible from this visual (figure 27

¹¹⁷ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-13.

¹¹⁸ American River Contract 2 Draft SEIS/SEIR - June 2021, Figure 2-5.

¹¹⁹ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-36.

below) to ascertain any meaningful environmental or recreational impacts. Instead of site-by-site descriptions of soil filled revetments, USACE simply provides figures which illustrate the general concept of launchable rock toes, trenches, and planting benches (see figure 16).¹²⁰ The pictures of American River Contract 1 and 2 already demonstrate that we can expect little resemblance between USACE's conceptual diagrams and the final work.

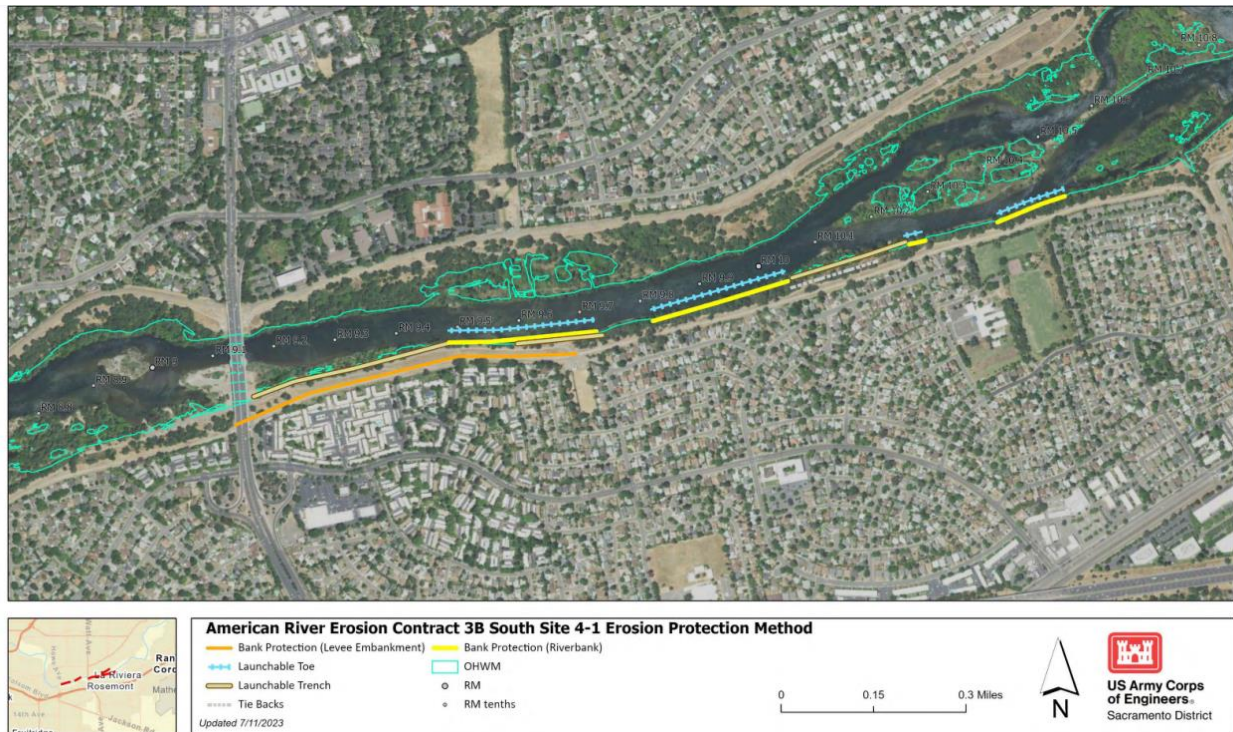


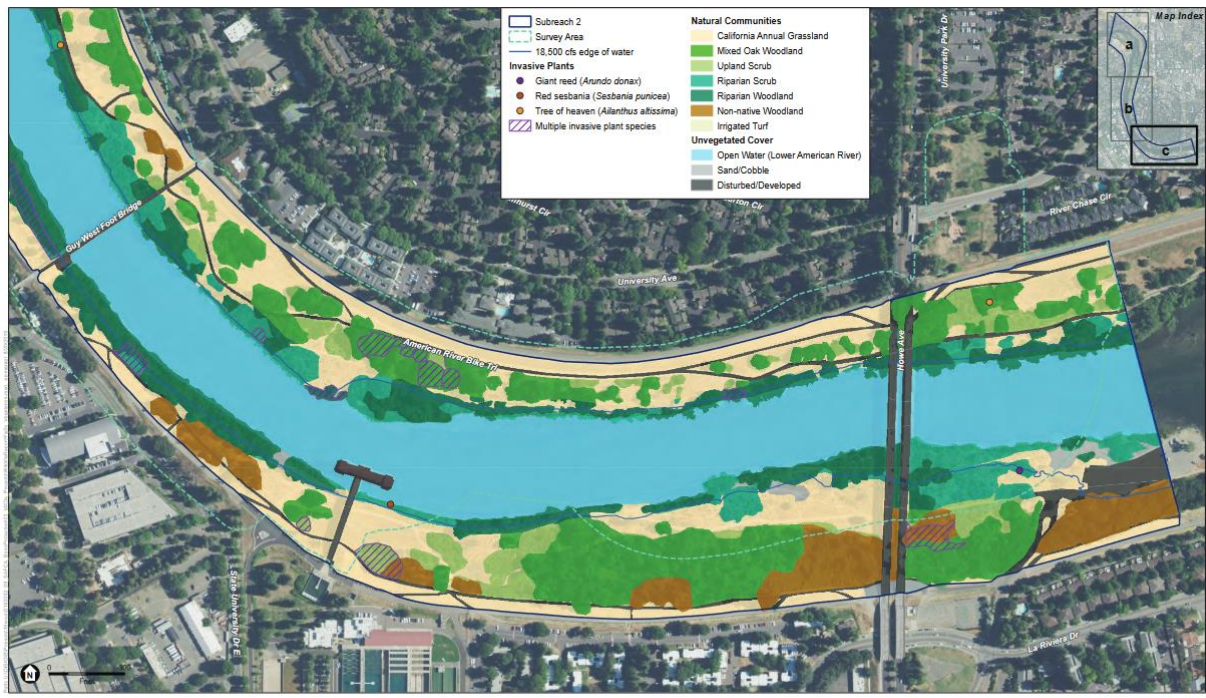
Figure 3.5.2-9. American River Erosion Contract 3B South Site 4-1 Details

Figure 27

The practice of providing low detail, zoomed out maps of the entire project area also notably contrasts with the habitat maps found in American River Contract 2, which included not only section by section habitat maps, but identified 13 types of habitats, compared to only 4 for the 2023 SEIS/SEIR. Furthermore, the habitat maps for the American River Contract 2 SEIS/SEIR Appendices identified various types of woodland, including oak woodland, which the map for the 2023 SEIS/SEIR does not do.¹²¹ At the very least, USACE can mark out the areas of the Contract 3B segments which have oak trees.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 3-28 and 3-40.

¹²¹ American River Contract 2 Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendix B. Wildlife Habitat Survey Reports for Subreaches 1, 2, 3, and 4, Including Arden Pond and for Rossmoor East and West, Figure 3A, Figure 3B, Figure 3c.



SOURCE: NHC, 2018; ESA, 2019

American River Common Features 2016 Project American River Contract 1

ESA

Figure 28



SOURCE: NRC, 2019; GSA, 2019

American River Common Features 2015 Project American River Contract 1

Figure 3a
Natural Communities of the
Lower American River Subreach 2



Figure 29

The lack of specificity means the public cannot reasonably trust USACE's claim that the loss of forest land is less than significant long-term with mitigation. To state that Contract 3B South's impacts are less than significant long-term because mitigation will allow vegetation to "grow back and provide a natural visual character again," ignores the special character of the resources in this area.¹²² **If heritage trees are part of the vegetation lost, then the visual character of the area cannot be the same for centuries.** Such is the case with USACE's 2011 revetments at left bank river mile 10.3-10.4. Where once there was majestic trees and majestic views of the river, there is now coyote brush which blocks views of the river.



Figure 30: Coyote brush that grew instead of trees at left bank river mile 10.3-10.4. Before there was large trees and clear views of the river.

¹²² December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3.1-23.



Figure 31: View of heritage trees and the river at left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, where USACE is proposing riprap under Contract 3B South.

Furthermore, USACE's claim that project features which will remain even after construction completion, i.e. "the O&M ramps, tie backs, and vegetation free zone areas," will constitute an insignificant long-term impact on visual and aesthetic resources because they "are only a small portion of the project site for American River Erosion Contract 3B North and South" is inadequate, incomplete, and unjustified. It is like saying removing 2% of a person's body weight will be insignificant only to find out that the 2% comes from extracting the brain. Likewise, the "portion" of a project site is an inadequate measure of its impact on the visual and recreational resources of the Parkway. If a ramp, for example, goes through a 300-year-old oak tree, that is a "substantial degradation to the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site." USACE does not actually show in the Draft SEIS/SEIR where the O&M ramps and tiebacks will be. USACE should show where the access ramps will be and how they will avoid impacts to heritage oaks. USACE should provide their map of all the heritage trees in the Contract 3B area and mark out the specific trees they intend to save. Otherwise, it is impossible to determine whether the long-term impacts to the existing visual character and quality of this project area will be significant and long-term.

USACE also needs to acknowledge the potential impacts even to heritage trees they plan to "save." It is not enough to simply state whether they will cut down trees. In placing heavy ramps, moving construction equipment back and forth across the banks, and removing most vegetation, USACE's contractors would likely still operate within what the California Oak Foundation calls the "root protection zone" of trees excluded from removal.¹²³ The root protection zone is critical area of an oak tree's roots that is typically 1.5 times the area from the trunk to the dripline.¹²⁴

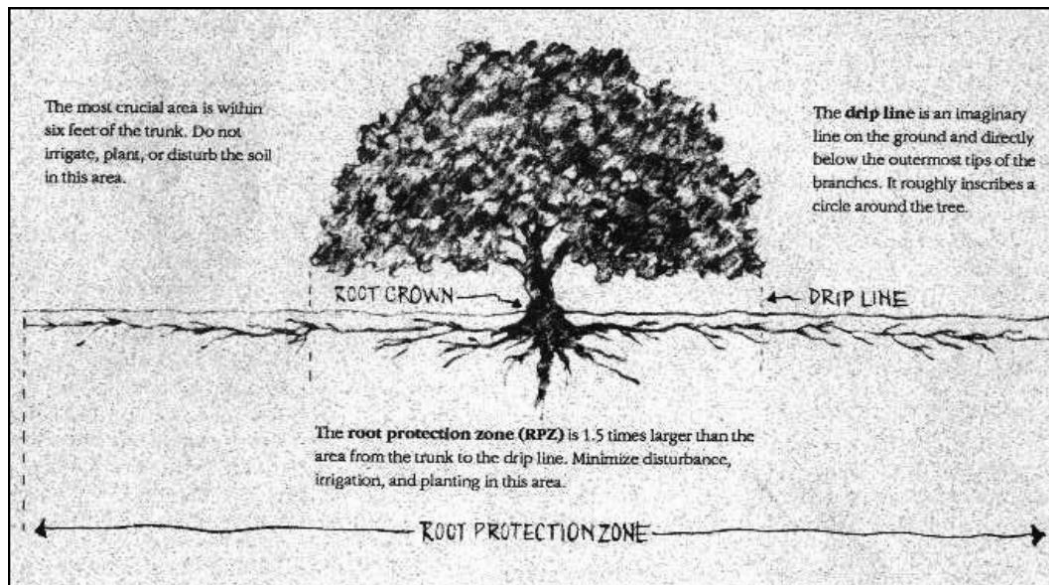


Figure 32: Diagram from "Care of California's Native Oaks"

¹²³ California Oaks Foundation, "Care of California's Native Oaks" in *Bulletin of the California Oak Foundation* (Oakland, 2016), 1. <https://californiaoaks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CareOfCAsNativeOaks.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Removing vegetation, trenching, or compacting the soils (through, for example, the movement of diesel trucks near trees) can kill or greatly reduce the remaining life expectancy of an oak tree even if the visible parts of the tree remain unscathed immediately after project completion. Indeed, some of the heritage oak trees near USACE's 2011 revetments at left bank river mile 10.3-10.4 died or lost most of their branches shortly after USACE finished installing the riprap. USACE should explain how they will install erosion measures without encroaching on the root protection zone of beloved heritage trees.



Figure 33: Heritage Oak Tree near the 2011 revetment project area that dropped all its branches shortly after the installation of the riprap.



Figure 34: A irreplaceable Heritage Oak Tree in the Contract 3B South area

The loss of heritage oak trees would be unmitigable, but to mitigate the other significant impacts of habitat removal, USACE proposes, where feasible, to cover launchable riprap with several feet of topsoil, then plant native trees such as cottonwoods, valley oaks, box elders, and alders.¹²⁵ However, the flawed design of the planting benches along with the limited period of performance monitoring shows they are not an adequate mitigation measure for the potential long-term, significant impacts caused by Contract 3B's proposed erosion protection features.

When riprap launches, it is expected to take down the planting benches. According to the *Geotechnical Report*, the waterside berm next to a launchable trench is expected to erode, and "will eventually reach the launchable trench."¹²⁶ When this happens, the "soils surrounding the trench will allow for the riprap contained in the trench to 'launch' into the void created adjacent to the trench."¹²⁷ If the trench launches as anticipated, they will likely take down the planting benches with them. Concern about collapsing planting benches was raised by the National Marine Fisheries Service 2021 Biological Opinion for ARCF. They wrote that launchable riprap is "also designed to launch to protect the levee from scour."¹²⁸ "The launching of this type of riprap," NMFS writes, "is likely to result in the loss of some of the mitigation planting bench" and to NMFS "the lack of durability of this mitigation is concerning."¹²⁹ Given that it could not "be accurately determined at what future time this planting bench will be damaged from launchable rock, the overall benefit of the mitigation becomes less certain."¹³⁰

USACE acknowledges this concern but has failed to consider mitigation measures for the entire life of the project, which is 50 years according to the 2023 SEIS/SEIR.¹³¹ In coordination with USFWS and NMFS, USACE promises to develop a vegetation management plan to "Ensure that native riparian plantings installed within the planting benches are protected, managed, monitored, and maintained," but only for "8 years, not to exceed 10 years following installation."¹³² Since erosion is cumulative, the likelihood that riprap launches would only increase each subsequent year after the monitoring period ends, and thus would also increase the likelihood of damage to mitigation planting benches. **This increasing likelihood means that without a plan to monitor and protect the planting benches over the entire 50-year life of the project, USACE cannot reasonably claim that planting bench mitigation will make the long-term impact of this project in the area of Contract 3B "less than significant under CEQA."**¹³³

USACE has also inadequately addressed how erosion of the planting benches will nullify their effectiveness as long-term mitigation. As USACE observed in the 2016 FEIS/FEIR, "Both the Sacramento River and the American River are confined by levees and have very little sediment in the water. Additionally, on the American River, Folsom Dam blocks sedimentation from upstream sources. Therefore, the energy of the flow tends to erode riverbanks and

¹²⁵ Ibid, 4.1-46.

¹²⁶ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 17.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Current NMFS Biological Opinion - 12 May 2021: 80.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 5-24.

¹³² Ibid, 3-66.

¹³³ Ibid, 3.4-12

levees.”¹³⁴ Contract 3B is not widening levees, nor is it increasing the amount of sediment flowing from Folsom Dam. Thus, we can expect that the same erosion processes which necessitated ARCF to operate even after the installation of launchable rock toes and trenches as well as planting benches. According to geologist Jeffrey Mount, “Thick, well-developed soils that have well-established vegetative covers tend to be more resistant to erosion.”¹³⁵ If the mature trees and thick vegetation which currently armor the banks of the American River in the Contract 3B area are supposedly insufficient to prevent erosion, then we can expect planting benches made up of newly laid soil held in place by immature trees (for many years) to erode away. This is not a hypothetical. USACE’s planting benches have already suffered major erosion from the 2023 high water event that was less than 40,000 cfs (see figure 14) and from the rains of February 2024 (Figures 35 and 36).



Figure 35: Eroding planting bench. You can see the irrigation lines in the upper third of the picture.

¹³⁴ ARCF Final EIS/EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), 9.

¹³⁵ Jeffrey F. Mount, *California Rivers and Streams: The Conflict Between Fluvial Process and Land Use* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 105.



Figure 36

USACE's answer to the problem of planting bench erosion are tiebacks, but at best USACE can only assert that tiebacks "limit the extent of erosion," not prevent it altogether.¹³⁶ Natural banks have deep, layered soils amassed over millennia from fluvial overflow deposits. This fluvial overflow deposit has created natural levees along the rivers of the Sacramento Valley that are up to twenty feet high.¹³⁷ Even if topsoil erodes away, there is still room in the bed materials of natural levees for roots to expand into. In contrast, launchable riprap creates an absolute floor only a few feet below the surface.¹³⁸ As the planting bench erodes away, the space for roots to grow gets shallower and shallower, until there is nowhere for the roots to go at all. Thus, an adequate mitigation measure based on planting benches would need to provide a mechanism for the continual replenishment of the planting bench over the entire 50-year life of the project. USACE provides no details in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR as to how deep the planting benches will be, how fast they may erode under different flow conditions, and how they may be replenished. Without these details, the public cannot evaluate the sufficiency of planting

¹³⁶ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-38.

¹³⁷ Elna Bakker, *An Island Called California: An Ecological Introduction to Its Natural Communities, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 144.

¹³⁸ American River Contract 2 Final SEIS/SEIR - September 2021, Figure 2-15, Figure 2-16, Figure 2-17.

benches as mitigation. Furthermore, the February 2024 rains, which did not create an extraordinary high-water event, caused erosion around the tiebacks, on the tiebacks, and under the tiebacks in the American River Contract 2 area.



Figure 37: Eroding planting bench and tieback with the riprap already exposed.



Figure 38: Eroding Tieback and Planting Bench

In response to concerns about the possibility of launching riprap damaging planting benches, USACE also resorts to an assumption of inevitable habitat degradation, but such an assumption is irrelevant considering CEQA and NEPA requirements. In the public scoping comments for the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR, comment 8-3 raised concern about the incompatibility of launchable riprap with planting bench mitigation. USACE's response was that "in the case of catastrophic flood USACE expects the bank protection features to perform as flood control features, and without these features, habitat loss would most likely be greater than without these erosion protection features in place."¹³⁹ There are several problems with this response. First, where USACE has installed launchable rock toes and trenches, they have left virtually no habitat, as shown in the pictures of erosion protection features installed for American River Contract's 1 and 2 (see figures 17, 18, and 19). In best case scenarios, USACE leaves a few trees, but a few trees no more make a habitat than a few houses make a town. Even where USACE has spared a few trees, there is no other vegetation left—no other trees or bushes, shrubs, grasses, vines, etc. USACE cannot reasonably claim that habitat loss would be greater without erosion protection measures when they remove all the habitat to install the erosion protection measures.



Figure 39: One of the segments where USACE did not remove all the trees.

Second, the likelihood of habitat loss due to catastrophic flooding is not inevitable. **There are many trees in these forests which have survived multiple 160,000 cfs flood events. We should not trade the possibility of future habitat damage for the certainty of present habitat annihilation.**

¹³⁹ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendices, Appendix A. Nepa Scoping Materials, comment number 8-3.

Third, mitigation for CEQA and NEPA is measured against baseline conditions, not against projected future conditions. In other words, both CEQA and NEPA require mitigation measures that attempt to restore conditions as they existed before project implementation. As outlined in CEQA, “the lead agency should describe physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published.”¹⁴⁰ A lead agency may use projected future conditions as a baseline “only if it demonstrates with substantial evidence that use of existing conditions would either be misleading or without informative value to decision-makers and the public.”¹⁴¹ A brief response to a public comment does not constitute “substantial evidence.” Furthermore, an existing conditions baseline “shall not include hypothetical conditions.”¹⁴² Under NEPA, environmental data collection and analysis is completed prior to project implementation to provide an understanding of the baseline conditions for each potentially affected resource for reference when determining the predicted efficacy of mitigation commitments is being achieved.¹⁴³ In short, mitigation for both NEPA and CEQA are primarily based on existing conditions before project implementation, not on hypothetical future conditions, and USACE has not provided substantial evidence as to why future conditions should be used as a baseline.

NEPA also demands a “Commitment to seek funding” for the entire life of a project, and “if it is reasonably foreseeable that funding for implementation of mitigation may be unavailable at any time during the life of the project, the agency should disclose in the EA or EIS the possible lack of funding and assess the resultant environmental effects.”¹⁴⁴ CEQ demands that “if the agency committing to implementing mitigation has not disclosed and assessed the lack of funding, and the necessary funding later becomes unavailable, **then the agency should not move forward** with the proposed action until funding becomes available or the lack of funding is appropriately assessed.”¹⁴⁵ USACE has not identified mitigation funding for the 50-year life of ARCF, nor has it assessed the potential environmental impacts that would culminate from this lack of funding. According to the Army’s regulations, “unless money is actually budgeted and manpower assigned, the mitigation does not exist.”¹⁴⁶ Without identifying mitigation funding for the 50-year life of ARCF, USACE cannot reasonably claim they are mitigating environmental impacts nor that these impacts are long term less than significant with mitigation. Therefore, USACE should not move forward with Contract 3B.

Identifying the potential long-term costs of maintaining planting benches on top of launchable riprap is critical because USACE has a history of devising brute-force solutions which end up burdening local governments with costly long-term commitments. For example, after storms inundated Santa Cruz during the 1950s, USACE went to war against the San Lorenzo River. USACE stripped the river of vegetation, straightened it, and lined its channel with

¹⁴⁰ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15125(a)(1).

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 15125(a)(2).

¹⁴² Ibid, 15125(a)(3).

¹⁴³ Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 17.

concrete and riprap. USACE promised that these measures would protect downtown Santa Cruz from a 100-year flood. Instead, the river laughed at USACE's hubris and moved restore its profile by filling its channel with 12 million cubic feet of sediment within 10 years of the project's completion. Santa Cruz subsequently had to spend millions of dollars annually to dredge a channel which can now only handle 25–30-year floods.¹⁴⁷ USACE should identify the possibility that planting benches on top of launchable riprap will become a long-term commitment for local agencies. CEQ requires that the lead agency identify "all relevant, reasonable mitigation measures" even "if they are outside the jurisdiction of the lead agency" to "serve to alert agencies or officials who can implement these extra measures."¹⁴⁸

Fourth, both the California and National Wild and Scenic River Acts make it a policy that protected rivers and "their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."¹⁴⁹ The NWSRA declares that "each component of the wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system."¹⁵⁰ In essence, both WSRAs demand continuous preservation. It is the policy of the state and federal government to preserve and protect rivers in the condition they were in when they were inducted into the Wild and Scenic River Systems for both **present** and future generations. If USACE is going to decimate habitat along a Wild and Scenic River, it is USACE's responsibility to restore and sustain that habitat to what it was before they installed riprap.

Even with planting bench mitigation, USACE's policies still conflict with the State and National Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. In Appendix E of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System*, the US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service explain that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers."¹⁵¹ In other words, the scenic, aesthetic, and natural appearance of the river and its banks cannot be separated from what makes the river "recreational." Later in the chapter, the Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service identify the resource values which made the Lower American River a suitable candidate for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system. Among these resource values was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees."¹⁵² The Heritage Conservation Service reiterated the connection between lush riparian forest and the Lower American River's recreation value in the *Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild*

¹⁴⁷ Jeffrey Mount, *California Rivers and Streams*, 302-304

¹⁴⁸ Council on Environmental Quality, *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations*, (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

¹⁴⁹ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 1(b). California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.50.

¹⁵⁰ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 10(a).

¹⁵¹ US Interior Department and Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, "Appendix E" in *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System* (1981), p. 9.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 26.

and Scenic Rivers System.¹⁵³ The LAR's forests, the Heritage Conservation Service reported, constitute a critical part of "one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country" that provides "many recreation opportunities," including "hiking" and "canoeing."¹⁵⁴ They add that the American River and its adjoining riparian lands possess "notable wildlife and botanic values considering its proximity to an urban setting."¹⁵⁵ Because of the proximity of lush riparian habitat to urban Sacramento, "students of all ages and members of the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club spend a considerable amount of time along the river observing wildlife."¹⁵⁶ Critically, the Lower American River's "riparian hardwood strip" provides so much recreational value because "the riparian vegetation is **carefully protected**," allowing for the uniform dispersal along the river of "birdlife, including raptors and wading birds."¹⁵⁷ We cannot say that the riparian vegetation has been "carefully protected" after allowing an agency to remove it altogether. Thus, any significant impacts from intentional actions, even short-term, to the riparian forests of the Lower American River would degrade the **INTRINSIC** conditions which makes the LAR a state and national wild and scenic river. Furthermore, USACE has not addressed what it means that their erosion measures are designed for 50 years. Does it mean that in half a century they will have to return and repair or replace the riprap? How can these forests, heavily populated with trees that are 75, 100, 150, and 200 years old, ever return to a "carefully protected" status if USACE must install tree-removing erosion measures every 50 years?

Because the riparian forests of the American River Parkway constitute an essential feature of its outstanding recreational values, cutting down the forests for any reason may impair the LAR's outstanding remarkable value of recreation. Certainly, if the riparian forests can never return to their former maturity because of the inevitability of the riprap launching, or because erosion diminishes the planting bench over time, or because in 50 years USACE may have to clear-cut the forests again to reinstall riprap, then USACE's chosen mitigation measure of planting benches fails. But even with mitigation, mass habitat decimation and measures that by design cannot be long-term mitigated are irreconcilable with Wild and Scenic Rivers. Regardless, USACE should address the erodibility of planting benches, the long-term prospect of launched riprap damaging the benches, and how they aim to restore riparian forest to a carefully protected status, which would require sustaining mitigation plantings beyond the 50-year design of this project.

It is also uncertain whether USACE can reconcile its measures with the second outstanding remarkable value of the Lower American River, anadromous fishery. As stated in the vegetation management strategy of the 2017 *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy*, the removal of woody vegetation found on and near Central Valley levees "can result in ecological impacts that are considered essentially 'unmitigable' due to the

¹⁵³ Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, *Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System*, (1981), II-32

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

unique nature of this landscape feature.”¹⁵⁸ The NMFS Recovery Plan points to the construction of “armored banks” as a major contributor to the decline of endangered salmonids which rely on wetlands and riparian habitats.¹⁵⁹ Approximately 95% of the historical wetlands and riparian habitats no longer exist in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley, and the remaining riparian habitat is highly fragmented.¹⁶⁰ Consequently, more than 16 species associated with the habitats of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley are now listed under the California Endangered Species Act or ESA. 22 other animal species dependent on floodplain habitat are considered sensitive species.¹⁶¹ Riprap has especially harmed salmonids by eliminating much of the high value SRA cover along the banks of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Systems.¹⁶² Spawning salmon need clean gravel with small to moderate pebbles to build their redds.¹⁶³ By replacing small rocks and pebbles with riprap, USACE will impair salmonid habitat. Planting benches do not adequately mitigate the destruction wrought on salmonid habitat by launchable riprap. The 2017 CVFPP Conservation Strategy found that “for anadromous fish, the habitat value of woody vegetation planted in revetment, relative to SRA cover, is uncertain.”¹⁶⁴ As of the 2022 update to the CVFPP Conservation Strategy, data is still insufficient to justify “the habitat value of woody vegetation planted in revetment, relative to SRA cover.”¹⁶⁵

Both CEQA and NEPA require that lead agencies consider the cumulative impacts of their projects, which USACE has not sufficiently done. CEQ’s NEPA regulations define cumulative impacts as the “impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.”¹⁶⁶ CEQA asks agencies to look at whether or not projects are “cumulatively considerable,” which means that “individual effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, CEQA was in part passed as recognition that “the capacity of the environment is limited.”¹⁶⁸ **USACE has not considered how removing 685 trees from the riparian corridor between Larchmont Community Park and Howe Avenue, and in many places installing large stones at river’s edge, so soon after decimating the riparian habitats at river park, and before mitigation plantings can mature, will compound environmental impacts on SRA habitat that vulnerable salmonid populations need to survive. If USACE carries through with Contract 3B, for at least several years there will**

¹⁵⁸ *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy* (November 2016), Appendix D. Vegetation Management Strategy, D-3.

¹⁵⁹ Annalisa Louise Batanides Tuel. 2018. “Levee Vegetation Management in California: An Overview of Law, Policy, and Science, and Recommendations for Addressing Vegetation Management Challenges,” *Environs*: 381.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 394.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 395.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 397-398.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 397.

¹⁶⁴ *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy* (November 2016), 8-8.

¹⁶⁵ *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan: 2022 Conservation Strategy Update*, 3-65.

¹⁶⁶ June 24, 2005 Memorandum, Council on Environmental Quality, Re: Guidance on the Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15065.

¹⁶⁸ CEQA, 21000(d).

not be a single fully intact mile of riparian corridor on the Lower American River from Larchmont Community Park to Paradise Beach, a stretch covering 6 miles, more than a quarter of the 23 mile Wild and Scenic Lower American River. Given how fragmented and narrow SRA habitat is already, USACE's Contract 3B does not bode well for salmonids.

USACE mentions that on the Sacramento River,

“Vegetation removal as part of these projects, in combination with the vegetation removal that is planned for other erosion contracts from the ARCF 2016 Project, could contribute to long-term cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to temperature increases and nonattainment of beneficial uses along the Sacramento River.”¹⁶⁹

For the American River, however, USACE just notes that the “Proposed Action’s contributions would be significant and unavoidable,” but fails to consider how adding this project so soon after the work for American River Contracts 1, 2, and 3A could compound adverse effects.¹⁷⁰ For vegetation and wildlife, USACE minces words by stating that “project implementation has the **potential to contribute** to the loss or degradation of sensitive habitats, riparian habitats, waters of the United States, waters of the State, and forestland.”¹⁷¹ USACE concedes that the effects of its current proposals may have similar adverse effects as past proposals, but again, fails to even mention how completing so many projects so close in time could compound adverse effects on vegetation and wildlife.¹⁷² USACE then claims:

“Once mitigation and compensation plantings have matured to the level of those removed, the affects to biological resources would be less than significant because the new habitat would be similar to those removed over the 50-year life of the project.”¹⁷³

As already noted, USACE has not addressed the increasing likelihood of riprap launching over the 50-year life of the project, which in turn would damage the planting benches and prevent new plantings from reaching maturity. USACE has also not addressed the erodibility of planting benches, which will make them less hospitable for plant growth over time. Furthermore, as already noted, part of the LAR’s outstanding remarkable value of recreation is its lush, “carefully protected,” riparian forests. A lush, carefully protected forest is multigenerational, with vegetation ranging anywhere from 3 days to 300 years old. Even if USACE’s new plantings survive the eroding planting benches and the launching of the trenches and toes, they will not reach the same level of multigenerational diversity of the habitats they have replaced for centuries. Thus, USACE cannot say that within the 50-year life of the project, the habitat will resemble the removed habitat. USACE once again fails to place “**special emphasis**” on “**environmental resources that are rare or unique to that region.**” The

¹⁶⁹ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 5-22.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 5-24.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 5-25.

riparian forests of the LAR are not just any habitat. They were special enough to factor in the LAR's Wild and Scenic induction. CEQA requires agencies place special consideration for environments within a quarter mile of a Wild and Scenic River.¹⁷⁴ USACE should acknowledge what makes the LAR unique and take care in their analysis of how their policies will affect its special resources.

Based on years of experience, apprehensive local fishermen are not convinced that USACE has fully considered the ecological implications of its actions, nor that its selected mitigation methods will work. The following is the perspective of a Sacramento area fisherman, who wishes to remain anonymous.

"Coming from a family of fishermen and being a fisherman myself, I find it hard to believe that anyone who had done their research before destroying many miles of the river bank, would not have concluded the massive damage they would be creating for the fish and their natural habitat. From my many years of fishing, we always stayed close to and fished the banks of the water. Whether a river, lake or stream, the fish naturally hide, feed from and have their habitat along the water's edge. If you want to find fish, you almost always stay along the edge of the water where you find rocks, fallen trees, branches, grasses and overhangs where they protect themselves. This goes for many types of fish, of which I am used to fishing for.

After going out to see the American River and following the edge of the water, all I could think of is what about the fish? Their entire natural habitat is completely destroyed from this project. I also have seen the absolutely useless areas, where this project had chained old trees along the river, thinking it would be the new fish habitat. We are in the middle of winter, which is our rainy season and the majority of these trees are not even in the water. The only time they would be, is in a flood season where the river would come up high enough to do anything at all for the fish and even then would only be a tenth of what was destroyed. Being here, in California, it seems like we are in drought more years than not, so the conclusion is what a futile waste and where will the fish go? Someone did not think this through very well or at least did not do their research well, or maybe at all!"

The drone photo below, taken in January of 2024, illustrates how much more habitat, shade, and hiding places undisturbed riparian habitat provides compared to the bundles of dead woody material USACE uses for mitigation.

¹⁷⁴ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15206(b)(4)(D)



Figure 40

Not only will destroying mature forest threaten salmonid populations, but the laying down of launchable riprap on numerous beaches in the Contract 3B area could make several beloved beaches in the Contract 3B area forever inaccessible. Once again, this was a concern raised in 2016. Apprehensive citizens wrote:

“The final EIS/EIR does not adequately characterize the many varied uses of the river and Parkway. Thus, it cannot and does not catalog and assess the harms to such uses that will be the result of the proposed project. For instance, the impacts to recreation seem focused on use of the parkways paved bikeway. While a key asset, there are other equally worthy of close consideration, such as **swimming, shoreline recreation, fishing**, walking, and bird watching.”¹⁷⁵

Another comment, from M.B. Schwehr, recalls how after five years where USACE installed riprap at left bank river mile 10.3 in 2011,

“The shady, serene river trails and **river shoreline** no longer exist, and will not for decades due to removal of nearly all the majestic trees in that stretch, despite assurances that ‘most’ would be spared. The **shoreline is un-useable for any recreation** due to the large quarried rocks.”¹⁷⁶

We can better understand M.B. Schwehr’s dismay by comparing the riprapped shoreline of left bank river mile 10.3 to the as yet non-riprapped shoreline of the adjacent shoreline.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Matthew Carr, Graham Brownstein, et al, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from M.B. Schwehr, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement.



Figure 41: Riprap at left bank river mile 10.3-10.4



Figure 42: Adjacent, non-riprapped shoreline at left bank river mile 10.4

The non-riprapped shoreline is usable for walking, swimming, launching a canoe, or fishing. The riprapped shoreline is covered with large rocks and is unusable for the public.

To apprehensions about loss of access to shoreline recreation, fishing, and swimming, USACE assured that “once construction is complete and mitigation plantings have been

established, access to the water's edge in the construction footprint will be permitted.”¹⁷⁷ This assurance does not address concerns that riprap would eliminate beaches altogether. In addition to the riprap bank protection proposed in the 2016 *General Reevaluation Report*, USACE has added launchable rock toes. USACE needs to address how bank protection and launchable rock toes will affect access to beaches. USACE understands that beaches are an aesthetic and visual resource. Section 4.4 of the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR lists “sandy beaches” as part of the aesthetics and visual resources of the SRMS.¹⁷⁸ Elsewhere in the SEIS/SEIR, USACE mentions that “shorelines provide hunting grounds for wading birds such as herons and egrets, and for kingfisher waterfowl, and shorebirds.”¹⁷⁹ Yet not once in the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR does USACE address potential loss of shoreline due to the installation of launchable rock toes. At left bank river mile 10.5, USACE’s proposed launchable rock toe may make two beloved beaches forever inaccessible.

Here is a beach at left bank river mile 10.5 as it was photographed for Google Earth

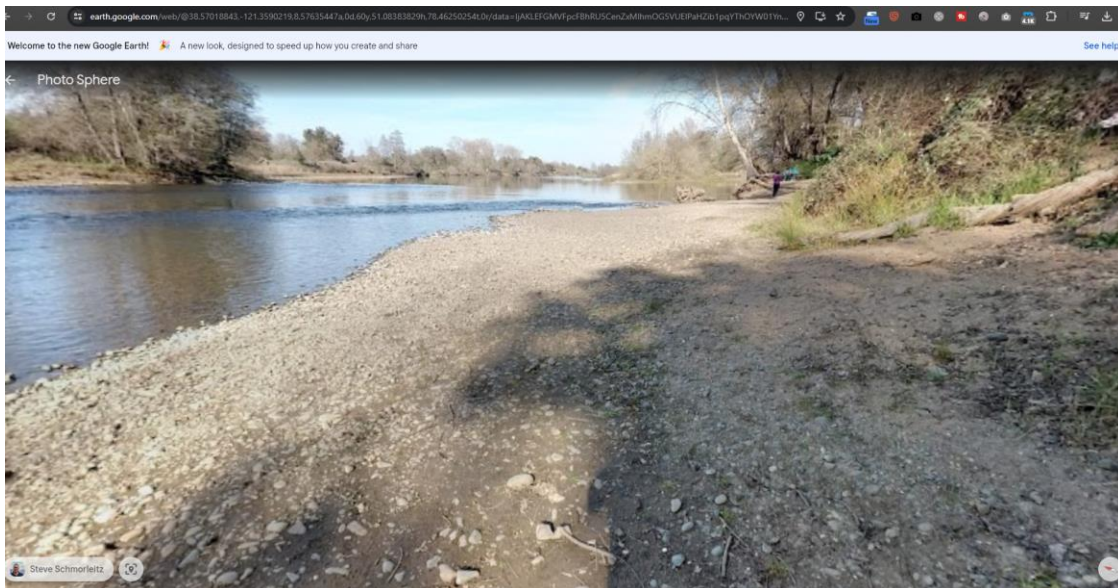


Figure 43: <https://earth.google.com/web/@38.57018843,-121.3590219,8.57635447a,0d,60y,0h,85t,0r/data=!jAKLEFGMVFcFBhRU5CenZxMlhOG5VUEIPaHZib1pqYThOYW01YnRLVF9JRDRpEAU6AwoBMA>

CEQ states that

Mitigation measures must be considered even for impacts that by themselves would not be considered “significant.” Once the proposal itself is considered as a whole to have significant effects, all of its specific effects on the environment (whether or not

¹⁷⁷ Letter to Graham Brownstein from Josephine R. Axt, May 24, 2016, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement. P. 2.

¹⁷⁸ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 4-139.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 4.1-16.

“significant”) must be considered, and mitigation measures must be developed where it is feasible to do so.¹⁸⁰

USACE has not considered the impact of its proposal on the beaches of the Contract 3B area. NEPA requires that it not only consider those impacts, but also consider any feasible mitigation measures.

American River Erosion Contract 3B creates so much risk for public safety, for heritage trees, for mature riparian forest, for salmonid populations, and for recreational resources that the only prudent course of action for USACE is to reconsider and redesign the whole project. I ask USACE to follow the recommendations of its own experts and account for erosion resistant areas of the LAR in its geotechnical analysis. I ask that instead of relying on oversimplified 2-d models which overestimate velocities along banks with mature trees, USACE use high-fidelity hydraulic modeling that will allow them to avoid needless devastation of a protected area. If high-fidelity hydraulic modeling and thorough geotechnical analysis still demonstrate a need for erosion protection measures, I ask USACE to work with unbiased independent experts to devise bioengineering alternatives that enhance the natural erosion protection features of the Lower American River instead of removing them. The habits and wildlife along our Wild and Scenic River may not survive another attempt by USACE to wage war against nature.

Sincerely,

Joshua Thomas
PhD Candidate, History Department
University of California Davis

¹⁸⁰ Council on Environmental Quality, *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations*, (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:25 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Public Comments for USACE 3B

From: Morris, Eliza J <eliza.morris@csus.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:15 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comments for USACE 3B

Here are all the items I hope to see clarified through this process:

1. The information we have been given on the levee repairs states that the levees will be improved to address identified seepage, stability, erosion, and height concerns. Looking through the recently released EIR/EIS it seems that the project actually does much more than just improve our levees. Those of us in the project area would like to know why certain design choices are being made. Why, when the river is 200 or more feet from the levee, do all the trees need to be removed or damaged in order to do work that goes far beyond fixing the levee. In fact, for a majority of the sections in our subreach, no levee repair is planned at all. To help our neighborhood better understand why these extreme choices are being made, and before all the trees are removed, we would like to have the opportunity to review a document similar to the one that was created for the previously completed projects like the document titled: Lower American River Subreach 2: Summary of Bank Protection Conceptual Design Process. The trees along the river trails and in the park are an important feature of our neighborhood. Can we get information on exactly which trees will be removed? In particular, the trees along the northside of Larchmont Park are part of the planned staging area for the work. Will those trees be preserved for our future park use?
2. Given that there are so many Environmental Resource Categories where the CEQA Significance and the NEPA Effects Determination are "Significant and Unavoidable" it is critical that a document similar to the Lower American River Subreach 2: Summary of Bank Protection Conceptual Design Process for the 3B South stretch be shared. In Section 7.2 of that document, it states: "Following closely behind Subreach 2, TRAC will begin the process of evaluating, documenting, and coordinating on the three other subreaches. Subreach 1 (Sacramento River Confluence to Paradise Bend), Subreach 3 (Howe Avenue to Watt Avenue), and Subreach 4 (Watt Avenue upstream to top of leveed reach) will all go

through the same bank protection assessment and recommendation development process as Subreach 2.” By gaining access to this document, I hope to better understand why specific design choices have been made for each segment and what concept designs were chosen by TRAC for each segment.

3. It is unclear why the haul route along La Riviera was not identified as unacceptable using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, as La Riviera runs along and confines a neighborhood that is identified as disadvantaged with the CEQ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. The chosen haul route is the only way for those community members to get in and out of their homes. Unlike the areas identified in project 3A, La Riviera is a one-lane street that currently does not have a high level of traffic. The current staging area is also approximately 300 feet from O. W. Erlewine Elementary School, which is a Title 1 school. Both the use of La Riviera and Larchmont Park could be avoided if instead Glenbrook Park were used as a replacement staging area. It is located adjacent to the Glenbrook River Access area, which has already been included in the project map. By modifying haul routes to use that park La Riviera and Larchmont Park could be entirely avoided and thus the neighborhood identified as disadvantaged would not be impacted. Glenbrook Park is approximately the same size as Larchmont Park and the nearby river access point was already identified as a levee access site for the project. This Proposed Action will cause significant and avoidable environmental justice impacts. It is also assumed in the analysis that people using the park or the stretch of the river along the neighborhood would go to the next nearest recreational area. Many of those using this space are families without the means to access other spaces who often walk to use the park from the disadvantaged community. Perhaps these considerations resulted in the Environmental Justice element: d. Result in a substantial impact to disadvantaged communities, particularly impacts related to the burdens identified by the CEJST being rated as significant and unavoidable. However, it can be avoided with the use of Glenbrook Park instead of Larchmont Park.
4. If, despite clearly being an Environmental Justice issue, the use of Larchmont park is unavoidable there are two items that are essential for maintaining a small level of recreational access for the neighborhood. First, we will need to have an alternative play structure installed for use further from the construction. Second, we will need to have access maintained to the last walkable stretch of river, upstream from the work on 3B South. This could be accomplished by keeping a flagger at the levy to allow pedestrians through to the other side.
5. The Lower American River – Subreach 1, 3, and 4 tier classification Technical memo from Nov. 13, 2019 identified the river miles differently from the USACE Supplemental SEIS/SEIR XIV, identifying Watt at RM 10. The hydrological data from Ayres Associates that was used in much of the analysis identified Watt closer to RM 9. The technical memo identified the need for work downstream from RM 10.5. It is unclear where that location is from the TRAC analysis and the hydrological data being used to determine the recommended work. According to the 2017 LAR Bank Erosion Report the location of RM 10.5 is just before Larchmont Park, which would imply a very different range for the project. That location is close to the bank protection and launchable toe segment between the RM 10.2 and 10.3 markers on the USACE plan. If the TRAC assessment relied on the 2017 LAR Bank Erosion Report for flow rates to make their determinations, then it is possible the work should extend to the location near RM 10.2 on the USACE plan map. This lack of clarity and the use of studies employing different RM locations makes the need for a summary document, similar to the one distributed regarding the designs for subreach 2 even more important.
6. Given that the Howe Avenue bridge low chord is at the 160,000 cfs water surface elevation, I would like to know why, in project 4B, work is being proposed to prevent erosion from velocities at 160,000 cfs and 192,000 cfs. Is there reason to assume that excavating a 5-foot trench below the surface of the ground around the tree and installing 2 feet of soil-filled revetment will help with scour protection?

The report mentions that some trees may not survive the excavation; is there evidence that the trees are likely to survive it?

7. There is a planned bike reroute for 3B south. As someone who commutes to work on the levee and the bike path from Watt to Sac State, I would like to make sure that there will be a safe alternative. I have been hit by a car once when using the in-road bike paths along La Riviera. With the increased traffic due to the haul routes, I would like to make sure there is a protected option for those of us, myself, and the many students living in this area, who commute from the 3B South area to Sac State.
8. The following is listed: **NEPA Impact Conclusion (Design Refinements)**: Short-term and Major effects that are Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. However, in that document it also states the following: "The project locations considered under the Proposed Action do not fall within ¼-mile of any schools." This is not accurate, as the maps given clearly show a project area with 1/4-mile of O. W. Erlewine elementary. It is possible that the impact on this school was not included, because as stated in the document, "O.W. Erlewine Elementary School are not within disadvantaged communities, therefore, disruption to these schools or school traffic would not be an EJ consideration." However, the EJ assessment cannot be accurate, because it does not include the fact that O.W. Erlewine Elementary is a Title 1 school.
9. The American River Parkway Plan states, in Policy 4.12, that "Vegetation in the Parkway should be appropriately managed to maintain the structural integrity and conveyance capacity of the flood control system, consistent with the need to provide a high level of flood protection to the heavily urbanized floodplain along the lower American River and in a manner that preserves the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational quality of the Parkway." It appears from the documents provided that the final design will be to install riprap along nearly the entire stretch of 3B South. This is inconsistent with the Parkway requirements. Please provide clarified or modified design plans so that the public can evaluate the consistency with the ARPP, or whether the plans violate the ARPP.
10. The outputs of the SMAQMD's Strategic Area Project Health Effects tool for the general geographic location of Sites 2-2 and 2-3 (where the greatest level of emissions would occur) under the Proposed Action indicate that ozone and PM2.5 exposure across the 5-air-district region would result in mortality of up to 6 persons per year above background health incidences of 75,000 mortality incidences per year, or an increase of about 0.015 percent of background incidences. What is the calculation of the rest of the project? We have yet to see detailed analysis of the work for 3B South and have not seen these calculations. These need to be provided and justified.
11. The noise analysis says that the changes will be negligible as the work is near 50 and boating is common. Boating is absolutely not common, and the work is quite far from 50. The estimate for current dBA is 82-84. This is not accurate for a majority of the homes near the project. At my home, the noise value is far, far lower (currently 35 dBA at 3:30pm). The actual changes need to be calculated for the homes impacted along the project.
12. Detailed information was provided for the previous projects on riparian habitat and acreage lost. We have not seen any information on how much of the current vegetation will remain for the 3B South project following the work. This needs to be provided.
13. Thus far we have seen only ½ page of detail describing the design for 3B South. It refers back to a few details from 3B North, but that description is only 1 page. Without additional detail, it is extremely difficult to determine the plan for that segment of the river. However, by looking at the amount of materials listed it seems as though riprap will be placed along nearly the entire stretch of 3B South. We need to see detailed plans for the stretch so that we can better understand the design plans.
14. The document states that there are locations at Site 4-1 where there is a launchable toe at the riverbank toe (referred to as bank toe in Figure 3.5.2-9), unlike the typical launchable toe at American

River Erosion Contract 3B where the launchable toe is at the edge of the planting bench (as shown on Figure 3.5.2-13). How much of the 3B South river edge will be unusable for recreation as a result of this design choice?

15. The design plan analysis from Section 2 states, “before the vegetation can become established, the site would be vulnerable to high velocities and shear stresses if a significant flood event were to occur in the first 3 years”. Presumably, a similar circumstance will be true for Section 3. When considering this, and also the construction time required before those initial 3 years during which vegetation will be reestablished, does the plan provide more protection than what currently exists assuming degradation of the new construction? The current assessment assumes zero maintenance. How does the risk assessment compare in the two circumstances? A clear risk assessment should account for this initial period of increased vulnerability, and needs to be provided to the public.
16. Air Quality Effects 3.1-c: Expose Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Pollutant Concentrations was assessed as Less than Significant. Given that O. W. Erlewine, a Title 1 school, is approximately 300 feet from the Larchmont Park staging area, I would like additional information on how this was calculated.
17. What are the long-term minor water quality effects that were identified as likely in Water Quality Effects 3.4-b?

Thank you,
Eliza Morris, PhD
Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy
California State University, Sacramento

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:16 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Michael Yanuck <myanuck@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:10 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR),

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B:

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I enjoy walking along the water's edge there.

A | I live in this neighborhood, and I often walk on the path along the trees & this place enriches my life tremendously both on a physical and mental levels. I lived on Indian Reservations for years serving native peoples as a medical officer of the Indian Health Service, so being in a place that reminds me of the pristine nature that I knew on the Reservations is very important to me, and that's what I find there.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim

that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of

truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and

often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what

makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less

than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,
Michael Yanuck

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:15 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments RE: Army Corps of Engineers Project section 3B

From: Lynn Jordan <jordan.lynn@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:07 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments RE: Army Corps of Engineers Project section 3B

To: US Army Corps of Engineers & Water Dept.

1 I attended the 16 January 2024 on-line meeting that presented the American River erosion project. The presentation had very little to do with the specific part of the project that concerns me (Section 3B) and included much discussion of projects throughout the greater Sacramento area, and very little to do with the project on our section of the river. It had no answers to our specific questions and used many acronyms making it nearly impossible to follow the train of thought. I, as a nurse, am required to explain procedures to our patients using ordinary language that they can understand. It would have been helpful to have the same courtesy from those who gave the presentation.

I lived for 13 years (May 1985-Nov 1998) just east of the Mayhew Drain on Mira del Rio Drive. I was concerned about living so close to the river when I moved in but the beauty of the parkway became a part of my daily life and I realized that life is not safe anywhere one lives and one must make choices and accept risks that suit their needs. Roughly 9 months after I moved into the area, the near-miss flood of 1986 occurred. It was terrifying to see the water rise across the flood plain and onto the levee. Nevertheless, in 1998, I decided that I wanted to be even closer to the river so I moved to Twin Falls Drive, just west of the Mayhew Drain, and I have a gate that opens onto the parkway levee. It is a privilege to watch the scores of people who walk by, enjoying the levee every single day of every week. I accepted the risk in order to have access to the river parkway. Who can measure the solace of walking on a quiet, tree-lined pathway after holding the hand of a dying patient? The trees and trails are a big part of my life. I was inconvenienced when the levee was widened and the slurry wall was built into the levee some years ago. (One of the noisy/dusty mixing machines was just outside my back gate for a very long time and one of the high-pressure water lines broke on a Sunday afternoon

sending many gallons of water into my back yard before the fire fighters were able to find someone to turn off the water.) Regardless, I understood the reasons for the project and felt that a few months of inconvenience was worth the extra safety that the construction would provide.

2 This project is different! From what I have been able to glean from the explanations provided, this erosion project does not make sense. It indiscriminately removes ancient trees and undergrowth (which helps to hold erosion in check) and creates a canal that is neither beautiful nor useful to those who use the parkway and river daily. No one wants to launch a kayak, walk on, or put out a beach towel on rip rap, to sit in the unshaded sun to spend an afternoon. This is a relatively straight section of river which is less likely to flood, even in the event of a repetition of the 1986 fiasco with the loss of the coffer dam upstream. The people who live here have weighed the risk and chosen to live in a place of riparian habitat, where fish swim and spawn, birds fly and nest, rattlesnakes live, along with coyotes, rabbits, squirrels, and unknown thousands of other creatures who will be forced to leave due to starvation and lack of places to hide from predators. The thousands of people who use the bike trails and levee daily will lose a gem that allows them to regain a richer perspective on life. Whatever happened to the balance between safety and beauty? I thought that this river parkway was the gem of Sacramento, and a designated Wild and Scenic River, safe from development like this. Please rethink this project! For those areas that are truly at risk, please use your creativity to create targeted and minimally invasive solutions. There is no reason to bulldoze the entire area. Physicians have learned to use fine scalpels and sutures rather than bone saws to repair limbs. I'm sure that engineers and planners who are creative and skilled can determine new and innovative, natural ways to achieve improved solutions to the local problems of erosion.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn R. Jordan

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:15 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment ARCF

From: Craig Heimbichner <cheimbichner@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:07 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment ARCF

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A | The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I walk it every day and live here one block away. It is a joy in my life.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Craig Heimbichner

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:14 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Howard Price <ibhap1948@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:06 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are

“necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the

exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to

account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban

environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Respectfully,

Howard Price

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:12 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to the Removal American River Wildlife Habitat

-----Original Message-----

From: Layla Airola <laylaairola@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:47 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to the Removal American River Wildlife Habitat

To whom it may concern,

1 I would like to express my opposition to the proposed plan to remove much of the oak and riparian woodland along the American River between Howe Ave. and above Watt Ave and converting the off-channel Urrutia Pond to a mitigation site. I have lived blocks away from this proposed area for over 10 years and value the natural elements of this area greatly. The removal of wildlife habitat and urban nature will harm many species of animals and the quality of life of nearby residents.

2 The draft SEIS/SEIR contains multiple serious flaws that must be addressed to meet the legal and procedural
3 requirements of NEPA and CEQA. The process for involving the public and responsible agencies was inadequate to meaningfully involve them in the planning process. The SEIS/SEIR document is so poorly organized and presented that has been nearly impossible for all but the most experienced reviewers to navigate and understand.

4 The document also is replete with errors and inconsistencies among various sections in describing the project and its
5 impacts. The range of alternatives considered is artificially narrow, with no meaningful alternatives presented or evaluated for bank protection methods or mitigation site locations. The environmental analyses, including impact assessment for noise, air quality, recreation, and biological resources, are inconsistent in various sections of the document and misrepresent and omit numerous environmental impacts, including some that were clearly identified in public scoping. In particular, the impacts of bank protection to existing oak woodland and riparian habitat, and associated wildlife and recreation use, and the effects of converting the Urrutia Pond to a mitigation area are either mischaracterized or ignored.

6 In short, the extensive deficiencies I and others have documented demonstrate that the document is inadequate to meet the legal requirements for public review under NEPA and CEQA. We request that the project partners reissue a new draft SEIS/SEIR that addresses the multiple deficiencies of this document, so that responsible agencies and the public can have meaningful input to the process, as is legally required. Should the project agencies not reissue the supplement, you

7 should prepare an extensively revised version of the document that is organized in a comprehensible way and that fully corrects the many sufficiencies in the document, so we can properly evaluate its legal adequacy. More importantly, it should propose alternative actions that will reduce environmental impacts and serve the public interest.

Thank you for your consideration and time, Layla Airola

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:13 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Flood Project

-----Original Message-----

From: Dionna Campbell <dwangan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:51 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Cc: amrivtrees@gmail.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Flood Project

To whom it may concern,

1 I was deeply dismayed to see the effects of your recent flood protection along American River Parkway near downtown Sacramento. I fully realize the need for flood protection, but the methodology that was used was as unwise as it is unsightly. I am writing today to ask you to stop clearcutting the banks of the American river for flood protection. Research shows it is not the most effective route, and it's destroying the gem of our city.

To recap, please do not continue to decimate the American River Parkway's levees in the name of flood protection. There are better ways available.

Sincerely,
Dionna Campbell

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:11 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Perry <mrhysperry@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:39 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

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[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

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(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

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I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

M.

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:11 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: LOWER AMERICAN RIVER PROJECT SEIS/SEIR

From: jodi artisticinteriorsbyjodi.com <jodi@artisticinteriorsbyjodi.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:37 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: amrivtrees@gmail.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] LOWER AMERICAN RIVER PROJECT SEIS/SEIR

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. My Uncle Don Sato used to kayak on the American River, and pick up trash. During his battle with cancer, he still managed to kayak. Being on the river brought him joy, and the will to continue living. My father used to bring us to the river to fish, and play on the riverbank. The trees along the riverbank have always been an integral part of the enjoyment of being at the river.

Watching the birds that rest on these majestic trees, and simply marveling at their beauty is therapeutic.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

I am concerned that once the trees are removed, it will be hundreds of years, if ever, to heal the land. The trees have been on the land before the areas along the riverbanks were developed. Removing the trees is removing a historic life force.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and

LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Jodi Sato-King

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:10 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: ronald.a.hall@sbcglobal.net <ronald.a.hall@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:15 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

1 As a resident who lives about 1 mile from the American River in Rosemont, I appreciate all the work that has been done to make the area safe from devastating floods. The additional proposed levee work will undoubtedly enhance safety, but this needs to be balanced against the environmental and scenic damage caused by the work. In particular, the river upstream of the Watt Ave bridge, which is perhaps the most beautiful section of the American River between the Hazel Ave bridge and Discovery Park, will be severely degraded. I urge you to consider reducing the number of trees that have to be removed,

Thank you, Ronald Hall

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:09 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Trees at America River

-----Original Message-----

From: Micki Harriman <dreamyncali@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:12 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Trees at America River

1 live near the river where you plan on removing all the trees for erosion control. This was attempted about 10 or so years ago and it didn't work in the area they did it on. These trees provide adequate erosion protection, shade, oxygen, beauty, and a great place for animals and birds. I am totally against this project.

Thank you ,

Micki Harriman

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Sara Caspi <scaspi@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 2:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; AmRivTrees@gmail.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A

I live in this Neighborhood and I often walk on the path along the trees & this place enriches my life tremendously both on a physical and mental levels.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel

PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its

outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize

impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Sara Caspi

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:57 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River planned flood control

From: John Hervey <herveyplus@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:31 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River planned flood control

The American River Parkway is a special resource for the Sacramento area. It has many scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife and other values. Even mental health values for those who need to get out in nature to help decompress from everyday life stresses.

1 | Clearing everything out of the way would just speed the water downstream causing other problems. Letting the water spread out and sink in would help in many ways.

Some thinning where needed could be acceptable but we certainly don't need anything leading to another LA River effect here.

John B. Hervey

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:35 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Caitlin Mueller <camueller5@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:33 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. I am appalled this project has

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me and I feel a personal and professional connection to this project.

Personally, I live and work a block from the river and visit it almost daily. I love going for walks along the river and I feel more peaceful after

walking under the massive old trees by the river than I do along the city sidewalk. Nothing can replace the grandeur of a 200 year old Valley Oak tree. Yes, trees that are cut down can be replanted, but mature trees have way more value both aesthetically and ecologically than saplings and there is no way for an oak tree sapling planted today to reach the level of a 200 year old oak tree in my life time. I also enjoy birding and the river has many great birding spots. There is a particular grove of large trees I especially like since there is always a variety of birds chirping and flitting around. The birds eat the many insects that live in the trees so if this grove was bulldozed, the birds would leave. If the trees from only a small section of river were being removed then birds and other wildlife could move and adjust, but since such huge sections of this incredible riparian habitat is being removed, this creates a much more serious problem.

The reason I was most excited to move into the place I currently live is that it's so close to such a nice part of the river. Destroying this beautiful river bank is no insignificant matter when it comes to local property value. In all honesty, if the river here ends up looking like the river near Sac State, I'll be glad I'm just renting and didn't just buy a house.

Professionally, I am a landscape designer and work for a landscape architecture firm in Sacramento. I work on public and private projects such as parks, streetscapes, commercial landscapes, schools, and neighborhoods. My company has worked with both the Army Corp of Engineers and DWR and I can appreciate how long, difficult, and complex these types of projects can be. I have been on the receiving end of countless plan check comments, conflicting project requirements, and constant value engineering. But that is no excuse for what I see proposed here. It may be cheaper and easier to simply cut down all the trees deemed in the way and dump rip rap to replace it but that is absolutely not acceptable here. This plan comes across as a

low quality, ignorant, and pathetic solution. This is the middle of Sacramento where people care about their neighborhood and the environment. This is not the place to skimp. This project needs to spend the time and money to reconsider its approach. The river going through Sacramento is a feature that should be celebrated, not a troublesome problem to be smoothed over. The river and any work done around it should be treated with the respect it deserves.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

-Limited evidence for unnecessary remove of trees and vegetation - Plants (with appropriate maintenance) are fantastic erosion control. Instead of spending the money to remove mature plants with great root systems, why not spend money to protect, plant, and/or maintain appropriate vegetation that will best support the desired goals of the levee? Over and over I have seen examples of situations where solutions that work with nature instead of against it have produced better and cheaper results in the long run than engineered solutions that rely solely on manmade materials and structures.

-Impact on wildlife and critical habitats - I took many ecology classes at community college and UC Davis while pursuing my degree in Landscape Architecture. I learned the importance and complexity of natural ecosystems, the value of choosing the right species of plant for the right location, the ecological value of mature plants, and many other important values that I see completely thrown out the window for this project. This could have been an amazing opportunity to collaborate with UC Davis or other ecological experts to come up with the best plan for this specific area. Instead this appears to be business-as-usual. California has already lost massive amounts of riparian forests so we can't afford to keep destroying them.

-Recreational access - I love walking, hiking, birding, biking, paddle boarding, and drawing by the river. I know I am not alone since I pass many others also enjoying the river. Practically and emotionally speaking, rip rap creates a huge barrier when trying to experience the river. The existing trees also provide shade which is very valuable in the summer heat.

This project's lack of concern for the local and broader community and the environment is appalling. The project team for this need to step up and come up with solutions that work with nature not against it.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. \

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,

Caitlin Mueller

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:35 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Contract 3B

From: Larry Bernstein <ljbmdrnr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:32 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Contract 3B

I write concerning Contract 3B in the American River Parkway. I strongly object to the removal of many hundreds of mature trees in the project to reinforce the levees.

1 I believe the Corps has not assigned correct monetary, environmental and cultural values to the riparian habitat they propose to severely disrupt. I see how this project impacted the river banks near Sacramento State University and do not want this repeated upstream for another six miles.

2 I urge the Corps to reconsider their plan. "This is how we've always done it" is not a reason to proceed with destruction. Alternatives might cost more and/or take more years to complete, but they would be well worth it to preserve the parkway.

The Corps might consider using smaller construction equipment with a lighter footprint. Thinking outside the box, maybe deliver the riprap from the river by barge instead of with huge trucks.

3 I appreciate the effort to save large heritage oaks, but the wholesale removal of trees like what occurred near Sac State is totally unacceptable.

Lawrence Bernstein

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:34 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Patricia Prendergast <pprender22@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:31 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. As an artist and longtime resident of the River Park neighborhood, I have spent many enjoyable hours painting the river shoreline trees.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

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The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,

Patricia Prendergast

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESP
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River USACE Contracts 3B, 4A, 4B

From: Lisa Howard <lisad_howard@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:29 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@CVFlood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River USACE Contracts 3B, 4A, 4B

I am writing today to share my concerns about planned work on the lower American River, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I have serious concerns with the proposed project.

1 Trees are an important stabilizing agent along rivers. Their root systems can bind together soil and strengthen the riverbank. Yet the USACE is proposing the elimination of more than 500 trees, including heritage oaks, to create an artificial riprap.

This would leave the banks bare for two years of construction and put us at more risk of erosion and flooding. Historically, levee failures are more associated with areas where riparian forests have been thinned or clear-cut.

2 Clear-cutting mature trees will also destroy wildlife habitat and remove carbon-sequestering trees at a time when we should be protecting mature trees that are already sequestering carbon and helping to keep our air clear. It would take decades for new growth to provide the benefits already being provided by the trees along the American River.

Clear-cutting would:

- 3
- pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon;
 - disrupt the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations, many of which have already seen drastic declines in number over the past few decades;
 - destroy the shade from large canopies, which could affect the survival rate of various species of

salmonids;

- disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning, and feeding activities

4 | In addition, the American River is designated as a Wild and Scenic destination, and an artificial shoreline would detract from the natural beauty that earned the river that designation.

I encourage you to:

- evaluate alternative methods that are more targeted and less destructive to habitat and wildlife.

5 | - consider "spot fixes," small equipment, and maintenance.

- support the use of stabilizing vegetation, aligning with the National Park Service's recommendation.

6 | Thank you for your consideration and your efforts to ensure the American River remains a healthy and beautiful part of Sacramento.

Sincerely,
Lisa Howard
Rocklin, CA

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:32 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Jon Schwedler <jschwedler@wildearthguardians.org>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I moved my family to this neighborhood, paying a premium for our residence, in large part to have access to a scenic natural area with wildlife, trails, and river access. The proposed "treatments" for removing trees and installing riprap is not only an affront to these natural and scenic values, but also the use of natural infrastructure to control climate-driven events. After seeing the destructive work already done on the American River from Glen Hall Park to Sact State, I have observed firsthand that work has only INCREASED erosion and instability in that section, with increased brown leakage and cracking, instable banks.

The proposed destructive work appears to be counterproductive to our aim of increasing flood resiliency along these sections of river. I do not understand how this project could have been approved thus far, and deeply suspect this is a federal funding hammer looking for a nail.

Over the last ten years I have observed otters, beavers, eagles, osprey, wood ducks, geese, boa snakes, rattlesnakes, woodpeckers, quail, lizards, deer, fox, coyote, yellow-billed magpies, frogs, salamanders, and even sea lions in the water where this destructive project is proposed. It is absurd to suggest the project's proposed wildlife "mitigation" area miles away is anywhere near adequate for the loss of our existing habitat and wildlife. It would be tragic to lose this valuable area in the face of lost cumulative wildlife and habitat trending across the state.

Specifically, I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of "revetment" EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to "access ramps" that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock

common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

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Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees

years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

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riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

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The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

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This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jon Schwedler

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:31 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Leslie Overstreet <leslie.overstreet@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Bill & Leslie Overstreet

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:30 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on American River Common Features project.

-----Original Message-----

From: Victoria Harris <vitaharris@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:05 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on American River Common Features project.

- 1 | I'm a resident of Sacramento County and use the American River Parkway a lot. I have seen what happened to the levees downstream of the H Street bridge. It is appalling. That absolutely cannot happen for this project.
- 2 | I would like to see an alternative approved that results in the least amount of existing vegetation being removed.
- 3 | Also I urge that a detailed mitigation and monitoring plan be prepared and provided to the County (and be made available to the public) so that staff and public members can ensure that all mitigation measures are completed in accordance with the final EIS.

Sincerely,

Victoria Harris

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:30 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment

From: Travis VanZant <travisvanzant@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:01 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a homeowner on Wausau Way, 95826 in the affected area.

1 I am IN FAVOR AND SUPPORT this project. This is first and foremost a levee system and not a national park, wildlife preserve, or otherwise. Any project that improves and maintains the flood control abilities of the levee system is not optional but a necessity.

Please continue with my support and, I am sure, the full support of the majority of home and business owners in the affected area.

Sincerely,

Travis VanZant

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:29 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: William Patterson <bilwpat@surewest.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:53 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I have spent over 30 years walking and observing the wildlife and trees along the south side of the American River between Watt Avenue and the Grist Mill area. If this project is completed as planned, there would be no reason for me to return. There are so few natural areas left around Sacramento, places such as this must be left alone.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

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Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

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The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

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This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

William D. Patterson

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:26 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: ARCF 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:49 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: ARCF 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR

Subject: American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices:

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

My Experience on the American River Parkway

1 The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I have lived near the Mayhew Drain for 33 years and have spent much time on the river canoeing, rafting, swimming and playing with my dog. It has been among my greatest pleasure to be able to walk into the clear water and cool off on a Summer day; to watch the Magpies twittering over what twigs are needed in their nest; to see my dog swim and swim for the pure joy of it. I dread the days when the tandem trucks, with their polluting emissions and heavy loads will deliver the rocks designed for erosion prevention and be lain in such a way as to rid the young fish from their natural habitat. I will miss seeing the deer, the coyotes, the hare, the birds, the otters, the beavers, the many waterfowl. We have been lucky to live so near this excellent slice of paradise. As a friend of mine from LA said: *We have to drive 75 miles to see something like this, and pay another \$50 to walk it.* It's hard to be beat the trails along the American River for walking, running or bird/nature watching. The USACE will now step in and "make this SAFER" by laying rock, evening the ridges of the river bank, and its edges. Making the river not accessible for recreational activities or for the simple things of cooling off in the shade of a tree, or by placing your feet in the water.

How do we account for this loss of Nature? How do we know if the disregard for its many attributes will be worth it if we see the nearby USACE renovated banks erode within months of its completion (referencing the recently completed Campus Commons area)?

The “new construction” does not address the ongoing erosion caused by rain, or the on-going problems with the drainage system backing up. As a USACE engineer remarked while examining a levee (in a USACE video), it is good to see the grass grow on the levee slopes, to help prevent erosion. There will be no growth on that newly manmade slope for some time. When you realize these mistakes happen, will the USACE be here to maintain and or fix this?

With the newly graded slope, with no vegetation for some time – will the water rush downriver, and thereby protect our community? What happens to the downstream urban community, and the rural communities past the urban center?

I would rather the Corps cancel the entire slope reconstruction and concentrate on those areas that need protection. Or save the money for this area and store on an emergency flood control plan that can be applied in the time of need. I wish for the people that come to this place after me also enjoy the land and natural surroundings as much as I have.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Because the loss is so huge and the gain is so unpredictable (only a flood will tell - - the results are unproven and expensive), I wanted to look at a cost benefit analysis.

There is no Cost:Benefit Analysis, but people realize that there is a great immediate and irreparable loss in natural resources.

How to account for loss in natural resources? The United Nations is addressing this issue in it's, “System of Environmental – Economic Accounting (SEEA) 2012” Applications & Extensions, New York 2017.” Lectures from the UN also include economic reasoning that if we do not account for natural resource loss, we will not treasure them, and we need to realize what damage we do when creating a system or new things. In this way, we have a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is more realistic.

“If we start to understand the value of nature to our society and economy, we will recognize the importance of living in harmony with nature, rather than destroying it for the short term gain. So many governments and businesses around the world are now realizing this, and starting to act – it gives me real hope for the future.” Chief Advisor, Economics and Development WWF-

UK (<https://www.wwf.org.uk/what-we-do/valuing-nature#>)

Cost = total loss of ecosystem for this area

Loss of Fish Habitat: the lower American River is known for its anadromous fish (one of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values in its designation of being a Wild and Scenic River) to include salmon, steelhead, striped bass, and American shad. Limited warmwater fishery for largemouth black bass, various sunfish, and catfish, together with a few trout and striped bass, supports a summer fishery. The lower American River is fishable year-round (rivers.gov/river/American).

Loss of Wildlife and aquatic animals (not specifically quantified)

- To include: coyotes, deer, possum, raccoons, hare, squirrels
- Muskrat, beavers, otters,

Loss of over 500 trees – includes:

- Loss in Air Quality
- Loss of Carbon Capture (Loss in fighting Climate Change)
- Loss of Natural vegetative erosion prevention (roots)
- Loss of shade canopy
- Loss of noise barrier
- Loss of nesting habitat
- Loss of shelter
- Heritage Oaks
 - Unique nesting features for mergansers and wood ducks

- Cannot replace – large rooting (erosion prevention) system & Carbon sequestering loss

Loss of River Access & Recreation Activities

This short stretch of river, flowing through the city of Sacramento, is the most heavily used recreation river in California. It provides an urban greenway for trail and boating activities and is also known for its runs of steelhead trout and salmon. (rivers.gov)

- Swimming, wading
- Launching small craft
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Picnicking

Loss of a variety of birds (150 species in area – due to loss of habita

- Lack nesting, food, shelter
- No longer an area for migrating birds

Adverse Noise

Adverse Vibration to nearby real property

Loss of Air Quality – diesel and carbon emissions (Alternative fuels/ lower emission vehicles were not considered in alternatives)

Loss of Accessibility on land and in water – Not mentioned as a loss, but projected to be able to return to the river in 10 years (Sacramento USACE Public Affairs Officer, Feb 2024)

Cost of Project: To Be Determine

Cost of Mitigation: To be determined

Cost of Maintenance: To Be Determined

Benefit = added value if we have a particular kind of flood from increased water flow and it is shown to be better than the barriers to such an event compared to what is already in place.

Possible, unproven, help in preventing floods

Clear view of the lower banks of the river

Sunbathing bank for rattlesnakes

Many, many non-indigenous rocks; rocks forever in this river bed

According to Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, Section 15003 – Policies (b) the EIR serves not only to protect the environment but also to demonstrate to the public that it is being protected.

I see no proof of protection, just proof of destruction. We are not being protected. This is an operation being forced on us that we are convinced that the Corps could do so much better if it considered Engineering with Nature. There is no nature-based solution considered in the many alternatives listed.

I am also convinced that this document fails to inform the public generally of the environmental impact of a proposed project (see Section 15003 (c). Mitigations mentioned do not address the loss of the immediate area. Environment is more than air and water quality assessments. Construction scheduling also needs to recognize breeding season of the wildlife in this area.

I strongly suggest that the USACE retool their program and preserve more Nature so that we do not incur this unmitigable loss of natural environment

DIFFICULT DOCUMENT REVIEW

As a member of the public, I think you need to be through this process of reading, understanding, researching and commenting at least one time to understand the process. This is hugely encumbering, difficult to follow, and unnecessarily confusing document...although there are various Codes of Federal Regulations requiring a more understandable document, and the Corps insists it performs a lot of public out reach.

The 45-day review is a minimum review period, and the Corps could easily extend it (Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, section 15105(a)). The 940 page document, along with the 840 page Appendix has a total of 1780 pages and encompassed 8 separate projects. I am interested in a few projects, but the information for these were dispersed throughout the document. A 45-day period would mean 40 pages would need to be analyzed each day, and upon extension, a 60-day period would average a 30 page analysis to be done each day.

(Title 40 CFR, Section 1502.7) The text of final environmental impact statements ...shall be 150 pages or fewer and, for proposals of unusual scope or complexity, shall be 300 pages or fewer unless a senior agency official of the lead agency approves in writing a statement to exceed 300 pages and establishes a new page limit. (This length of document averages 7 pages a day to review...)

(Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, Section 15003) Policies (g)) states, “The purpose of CEQA is not to generate paper, but to compel government at all levels to make decisions with environmental consequences in mind.” This criteria is not met in this SEIS/SEIR.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.8) states that, “Agencies shall write environmental impact statements in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision makers and the public can readily understand such statements.

Excerpt from 3-29 ARC Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR:

This table outlines and defines the erosion protection terms for erosion protection activities on the American River.

“Launchable toe with planting bench – Placed as the waterward face of a planting bench.

Launchable toe – placed along the riverbank near the riverbank toe.

When at riverbank toe, can be included with or without a planting bench.

Tie-back features are typically incorporated element with erosion features listed above as necessary to meet flood risk measures.

Planting Bench Rock Tie Backs – Placed within planting benches and spaced intermittently

There is not much effort or intent in this document for new or inventive alternatives, especially when it did not consider any of the nature-based solutions.

I noted that some ideas contained in the document to be used in preventing erosion are complicated and basically rely on rocks and rock replacement. One of the elements used in the construction plan is the launchable rock trench. This is introduced in the American River Common Features GRR Erosion Protection Report, section 6.3. The report states the “rock trench design concept” comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; however, it is not used in the area of the Wild and Scenic River portion of the Missouri River, according to the National Park Service.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.1 (g)) states, “Environmental impact statements shall serve as a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions rather than justifying decisions already made.”

I would recommend that the Corps review less invasive designs when they are more appropriate for a more comparative portion for the lower American River.

Public Engagement:

The Army Corps of Engineers has not engaged with the Public via meetings or workshops to explain the various methods of bank protection measures that they expect to install. It is up to the public to figure out such terms

as, “launchable rock toes, tiebacks, launchable rock trenches, and riprap armoring. The USACE told us when we requested a meeting to discuss these terms, he said that there would be presentations offered in January that will explain the details. The presentations did not explain these terms, nor did they allow any questions. They promised to record our comments. That meant that we could not get simple questions answered to better understand the document. Recently, in a US Army Corps of Engineer presentation, the presenting Colonel stated that they are, “engineering with nature,” and dedicated to” communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible.”

On their website, an Update for August 11, 2023, stated, “We will hold two virtual public meetings, one on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and one on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 to present this document. And that is all they did, was present the document and record comments (not answer any questions). At the original Scoping meeting held November, 2022, the instructions included (pg 4), #3 Comments will inform the preparation of the SEIS/SEIR will not be responded to verbally during this meeting. Comments will only be accepted in writing via e-mail or regular mail.

Chapter 4 of the Appendix A states “Future Public Involvement, “USACE also plans on opportunities for public awareness, involvement, and participation including website updates and formal and informal meetings with interested members of the public, community groups, and individuals as requested. We asked for a meeting multiple times including during the Corps two presentations, and were not able to get one.

I made phone calls that were frequently answered by “sorry this number is not available.” When I left a message, it was often not returned.

One letter written attached to the Draft Environment Impact Statement EIR and Draft GRR stated that the best outcome will occur if the USAE works with stakeholder groups at the local level. Agreed. Another letter written by our Assembly member encourage the Corps to work with two local agencies.

More Nature-Based Solutions:

In November 2022 the letter submitted by the US Environmental Protection Agency noted that the Alternatives Analysis offered by the Corps did not explore and objectively consider “various bank and levee protection designs that could be employed to maximize environmental benefits or ecological components, structures and functions while also reducing risk and property loss from a large flood event.”

8 I concur with most things addressed in this letter, and especially with the suggestion that more environmental aware solutions exist. In this way, the Corps is remiss in not at least mentioning the alternative nature-based solution discovered by their own Engineering with Nature Program.

In a comment on the Draft EIS-EIR and Draft GRR (March 2015) an Environmental Scientist, Division of Water Quality stated, “In general, we encourage the Corps and the CVFPB to implement alternatives which conserve to the greatest extent the existing riparian vegetation, especially large mature trees that would not likely pose a threat to the integrity of the levee banks.

Executive Order 14072 takes multiple actions designed to tackle the climate crisis, make our nation more resilient to extreme weather, and strengthen local economies, including focusing considerable attention and federal effort on nature-based solutions. There is a video to learn more about the executive order and the role USACE will play in enacting it. (<https://ewn.ercd.dren.mil/ewn-supports-white-house-in-accounting-for-nature/>)

This idea is further emboldened by the Title 40 – Protection of Environment, Section 1507.2 (e) Comply with the requirements of section 102(2)(H) of NEPA that the agency initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects. Further, in 1507.3 © (4) Requiring that the alternatives considered by the decision maker are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents and that the decision maker consider the alternatives described in the environmental documents. If another decision document accompanies the relevant environmental documents to the decision maker, agencies are encouraged to make available to the public before the decision is made any part of that document that relates to the comparison of alternatives.

Climate Change:

Although this is implied in the need for flood control in general, Climate Change is not addressed. The river bank stabilization effort can be equally challenged by drought and/or flood. However, this plan does not address drought conditions, and if there is a multi-year drought I would expect this design to increase the impact of heat and loss of vegetation. Certainly, carbon capture will not occur without trees and other mature vegetation. Temperature, both cold and hot, would be more extreme.

In the President's November 8, 2022 address to the climate Change Conference (COP 27), it was stated that Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, or restore natural or modified ecosystems as solutions to societal challenges, like fighting climate change. Examples include protection or conservation of natural areas, reforestation, restoration of marshes or other habitats, or sustainable management of farms, fisheries, or forests. These actions can increase resilience to threats like flooding and extreme heat, and can slow climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide. Nature-based solutions play a critical role in the economy, national security, human health, equity, and the fight against climate change.

Erosion construction:

The design of this erosion prevention construction does nothing to mitigate erosion destruction caused by rain or rills of water that may result from heavy storms, common during Sacramento Winter months. In fact the recent (Winter 2023-24) Army Corps construction of the banks near Campus Commons shows astounding amount of erosion shortly after construction. Yet the nearby banks, unaffected by the Corps construction, fared far better.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

The Alternatives in the section for hauling equipment is not adequately considered. Big, tandem diesel-fueled trucks and other large similar hauling equipment are the only ones that can be used. There are alternative designs and fuels/energy sources available; but these are not considered in the report. These trucks are limited in their movability – necessitating trimming/cutting multiple trees in their path. Perhaps this is the size preferred for hauling rocks, but not the best environmental choices for a variety of reason.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more applicable, tailored approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

Recommendation:

I know that this project is planned to go forward regardless of the adequacy of this review or “comment period.” (Also inferred by the project television news coverage, KCRA News Segment aired 2/22/2024). I also feel that “one size fits all” model was used in these plans. (This is especially true as I read what seemed as a disingenuous promotion of the use of a launchable rock trench as a feature (see 6.3 of the Erosion Protection Report of the American River Common Features GRR.) I believe the local citizens are not represented in this effort; in fact most people we met during our outreach of the past three months had no idea that this project was scheduled to take place. While we are tasked to review 1780 pages for adequacy and

accuracy of alternative solutions, the Corps is not accessible to answer questions or to meet with the local community.

Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1502.1 states one of the purposes of the EIS is to ensure agencies consider the environmental impacts of their actions in decision making. It adds that, “a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions, rather than justifying decisions already made.” I feel that the SEIS/SEIR coupled with Corps communications really is to justify decisions already made.

The US Army Corps of Engineers, in pursuing this “one size fits all” project is missing a great opportunity to reposition themselves as a problem solver resulting in improvements to the environment, promoting natural resources while providing a gentle footprint to lower-cost, more natural solutions. This community, like so many others, wants to continue to enjoy nature’s bounty while ensuring safe and healthier lifestyles for everyone. We believe the Corps has the interest and knowledge to provide nature-based solutions to engineering problems, to include the best approach to various extreme weather tragedies that happen with our rapid climate change. We all want to be part of the solution for this future and not cause any harm to life, environment or our many gifts of nature.

This means retooling our solutions through creative problem solving; applying engineering knowledge in ways that fit every unique environmental problems they face.

Now, it seems the Corps is bent on involving massive amounts of rocks, using polluting vehicles resulting in hard armor construction of the river that limits its movements. It is thereby missing a great opportunity...to move into a position of known climate change heroes for all populations it affects through engineering with nature and helping mitigate disastrous events.

The Corps should be able to propose a more nature-based project, work with the tools and expertise of their Engineering with Nature program. During this process they should have information readily available with multiple outreach programs for local stakeholders and interest groups. This would result in unique and progressive projects that can be endorsed by a wider population and promote the health of the local community, the earth and result in a healthier environment that is more able to survive the many events that will result from climate change. They should dedicate their role as a promoter of natural solutions, while increasing natural resources and supporting the local populations and their environment.

This effort along with intent to work with local stakeholders, can result in a more cooperative project that preserves and promotes the benefits of nature while protecting the population from emergencies from the flooding river, rain or drainage issues.

The US Army Corps of Engineers needs to engage with the Public, and not continue a one-way communication which does not increase knowledge of the projects nor increase confidence in the plan

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves. We are destroying the reasons it has been designated a Wild and Scenic River.

Nancy Kniskern

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:25 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to Contract 3B site

From: rlindgren@juno.com <rlindgren@juno.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:47 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to Contract 3B site

To whom it may concern,

1 I am writing in opposition to the "Contract 3B site project". For 26 years my family and I have enjoyed the American River Parkway (the jewel of Sacramento) almost daily to walk, jog, bike, kayak, swim, and observe birds and countless other wildlife. These activities are a huge part of our physical and mental health and play a large role in our quality of life. Lack of access for 1-2+ years feels like a gut punch. Unnecessary bulldozing of hundreds of trees and eliminating wildlife habitat feels even worse.

2 Additionally, I see by the maps that the Glenbrook River Access Park is to be used as a staging ground for the project. That space is literally behind my back yard. It was used as a staging ground for many months during the last levee strengthening project a decade ago. We experienced cracked walls and concrete pads, and constant noise, dust, and diesel fumes. Access to the parkway was closed off during that time. I appreciate that the levee is stronger due to that project, but now I am supposed to tolerate 1-2+ years more of the same?

3 Please take the time to revisit and re-evaluate the project. I hope the erosion bank project can be done in a more measured, targeted, less invasive manner.

For my neighbors and me, this is a very personal issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Rob Lindgren

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:25 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Anne Klein <annenamiko@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:46 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me and my children, who have grown up enjoying nature walks along this special riparian corridor.

A As a former landscape ecologist who worked on mapping and classifying vegetation along the America River and beyond, I am quite familiar with the plant and animal species that occupy this habitat. There is no substitute for erosion controls offered naturally through riparian tree, shrub, and herb species with root systems that often extend well beyond their above-ground leaf and branch components. Not only are healthy riparian plant communities evolved over thousands of years to effectively stabilize stream banks and erosion, but they also serve as important habitat to many important local/sensitive wildlife, insect, plant, and fungal species. The destruction of this contiguous habitat with already built-in erosion controls, seems like unnecessary devastation to a valuable ecosystem that benefits myriad species and recreational users.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower

American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway

Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Anne Klein

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:23 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: PATRICK CARROLL <rickbna@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:44 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A | The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. My family and I use the parkway for walks every day. We love to stroll through the many forested trails, sit under the shady banks, fish, birdwatch, etc. This is an invaluable resource, and in my opinion, the best asset in the Sacramento area.

B | The heterogeneity of riparian forests creates numerous habitat features that explain why riparian forests in California support a greater diversity of wildlife than any other habitat type. Riparian vegetation along river channels also functions as primary regional migration routes for most wildlife. The trees and vegetation remove CO2 from the atmosphere, which of course is a major concern these days. 95% of California's Central Valley riparian habitat has been lost in the last 200 years. We cannot afford to lose anymore of it!

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The

SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway

Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway's wildlife. A "surgical approach", not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Patrick Carroll, MD
Carmichael, CA

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:24 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices Dear US Army Co...

-----Original Message-----

From: Andonia Cakouros <cakouros@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:44 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices Dear US Army Corps of Engineers

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Department of Water Resources (DWR):

I am writing out of concern about proposed clearing of the American River Parkway for erosion control. My focus is on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I am a Professor Emeritus of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Sac State University. The natural environment is necessary for the artists of the region. I used to take my acting students at least once a week to Alumni Drive on Campus for class so they could be amongst the trees and near the river where we did all our vocal and physical exercises outdoors. It was critical to their training. I taught for 38 years on that beautiful campus filled with trees and so near the river.

1 The people of Sacramento have a right to access the American River. The USACE's decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches will compromise this access for walkers, swimmers, and paddlers. Sacramento communities seek to co-existence with the American River Parkway's myriad of animals, birds, fish, and countless of creatures, flora, and fauna that make up the natural life of our region. Unfortunately, the American River Parkway is being stripped away and destroyed by the USACE to address potential streambank erosion concerns that are not a certainty. My understanding is that improvements are intended to serve as only an interim step to cover a few years. Measures and risks can be more balanced.

2 I am writing to ask that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents and not go forward with the subcomponents of Erosion Control Contracts 3B and 4 until more surgical, fine-grained approaches are presented.

3 The American River Parkway is often called the Crown Jewel of Sacramento. In 2012 it was designated a Regional Treasure. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a Protected Area under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B will destroy much of this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure. Please reconsider how you will move forward. Your erosion protection should also protect the environment of the American River Parkway and the legacy of future generations of Sacramentons.

Thank you,

Andonia Cakouros
Professor Emeritus
Department of Theatre and Dance
Sac State University

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:23 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: jessica epperson <epperson.wiseman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:41 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A Our family moved here three years ago mainly due to the proximity to the American River Parkway. Our house is located behind the Manlove Pumping Station between Watt Avenue and Sara Park. We appreciate the open space behind our yard to view the oak trees and hear the birds and other wildlife. We fish, take bike rides, jogs and nature walks with our 5 year old son along the Parkway. He named the area past Mayhew Pumping Station "Ninja Otter Point", where we frequently see the family of otters who live there. We find our fun, freedom and peace along these shorelines and pathways. I could go on and on about the value of this location and space to myself and our family. But the value and safety of this area goes beyond personal or even recreational use, however important that may be. This is a community and environmental devastation contract. I am stunned that the very organization who has researched, presented and used environmentally sound techniques for erosion control and flood protection in other contracts has not attempted to use those very techniques in these proposals. I am asking for relevant and timely data to support decisions that target specific areas of need as opposed to a blanket approach of unnecessary massive destruction:

B Provide protection without environmental and community annihilation. Additionally, I am highlighting my alarming concern regarding the staging ground for this project being adjacent to a school site and pumping stations with houses

C (including my own) backed up directly to the area. What of your research concludes that the noise, ground, water and air pollution will not be a physical and mental health crisis for my son and other children in our neighborhood?

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River. I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

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the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an

outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Jessica Wiseman

Dorff, Becky

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Carrie Sessarego <sessarego1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:28 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns

that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Carrie Sessarego

she/her

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: angela laws <angela.n.laws@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I spend time birding and looking for butterflies and other wildlife in this area. As the effects of climate change become more apparent, the wisdom of clearcutting 500 trees and reducing biodiversity and carbon sequestration along the river is questionable, at best. We need to devote more effort into protecting and maintaining habitat - these "natural climate solutions" are key to combating climate change. Prior work along the river demonstrate that habitat is not replaced after this erosion work takes place.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to

supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

- B**
- ***Loss of habitat for wildlife***
 - ***Loss of biodiversity***
 - ***Reduction of carbon sequestration services in the area***
 - ***Lack of track record for habitat restoration in areas where similar actions have been taken.***
Habitat is removed and not replaced!

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Angela Laws, Biologist

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:21 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Project 3b: Concerns with Lack of Necessary Detail for the Public to give proper comments

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Project 3b: Concerns with Lack of Necessary Detail for the Public to give proper comments

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

I am concerned that not enough detail has been shared with the community in order for them to properly give comment on this project.

1 In my review of other projects you have completed in the USACE's authored Engineering with Nature Atlas, Volume 2, I found that you celebrated the outreach to the public for your Dry Creek Sonoma County work. When I went on the website for this project (www.sonomawater.org/dry-creek-habitat), I noticed detailed maps that included a work plan for the construction and the list of which trees would be removed and what the footprint of the project would be for the specific area. **Can you explain why this was not provided to our community for Project 3b during the public comment period, when we need this level of detail to formulate specific concerns we might have?**

2 **Can you share if you plan to re-open public comments once the detailed footprint, workplan, and specified tree removal is determined?**

Thank you,

Alicia Eastvold

Larchmont Neighborhood resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:17 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Attachments: 20240223_093637.jpg

From: Louise Berner <louiseberner5@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:01 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A | My family and I walk along the river regularly, and enjoy the shade provided by lovely trees and the wildlife along the river.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River. In fact, an attached photo shows clearly that the so-called erosion control plan actually has led to erosion!!

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable”

impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

And now, some of the piles of dead trees have come unmoored and litter the river.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.”

Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Louise Berner

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:20 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Duey, Keleigh L CIV USARMY CESP (USA); Martin, Nathaniel J CIV USARMY CESP (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] USACE's Project 3b- Concerns with lack of notification to necessary residents on the project

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:11 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USACE's Project 3b- Concerns with lack of notification to necessary residents on the project

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

1 In my review of the USACE's created International Guidelines on Nature and Nature Based Features for Flood Risk Management under your Engineering with Nature Program, I noticed that for your projects there was a focus on gathering community support with "early and frequent engagement with stakeholders and affected communities." (p 23).

2 Can you explain the methods you used to conduct early and frequent engagement with our community? Can you share the notifications materials beyond the postcard received in December of 2023 with select neighbors that helped reach out to the community? Can you also share the neighborhoods identified that received these postcards and can you confirm whether the RiverBlu or Apex apartment residents received notification of your work, and if not, the reason?

3 Can you share if any postings were placed publicly along the river to help inform the public?

I fear that the outreach failed to notify or inform a significant segment of residents who rent, or visit the area but may not be able to afford home ownership, but have not been notified about the work in time to give public comment.

Thank you,

Alicia Eastvold

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:17 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendice

From: Jill <jillpz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:09 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendice

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

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My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

1 I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the destruction of
so many trees. Trees which help with erosion and capture CO2. I do not
see how destroying all of these trees are in our best interest. I also
2 question whether you did an acceptable analysis under the EIR of
"alternative measures" to accomplish the needed results without this

destruction of habitat, shade, and aesthetic beauty of our region. Do not, do not leave us with the same scarred bank that is now exposed at the Howe area bridge after the work you performed.

3 The EIR does not adequately describe the impacts of the plan, nor does it provide adequate mitigation. You must go back to the drawing board and figure out an alternative. Destruction of these trees is criminal given the need to preserve them is so significant.

Jill Peterson

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:15 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source]

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:54 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source]

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

1 I have a specific concern around further erosion from the proposed plan for USACE's Project 3b on the American River.

2 I recently discovered through my own observations that **significant erosion has occurred on contract 1 and 2 of the American River project**. You also mention this in several of your updates to the community. Can you explain how your project design for Contract 3b is informed by this information? **Can you explain any further field studies you have completed on the success rate of this prior approach in light of this information?** We would like to know that your Contract 3b design does not make us more vulnerable to erosion.

Attached are the pictures illustrating my observations.



Alicia Eastvold

Larchmont Neighborhood Resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:13 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; SPK-PAO SPK; Polk, William F CIV USARMY CESPK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River C3B comments regarding statements by William Polk, Sr. Project Manager, Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento
Attachments: USACE EWN Dry Creek.jpg; USACE EWN Pajaro River.jpg; erosion by CSUS.jpg; Erosion by Paradise Beach.jpg; River Signage.jpg; habitat comparison.jpg

From: Barbara Domek <barbjds@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:53 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov; SPK-PAO SPK <SPK-PAO@usace.army.mil>
Cc: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River C3B comments regarding statements by William Polk, Sr. Project Manager, Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento

Please forward to William Polk, Sr. Project Manager, Army Corps of Engineers - Sacramento District.

This letter is in response to statements by William Polk, Sr. Project Manager, during the newscast aired on KCRA Ch. 3, February 22, 2024, regarding the Contract 3B project, as well as attachments as evidence that the current plan for Contract 3B of the lower American river must be reconsidered.

Dear Mr. Polk and USACE associates,

As you know, the Army Corps of Engineers has a program in place called "Engineering With Nature" (EWN). I have attached images from the publication "America's Engineers" by the USACE with articles that demonstrate the USACE's ability to work with and retain nature within these types of erosion/flood control projects. I have also attached the link to the USACE's EWN website. There are engineers within the Army Corps that embrace this process, such as Army Corps Environmental Planning Chair Julie Beagle and EWN National Lead Dr. Todd Bridges.

1 But in Sacramento, the Contract 3B plan is designed NOT to protect, preserve and work with the existing natural environment. But rather, it will destroy the riparian woodland along the American River, completely obliterating the recreational value, wildlife habitat, and beneficial climate properties of this precious and priceless gem unique to the city of Sacramento, for generations to come. Please reconsider the proposed project and incorporate the USACE's "Engineering With Nature" policies on this project. Sacramento could be a proving ground for this modern approach of working with nature.

2 As you can see in the attached photos, there is already erosion occurring in the "Completed" sections near Sac State and Paradise Beach. Had some of the existing mature riparian ecosystem been left intact in these areas, this washing-away of soil that we now see happening during recent rainstorms would not have occurred. There is scientific evidence that mature trees and shrubs can reduce soil erosion such as this.

Also, regarding Mr. Polk's statements about periods of high river flow, he did not mention the work on Folsom Dam which will reduce the need for those extremely high releases in the future during seasons of high precipitation, thus making this Contract 3B project as it is planned, unnecessary and obsolete in the future. The dam itself will provide more protection for the Wild and Scenic American River Parkway.

My husband and I got engaged under the trees of the American River near the Guy West Bridge (that special spot is now obliterated forever by this project) nearly 40 years ago. We bought our home along the La Riviera Drive stretch of the American River specifically to be near this protected Wild and Scenic American River Parkway. We assumed that "protected" meant forever. We've seen the BIG floods, 1986 was a sight to see, but the mature riparian woodland held-up, the trees actually slowing the flow and binding the soil. Riprap will make the water's edge inaccessible and dangerous for people trying to fish or kayak. Our own children were raised exploring, respecting and loving the wild natural environment of the American River Parkway. The boys hiked 20 miles of the American River Parkway with their Boy Scout troop once on a hot Summer day, but thankfully the cool shade of the tree canopy protected them from the blazing sun. They are grown adults now, and we as a family, along with thousands of others, continue to cherish the natural ecosystem along the river, running on its shady paths, bicycling on the amazing bike trail, filming and photographing the beautiful scenery and wildlife, marveling at the salmon washed-up along the shore in the Fall, searching for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetles on the elderberry bushes, birdwatching the multitude of bird species, trying to spy a Swainson's Hawk, a Great-Horned Owl, or even an elusive Bald Eagle! We continue to use the Parkway almost daily to exercise, de-stress and connect with nature. If this project goes through as planned, this treasure will be gone forever, at least in my lifetime and for generations to come.

3 I implore you, rather than using severe and destructive methods such as riprap and clear-cutting, use the proven and nature-based methods endorsed by your own program of "Engineering With Nature". You know there ARE alternative and more targeted ways of stabilizing areas prone to erosion, while leaving other stable areas of woodland intact. The Wild and Scenic Lower American River Parkway must be preserved, and this CAN be done while also ensuring erosion/flood control.

Sincerely,
Barbara Domek

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:09 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Malinda Ruiz <malindaruiz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:55 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I live one-block from Larchmont Park and this proposed project and I visit this area daily. I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed

project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion”

protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone. Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior

Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial

designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to

almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Malinda Lea Ruiz

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:08 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] 200-year flood discharge amount discrepancy for Project 3b on the American River

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:51 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] 200-year flood discharge amount discrepancy for Project 3b on the American River

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

I have a specific concern with the proposed plan for USACE's Project 3b on the American River.

1 I recently discovered that SAFCA's published Urban Level of Flood Protection 2022 Annual Report mentions that once the Folsom Dam raise is completed, the "200-year flood discharge into the American River will not exceed 115,000cfs." Project 3b is built around a 160,000cfs model, which requires significantly more construction and revetment. Can you explain how you are incorporating this information into the project design and approach?

Thank you,

Alicia Eastvold

Larchmont Neighborhood Resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:08 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Pause on 3B, restart TRAC and BPWG, no buried rock trench or launchable toe behind Fair Oaks Formation, save trails and beaches, leave intact wildlife corridor, incorporate white alder, maintain some neighborhood access durin...

From: Avery, William E <averyw@csus.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:48 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Susan E Rosebrough-Jones <Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>; barbara_rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; Bellas. Liz <bellase@saccounty.gov>; Sorgen. KC <sorgenkc@saccounty.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pause on 3B, restart TRAC and BPWG, no buried rock trench or launchable toe behind Fair Oaks Formation, save trails and beaches, leave intact wildlife corridor, incorporate white alder, maintain some neighborhood access during construc...

Pause on 3B, restart TRAC and BPWG, no buried rock trench or launchable toe behind Fair Oaks Formation, save trails and beaches, leave intact wildlife corridor, incorporate white alder, maintain some neighborhood access during construction, leadership meeting.

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

In addition to prior comments, this letter amplifies and distills some key requests.

Please put a pause on C3B for the following reasons:

Stop using outdated risk assessments

1 Please discontinue using levee seepage or pre-slurry wall risk analysis as a basis to publicly justify all projects. This strategy was used in the 2016 GRR and for the current SEIS/SEIR. Although certain project subcomponents may be about specifically improving levee impermeability and strength it is confusing to the public to use this justification for all project subcomponents. No post slurry wall projects should be justified based on pre slurry wall risk assessment. See Figure 17-1 GRR Geotechnical Report Appendix C page 716 of appendices.

Reinitiate TRAC and BPWG

2 Tier classification (used to classify the need for erosion work) appears to be biased and based on obsolete data (HDR and Ford 2019 Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4 tier classification. Technical Memo - Nov 13, 2019). Please suspend Contract 3B and 4B, reinitiate TRAC and BPWG involving qualified residential volunteers, map erosion at a much finer granularity, monitor and predict erosion, incorporate advanced 3D hydrological modeling that accounts for water-slowng potential of intact vegetation. Redesign the bank protection projects keeping riparian habitat protection at a coequal value with erosion protection. Investigate application of cobble and planting of woody riparian tree species as primary means of local erosion control and as an "Engineering with Nature" option.

No buried rock trench or launchable toe behind Fair Oaks Formation

3 Do not install a buried launchable trench behind the area of the exposed Fair Oaks formation! The existing healthy riparian forest there, that would be cut down, is in zero danger of erosion, there is zero erosional scour downstream of any trees, the area is buffered by Pleistocene Fair Oaks formation hard pan and will never have the opportunity to launch any launchable rocks buried there and therefore is 100% unnecessary. All it would do is destroy precious riparian habitat for no benefit and 100% unmitigated loss. This one spot is home to at least fifty bird species and another 100 species move through it seasonally. Mergansers and wood ducks nest here. Deer are seen in here almost every day one walks through. It is frequented by cottontail, jackrabbits and California quail. The levee above this location is protected by three distinct berms separating it from the river. Erosion here is so slow that it cannot even be detected by aerial photography. It makes no sense to cut down riparian habitat in an area of undetectable erosion, bulldoze away living soils, dig a trench down into perfectly protective Pleistocene Fair Oaks hardpan, fill it with quarried rocks, only to cover it up again with infertile subsoil, and then attempt to regrow a riparian forest there that didn't need to be cut down in the first place! Of all the project subcomponents of C3B this one makes the least sense of all.

To quote a sixty-year+ resident of the area speaking specifically about the riverbank that will be impacted by the buried rock trench and the launchable toe upstream and adjacent to the trench (see her own recent comment letter):

"I taught each of our five children how to swim at "Pirates Cove" in the 1960s which is located right at the entrance to the LAR at SARA Park on Rogue River Drive. This area is also where my two sons learned how to kayak in the 1970s. They were taught how to kayak by none other than William "Bill" Griffith (1925-2013), another early and longtime serving member of SARA who also lived on Rogue River Driver. Bill died in the afternoon on January 13, 2013 after taking his daily morning kayak paddle.

If you proceed with your plans as they currently exist, my late husband and Bill will roll in despair from their graves—while those of us who remain in this world, will weep with deep sadness lamenting the destruction you will have wrought on us for the remaining days of our lives.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me, and everyone who knows it."

- 4 | Please suspend these bank protection subcomponents of C3B until they can be reassessed and completely redesigned.

If project is still going forth after all public comment please do the following:

Save trails and beaches

- 5 | Map, maintain, replace social paths and beaches, small watercraft put-in and take-out points, use only round cobble and gravel for these access points. See earlier comment letter to this effect.

Leave intact wildlife corridor

- 6 | If determined to remove riparian vegetation and install riprap please leave an intact contiguous corridor of riparian habitat throughout the length of the project. This is so crucial for the movement and migrations of wildlife.

Incorporate white alder

- 7 | White alder seems to be largely missing from your onsite and offsite mitigation list please add it to the mix particularly at the waters edge. It provides one of the strongest sources of vegetative armoring at the mean summer water level.

Maintain some neighborhood access during construction

- 8 | Maintain access to river for small watercraft and hikers! Please devise a way to allow hikers, strollers, small watercraft to cross through truck haul routes when it is safe to do so, for example evenings and weekends, intervals when trucks are not passing through frequently. Please allow people some form of continued access to the non-construction areas

of the river from the four affected neighborhoods on the south side and the several affected neighborhoods on the north side as well.

Leadership meeting

9

Please arrange a face to face meeting between Sacramento USACE project leaders and American River Trees and Parkway Partners (SARA, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, etc.) leadership.

Thank you sincerely,

William Avery, PhD
Professor Emeritus, Biological Sciences, CSUS
Concerned Resident

Sent from my iPad

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:06 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway Contract 3B

From: Doris Brown <dorisdltet@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:56 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublcCommentARCCF16@water.ca.gov; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov
Cc: bilwpat@surewest.net
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway Contract 3B

I am writing to express my intense concern with the devastation of the American River Parkway proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers plan for erosion control.

I moved to Sacramento in 1974 as a single parent with two small children after a divorce. I got a job with the State. In 1975 I was able to buy a home in Larchmont Butterfield a block from the entrance to the American River on Kansas Way.

It was a very stressful period of my life, but I walked by the river every morning before work. Being in nature with the trees and vegetation helped me feel much calmer and able to be a much better mother and employee.

The parkway and area around it were a precious resource for time with my children. We went to the river after I got

home from work and picked them up from day care. We played imaginary games making up gnomes and other stories.

We loved seeing squirrels, fish jump and frogs. There were many birds and butterflies. We swam and played in the water. It was a miracle to be in such an incredibly beautiful natural area so accessible and close to our home.

I would not have had the energy to go further away after long and trying work days.

There was a surprising amount of wildlife. The beavers were building a dam and we saw one. I saw a fox. And we

saw deer. One year we had a kids Halloween Party with many kids in costume walking down to the river where I, in my witches mask, stirred a caldron with dry ice.

The next 15 years were often stressful with my rise in State government, a diagnosis of breast cancer and a

Court hearings with my ex-husband over child support and being a loving good mother. Access to the river helped me and my family enormously.

In 1990, I remarried and moved away, but my husband and I regularly walk by the river, parking at Kansas Way. It is an incredible area. We used to go to the Paradise Beach area where the Army Corps of Engineers recently the
1 “Erosion Control” project. It is UGLY and DEVASTATED. The trees were cut. The land was scraped and bulldozed.

The wildlife there are gone. It will never truly recover.

Please do not allow this to happen to the rest of the American River Parkway. I do understand the need for flood control.

2 There must be smaller ways to solve the problem of erosion by treating small areas. As I understand it, the EIR did

Not address other alternatives like this. And I’m sure they prefer to treat miles of Parkway at a time—it would be more efficient. But there are other values more important than efficiency, like Nature, Beauty, Peace of Mind and Conservation.

Sincerely, Doris Brown

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Josh Levesque <joshua.levesque@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:33 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To Whom It May Concern,

Look, I'm just a regular guy. I'm not going to use a template to speak my mind on this topic. I am not a scientist, I work in Information Technology for the State in the CalEPA building.

1 With that said, it is very important to me that this area be protected as it has improved my mental health by just being able to take a simple walk. I've been going through a divorce the past year (which has obviously been hard), the ease of access to this location and cost of FREE has really helped with that to clear my mind by watching the precious wildlife in their natural habitat. Being able to do this calms me and I love being surrounded by it. California's waterways are unique to this country and require a targeted analysis and treatment.

I ask that you please hold off on your project to evaluate a less destructive, and more nature based method.

Thank you for taking the time to read these comments and concerns from the public.

Sincerely,

Joshua Levesque

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:04 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject:Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: randyrux3@yahoo.com <randyrux3@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:30 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject:Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A | I live one block from Larchmont Park and this proposed project and visit this area daily. I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of

hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by

many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the

wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED

and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Randall Ruiz

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] URGENT REQUEST FOR EXTENSION TO REVIEW PERIOD FOR ARCF SEIS/SEIR

-----Original Message-----

From: David Ganz <ganzdavid7@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:31 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] URGENT REQUEST FOR EXTENSION TO REVIEW PERIOD FOR ARCF SEIS/SEIR

URGENT! I support Sacramento County Regional Park's request to the US Army Corps of Engineers for more time to ADEQUATELY review the draft SEIS/SEIR (for ARCF). Please give us more time for a thorough review of this complex and extensive set of documents and proposed project. It is vitally important to have an extension of the comment period due to the significant effects expected to occur within the American River Parkway, the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento".

In addition, I request that USACE hold an in-person public meeting on this significant proposed project.
Thank you.

David Ganz

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Contract 3B Public Comment

From: David Ganz <ganzdavid7@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:30 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Contract 3B Public Comment

1 I am the Grandfather to an 8-year-old little boy that lives next to Larchmont Park and O.W. Erlewine Elementary School. The current project proposal predicts significant and harmful impact to the air quality to the area including the school. I am very concerned for how the dust and fumes will impact his health as well as the other children in the community. Please consider a less destructive and more targeted approach to strengthening the levees. Please implement mitigation measures such as using newer, smaller, and electric equipment, and moving construction away from O.W. Erlewine Elementary School and Larchmont Park.

Thank you,

David Ganz

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:02 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Contract 3B Public Comment PLEASE READ

From: Lisa Nieman <lisanien@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:27 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Contract 3B Public Comment PLEASE READ

Greetings,

1 | My 8-year-old nephew and sister live next to Larchmont Park and O.W. Erlewine Elementary School, directly adjacent to your current project proposal. While strengthening the levees is in everyone's best interest, I urge you to take a more targeted and less destructive approach.

First of all, the current trees provide the following benefits to the community and beyond:

- 2 |
- Trees conserve water and reduce soil erosion.
 - Trees save energy.
 - Trees modify local climate.
 - Lower air temperature through shade.
 - Trees increase economic stability.
 - Trees reduce noise pollution.
 - Trees create wildlife and plant diversity.
 - Trees increase property values.

3 | Additionally, your proposed plan would significantly pollute the air during the project period. Your agency has invested in other communities by retaining their trees and wildlife and strengthening their levees at the same time. This community deserves the same. The trees you save will have the added benefit of reducing maintenance needs in the future.

In summary, the following steps may allow for both levee strengthening and streamside protection:

- 4 • Create a plan to keep as many trees and as much vegetation as possible.
- 5 • Use only electric equipment.

- 6 • Move the construction away from O.W. Erlewine Elementary School and Larchmont Park.
- 7 • Implement an environmental restoration project immediately following all construction that includes ensuring new trees become established and are suitable or native to the area.
- 8 • Include an engagement component to ask for feedback and ideas from elementary students. Many of them may be future engineers!

Thanks for your consideration. Please contact me with any questions.

Lisa Nieman

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:00 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPK (USA); Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESPK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Tanya Veldhuizen <tveldmoff@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:25 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. My husband and I specifically purchased a home near the American River Parkway, as we value and enjoy it's environmental, aesthetic and recreational values. As a professional environmental program manager specializing in water resources for the State of California for over 25 years and holding a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology and a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology, I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor

provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

B As described in the draft SEIS/SEIR, the American River Erosion Contract 3B North and South, and American River Erosion Contract 4A are two erosion protection projects from the 2016 authorized alternative. American River Erosion Contract 3B North and South are made up of three different sites. Site 3-1, 1.1 miles of erosion protection, is located on the right (north) bank between Howe Avenue and Watt Avenue between River Mile (RM) 7.8 to RM 8.8. Site 4-1, 1.5 miles of erosion protection, is located on the left bank upstream of Watt Avenue between RM 9.1 to RM 10.5. Site 4-2, 0.7 miles of erosion protection, is located on the right bank near the Estates Drive River Access between RM 9.7 to RM 10.3. American River Erosion Contract 4A, a 100-foot berm, is on the right bank downstream from these locations near RM 2.0 under the State Route 160 Bridge and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Bridge. American River Erosion Contract 4B is an additional erosion protection project along the American River. This contract is in the conceptual phase. It is anticipated that a total of 0.6 miles of erosion protection work would be done on the right bank near RM 8.6 and on the left bank near RM 9.8.

C According to the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways website, “*the lower American River has been designated as a “Recreational River” under both the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1972) and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1980). These designations provide state and national recognition and additional protection of the river’s outstanding scenic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and recreational values. The American is one of seven rivers in the state to receive this protective status*” (https://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29488; accessed Feb 22, 2023). The proposed project will significantly impact this “wild and scenic” river, by destroying riparian habitat, shaded riverine habitat, and recreation for at least 30 to 40 years. Thirty to 40 years is the minimum timeframe for trees and understory vegetation to regrow and begin to provide habitat complexity and support wildlife assemblages. Yet, 40 years is still inadequate to replace 100- to 300-year-old heritage oak and cottonwood trees or the tall forest canopy that are slated to be removed as a result of this project (or already removed between Howe Ave and Sutter’s Landing during an earlier phase of the Common Features project). This draft SEIS/SEIR claims that long-term impacts will be insignificant but does not define “long-term”. Any reasonable person would consider a 20-year recovery time to be long-term for most projects, and at least 40 years recovery time for this particular project. Under the assessment of whether this project will “have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” this draft SEIS/SEIR claims that the project, with the proposed mitigation measures under VEG-1 and D VEG-2, will result in “long-term less than significant with mitigation incorporated.” This project and the proposed mitigation do not adequately mitigate or avoid long-term impacts. I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

E The evaluated project alternatives in this draft SEIS/SEIR failed to consider other erosion protection methods that preserve mature trees, riparian forest, recreational foot trails and recreational shoreline beaches. On page 3-25 of the draft SEIS/SEIR, it states “*the 2016 ARCF GRR Final EIS/EIR only analyzed launchable trench and bank protection (Figure 3.5.2-2) as erosion protection methods. The design refinements include additional erosion protection methods (launchable rock toe protection and tie backs) throughout the American River Erosion Contract C3B North and South project sites...*” In this draft SEIS/SEIR under alternative 6, USACE says it evaluated launchable rock toe, launchable

F trench, bank protection, tie backs, velocity and tree scour improvements. These statements clearly acknowledge that USACE failed to evaluate or even consider alternative bank armoring methods as project alternatives. As such, the 2016 final SEIS/SEIR and current draft SEIS/SEIR are inadequate. The complete removal of all trees, including heritage oaks and mature cottonwoods, and the elimination of shaded riverine habitat could be avoided or significantly reduced to onsite mitigatable levels by using more progressive techniques. An example of a successful bank armoring technique that preserved the riparian forest, wildlife migration corridor, and recreation walking access is located downstream of Paradise Beach on the south side of the river. The benched bank armoring technique with preserved mature trees should be evaluated by USACE for the Common Feature project. This draft SEIS/SEIR fails to evaluate alternative bank armoring techniques, such as bio-engineering methods, that preserve critical habitat. The assessment needs to expand the evaluation of alternatives to include bio-engineering techniques that retain mature trees and preserve shaded riverine habitat.

G As clearly described and acknowledged on the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways website, *"the 23-mile stretch of land along the American River from Nimbus Dam to the Sacramento River is one of the most unique public parks in the country. The American River Parkway preserves the natural, archaeological, historical, and recreational resources of the river while making them accessible to park visitors"* (https://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29488; accessed Feb 22, 2023). Under these current and proposed projects, USACE will destroy at least 11 miles of sensitive riparian habitat, 11 miles of recreational shoreline and beaches, 11 miles of natural bank protection, 11 miles of mature tall forest, 11 miles of shaded riverine habitat, 11 miles of shaded recreational trails, and 11 miles of a cultural resource. In Table 3.4-1 on page 3-12 of the draft SEIS/SEIR, the description of the No Action Alternative includes the 11 miles of launchable trench and bank protection recently constructed on the Lower American River, and 65 acres of riparian habitat and VELB habitat. The Lower American River, from Nimbus Dam at Lake Natoma to the confluence with the Sacramento River, is 23 miles long. This means that 48% of the river miles of Lower American River are or will be significantly impacted by USACE projects. In addition, concurrent projects underway by Caltrans (Cap City Freeway bridge modifications) and the City of Sacramento (Two Rivers bike trail) are also significantly impacting riparian habitat. This SEIR/EIR does not take into account the cumulative impact of all of these projects on the Lower American River riparian habitat, nor does it mitigate the significant impacts to the environment, recreation, and cultural resources.

H As described in this draft SEIS/SEIR, the American River Contract 4A levee work would be conducted on the right bank of the Lower American River near RM 2.0. A berm is proposed upstream of the SR160 bridge to deflect high-velocity flood waters away from the levee slope. Due to the physical constraints at this location, the berm footprint will block the current alignment of the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail. To allow continued use of the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail in this area, a new permanent paved bike trail route is being proposed on the south side of the wetland, following an existing equestrian, hiking, and off-road bike trail. The rerouting of the bike trail adjacent to an existing equestrian trail is not compatible with the existing trail designation nor the safety of equestrians. This SEIR fails to adequately address the safety of equestrians if bicyclists are rerouted near equestrian trails. The document states that Parkway recreation staff would be consulted. However, the public cannot evaluate the impacts of this project in its current draft form.

I In the American River Common Features Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR, it states that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that State and local government agencies consider the environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects (page 1-6). And under the California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.,

CEQA also requires that each public agency avoid or reduce to less-than-significant levels, wherever feasible, the significant environmental effects of projects it approves or implements. If a project would result in significant environmental impacts that cannot be feasibly mitigated to less-than-significant levels, the project can still be approved, but the lead agency's decision makers must issue a "statement of overriding considerations" explaining in writing the specific economic, social, or other considerations that they find, based on substantial evidence, make those significant and unavoidable effects acceptable. The described project, presented alternatives, and selected alternative as presented in this draft SEIS/SEIR fail to demonstrate the need for the complete removal of riparian habitat along a wild and scenic river. Reasonable and cost-effective bio-engineering methods were not considered, even though proven bio-engineering bank armoring has been successfully implemented in the Lower American River near the project site. In addition, the presented modeling results of channel velocities during 160 cfs releases clearly show slow moving water along the banks, despite the very low quality resolution of the figures. USACE's own modeling results actually counter the claim of erosion risk. Therefore, USACE has failed to demonstrate "overriding considerations" for this project.

Under CEQA, even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) has not been presented. USACE and DWR must reconsider the need for this project as currently described based on a false presentation of risk, incorrect interpretation of modeling results, a failure to evaluate other bank protection measures, and a failure to provide overriding considerations to the significant long-term impacts to threatened and endangered species and their designated critical habitat, to rare tall forest riparian habitat, and to recreation and cultural resources of the Lower American River.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

J I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,

Tanya Veldhuizen, MSc
Resident, City of Sacramento

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:12 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPK (USA); Schleeter, Nicole Marie CIV USARMY CESPK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Chris Conard <conardc@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:11 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

- 1 I am writing to express my strong opposition to the habitat destruction proposed within the American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices. I am also writing to express my dismay regarding the complete failure of the public engagement process. Public scoping was entirely inadequate and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) staff refused to engage with residents, local agencies, and local natural resource experts around strategies to preserve habitat and recreational values within the American River Parkway. USACE repeatedly said they would record, but would not respond to comments. Furthermore, the SEIS/SEIR is a hodgepodge of multiple projects, covering thousands of pages, and nearly impossible to navigate.
- 2
- 3 For these reasons, the proposed actions in the SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B, must be put on hold, and the flood control objectives must be performed in a way to maximally preserve habitat consistent with the American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan.
- 4 I wholeheartedly support comments already submitted by agencies and organizations that contain detailed, point by point analyses of the multiple failures to address the significant and sustained losses of habitat and recreational values the SEIS/SEIR, as currently constituted, would bring about.

5 Here I am writing personally as a resident, living for more than 30 years adjacent to the American River Parkway in areas that will be largely destroyed by contract 3B as laid out in the SEIS/SEIR. The American River Parkway is considered by many to be the best Sacramento has to offer. I and many others have arranged our lives and made career and housing choices so we could live within reach of this wonderful area. The impacts as laid out in the SEIS/SEIR would permanently reduce habitat and recreational values and turn vast stretches of intact habitat into a water conveyance canal.

6 We live in a time of decreasing trust in institutions. Government agencies must understand that they work for the public and must make an effort to educate and have a meaningful dialog with impacted residents. The tone of the presentations and the lack of dialog has left residents with the opposite sense. This overwhelmingly complicated document was released on the Friday before the Christmas holiday. USACE staff refused to address comments, only record them, and dismissed or ignored opportunities to meet with residents and local agencies and experts to address the losses and disruption to the Parkway adjacent to their homes. The rapidly approaching construction schedule was presented as a fait accompli and alternatives to the outright leveling of riparian habitat was not explored in the SEIS/SEIR or even addressed by USACE staff during the public meetings.

8 The proposed work in the SEIS/SEIR fails to address the significant loss of mature riparian habitat. I have personally recorded over 200 species of birds in this area. The oaks and other riparian trees are decades old and cannot be easily replaced. The forest has developed complexity, with canopy, midstory, shrubs, and forbs providing habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife. The older trees harbor cavities, which are required nesting habitat and shelter for species including Wood Ducks, Common Mergansers, Barn Owls, Western Screech-Owls, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Tree Swallows, House and Bewick's wrens, and White-breasted Nuthatches. It takes time for this habitat to develop. Remove it and the wildlife will be gone as well. These areas also provide an immeasurable benefit to the community as a place to walk and enjoy a refuge from human-dominated environments. The Parkway is a major attraction for Sacramento--some consider it one of the region's best features--and every effort should be made to preserve its natural character and habitat values.

10 Adding insult to injury, the proposed American River Mitigation Site (also known as the Urrutia property) would involve the complete elimination of an off-channel pond that provides roosting and foraging habitat for 100s, and sometimes thousands of waterbirds. In contrast to contract 3B, with its riparian destruction proposed within a quarter-mile of my house (which I became aware of only late last year!), I provided background information on waterbird usage of the pond slated for elimination at the proposed mitigation site over the past two years. USACE staff and consultants exhibited little knowledge or concern regarding the extant habitat features and waterbird numbers. The impacts of the loss of this open water habitat have been fully explored in comments by other agencies/organizations, and I bring them up here to express my opposition to the elimination of the pond at the American River Mitigation Site as yet another serious deficiency of the SEIS/SEIR.

11 In closing, I urge in the strongest terms possible that the proposed actions in the SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B, must be put on hold, and that the flood control objectives be designed in a way to maximally preserve habitat consistent with the American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan.

Thank you,

Chris Conard

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:10 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Destruction of Ancient Oak Trees

From: Foster, William <william.foster@csus.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:05 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Destruction of Ancient Oak Trees

Dear Sirs,

1 Please, I implore you to not ruin these precious ancient oak trees. These are not trees that can be replaced with replanting. The trees also work hard to hold the soil together along the bank. By bulldozing them, you will do more harm in many ways to the river bank.

I ask as a Concerned citizen to save these oak trees. I ask as a recreational cyclist and commuter who uses the shaded bike path in summer. I ask as a biologist, to not destroy these precious resources. We can replace cars and houses, but we can not replace Ancient Oak Trees.

Sincerely,

Will

William Foster, Ph.D
(he, him, his)
Lecturer
Department of Biological Sciences
California State University, Sacramento
Student Hours
Zoom Wednesday 3 pm- 3:50 pm
Meeting ID: 910 260 6024
In Person:
Solano Hall 2001, Friday 11:50- 1pm

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:10 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] My Comments on US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) SEIS/SEIR Contract 3B - American River

-----Original Message-----

From: Nancy K <birdbabe@surewest.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:01 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] My Comments on US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) SEIS/SEIR Contract 3B - American River

Hello,

1 I am writing to express my strong opposition to the work planned by US Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) along the project's section "3B" of the American River. I am a birder and native plant enthusiast and treasure the habitat along the American River. It is the best place for me to enjoy these activities as well as hiking and bike riding the parkway, which I also love to do.

2 I am horrified and afraid of this project. I do not approve of the Corps' proposed use of archaic methods to do "erosion" control along this "3B" stretch of the river. I listened to many experts that commented at the only public workshop that there is not a big erosion problem on this stretch of the river and that there are other far less destructive methods of erosion control. I am astounded that in this day and age with so much attention being given to climate change that this kind of destruction of habitat would even be considered!

3 I have seen the work the Corps has already done on the American River downstream near Sacramento State University, which the work on section 3B would mimic. The results of that work after 2 years is horrific. It is a dismal failure and the Corps should not propose to do it again on section 3B or anywhere along this designated Wild and Scenic River.

Sincerely,

Nancy

Nancy Kapellas

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:08 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESP
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Daniel M. Steinberg <DSteinberg@weintraub.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:44 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A.

1 I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me my family and we use it daily, as we have a home that backs directly to it.

1 I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is legal, or even necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the published proposal of clear cut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

2 I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

- 3 The lower American River was designated in 1972 as a California Wild and Scenic River and in 1981 under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the federal designation states that for recreational rivers: “Future construction of impoundments, diversions, straightening, rip-rapping, and other modification of the waterway or adjacent land would not be permitted except in instances where such developments would not have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which that river area was included in the national system as determined by the Secretary charged with the administration of the area.” (Page J-9, emphasis added.) In the final EIS, the flora and fauna resources of the Lower American River designated to be preserved were described as: “Flora and Fauna. The Lower American River is lined with lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood, and sycamore trees. The riparian hardwood strip along the Lower American River supports a wildlife community similar to the North Coast, with differences associated with high use by the public and many years of influence by civilization. Because the riparian vegetation is carefully protected, birdlife, including raptors and wading birds, is uniformly dispersed along the river section. Small mammals and a few deer exist in the less developed area; snakes and lizards thrive in the brushlands, dredger cobbles and along the river banks.” (Pg 26, Appendix E). Both the federal and state WSRA place these values before any government-funded water resources projects and both state and federal acts contain prohibitions against governmental cooperation in projects adversely affecting the system, as well as establishing specific regulatory programs to preserve these values. It seems straight forward that the proposed project to remove the valuable resources of lush riparian vegetation and hundreds of trees in order to place riprap rock armoring on the levee is a direct violation of both the California and Federal Wild and Scenic River Acts. Further, Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.
- 4
- 5
- 6 In addition, I request clarification regarding how the EIS has been addressed in the 2016 EIR that is presumably the basis for the current work being performed. Further, I seek clarification regarding what conditions have changed since the EIR that is applicable to this project have changed. Some of these issues include, but are not limited to, changes in the Folsom Dam that have occurred, or are in the planning stages (such as raising the dam height), is the prior river flow estimate still 160 cfm, or is it lower now? and if lower, how has this been addressed in the design of the levy modification? Has the river water need been reduced since the initial studies were performed? How does this affect the design? EIR? and is the EIR still valid?
- 7
- 8 In addition, I would request to know what was done to provide the public with notice of this project? How were residences in the area notified? and who approved holding a public hearings on Friday, Dec 22, the weekend before Christmas? More specifically how were residence on Crondall Drive advised of the project and public hearings?
- 9 Further, I have been advised by Guy Romine of the US Army Corp of Engineers that a current revision of section 3B is in process, that approximately 500 trees will be removed under this revised design and that no healthy trees over 3.5 inches will be removed. When will this revised report be issued? Will the EIR need to be revised in light of the changes? Does this new design address the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act? If not, what will be done to address it? Further, I believe in light of these multiple issues and potential violation the Army Corp. must perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.
- 10

Thank you.

[Daniel Steinberg]

Daniel M. Steinberg

weintraub | tobin

weintraub tobin chediak coleman grodin law corporation

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From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Ermolaeva, Aydin <aydinermolaeva@csus.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:33 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a

much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The

modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted

and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Aydin Ermolaev

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 SEIS/SEIR

From: Jude at Huki <jude@huki.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:26 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; AmRivTrees@gmail.com
Cc: jude@huki.com
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 SEIS/SEIR

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

I am writing out of concern about proposed clearing of the American River Parkway for erosion control. My focus is on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A

I am a California manufacturer of outrigger canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards. For the past 25 years, my goal has been to facilitate people's spiritual, mental, and physical growth through interaction with Sacramento's waterways and with the American River Parkway in particular. Recently, I was horrified to see the nightmarish landscape which has resulted from erosion control at the Fair Oaks Bridge crossing the river. The American River is being reduced to a drainage ditch. The USACE's measures are disproportionate to the risks posed by the possibility of flooding along the American River Parkway.

B

The people of Sacramento have a right to access the American River. The USACE's decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches will compromise this access for walkers, swimmers, and paddlers. Sacramento communities seek to co-existence with the American River Parkway's myriad of animals, birds, fish, and countless of other creatures, flora, and fauna that make up the natural life of our region.

Unfortunately, the American River Parkway is being stripped away and destroyed by the USACE to address potential streambank erosion concerns that are not a certainty. Measures and risks can be more balanced. My understanding is that these improvements are intended to serve as only an interim step to cover a few years until the capacity of Folsom Dam is increased.

I am writing to ask that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents and not go forward with the subcomponents of Erosion Control Contracts 3B and 4 until more surgical, fine-grained approaches are presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the, the Crown Jewel of Sacramento. In 2012 it was designated a Regional Treasure. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a Protected Area under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B will destroy much of this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure. Please reconsider how you will move forward. Your erosion protection should also protect the environment of the American River Parkway and the legacy of future generations of Sacramentons.

Thank you.

Jude Turczynski
P.O. Box 712
West Sacramento, CA 95691

Jude Turczynski, owner www.huki.com
HUKI • Outrigger Canoes, Surfskis & SUP's
26 years of designing and manufacturing ocean racing paddle sports equipment.

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:59 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Laurie Hagan <laurie_hagan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:58 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

As a Sacramento native, I have enjoyed the American River for more than sixty years--biking, hiking, rafting. We are the "City of Trees," and none are more beautiful than those along the banks of the American River. As a Sac State alum, I spent several years enjoying specifically the targeted area.

Furthermore, the last thing we should be doing in our fight against climate change is remove trees!

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the

Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Laurie Hagan

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Mark Tele <jeffball@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:55 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

- A My wife and I recreate along the American River Parkway about 200 days per year, and have been doing so for 35 years.
- B We just became aware of this misguided plan today - the last day to comment. There are many people who frequent the parkway that are not aware of this destructive plan - the comment period should be extended and the details of this plan publicized thru local media.

Yesterday, we were out at the area where the Army Corp wants to bulldoze over 500 trees, including Heritage Valley Oaks. We saw a pair of Bald Eagles among the many species of birds and are concerned that massive damage will be done to the American River Parkway and wildlife habitat. More destruction will occur with this project than occurred with the actual levee upgrades completed over the last decade. It would bring the total damaged area of the wildlife corridor to 11 miles out of the 26 miles of parkway below Nimbus Dam. We strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

We do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

With more than 5 million visits annually to the American River Parkway, which is more than Yosemite, the USACE project 3B will significantly diminish our parkway’s beauty and recreational values. The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Jeff Ball and Laura Konechne

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:57 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca
Attachments: 2017 LAR Bank Erosion Monitoring Report (FINAL).pdf

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:00 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 2:58 PM Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers and CA Department of Water Resources public comment recipients,

I am submitting the following documents to make them part of the project record.

FEMA, Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th

Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors, 8 Cal. 3d 247

HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, “Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4,” (2019)

MBK Engineers, “2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report,” (May 2018)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:04 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPK (USA); Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESPK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment for AFCR SEIS/SEIR

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment for AFCR SEIS/SEIR

1 The report states the “rock trench design concept” comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; however, it is not used in the area of the Wild and Scenic River portion of the Missouri River, according to the National Park Service.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.1 (g)) states, “Environmental impact statements shall serve as a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions rather than justifying decisions already made.”

2 I would recommend that the Corps review less invasive designs when they are more appropriate for a more comparative portion for the lower American River. We would like a more nature-based design for the particular area of erosion be applied instead.

Nancy Kniskern

2/23/24

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:03:40 PM

From: Eleanor Averitt <ladyaveritt@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A Being able to take walk with my dog amongst the natural beauty of the American River Parkway is invaluable. It is a place to bond with not only my dog but also with the wildlife in the area that make the American River Parkway. Walking

amongst nature is so good for my well being, both physically and mentally.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much

more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

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reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed "significant unavoidable" when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and "planting benches", for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings -- could actually

make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

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I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values

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If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as

in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Eleanor Averitt

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 DSEIS/SEIR – December 2023
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:02:37 PM

From: Edith Thacher <egthacher@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:17 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 DSEIS/SEIR – December 2023

RE: Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear People of the US Army Corps of Engineers and Dept. of Water Resources:

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contract 3B.

I care about this section of the Parkway because of the many pleasant walks I have taken in this area, in the shade of the mature trees, which make walking near the river so pleasant.

The planned removal of 500 trees from the American River Parkway makes no sense. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me and all citizens of Sacramento. As we face the increasing impacts of climate change, trees become ever more critical for carbon sequestration, cooling, wildlife habitat and the protection of levees.

1 | There is modeling on the lower American River that demonstrates the protective effect of trees to levees. Trees provide a protective effect in slowing the water flow velocities at the edges of the river, which protects the levees.

American River Flood Control literature touts its “life-cycle management” approach to

1
cont'd

trees. Bull-dozing 500 trees is the opposite of tree trimming, removal of sick or damaged trees and replanting trees.

The American River Parkway is a unique stretch of parkland as it provides close proximity of natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities. It should be protected, legacy trees should be allowed to flourish, wildlife in the river and on its banks should not be wiped out.

I would like to walk this section of the River with my grandchildren and enjoy the shade, wildlife, natural beauty and the miracle of mature trees.

Thank you.

Edith Thacher

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Review of the ARCF SES/SEIR 2023 Comment
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:02:01 PM

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:16 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Review of the ARCF SES/SEIR 2023 Comment

DOCUMENT TOO DIFFICULT FOR PUBLIC PERUSAL

1 This is a hugely encumbering, difficult to follow, and unnecessarily confusing document...although there are various Codes of Federal Regulations requiring a more understandable document The Corps insists it performs a lot of public outreach; we found this untrue

2 The 45-day review is a minimum review period, and the Corps could easily extend it (Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, section 15105(a)). The 940 page document, along with the 840 page Appendix has a total of 1780 pages and encompassed 8 separate projects. A 45-day period would mean 40 pages would need to be analyzed each day.

3 (Title 40 CFR, Section 1502.7) The text of final environmental impact statements ...shall be 150 pages or fewer and, for proposals of unusual scope or complexity, shall be 300 pages or fewer unless a senior agency official of the lead agency approves in writing a statement to exceed 300 pages and establishes a new page limit. (This length of document averages 7 pages a day to review...)

(Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, Section 15003) Policies (g)) states, "The purpose of CEQA is not to generate paper, but to compel government at all levels to make decisions with environmental consequences in mind." This criteria is not met in this SEIS/SEIR.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.8) states that, "Agencies shall write environmental impact statements in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision makers and the public can readily understand such statements.

4 A confusing Excerpt from 3-29 ARC Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR:

This table outlines and defines the erosion protection terms for erosion protection activities on the American River.

“Launchable toe with planting bench – Placed as the waterward face of a planting bench.

Launchable toe – placed along the riverbank near the riverbank toe.

When at riverbank toe, can be included with or without a planting bench.

Tie-back features are typically incorporated element with erosion features listed above as necessary to meet flood risk measures.

Planting Bench Rock Tie Backs – Placed within planting benches and spaced intermittently

I did not understand a word of this. I was looking for definitions of these terms, And, this was not helpful.

Nancy Kniskern

2/23/24

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:01:34 PM

From: steve powell <steve.powell4@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:17 PM
To: Timothy Conway <timjconway@msn.com>; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site

- 1 | A cost-benefit analysis of this project should fully consider the Costs, which include excessive destruction of habitat and Parkway.
- 2 | The US Army Corps of Engineers should avoid their historic tendency to Over-Engineer and Under-Conserve.
- 3 | Please negotiate details of the plan with residents from the neighborhood (most affected), tree by tree.

Thank you, Steve

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its habitat and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I have lived next to the American River for over 30 years and walk there daily. It's where I go for exercise, mental health and spiritual renewal. I also worked for 30 years for the State of California as an environmental scientist/manager in the areas of flood management, urban stream restoration, fish passage and developing the 2016 Conservation Strategy for the Central Valley Flood Plan.

I have the following concerns about the project design, SEIR/SEIS document and public outreach process:

1. Modeling and Design selection process - Based on the data and modeling information available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there appears to be insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts of the project. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, data presented for Contract 3B show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees several years ago); and there is inadequate evidence of urgent erosion issues.

2. The USACE erosion analysis appears to overgeneralize the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used older models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Recent research using three-dimensional modeling (referenced below and detailed in the comments submitted separately by the Butterfield-Riviera East Community Association (BRECA)) on segments of the lower American River downstream of the Contract 3B area demonstrate the protective effect of trees when included in the models (1, 2). This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed "significant unavoidable" when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by appropriate, current modeling or empirical data. I request the project partners to conduct 3-D modeling

to more accurately evaluate the need and extent for erosion control on the reaches upstream of Howe Avenue.

- 3
2. Habitat Loss – The California Central Valley has lost over 95% of its riparian habitat . Riparian forests are some of the most complex and rich ecosystems and provide valuable habitat for a variety of avian, terrestrial and aquatic species. The project proposed would clear and remove up to 500 trees in the Contract 3B area, including potentially some Heritage Oaks over 200 years old. The SEIS/SEIR does not clearly detail the loss of trees and the impacts associated with the proposed project, including the impact on birds as outlined in the comments provided by the Central Valley Bird Club.

- 4
- Also, the cumulative effects with this new project would bring the total length of American River banks denuded by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including areas with high quality riparian habitat and important shaded riverine habitat. Wildlife and birds that have been displaced from project areas downstream will be displaced again. The SEIS/SEIR does not adequately addresses these cumulative impacts.

- 5
3. Intrinsic values and Recreation Impacts – a) The project threatens the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain the diverse wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, coyotes, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this area so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”.

- 6
- The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the intrinsic conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. The SEIS/SEIR does not adequately address the long term impacts associated with the intrinsic qualities of this section of the parkway.

- 7
- b) The project will result in the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize and mitigate

for the impacts to features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much used small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails.

8 4. Air quality impacts - Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

9 Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

10 5. Environmental Justice - The American River Parkway provides high quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Fishing and family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

11 6. Public Outreach Meetings – I attended both of the public outreach meetings in January/February 2024 and like others, found them frustrating. There were technical issues both nights (in some cases making it extremely difficult to hear the recorded presentation). Multiple project reaches were included on an individual slide making it difficult to see the detail for any particular reach. Additionally, there was no way for people to ask even basic

clarifying questions, which made it harder for people to understand what was being presented and led to misunderstandings about some aspects of the project.

12 At the public meetings there was inadequate information about the erosion assessment and modeling undertaken and how various potential bank protection measures were evaluated. (At a separate local presentation on the project, I learned about the Lower American River Taskforce Bank Stabilization Working Group process.) Including more detail in the USACE public presentations would have helped attendees understand the specific process for making decisions.

13 7. Additional Comments – I would like to add my support for the more extensive comments made in two letters sent separately by the Butterfield-Riviera East Community Association and the Central Valley Bird Club.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and all comments being submitted by interested parties.

Sara E. Denzler

References:

1. Flora, K, Santoni, C & Khosronejad A (2021) Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River under Flood Conditions. J. Hydraul. Eng. 147(9): 05021006. <https://ascelibrary.org/doi/10.1061/%28asce%29hy.1943-7900.001912>
2. Flora, K & Khosronejad A (2023) Uncertainty Quantification of Bank Vegetation Impacts on the Flood Flow Field in the American River, California, Using Large Eddy Simulations. Earth Surface Processes and Landforms. <https://doi.org/10.1002/esp.5745>

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:59:26 AM

From: Judith Martin <go.faceitwithagrin@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:08 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction

health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles

of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American

River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

Judith Martin

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:59:11 AM

From: GEORGE M KIMMERLEIN <g.kimmerlein@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:08 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

A | *I have lived along the American river east of Watt Ave. for more than 20 years. I often paddle in my kayak or just take a swim from the bank on hot days.*

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

B | *The recreational value of the river east of Watt will be eliminated despite limited or no additional flood protection.*

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

George Kimmerlein
Sacramento CA

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:48:11 AM
Attachments: [Engineering With Nature Web.pdf](#)
[Final Text - web.pdf](#)
[2022-c090840.pdf](#)
[7367-7385.pdf](#)
[wsr-act.pdf](#)
[Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors.pdf](#)
[20190725 LAR Erosion Risk Memo \(1\).pdf](#)

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:59 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers and CA Department of Water Resources public comment recipients,

I am submitting the following documents to make them part of the project record.

FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th

Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors, 8 Cal. 3d 247

HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, "Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4," (2019)

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:38:27 AM

From: GEORGE M KIMMERLEIN <g.kimmerlein@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:00 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A | *I spend many hours on, in , or by the American river year round near Larchmont park which is near my home.*

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate

matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead

agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees

years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We

understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along

the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic,

water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway,

including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

George M Kimmerlein
Sacramento CA

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:20:48 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Leslie Stradley <lesliestrادley@icloud.com>
 Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:48 PM
 To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
 Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
 Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

I'm writing to you today about the lower American River (components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.) The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I've lived within walking distance of the American river Parkway for 30 years. I walk, bike, and/or kayak there at least three times per week. The American River Parkway is the best thing about living in Sacramento.

It is a wild, natural place. The only one around. It's different than a city park. Being down by the river is an emotional and spiritual experience. Places like this are rare and special. I love walking alone on the horse paths along the river's edge experiencing the sounds and motion of the river, the wind blowing in the branches, the birds singing. I know where the beaver lodge is. It's a treat to visit at dusk as they come out and swim from shore to shore. I often see river otters playing. I call out, "Buenos dias, Señor ", to the coyote as I pass them. I wave to the deer as they raise their heads as I ride by on my bike. One of my favorite things is when I see a family of quail scurrying across the path.

1 | What happens to animal homes when 500 trees are cut down and the grasses and shrubs bulldozed? Where will the birds, rabbits, coyotes, deer, and other wild creatures go? I've seen what happened near Sac State. I ride my bike by there at least twice a week. It's barren, hard dirt. I don't see how this is better for flood control than grasses, shrubs, and trees. (Last week as I was biking, I passed an old man pushing a metal hand cart. On the cart was a bag of seed. He was hand-spreading the seeds on the hard, bare dirt just upstream from the Guy West Bridge. It broke my heart.)

2 | I've gone down to see how far the river has risen after big storms. A few years ago it was all the way up to the levee in many places. After not much time, the water receded and the area seemed to recover as if nothing had happened. It probably deposited needed minerals. I can't imagine a flood near the now-denuded banks near Sac State after a flood. The dirt will just wash away I suppose.

I understand that people feel like some things need to be repaired. My hope is that it will be done in a thoughtful way with the least amount of impact on the wild nature of the river and the woods along its banks.

3

I also would like assurance that whoever is making decisions on this project, goes down to the river. Go alone. Walk the horse trails. Listen to the wind and the water. Watch the trees move in the wind. Maybe catch a glimpse of raft of otters.

To quote the Lorax, "I speak for the trees." They can't speak for themselves.

Thank you,
Leslie Stradley

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: [publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov](#); [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns with lack of Social benefit considerations for USACE Project 3b on the American River
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:20:22 AM

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:02 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns with lack of Social benefit considerations for USACE Project 3b on the American River

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

1 I recently discovered that in the USACE authored book for International Guidelines on Nature and Nature Based Features for Flood Risk Management under your Engineering with Nature Program, a
significant principal is to identify solutions that produce multiple benefits that “enhance quality of human life, advance social equity and increase environmental integrity” (p 23). Can you explain how project 3b will implement this principal? I can see from reading your Engineering with Nature Volume 2 that you work to meet this principal with other projects, such as the work you celebrated for Sonoma County's Dry Creek. Can you explain how you have considered a way to enhance quality of life? Can you explain how you have considered the impact to social equity, since this stretch of
2 river is a major access point to many lower income areas of Sacramento?

Thank you,
Alicia Eastvold
Larchmont Neighborhood resident

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site project
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:19:38 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Fred Foerster <fredjudy815@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:46 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site project

To Whom It May Concern.

1 | I am greatly concerned with this project and its impact on the environment. What is to happen to the animals as well
2 | as the flora. Although I am certain that there was some prior notice but not sufficient enough to make local residents
aware. On top of this impact, to find that the intended use of the Waterglen Access as a staging area makes this even
more objectionable.

Fred Foerster, resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPK (USA); Toland, Tanis J CIV USARMY CESPK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment for AFCR SEIS/SEIR

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment for AFCR SEIS/SEIR

- 1 | The report states the “rock trench design concept” comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; however, it is not used in the area of the Wild and Scenic River portion of the Missouri River, according to the National Park Service.
- 2 | **(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.1 (g)) states, “Environmental impact statements shall serve as a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions rather than justifying decisions already made.”**
- 3 | I would recommend that the Corps review less invasive designs when they are more appropriate for a more comparative portion for the lower American River. We would like a more nature-based design for the particular area of erosion be applied instead.

Nancy Kniskern

2/23/24

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:03 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Eleanor Averitt <ladyaveritt@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A Being able to take walk with my dog amongst the natural beauty of the American River Parkway is invaluable. It is a place to bond with no only my dog but also with the wildlife in the area that make the American River Parkway. Walking amongst nature is so good for my well being, both physically and mentally.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the

unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be

incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more

slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and

vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage

Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control

projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B

and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Eleanor Averitt

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Erosion project on American River Parkway
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:58:50 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Beth McClure <bethmcclure1@me.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Erosion project on American River Parkway

To whom it may concern,

The American River Parkway is a treasure of Sacramento and all of California. As a resident of Sacramento County for over 30 years I have spent 1-3 hours per day on the horse trail and along the bike trail to exercise, enjoy nature and appreciate our wild spaces.

1 The devastation that occurred over the last 2 years with the last “erosion” project was an abject failure in the disruption to our beloved trail and its plants, trees and animals and to the people who depend on the trail to enhance their lives and the lives of their families and community members. With global warming and climate change it is imperative to keep mature tree canopies and to remove literally every living thing was unbelievably short sighted. These impacted areas will not recover certainly in my lifetime but not even that of my children. The natural habitat has prevented erosion with interlocking root systems and co dependency since rivers first flowed. You have spent millions on levee support and that should be enough and the focus. One needs only to stand on the Sac State bridge and looks at what looks like a war zone in a desert and see the tremendous erosion happening with these most recent storms....please look at the silt from your construction site pouring and clouding our beautiful river.

The most powerful image of all that your projects have destroyed was the large graffiti under Howe Avenue THE DAY THE TRAIL REOPENED! In 30 years we have never had graffiti along the parkway in Arden Arcade....this happened because the tagged recognized this barren landscape devoid of green as not worthy of keeping pristine and of no value any longer....

Please keep our trees for our future.

Sincerely yours,
Elizabeth McClure MD
Sierra Oaks Vista resident
Sacramento County

Sent from my iPhone

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: Contract 3B Site Project
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:00:57 AM

From: Robert L'Heureux <lheureux1@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:04 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B Site Project

Greetings,

Thank you for extending the comment period for the subject project.

- I'm a homeowner in the vicinity of the project scope. (That is, I live in the College Glen neighborhood and the street I live on abuts the levee that is scheduled to be addressed by this project.) My concerns are mostly for the trees and wildlife that abut the American River. I
- 1 I would request that the Army Corps consider the many who live and recreate along the American River by proceeding with a more measured approach that doesn't completely scar the riparian area behind our homes as has already been done along Sacramento State. We would be in support of a project that more methodically institutes tree removal and replanting rather than removing all trees along the River as well as the wildlife that depends on them.
- 2 Please consider my comments return with a more neighborhood friendly and—more directly—*environmentally* friendly plan that doesn't include the removal of the flora and fauna for those here now and for the and several generations to come.

Sincere Regards,

Robert L'Heureux, PE

Comments of Dennis Eckhart on the Draft SEIR/SEIS, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

My connection to, and knowledge of, the American River Parkway

Since moving to Carmichael in 1983, I have visited the American River Parkway thousands of times. From 1991 to 2010, I commuted virtually every day by bicycle to and from downtown Sacramento on the Jedediah Smith Multi-use Trail. After transitioning to a part-time work schedule, I continued to commute to downtown Sacramento several days a week.

I usually visit the parkway several times a every week for birdwatching, wildlife viewing/photography, and hiking, and for volunteer restoration activities for the American River Parkway Foundation (ARPF) and the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA).

From August 2011 to the present, I have volunteered with the ARPF's Invasive Plant Management Program (IPMP), concentrating primarily on removing red sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), stinkwort (*Ditrichia graveolens*) and yellow starthistle (*Centurea solstitalis*), but also removing French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), giant reed (*Arundo donax*), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), and Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*). During my 13+ years in the IPMP, I have surveyed and pulled invasive plants on both the left and right banks of the lower American River on most of the 23-mile parkway.

In 2016 I was asked to join the ARPF's Program Committee, a position I hold to this day. In 2021 I was asked to represent the ARPF at Sacramento Area Weed Management Meetings, which I continue to do. Also, at ARPF's request, I reviewed and provided written comments on two drafts of the Natural Resources Management Plan and the Monitoring Plan (Appendix D) for the Parkway.

My capstone project for certification as a California Naturalist in 2017 involved the organization of a stinkwort eradication project at the north end of the Nature Study Area (NSA) that is adjacent to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) in Ancil Hoffman Park. Stinkwort eradication at that site is ongoing. In 2023 volunteers under my direction pulled over 18,426 stinkwort plants at that location.

In 2020 I joined the Habitat Restoration Team (HRT) at EYNC, where I lead the Invasive Plant group on monthly workdays, survey the NSA for invasive plants, and plan eradication efforts. In 2023 HRT volunteers removed 1,110 Spanish broom, 9842 yellow starthistle, 2600 Italian thistle, and 3743 rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*) in the NSA.

Although my post-graduate degrees are in Philosophy and Law, I have attended seminars and conferences on invasive-plant biology and control methods. I have provided trainings and prepared written materials on invasive plants for both ARPF and ARNHA.

Comments on Draft ARCFs SEIR/SEIS

While I am greatly concerned about the destruction of wildlife habitat and natural space, including the loss of hundreds of heritage trees and other native flora along the banks of the American River, my comments on the draft SEIR/SEIS will be confined to deficiencies in relation to invasive plant species, and in particular, the total lack of identified methods and procedures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plant species, including pernicious annuals, such stinkwort and yellow starthistle.

Several legal and policy directives require USACE to identify action to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species

The draft SEIR/SEIS cites and describes Executive Order EO 13112, signed February 3, 1989, as

... direct[ing] Federal agencies to take actions to prevent the introduction of invasive species, provide for control of invasive species, and minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause. . . . This EO requires consideration of invasive species in NEPA analyses, including their identification and distribution, their potential effects, and measures to prevent or eradicate them.

This brief passage in the Draft SEIR/SEIS ends with the conclusionary assertion that

The Proposed Action complies with EO 13112 by discussing invasive species and measures to prevent their spread during construction in Appendix B Section 4.1 Vegetation and Wildlife.

(Draft SEIR/SEIS, sec. 6.1.12, pp. 6-7; italics added.)

Despite this assertion, Appendix B does not “discuss[] invasive species and measure to prevent their spread during construction.”

Appendix B does cite and again briefly describes Executive Order EO 13112 (although it incorrectly says this EO was issued in 1999, rather than in 1989):

[EO 13112] directs Federal agencies to take actions to *prevent the introduction of invasive species, provide for control of invasive species, and minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause*. EO 13112 also calls for the restoration of native plants and tree species.

(App. B, 4.1-19 -20, Italics added.)

Appendix B also cites Executive Order 13751, issued December 5, 2016, but states only that this EO “directs action to continue coordinated Federal prevention and control efforts of invasive species.” (Ibid.)

EO 13751 states in the strongest possible terms the policy of the United States in regard to invasive species:

It is the policy of the United States to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive species, as well as to eradicate and control populations of invasive species that are established. Invasive species pose threats to prosperity, security, and quality of life. They have negative impacts on the environment and natural resources, agriculture and food production systems, water resources, human, animal, and plant health, infrastructure, the economy, energy, cultural resources, and military readiness. *Every year, invasive species cost the United States billions of dollars in economic losses and other damages.*

(EO 13751, sec. 1, italics added.)

Further, EO 13751 amends section 2 of EO 13112 to state:

"Sec. 2. Federal Agency Duties. ***(a) Each Federal agency for which that agency's actions may affect the introduction, establishment, or spread of invasive species shall, to the extent practicable and permitted by law, (1) identify such agency actions;*** (2) subject to the availability of appropriations, and within administrative, budgetary, and jurisdictional limits, use relevant

agency programs and authorities to: ***(i) prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive species;***

...

(c) conduct research on invasive species and ***develop and apply technologies to prevent their introduction, and provide for environmentally sound methods of eradication and control of invasive species;***

(EO 13751, sec. 3, italics added.)

As pertinent to this discussion, EO 13751 also amended EO 13112 to define the key terms "introduction" and "prevention," as used in the "Federal Agency Duties" section, quoted above:

(d) 'Introduction' means, as a result of human activity, the intentional or unintentional escape, release, dissemination, or placement of an organism into an ecosystem to which it is not native.

...

(h) 'Prevention' means the action of stopping invasive species from being introduced or spreading into a new ecosystem.

(Id., sec. 2.)

Also cited in Appendix B is USACE's Invasive Species Policy, issued in February 2023, which

Requires that ***civil works projects will include measures to either prevent or reduce the establishment of invasive and non-native species.*** O&M will include strategies for invasive species management.

(App. B, 4.1-19 -20; italics added.)

More specifically, USACE's policy provides, in pertinent part, that

6. Measures to either prevent or reduce establishment of invasive and non-native species will be a component of all USACE Civil Works projects and will be applied to invasive species issues in the execution of all Civil Works programs. The intent is to integrate the Invasive Species Policy into all projects and programs to effectively and efficiently manage invasive and nonnative species, including harmful algal blooms.

a. Operating projects will include strategies for invasive species management in their project Operation and Maintenance (O&M) responsibilities and ensure these strategies are addressed in Master Plans and Operational Management Plans (OMPs) as appropriate. These strategies will be coordinated, as required by law, with other Federal agencies, Tribal Nations, State and local governments, non-government organizations, stakeholders, and partners, as applicable.

b. Civil Works planning documents will appropriately address invasive species concerns in their analysis of project impacts. native plants and tree species. . . .

c. Construction activities creates (sic) the opportunity for the introduction, spread, and establishment of invasive species. ***Engineering and Construction shall consider and implement practices to reduce the introduction and spread of invasive species during the design and construction of Civil Works projects.***

(USACE Invasive Species Policy, sec. 6, italics added.)

The Draft SEIR/SEIS addresses invasive plant species in summary and incomplete fashion

On page 4.1-17, the document briefly paraphrases section 3.6 of the ARCF GRR FEIS/EIR in regard to the types of areas where invasive species typically occur, e.g., “previous construction sites.” The draft SEIR/SEIS then quotes from page 113 of the ARCF GRR FEIS/EIR:

These invasive species typically outcompete native plant species and must be controlled aggressively including mitigation and restoration areas. Since 2001, Sacramento County and SAFCA have collaborated on invasive plant management planning efforts, which have guided local efforts towards eradication of all populations of giant reed (*Arundo donax*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.), French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), red sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*), Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), and pyracantha (*Pyracantha* spp.).

Significantly absent from this list are Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*)—an invasive species considerably more prevalent on the Parkway than Scotch or French broom. Nor is either stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) or yellow starthistle (*Centurea solstitialis*) listed, despite extensive infestations on the Parkway.

Moreover, ARPF has mapped only two tamarisk on the entire Parkway and only a handful of orleander and pyracantha. Giant reed and Pampas grass do occur on the Parkway, but only in small patches which ARPF monitors and removes as volunteer resources are available.

The Draft SEIR/SEIS does not address measures to prevent the introduction of invasive species during construction

Not only does the Draft SEIR/SEIS fail to even mention several of the most invasive and widespread invasive plant species on the Parkway, but, despite the clear mandates and policy directives, described above, the draft SEIR/SEIS does not even mention, let alone describe, any practices or procedures to prevent or reduce the introduction of invasive species during any phase of the project. Nor does the draft SEIR/SEIS provide for pre-construction surveys to determine what invasive species may already be present at the site.

Of particular concern are Invasive species, such as stinkwort and yellow starthistle—both annuals in the Asteraceae family—produce hundreds of seeds in the summer and fall. Both these weeds are prevalent along highways and trails because they take hold and thrive in disturbed ground. Grading and other construction activities are common vectors.

As noted above, I have considerable experience with the stinkwort Infestation in the NSA at Ancil Hoffman Park. Stinkwort produces a pungent odor, and contact with the plant causes dermatitis in some people. No native animals consume stinkwort, and there are as yet no biological controls available.

In the fall of 2017, thousands of mature stinkwort—many of them three feet tall and three feet around—created a monoculture in several acres of open cobble at the north end of the NSA. Over the next two years, volunteers pulled and bagged mature stinkwort prior to seed production. Nonetheless, new infestations have continued to emerge at the site, which has required constant effort to maintain control.

Comments of Dennis Eckhart on the Draft SEIR/SEIS, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

In late summer and fall 2021 a project of the Sacramento Water Forum to create habitat for fall-run Chinook Salmon was completed in this same part of the NSA. One component of the project involved substantial grading and creation of a side channel where salmonids could safely mature before migrating to the Pacific Ocean. Construction coincided with the peak period for stinkwort flowering and seed production, but construction activities at the site precluded stinkwort control and eradication that year.

4
cont'd

In the year following the project, volunteers removed 15,885 stinkwort plants from the site. In 2023 even more plants, 18,426, were pulled and bagged.

It is important to note that the Water Forum project did not include the importation of any soil, rocks or other materials from off-site. Construction equipment, which included dump trucks, bulldozers and a loader, were thoroughly cleaned before entering the site, and they remained on site for the duration of the project. Even with these measures, stinkwort continues to thrive at the site.

In contrast, USACE's proposed project along the American River would involve hundreds of vehicle trips entering and exiting the site at a number of access points. Considerable materials (rocks, soil, and erosion controls such as wattles) will be imported from off-site. Yet the draft SEIR/SEIS does not address these vectors for introduction of invasive plants, such as stinkwort, onto the Parkway. Not addressed in any way shape or form are such issues as the cleaning of trucks, bulldozers and other vehicles before they enter the site. Nor is there any mention of whether soil and rocks will be obtained from weed-free sources.

These deficiencies should be addressed in the Draft SEIR/SEIS, and procedures to prevent the

introduction of invasive plant species should be adopted and adhered to in this project.

Thank you for considering my comments on the Draft SEIR/SEIS.

Dennis Eckhart

Feb. 23, 2024

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: [ARCF_SEIS](#); publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:02:52 AM

From: Clint Duke <clintduke87@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:09 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be

incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use,

aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway's wildlife. A "surgical approach", not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Clint Duke

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:03:31 AM

From: john dye <john@dye-design.us>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:11 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The Corp does many good projects in the West but this is not one of them. I've paddled the Lower American River for over 30 years in water levels ranging from 1,200 cfs to over 20,000 cfs. I've never seen conditions which would warrant removing the trees and vegetation which holds the bank together. The Corp's approach to taking a natural riparian riverbank, denuding it of all life and turning it into an engineered ditch is out dated, un-needed and a waste of tax payer dollars.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

B

- Proposed project appears it will result in increased flow during flood events. If so this would increase bank erosion rather than reduce erosion.
- Increased flow rates during flood events may simply raise the flood danger for communities downstream.

C

- Reassess the value of the existing riparian habitat in the EIR.
- Preserve existing riparian habitat at all cost.
- Spend the dollars on stream restoration as opposed to stream destruction.
- Concentrate on expanding flood plains, backwaters and marshlands to absorb flood waters and improve salmon spawning habitat in the watershed as opposed to riprap and habitat destruction.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank You,

John Dye
Co-Founder Rivers for Change

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Central Valley Flood Protection Board/California Dept of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, CA 95821

Submitted via email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Re: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

1 My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contract 3B, and the complete lack of an appropriate and site-specific environmental analysis for a project of this magnitude. The section of river between Howe Avenue and Mayhew Drain is different from any other section of the river previously worked on by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, so one would expect a unique approach when considering providing “potential erosion protection”. And, as far as I can see in the SEIS/SEIR, Contract 3B has not been given an appropriate and in-depth environmental analysis, or the benefit of a unique approach. I feel as though USACE are employing a one-size-fits-all approach to the sites within Contract 3B, which will cause irreparable damage to this section of the Wild and Scenic lower American River, and the many species that call this region “home”. Instead of proving that erosion protection is necessary through sound science, USACE are using oversimplified modeling, and scare tactics to justify the need for potential erosion protection in the area between Howe Avenue and the Mayhew drain. This lack of a detailed and site-specific analysis, coupled with the proposed approach of clearcutting mature forests (including heritage oaks), obliterating miles of shady riverine aquatic habitat (SRA), and filling with rip rap, leads me to believe that the community will likely see a much higher risk of erosion after Contract 3B is complete.

2 Among my many concerns with Contract 3B are the proposed use of rip rap and the loss of shady riverine aquatic habitat, which are in complete contrast with the National and State Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as well as recommendations by the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy, and the American River Parkway Plan.

Rip rapped banks will cut off river access for many American River Parkway recreational users. If “Bank Protection” allows for sharp/angular rip rap to be placed at the water’s edge, continuing at any length up the riverbank, this will stifle *primitive river access* for fishing, boating, wading, nature-viewing, etc. Figure 3.5.2-9 from the 2016 SEIS, displays “bank

protection/riverbank protection” for nearly the entirety of Larchmont Community Park, only stopping on the west end of the park, where rip rapped banks already cut off user access.(A) Cutting off access to these long-used primitive river access points will be in direct violation of American River Parkway Plan Goal/Policy 8.16.(B) This section of the American River Parkway adjacent to Larchmont Community Park is an extremely popular water access point, with several social trails leading down to the river. The American River Parkway Plan even lists 3 official pedestrian levee access points in the area between Sara Park and the east end of Larchmont Community Park.(C) The beaches in this section of the river are currently made from various sized smooth river stones, which make wading, swimming, fishing, and small boat launching much safer than the alternative. If we lose the beaches in this section, and the current river stones and pebbles are replaced with sharp/angular rip rap, all of these recreational opportunities will be lost with them. Section ES-5 of the ARCF SEIS/SEIR Executive Summary considers the long-term recreational loss in Project 3B South “No impact”, which can’t be further from the truth. In USACE written responses to official comment letters to the 2016 GRR EIS/EIR, USACE claimed that “once construction is complete and mitigation plantings have been established, access to the water’s edge in the construction footprint will be permitted.”(D) But, if bank protection itself limits user access to the water’s edge, then Project 3B will permanently remove primitive river access for recreational users. Furthermore, if high flow events remove the loose soil that is installed over top of large sections of rip rap, as the SEIS/SEIR proposes, then these inaccessible sections of exposed rip rap will only grow larger over time.

- A. ARCF Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR and Appendix B (Detailed Analyses), 2016, Figure 3.5.2-9, 3-36.
- B. American River Parkway Plan, 2008. Goals and Policies, Public Access and Trails, 8.16, pg 126 - *“A variety of primitive and developed fishing access points shall continue to be maintained.”*
https://regionalparks.saccounty.gov/Parks/Documents/Parks/ARPP06-092617_sm.pdf
- C. American River Parkway Plan, 2008. Area Plans - Sara Park, pg 174.
- D. ARCF GRR Final EIS/EIR Appendix F, May 2016.
https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/WRDA16/Documents/ARCF_GRR_Final-EIS-EIR_AppF_May2016.pdf

Removing a canopy of over 500 trees, and installing unnecessary rip rap revetement, as proposed in American River Erosion Contract 3B South, will lead to a substantial loss of shade and habitat diversity, which could lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids (Steelhead and Chinook Salmon). Although the proposed 3B South plan does involve mitigation efforts to replant some trees, you simply cannot mitigate for the mature canopies that exist between Watt Avenue and Larchmont Community Park. Removing the kind of mature trees that are thriving in the proposed construction footprint could have devastating effects on fish populations and sport-fishing alike. In a study published by the US Department of Agriculture and the US Forest Service, scientists found that “stream temperatures are far more sensitive to changes in shade than to changes in either air temperature or stream discharge.”(A) Because water temperature is known to have drastic effects on salmonid’s ability to migrate for spawning, and the survivability of their eggs/fry, a project like USACE’S 3B will put unnecessary

stress on fish. In a report prepared for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), it was determined that “Studies of the migration timing and survival of adult Chinook support the notion that high water temperatures can limit migration success,” and that “Temperature ranges above optimal may cause fish to cease migration.” (B) If one of the goals is fostering a healthy fishery and ensuring the success and survival of species of interest, like the Chinook Salmon, then the logging and removal of acres of mature shade-providing trees along the riverbank would be the exact opposite of what is needed. Goal/Policy 3.11 of the American River Parkway plan states: “Agencies managing the Parkway shall identify, enhance and protect: areas where maintaining riparian vegetation will benefit the aquatic and terrestrial resources; current shaded riverine aquatic habitat.” (C) In addition to the stress introduced by the potential loss of canopy, the installation of huge quantities of rip rap, where the riparian and shady riverine aquatic zones currently thrive, will only further stress these sensitive fish populations. A study presented by the Habitat and Enhancement Branch of Fisheries and Oceans-Canada recognized that “riprap reduced habitat complexity and diversity, important to survival, growth, migration, and reproduction of salmonids,” and that “Negative effects of rip-rapped streambanks can include a loss of riparian vegetation, resulting in a loss of nutrients and food sources, decreased future LWD (large woody debris) recruitment, and reduced shade, and a decrease in habitat diversity.” (D) This complete obliteration of the riparian corridor and elimination of the shady riverine aquatic habitat is also in direct contrast with the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy from 2016, where the CVFPP recommended the “establishment of continuous corridors of riparian vegetation and Shady Riverine Aquatic cover” to facilitate the recovery of various native species. (E) It seems as though the USACE ARCF SEIS/SEIR plans to complete these “erosion” projects in direct contrast with recommendations/policies of both the American River Parkway Plan, as well as the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy, with little justification.

- A. “*Shading Out Climate Change: Planting Streamside Forests to Keep Salmon Cool*”, Science Findings, June, 2020. “Steve Wondzell, a research ecologist with the USDA Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station, conducted a study on the upper Middle Fork of eastern Oregon’s John Day River. By using computer modeling, he and colleagues found that adding shade was the single most effective way to cool the water and preserve habitat for salmon into the future. With enough added shade, they found that future water temperature in the river could be cooler than today, even as air temperatures warm.”
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnw/science/scifi228.pdf>
- B. “*The Influence of In-stream Habitat Characteristics on Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha)*”, David Bergendorf, November 2002.
https://www.webapps.nwfsc.noaa.gov/assets/11/7389_10232012_174142_Bergendorf2002.pdf
- C. American River Parkway Plan, 2008. Goals and Policies, Aquatic Community Policies, 3.8, 3.11, pg 18
- D. “*Streambank Protection with Rip-rap: An Evaluation of the Effects on Fish and Fish Habitat*”, J.T. Quigley and D.J. Harper, 2004 <https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/285541.pdf>
- E. Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, Conservation Strategy, November 2016. Section 5-27.
<https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Flood-Management/Flood->

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Please take the time to perform a more site-specific environmental analysis for Contract 3B, and if more accurate modeling and site-specific data show that erosion is occurring in a way that affects levee stability, then treat those specific areas in a more surgical manner that compliments and enhances the natural environment. The American River is an incredibly unique resource, but it is not an infinite one. The surrounding community and the millions of Parkway visitors who walk these trails and paddle these waters each year do not want to look back one day and think of what USACE could have done differently.

Sincerely,

Clint Duke

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on proposed Contract 3B project
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:04:28 AM

From: Peter Hathaway <phath2@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:16 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on proposed Contract 3B project

To Decision-makers for the Contract 3B project to harden levees on the American River through suburban Sacramento:

1 I instinctively question projects like this, which would strip off mature riparian vegetation to armor-plate levees with heavy rock. At the same time, I appreciate the co-objective of flood control along an urban river. A corridor of riparian vegetation within levees offers a superior natural solution for flood control. That kind of corridor exists as the starting point here along the American River downstream from Watt Avenue.

2 I know about the Los Angeles River Riparian Restoration project, which in the next few years will remove a 60-80 year old massive concrete channel in favor of levees with a riparian vegetation corridor. It is a Corps of Engineers project backed by at least 8 years of studies. Yes, it is a different project, different situation, different details, but seeks the same broad objective of superior flood control plus ancillary public and natural benefits through an urban flood plain. If anything, the area along the L.A. River is more intensely built up, and the flood danger more acute because the upstream mountains are so steep and so close, and climate change looms as an important factor in both places. I think the work the Corps of Engineers along with local and state agencies did in L.A. may provide useful insights that could inform decisions to be made for the Contract 3B project here. **I ask that you review carefully the studies and decision deliberations that led to the Los Angeles River Riparian Restoration project to see if the same information and conclusions might be applicable here for the Contract 3B project, and allow for less disturbance to the existing American River riparian corridor.**

4 I live a few minutes walk from the American River, about 10 miles upstream from Watt

4
cont'd

Avenue, and actively use the American River Parkway several times each month. I am currently retired, but my 41-year career in transportation centered on funding and decision-making for large, complex, multi-objective projects, so I can understand the challenges and choices for this flood control project. My value system suggests that greater weight be given to natural and riparian features for this Contract 3B project rather than hardscape engineering features, and that this weighting would more closely match nearby community and political values.

Thank you for the comment opportunity.

Peter Hathaway

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] TIME SENSITIVE: Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:05:11 AM

From: LESLIE WATTS <leslie.watts@prodigy.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:20 PM
To: Jonah.Knapp@CVFlood.ca.gov; Chris.Lief@CVFlood.ca.gov
Cc: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; richdesmond@saccounty.gov; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] TIME SENSITIVE: Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate the dedication of your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for “bank erosion protection” on the lower American River east of Howe Avenue.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

I respectfully request that your Board:

Conduct workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period beyond Feb. 23, 2024, to ensure the above occurs;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The USACE presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to “Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible.” It is necessary this goal be accomplished

now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024, has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave. to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for “bank erosion protection.” The USACE claim that this protection is “needed” is based on minimal, overgeneralized “data”, and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. My neighborhood community strongly questions whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. While we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles -- almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then **less destructive alternative methods** should be used, such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the USACE is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the USACE to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location as one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento.” Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.
Leslie A. Watts

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding ARCF 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR, December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:06:58 AM

From: Pamela Hatton <pamelahattonito@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:21 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding ARCF 2016 Draft SEIS/SEIR, December 2023 Report and Appendices

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. **I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.**

A

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me and thousands of other people, in the greater Sacramento area and beyond. It is also home to thousands of creatures, large and small, including birds, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, rabbits, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and deer.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, ***is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.***

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). **The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement,** and the analysis of alternatives for a much more detailed, cautious, surgical approach — with less environmental impacts — are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

B

1. The near-total devastation, both during construction activities and long after, while immature vegetation struggles to re-populate the bull-dozed levy sides.

- C 2. The project's long-term impacts on near-by residents: months of air pollution from the soil components distributed through the air by the broad-range bull-dozer approach; months of noise pollution from the same broad-range bull-dozer approach; months of limited or no parkway access for those of us within walking distance, who regularly use the area for exercise, walking pets, and social interactions.
- D 3. The danger of mudslides and just general surface/soil erosion and deterioration, that will happen while trees and other plant life, and their stabilizing root systems, attempt to repopulate. It will take **YEARS** for the area to recover, and the left-over damage will present hazards to humans and animals alike.
- E 4. And, the undisputed ugliness, of our once beautiful river parkway will harm us all, mentally, if not physically.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento." These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

And, yes, this is a "form letter," but, as indicated by my modifications, I have read it. **AND I AGREE WITH THE ISSUES IT ADDRESSES.**

Thank you,

Pamela Hatton

From: [ARCF_SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF_SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site project
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:07:44 AM

From: Judy Thompson <judyfred815@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:33 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Contract 3B site project

- 1 | I am writing to oppose the above project that will destroy our beautiful trees that clean our air and
- 2 | also block a lot of noise from freeway traffic. Where is the wildlife supposed to go? This is the third
- 3 | project I will have to live with in 10 years since my back fence faces the College-Glen river access.
- 3 | Noise and dust for two years and having to keep windows closed in summer to avoid keeping dust
- 3 | out of the lungs of my 83 year old husband who has copd will be a real challenge.

Judith D Thompson

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:11:15 AM

From: Ellen Ganz <ganz.ellen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:34 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

1 I am writing to request a less destructive and more targeted approach for Contract 3B. The 3B area is not at risk for flooding or erosion of the levee.
 2 The 2017 Lower American River Streambank Monitoring Report for the American River Flood Control District found that erosion at this side does not threaten the levee due to the width of the berm. This project puts us at more risk for flooding by removing the root system that holds the levee in place, and inserting rock that will inevitably shift and need to be maintained. Significant erosion has now been seen at the Contract 1 and 2 sites and should be considered in planning for the 3B, 4A and 4B areas.

3 William Polk said on the news that this is being done to shore up the levees, not that the levee is at any risk of failure. The levee is so far away from the river that any erosion wouldn't come close to damaging it. It is not clear to the residents that we need this work for flood protection. What is clear and what we do know is that the project as proposed will cause REAL and KNOWN
 4 HARM to our children. I am terrified of the impacts that this will have on the very young children in the neighborhood who are at even greater risk from dust

and fumes. These levels of fumes and dust put them at known risk of cancer, asthma and more health impacts. Please take into consideration that O. W. Erlewine is a Title 1 school that is entitled to greater protection.

5 When making the final plans, I am pleading that mitigation efforts be made to
6 reduce the dust, noise and smog such as re-routing trucks away from the
elementary school, using smaller equipment, electric equipment, and anything
else that can be done. CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be
incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§
15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of
alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less
environmental impacts) are not presented. The residents are asking for a more
detailed plan created with local scientists and experts that includes mitigation
efforts.

7 **We need more detailed information including the number of trucks that
will be by our house a day, what kinds of fumes will be released and how
much dust will be in the air. Will these be measured and provided to
residents? We need to know if and when there will be varying levels of
hazard so that we can make the best choices for our health. Will this be
communicated and how?**

8 I have an eight-year-old little boy who means the world to me. He attends
O.W. Erlewine Elementary School and we visit the park and the river
throughout the year. I always imagined him coming back here as an adult with
fond memories. If work is needed, please reduce risk and build back the area in
a way that allows for recreation on the river. I am asking you to please treat
this area as you would protect your own families and children- protect us from
flooding while safeguarding the open space that we love and protect our
children from dust and dangerous fumes.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ellen Ganz

Subject: American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

My Experience on the American River Parkway

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

I have lived near the Mayhew Drain for 33 years and have spent much time on the river canoeing, rafting, swimming and playing with my dog. It has been among my greatest pleasure to be able to walk into the clear water and cool off on a Summer day; to watch the Magpies twittering over what twigs are needed in their nest; to see my dog swim and swim for the pure joy of it.

1 I dread the days when the tandem trucks, with their polluting emissions and heavy loads will deliver the rocks designed for erosion prevention and be lain in such a way as to rid the young fish from their natural habitat. I will miss seeing the deer, the coyotes, the hare, the birds, the otters, the beavers, the many waterfowl. We have been lucky to live so near this excellent slice of paradise. As a friend of mine from LA said: *We have to drive 75 miles to see something like this, and pay another \$50 to walk it.* It's hard to be beat the trails along the American River for walking, running or bird/nature watching.

2 The USACE will now step in and “make this SAFER” by laying rock, evening the ridges of the river bank, and its edges. Making the river not accessible for recreational activities or for the simple things of cooling off in the shade of a tree, or by placing your feet in the water.

How do we account for this loss of Nature? How do we know if the disregard for its many attributes will be worth it if we see the nearby USACE renovated banks erode within months of its completion (referencing the recently completed Campus Commons area)?

3 The “new construction” does not address the ongoing erosion caused by rain, or the on-going problems with the drainage system backing up. As a USACE engineer remarked while examining a levee (in a USACE video), it is good to see the grass grow on the levee slopes, to help prevent erosion. There will be no growth on that newly manmade slope for some time. When you realize these mistakes happen, will the USACE be here to maintain and or fix this?

4 With the newly graded slope, with no vegetation for some time – will the water rush downriver, and thereby protect our community? What happens to the downstream urban community, and the rural communities past the urban center?

5 I would rather the Corps cancel the entire slope reconstruction and concentrate on those areas that need protection. Or save the money for this area and store on an emergency flood control plan that can be applied in the time of need. I wish for the people that come to this place after me also enjoy the land and natural surroundings as much as I have.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Because the loss is so huge and the gain is so unpredictable (only a flood will tell - - the results are unproven and expensive), I wanted to look at a cost benefit analysis.

There is no Cost:Benefit Analysis, but people realize that there is a great immediate and irreparable loss in natural resources.

6 How to account for loss in natural resources? The United Nations is addressing this issue in it's, "System of Environmental – Economic Accounting (SEEA) 2012" Applications & Extensions, New York 2017." Lectures from the UN also include economic reasoning that if we do not account for natural resource loss, we will not treasure them, and we need to realize what damage we do when creating a system or new things. In this way, we have a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is more realistic.

"If we start to understand the value of nature to our society and economy, we wil recogniz=se the importance of living in harmony with nature, rather than destroying it for the short term gain. So many governments and businesses around the world are now realizing this, and starting to act – it gives me real hope for the future." Chief Advisor, Economics and Development WWF-UK (<https://www.wwf.org.uk/what-we-do/valuing-nature#>)

Cost = total loss of ecosystem for this area

7 Loss of Fish Habitat: the lower American River is known for its anadromous fish (one of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values in its designation of being a Wild and Scenic Reiver) to include salmon, steelhead, striped bass, and American shad. Limited warmwater fishery for largemouth black bass, various sunfish, and catfish, together with a few trout and striped bass, supports a summer fishery. The lower American River is fishable year-round (rivers.gov/river/American).

Loss of Wildlife and aquatic animals (not specifically quantified)

- To include: coyotes, deer, possum, raccoons, hare, squirrels
- Muskrat, beavers, otters,

Loss of over 500 trees – includes:

- Loss in Air Quality
- Loss of Carbon Capture (Loss in in fighting Climate Change)
- Loss of Natural vegetative erosion prevention (roots)
- Loss of shade canopy
- Loss of noise barrier

- Loss of nesting habitat
- Loss of shelter
- Heritage Oaks
 - o Unique nesting features for mergansers and wood ducks
 - o Cannot replace – large rooting (erosion prevention) system & Carbon sequestering loss

Loss of River Access & Recreation Activities

This short stretch of river, flowing through the city of Sacramento, is the most heavily used recreation river in California. It provides an urban greenway for trail and boating activities and is also known for its runs of steelhead trout and salmon. (rivers.gov)

- Swimming, wading
- Launching small craft
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Picnicking

Loss of a variety of birds (150 species in area – due to loss of habita

- Lack nesting, food, shelter
- No longer an area for migrating birds

Adverse Noise

Adverse Vibration to nearby real property

Loss of Air Quality – diesel and carbon emissions (Alternative fuels/ lower emission vehicles were not considered in alternatives)

Loss of Accessibility on land and in water – Not mentioned as a loss, but projected to be able to return to the river in 10 years (Sacramento USACE Public Affairs Officer, Feb 2024)

Cost of Project: To Be Determine

Cost of Mitigation: To be determined

Cost of Maintenance: To Be Determined

Benefit = added value if we have a particular kind of flood from increased water flow and it is shown to be better than the barriers to such an event compared to what is already in place.

Possible, unproven, help in preventing floods

Clear view of the lower banks of the river

Sunbathing bank for rattlesnakes

Many, many non-indigenous rocks; rocks forever in this river bed

According to Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, Section 15003 – Policies (b) the EIR serves not only to protect the environment but also to demonstrate to the public that it is being protected.

I see no proof of protection, just proof of destruction. We are not being protected. This is an operation being forced on us that we are convinced that the Corps could do so much better if it considered Engineering with Nature. There is no nature-based solution considered in the many alternatives listed.

I am also convinced that this document fails to inform the public generally of the environmental impact of a proposed project (see Section 15003 (c)). Mitigations mentioned do not address the loss of the immediate area. Environment is more than air and water quality assessments. Construction scheduling also needs to recognize breeding season of the wildlife in this area.

I strongly suggest that the USACE retool their program and preserve more Nature so that we do not incur this unmitigable loss of natural environment

DIFFICULT DOCUMENT REVIEW

As a member of the public, I think you need to be through this process of reading, understanding, researching and commenting at least one time to understand the process. This is hugely encumbering, difficult to follow, and unnecessarily confusing document...although there are various Codes of Federal Regulations requiring a more understandable document, and the Corps insists it performs a lot of public out reach.

The 45-day review is a minimum review period, and the Corps could easily extend it (Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, section 15105(a)). The 940 page document, along with the 840 page Appendix has a total of 1780 pages and encompassed 8 separate projects. I am interested in a few projects, but the information for these were dispersed throughout the document. A 45-day period would mean 40 pages would need to be analyzed each day, and upon extension, a 60-day period would average a 30 page analysis to be done each day.

(Title 40 CFR, Section 1502.7) The text of final environmental impact statements ...shall be 150 pages or fewer and, for proposals of unusual scope or complexity, shall be 300 pages or fewer unless a senior agency official of the lead agency approves in writing a statement to exceed 300 pages and establishes a new page limit. (This length of document averages 7 pages a day to review...)

(Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, Section 15003) Policies (g)) states, “The purpose of CEQA is not to generate paper, but to compel government at all levels to make decisions with environmental consequences in mind.” This criteria is not met in this SEIS/SEIR.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.8) states that, “Agencies shall write environmental impact statements in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision makers and the public can readily understand such statements.

Excerpt from 3-29 ARC Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR:

This table outlines and defines the erosion protection terms for erosion protection activities on the American River.

“Launchable toe with planting bench – Placed as the waterward face of a planting bench.

Launchable toe – placed along the riverbank near the riverbank toe.

When at riverbank toe, can be included with or without a planting bench.

Tie-back features are typically incorporated element with erosion features listed above as necessary to meet flood risk measures.

Planting Bench Rock Tie Backs – Placed within planting benches and spaced intermittently

There is not much effort or intent in this document for new or inventive alternatives, especially when it did not consider any of the nature-based solutions.

I noted that some ideas contained in the document to be used in preventing erosion are complicated and basically rely on rocks and rock replacement. One of the elements used in the construction plan is the launchable rock trench. This is introduced in the American River Common Features GRR Erosion Protection Report, section 6.3. The report states the “rock trench design concept” comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; however, it is not used in the area of the Wild and Scenic River portion of the Missouri River, according to the National Park Service.

(Title 40 CFR Section 1502.1 (g)) states, “Environmental impact statements shall serve as a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions rather than justifying decisions already made.”

I would recommend that the Corps review less invasive designs when they are more appropriate for a more comparative portion for the lower American River.

Public Engagement:

The Army Corps of Engineers has not engaged with the Public via meetings or workshops to explain the various methods of bank protection measures that they expect to install. It is up to the public to figure out such terms as, “launchable rock toes, tiebacks, launchable rock trenches, and riprap armoring. The USACE told us when we requested a meeting to discuss these terms, he said that there would be presentations offered in January that will explain the details. The presentations did not explain these terms, nor did they allow any questions. They promised to record our comments. That meant that we could not get simple questions answered to better understand the document. Recently, in a **US Army Corps of Engineer presentation, the presenting Colonel stated that they are, “engineering with nature,” and dedicated to” communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible.”**

On their website, an Update for August 11, 2023, stated, “We will hold two virtual public meetings, one on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and one on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 to present this document. And that is all they did, was present the document and record comments (not answer any questions). At the original Scoping meeting held November, 2022, the instructions included (pg 4), #3 Comments will inform the

preparation of the SEIS/SEIR will not be responded to verbally during this meeting. Comments will only be accepted in writing via e-mail or regular mail.

19 Chapter 4 of the Appendix A states “Future Public Involvement, “USACE also plans on opportunities for public awareness, involvement, and participation including website updates and formal and informal meetings with interested members of the public, community groups, and individuals as requested. We asked for a meeting multiple times including during the Corps two presentations, and were not able to get one.

I made phone calls that were frequently answered by “sorry this number is not available.” When I left a message, it was often not returned.

One letter written attached to the Draft Environment Impact Statement EIR and Draft GRR stated that the best outcome will occur if the USAE works with stakeholder groups at the local level. Agreed. Another letter written by our Assembly member encourage the Corps to work with two local agencies.

More Nature-Based Solutions:

20 In November 2022 the letter submitted by the US Environmental Protection Agency noted that the Alternatives Analysis offered by the Corps did not explore and objectively consider “various bank and levee protection designs that could be employed to maximize environmental benefits or ecological components, structures and functions while also reducing risk and property loss from a large flood event.”

I concur with most things addressed in this letter, and especially with the suggestion that more environmental aware solutions exist. In this way, the Corps is remiss in not at least mentioning the alternative nature-based solution discovered by their own Engineering with Nature Program.

21 In a comment on the Draft EIS-EIR and Draft GRR (March 2015) an Environmental Scientist, Division of Water Quality stated, “In general, we encourage the Corps and the CVFPB to implement alternatives which conserve to the greatest extent the existing riparian vegetation, especially large mature trees that would not likely pose a threat to the integrity of the levee banks.

22 Executive Order 14072 takes multiple actions designed to tackle the climate crisis, make our nation more resilient to extreme weather, and strengthen local economies, including focusing considerable attention and federal effort on nature-based solutions. There is a video to learn more about the executive order and the role USACE will play in enacting it. (<https://ewn.erdcdren.mil/ewn-supports-white-house-in-accounting-for-nature/>)

23 This idea is further emboldened by the **Title 40 – Protection of Environment, Section 1507.2 (e) Comply with the requirements of section 102(2)(H) of NEPA that the agency initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects.** Further, in 1507.3 © (4) Requiring that the alternatives considered by the decision maker are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents and that the decision maker consider the alternatives described in the environmental documents. If another decision document accompanies the relevant environmental documents to the decision maker, agencies are encouraged to make available to the public before the decision is made any part of that document that relates to the comparison of alternatives.

Climate Change:

24

Although this is implied in the need for flood control in general, Climate Change is not addressed. The river bank stabilization effort can be equally challenged by drought and/or flood. However, this plan does not address drought conditions, and if there is a multi-year drought I would expect this design to increase the impact of heat and loss of vegetation. Certainly, carbon capture will not occur without trees and other mature vegetation. Temperature, both cold and hot, would be more extreme.

In the President's November 8, 2022 address to the climate Change Conference (COP 27), it was stated that Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, or restore natural or modified ecosystems as solutions to societal challenges, like fighting climate change. Examples include protection or conservation of natural areas, reforestation, restoration of marshes or other habitats, or sustainable management of farms, fisheries, or forests. These actions can increase resilience to threats like flooding and extreme heat, and can slow climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide. Nature-based solutions play a critical role in the economy, national security, human health, equity, and the fight against climate change.

Erosion construction:

25

The design of this erosion prevention construction does nothing to mitigate erosion destruction caused by rain or rills of water that may result from heavy storms, common during Sacramento Winter months. In fact the recent (Winter 2023-24) Army Corps construction of the banks near Campus Commons shows astounding amount of erosion shortly after construction. Yet the nearby banks, unaffected by the Corps construction, fared far better.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

26

The Alternatives in the section for hauling equipment is not adequately considered. Big, tandem diesel-fueled trucks and other large similar hauling equipment are the only ones that can be used. There are alternative designs and fuels/energy sources available; but these are not considered in the report. These trucks are limited in their movability – necessitating trimming/cutting multiple trees in their path. Perhaps this is the size preferred for hauling rocks, but not the best environmental choices for a variety of reason.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more applicable, tailored approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

Recommendation:

27

I know that this project is planned to go forward regardless of the adequacy of this review or "comment period." (Also inferred by the project television news coverage, KCRA News Segment aired 2/22/2024).

- 28 I also feel that “one size fits all” model was used in these plans. (This is especially true as I read what seemed as a disingenuous promotion of the use of a launchable rock trench as a feature (see 6.3 of the Erosion Protection Report of the American River Common Features GRR.) I believe the local citizens are not represented in this effort; in fact most people we met during our outreach of the past three months had no idea that this project was scheduled to take place. While we are tasked to review 1780 pages for adequacy and accuracy of alternative solutions, the Corps is not accessible to answer questions or to meet with the local community.
- 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1502.1 states one of the purposes of the EIS is to ensure agencies consider the environmental impacts of their actions in decision making. It adds that, “a means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions, rather than justifying decisions already made.” I feel that the SEIS/SEIR coupled with Corps communications really is to justify decisions already made.
- 30 The US Army Corps of Engineers, in pursuing this “one size fits all” project is missing a great opportunity to promoting natural resources while providing a gentle footprint to lower-cost, more natural solutions. This community, like so many others, wants to continue to enjoy nature’s bounty while ensuring safe and healthier lifestyles for everyone. We believe the Corps has the interest and knowledge to provide nature-based solutions to engineering problems, to include the best approach to various extreme weather tragedies that happen with our rapid climate change. We all want to be part of the solution for this future and not cause any harm to life, environment or our many gifts of nature.
- This means retooling our solutions through creative problem solving; applying engineering knowledge in ways that fit every unique environmental problems they face.
- 31 Now, it seems the Corps is bent on involving massive amounts of rocks, using polluting vehicles resulting in hard armor construction of the river that limits its movements. It is thereby missing a great opportunity...to move into a position of known climate change heroes for all populations it affects through engineering with nature and helping mitigate disastrous events.
- The Corps should be able to propose a more nature-based project, work with the tools and expertise of their Engineering with Nature program. During this process they should have information readily available with multiple outreach programs for local stakeholders and interest groups. This would result in unique and progressive projects that can be endorsed by a wider population and promote the health of the local community, the earth and result in a healthier environment that is more able to survive the many events that will result from climate change. They should dedicate their role as a promoter of natural solutions, while increasing natural resources and supporting the local populations and their environment.
- 32 This effort along with intent to work with local stakeholders, can result in a more cooperative project that preserves and promotes the benefits of nature while protecting the population from emergencies from the flooding river, rain or drainage issues.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers needs to engage with the Public, and not continue a one-way communication which does not increase knowledge of the projects nor increase confidence in the plan

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves. We are destroying the reasons it has been designated a Wild and Scenic River.

Nancy Kniskern

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:17:44 AM

From: Jeff Hamann <mnh2obuff67@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:45 PM
To: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A | The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I walk the banks of the river daily, collecting trash and soaking in the natural habitat. I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where

impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

B My specific concerns and comments include the following: the lost of habitat and access to this special area to hikers, runners, fishermen, recreational seekers. Recreational opportunities for our youth in the lose of soccer fields for staging areas. All the issues created by the heavy equipment destroying our living environment.

C More information on the need for this massive. What will be the impact on all the wildlife in the targeted area.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Jeff Hamann

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: [publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov](#); [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Removal of hundreds of trees along the American River
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:17:27 PM

From: Gretchen Fau <fau@pacbell.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Removal of hundreds of trees along the American River

1

I would like to state my protest in regards to the plan to remove such a huge amount of trees (many of which are old growth trees) along the American River in Sacramento. The area will look like Ground Zero for generations. The American River Parkway is a resource that many people in the area utilize and of course trees offer relief from our hot summers and help with pollution.

There must be a better way.

Gretchen Fau

From: [ARCF SEIS](#)
To: [Sutton, Drew](#)
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; [ARCF SEIS](#)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on ARCF SEIS/SEIR 2023
Date: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:16:46 PM

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:26 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on ARCF SEIS/SEIR 2023

More Nature-Based Solutions, *PLEASE*

1 In November 2022 the letter submitted by the US Environmental Protection Agency noted that the Alternatives Analysis offered by the Corps did not explore and objectively consider “various bank and levee protection designs that could be employed to maximize environmental benefits or ecological components, structures and functions while also reducing risk and property loss from a large flood event.”

I concur with most things addressed in this letter, and especially with the suggestion that more environmental aware solutions exist. In this way, the Corps is remiss in not at least mentioning the alternative nature-based solution discovered by their own Engineering with Nature Program.

2 In a comment on the Draft EIS-EIR and Draft GRR (March 2015) an Environmental Scientist, Division of Water Quality stated, “In general, we encourage the Corps and the CVFPB to implement alternatives which conserve to the greatest extent the existing riparian vegetation, especially large mature trees that would not likely pose a threat to the integrity of the levee banks.

3 Executive Order 14072 takes multiple actions designed to tackle the climate crisis, make our nation more resilient to extreme weather, and strengthen local economies, including focusing considerable attention and federal effort on nature-based solutions. There is a video to learn more about the executive order and the role USACE will play in enacting it. (<https://ewn.erdcdren.mil/ewn-supports-white-house-in-accounting-for-nature/>)

4 This idea is further emboldened by the **Title 40 – Protection of Environment, Section 1507.2 (e) Comply with the requirements of section 102(2)(H) of NEPA** that the agency initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects.

Further, in 1507.3 © (4) Requiring that the alternatives considered by the decision maker are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents and that the decision maker consider the alternatives described in the environmental documents. If another decision document accompanies the relevant environmental documents to the decision maker, agencies are encouraged to make available to the public before the decision is made any part of that document that relates to the comparison of alternatives.

Nancy Kniskern

**Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:**

1 My comments primarily focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. However, as an Environmental Scientist with a hydrogeological background, whose worked for DFW in the Instream Flow Program and currently working for the CA SWRCB Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (combined 13 years employment), **I am concerned with the overall approach of these types of projects—this one and future projects.**

❖ **My Community**

2 I wanted to begin by offering **my appreciation for your time in reviewing my community's many very important comments.** Having discussed the details of this proposal with so many, I can feel their hearts breaking at the thought of this project (implemented as-is) taking place. In addition to our love for this precious, protected Wild & Scenic area, I wanted to let you know that **most of my community involved in this effort have also become well educated on the elements of the project—both good and bad.**

Our community includes people from all walks of life and backgrounds coming together for this cause, **including engineers and scientists (like myself) who possess in-depth knowledge on the subject matter.** However, I do not believe it takes a scientific background to recognize the areas of this project that are unquestionably in need of improvement, postponement, and/or reassessment.

I ASK YOU KINDLY TO PLEASE ALLOW ALL OUR VOICES TO BE HEARD. THANK YOU.

❖ **We Share a Common Goal!**

3 We all want healthy waterways that safely convey water! Let's make sure we're using the best methods available that **both alleviate erosion issues AND best utilize the built-in, natural erosion control benefits that the many trees and riparian vegetation already offer.**

"Restoration" (over many years) will not sufficiently reestablish the healthy habitat that had already been stabilizing the banks for hundreds of years, prior to human interference of natural flow characteristics. **Projects that address fixes/improvements to upstream causes of unnatural flow, such as dams, should always be prioritized over destructive, downstream methods, such as this project proposes.**

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND REEVALUATE THE EROSION-CONTROL BENEFITS OF PRESERVING EVEN MORE TREES THAN CURRENTLY PLANNED.

❖ **Nature-based Solutions**

4 I understand and appreciate that USACE's project was designed to "spare as much habitat as possible", however, **I don't believe that the project (as it currently stands) preserves all that is possible to preserve.** I have researched several alternative "nature-based", less destructive

4
cont'd

methods that could assuredly be implemented here and elsewhere on the American River but are being disregarded.

5

Please review the attached document, *SACRAMENTO RIVER BANK PROTECTION PROJECT PHASE II SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORIZATION, EIS/EIR, VOLUME II: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS (March 2020)*, as evidence of **several alternative methods that were recommended by various agencies/organizations/governmental departments to USACE as a result of numerous environmental impact concerns identified in a similar project proposal.**

I'd like to point out one of these responses from the CA SWRCB, for which I'm employed and fully back their below statements (page 2-50 of attached document):

"State Water Board staff has reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR to determine if the proposed project will have significant adverse impacts to water quality and, ultimately, the beneficial use of waters of the state. We recognize the great importance of flood protection for the communities and farms of the Sacramento River valley. We understand the enormous economic risk and the risk to human life that exists without a safe, functional levee system. However, significant ecological impacts are possible as a result of the proposed project.

In general, we encourage the Corps and the CVFPB to implement alternatives which conserve to the greatest extent the existing riparian vegetation, especially large mature trees. Alternatives that maximize meander zones should be selected. Setback levees should be used when feasible. State Water Board staff has prepared the attached comments on the Draft EIS/EIR (see Enclosure 1, Table 1)."

6

To reiterate, I understand that USACE believes their project already avoids unnecessary deforestation, however, I disagree given their selected method among a plethora of alternative techniques and approaches that would not only better preserve the environment, but also add to the potential overall success of the project's effort to address erosion issues.

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE, NATURE-BASED, LESS DESTRUCTIVE APPROACHES, SUCH AS THOSE ALREADY RECOMMENDED TO USACE.

❖ **Public Notification Insufficiencies**

7

Although USACE may have abided by outdated and minimal public notification requirements, I'm **incredibly disappointed with the lack of public informing that a project—with this significant of an impact on the local environment, residential communities, and businesses, such as this one—has involved.** USACE is not required to publicly inform only at the minimal requirement. It would be fair to assume that **a trustworthy, guilt-free, good-willed agency, confident of their chosen method would want to sufficiently inform, even involve, the communities that would be directly and indirectly affected.**

Instead, our community worked tirelessly to inform **hundreds of residents, businesses, and Parkway users who were NOT INFORMED OF THE PROJECT IN ANY RESPECT.** This is unacceptable. So many, including myself, were appalled by the project proposal and felt deceived

by USACE at the lack of public notice and involvement. I don't want to accuse USACE of being "sneaky", but unfortunately, this is the only impression I've received from their actions, or lack thereof, regarding this project thus far.

PLEASE CONSIDER BETTER INFORMING AND INVOLVING COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY USACE PROJECTS.

❖ ***California Waterways Unique to the County***

8 California waterways are UNIQUE, SENSITIVE, AND UNCOMPARABLE to most other waterways throughout the country. The American River does not, for example, function primarily as a conveyance system for commercial boat transportation, and possesses a wide spectrum of differing characteristics, and as such, requires specifically tailored, and equally unique treatments to achieve the best results.

Any USACE projects executed elsewhere, such as on the Missouri or Mississippi Rivers, should undergo massive adaptation, involving extensive targeted research of California's unique waterway uses and needs (including California species protection), before being applied in California rivers. The currently proposed project requires even more adaptation and targeted assessment.

9 I do not believe this project (as-is) sufficiently encapsulates all the many special components that would be required to effectively mitigate erosion issues without inadvertently inflicting other, equally serious issues (such as the loss of vital species and large-scale, natural erosion control provided by riparian vegetation).

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND PERFORM MORE TAILORED RESEARCH.

PLEASE WORK WITH MORE CALIFORNIA RESOURCE ENTITIES TO INCORPORATE RELEVANT AND LESS DESTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS.

❖ ***Wild and Scenic Protected***

The Lower American River is fully protected under the Wild and Scenic Act, which classifies it as a water system that "**possess extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values [that] shall be preserved in their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environments**, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the state." —*California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 1972.*

10 [National Wild and Scenic River System | Rivers.gov](#) describes the American River's unparalleled recreational importance as it exists in its current state, "*This short stretch of river, flowing through the city of Sacramento, **is the most heavily used recreation river in California.** It provides an urban greenway for trail and boating activities and is also known for its runs of steelhead trout and salmon.*"

The methods proposed by USACE's project (as-is) DO NOT COMPLY with the protections granted under the Wild and Scenic Act. **This project would significantly and negatively impact the river's "free-flowing state, together with [its] immediate environment".**

Furthermore, Section 6.3 of the *USACE Erosion Protection Report of the American River Common Features GRR Report* states, "The rock trench design concept (depicted below in Figure 6-1) comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers". This was referenced as if it represented what USACE has implemented in both the Wild and Scenic portion of the Missouri River, and the long, navigable sections in need of their continued monitoring and structural maintenance. However, **USACE DOES NOT IMPLEMENT THEIR "LAUNCHABLE ROCK TRENCH" METHOD IN THE WILD AND SCENIC PROTECTED PORTION OF THE MISSOURI RIVER, which is more characteristically comparable to the lower American River.**

How was it then justified as a viable method to be used in the Wild and Scenic portion of the American River? **USACE had already set a precedent for non-use of this method in Wild and Scenic portions but are unjustifiably applying it here.** This is a very consequential inconsistency that must be further investigated.

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND REEVALUATE METHODS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE IMPACTS TO PROTECTED ELEMENTS OF THIS WILD AND SCENIC AREA.

PLEASE BE FAIR AND CONSISTENT IN COMPLYING WITH THE WILD AND SCENIC ACT.

❖ Other Urgent Concerns

Again, I appreciate your time and understand there are many lengthy comments to review, but I'd like to ask for your continued attention as I outline **the equally serious concerns** I have with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

➤ **Erosion is actually minimal in USACE's Contract 3B**

- Advanced, modern modeling more accurately predicts low water velocities at the levees.
- Modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrate the protective effect of trees when included in the models.
- While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, the data presented for Contract 3B show no seepage risk for this zone and there is inadequate evidence for urgent erosion issues.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND USE MORE MODERN, UP-TO-DATE MODELS TO MORE ACCURATLY DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF EROSION FIXES NECESSARY.**

➤ **Upcoming Folsom Dam Improvements Not Considered**

- According to the USACE website, "*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District is moving forward with the Folsom Dam Raise Project to help further reduce flood risk in the Greater Sacramento area. The Dam Raise Project has prioritized completion of the*

remaining flood risk reduction elements of the overall project, which include raising the existing crest elevation of Dikes 1 through 8, MIAD, LWD, and RWD by approximately 3.5 feet. **This work is expected to enhance utilization of Folsom Lake's existing surcharge flood storage space and increase the temporary water storage space that can be used during flood events.**—<https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Folsom-Dam-Raise/>

- The project modeling was designed under the premise of 160,000cfs releases from the current, pre-improved Folsom Dam. When the dam improvements are in place, the maximum release **will significantly decrease to 115,000cfs.**
- According to the USACE website, preparation and construction for the *Folsom Dam Raise Project* have already begun and is scheduled for completion in 2027.
- Improvements and resulting changes in flow volumes, especially “during flood events”, must be incorporated into USACE project models to effectively evaluate the degree of erosion fixes necessary
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT UNTIL FLOW-ALTERING FOLSOM DAM IMPROVEMENTS ARE COMPLETED**
- **USE MODELING THAT INCORPORATES THE SOON-TO-BE LOWER FLOW VOLUME.**

➤ **Riprapped Riverbanks Present Significant Negative Consequences**

- Significant Impacts to American River Recreational Beneficial Uses: The proposed installment of riprap will make river access, and very popular recreational activities (e.g., swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, etc.), difficult and potentially dangerous, if not completely impossible, for miles of the project area.
- The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features, except the bike trail.
- Non-compliance with Wild and Scenic Act: The riprap revetment element of this project would significantly and negatively impact the river's “*free-flowing state, together with [its] immediate environment*”, a protection offered by the Act.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE METHODS THAT PRIORITIZE THE PRESEVATION OF RECREATIONAL BENEFICIAL USES.**
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE USING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT EROSION.**

➤ **Significant Impacts on Wildlife and Critical Habitats**

- Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth.
- Major loss of habitat for many important species. **The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife.**
- Major loss of 200+ old “heritage” trees, precious to this area's human and creature inhabitants alike.
- Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.

- 26 • Substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.
- 27 • The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.
- 28 • High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE USING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS THAT ARE MORE PROTECTIVE OF INVALUABLE WILDLIFE AND CRITICAL HABITATS.**

➤ **Significant Impacts to Mental Health and Green Spaces**

- 29 • Trees and vegetation are important elements of green spaces, which have been scientifically linked to improved mental health, stress level reduction, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees proposed by this project will lead to great loss of these beneficial green environments.
- According to the California Department of Public Health, "*As communities become increasingly more urban, parks and the protection of green and open spaces within cities increase in importance. Parks and natural areas buffer pollutants and contribute to the quality of life by providing communities with social and psychological benefits such as leisure, play, sports, and contact with nature. Parks are critical to human health by providing spaces for health and wellness activities.*"
<https://data.chhs.ca.gov/dataset/park-beach-open-space-or-coastline-access>
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO CONSIDER METHODS THAT AVOID SERIOUS IMPACTS TO GREEN SPACES AND HUMAN HEALTH.**

➤ **Significant Air Quality Impacts on Human Health**

- 30 • As the proposed USACE project currently stands, each construction site would have an estimated 100+ daily truck trips that travel through residential communities over the span of 2+ years. USACE claims less than significant impacts of air pollution on sensitive receptors. **However, the OEHHA guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months** (OEHHA, page 8-18).
- 31 • <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/cmr/2015guidancemanual.pdf>
- 32 • The use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Transportation of 100+ truckloads of such rocks per day, and the associated dust, within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.
- 33 • **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND PREPARE A CONSTRUCTION HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT (HRA) TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT THE PROJECT**

WOULD NOT EXPOSE RESIDENCES TO DIESEL PM EMISSIONS, NOR ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION, AT LEVELS RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT HUMAN HEALTH IMPACTS.

➤ **Significant Impacts to Environmental Justice**

- The American River Parkway sees more than 5 million visitors annually, which is more than Yosemite! Both locals and travelers from far and wide come to enjoy the one-of-a-kind “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”.
- It provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little to no cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics and events on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO CONSIDER METHODS THAT AVOID SERIOUS IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RIGHTS.**

➤ **My Personal Connection and Final Pleas**

The American River’s Wild and Scenic river designation was based on “recreation” and “anadromous fish”, wherein the definition of “recreation” includes intrinsic values that include a person’s enjoyment and value of nature and wildlife and woods in all forms.

For this reason, I wanted to briefly share with you my personal connection to this one-of-a-kind, precious area with the hope that you’ll hear my heart as the last item of evidence among the many extremely important and valid points I’ve presented in this letter, requesting the postponement and reevaluation of the destructive and unnecessary elements of this proposed project.

I moved over a year ago to, and still reside in, an apartment complex adjacent to the proposed USACE Contract 3B project portion of the American River. My father had just passed unexpectedly, and I’d just escaped an emotionally abusive husband of ten years. However, this is not a sob-story because I now have the mental stability and quality of life that I’d been seeking my entire existence.

I owe this to the Parkway. To the heritage trees whose souls connect to mine, and whose branches on which the happy, fat squirrels chase each other about; and whose trunks so generously house the busy, little woodpeckers and so many others. To the wise Great Blue Herons and the snow-white Great Egrets who so stealthily fish at the water’s edge. To the turkey vultures that take to the skies and glide about the breeze with ease and majesty.

I owe this to the salmonids whom I love to watch wiggle up the shallow riffles with sheer tenacity; and to the sea lions who occasionally follow them up in higher flows. To the many wonderful, good-willed, nature-loving people I’ve met along the Parkway. To the irreplaceable summer raft-floating adventures with friends and loved ones. To the peace and love that emanates from every piece of this Wild and Scenic area, so rightfully designated.

Please allow my voice, and those of my community’s, to be heard and taken seriously. I’m not asking USACE to stop providing erosion fixes, where necessary, or discontinue projects altogether. I’m simply asking that they postpone and reevaluate their proposed project to better address and

incorporate all the many valid points I've presented in this letter, and those of my community's letters as well.

35

Please support my request for re-evaluation of the overall necessity for this proposed project taking place in this beautiful Wild and Scenic protected area. Please evaluate and seriously consider alternative methods and solutions that are more targeted, less destructive, more ecosystem-conscious and wildlife-protective, that also utilize the natural erosion protection benefits that the existing trees and riparian vegetation already provide; and those that are less negatively impactful to human health, mental health, recreation, and all those who currently thrive and depend on this one-of-kind, easy-to-access and easy-to-appreciate area.

Please heed our requests and desperate pleas.

Thank you for your time. You are appreciated!

Candice Heinz

Environmental Scientist

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

John OConnor <johnrusselloconnor@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 12:27 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc:Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from johnrusselloconnor@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for "bank erosion protection". The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data", and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

From: [Brown, Josh@DWR](mailto:Brown.Josh@DWR)
To: [Sutton, Drew](mailto:Sutton,Drew)
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River Common Features public comment
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 2:31:16 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: Mechele Palmer <mechpalmer@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:08 AM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River Common Features public comment

[You don't often get email from mechpalmer@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Please keep tree removal to a minimum along the American river during flood protection work. It's important to the whole community that a natural place be protected now and into the future.

Sent from my iPad

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

Mary Swisher <maryeswisher@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 1:00 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from maryeswisher@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

INDIV-720

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Linda <lindabkingsley@comcast.net>

Thu 2/22/2024 12:52 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[You don't often get email from lindabkingsley@comcast.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for "bank erosion protection". The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data", and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

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As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.
Linda Kingsley

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Zilan Chen](#)
To: [Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB](mailto:Knapp_Jonah@CVFPB)
Cc: [Lief, Chris@CVFPB](mailto:Lief_Chris@CVFPB)
Subject: [UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)
Date: Friday, February 16, 2024 6:15:47 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from zilan.chen8@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for “bank erosion protection” on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

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Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

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of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

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As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:36 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection Project slated for the American River

From: Ed Harper <calidris@surewest.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:07 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection Project slated for the American River

To Whom it may concern:

I am shocked by the poorly drafted project replete with errors that is designed for the American River Parkway. Furthermore, there has been little opportunity, given the time restraints, to sufficiently address the slated project. The community deserves to have their concerns addressed. Surely there is overwhelming opposition to the project as it is presently outlined. We value our riparian areas and the American River Parkway is a living jewel. The trees that define the area must be treasured, not destroyed. The U. S. Army Corp should be actively working to protect and restore vital riparian areas rather than destroying them. Given our knowledge about climate change, we know how essential trees are. Riparian corridors provide essential habitat to the vast majority of birds and terrestrial mammals. Destroying trees along the American River would have a profound and deleterious impact to the salmon fishery since trees help keep the waters cooler, provide food resources for young salmon, and enhance habitat and survival of young salmon.

Please keep in mind "No natural landscapes of California have been so altered by man as its bottomlands" (Bakker 1972). The once-lush riparian forests, forming natural vegetation corridors along many of the Central Valley's watercourses, are mostly gone today. These forests were, in Thompson's words, ". . . modified with a rapidity and completeness matched in few parts of the United States" (Thompson 1961)."

Please listen to my pleas. No destruction to our valued riparian areas of the American River Parkway.

Sincerely,

W. Edward Harper

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:32 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Nanci Kuzins <nkuzins@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:05 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees.

Advanced

modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.
Nanci Kuzins

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:32 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Alia Shah <aliashah1113@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:45 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A The American River Parkway is such a valuable resource to the city of Sacramento. It is the place I go to support my mental wellness. Connecting with the trees and nature help me to recover from PTSD and this sanctuary is absolutely important to my mental health and wellbeing and for many, many others. It is a resource and a sanctuary for so many birds and so much diverse wildlife. It is a wildlife habitat that is home to so many creatures and animals.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment”

EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing,

photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Alia Shah

February 23, 2024

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**Re: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact
(SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices:**

Comments from the College Greens East Townhome Owners Association (CGETA)

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

1 Our comments focus on the Lower American River (LAR) components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly LAR Contracts 3B and 4B.

We respectfully request that you do not move forward with the plans described in lower American River

Contracts 3B and 4B (“Project” or “Proposed Project”). This Project should instead be significantly revised in order to avoid the loss of riparian forest, and its associated values, along the lower American River, and to avoid the harmful short and long-term impacts to the community’s health, structures, property and safety, due to the construction-related activities that would be associated with the Project.

Board of Directors Responsibility for 64 Homes.

2 We, the Board of Directors, are writing on behalf of the College Greens East Townhome Owners Association (CGETA). Located along Rio Bravo Circle, it includes 64 separately owned, two-story townhomes, 4 or 6 units per building. The Buildings form an “L”, with half the units backing up to the Rio Bravo levee and half backing up to Larchmont Park, so nearly all units will be impacted by the proposed work and truck routes. The Board represents these 64 units and owners, and has a fiduciary responsibility to them. While much of our comment letter addresses impacts to the regional treasure of the American River Parkway and its values to people (and wildlife) from all over the greater Sacramento

region (and beyond), we the Board of Directors must also address some specific concerns affecting the CGETA residents as part of our fiduciary responsibilities.

Property Damage, Noise, Vibration, Dust, Air Pollution, Carcinogenic Diesel Exhaust.

Because the CGETA units share common walls and roofs, the Board has fiduciary responsible for maintaining structural integrity, roofing, paint, and insurance requirements of these 64 units. We are also concerned with impacts to the residents' health, safety, and well-being as part of our duties to maintain the quality of the community. All of our residents will be significantly adversely impacted by both the short-term and long-term aspects of the Project under Contract 3B and 4B.

We are concerned about the proposed truck route from Folsom Blvd, along Mayhew Drain, and travel the Rio Bravo levee extremely close behind the townhomes, with potentially a hundred truck trips per day, and then dumping the rock loads at the rivers edge. Based on reports of what occurred in the construction areas of the prior contracts near Howe/Sacramento State University, we understand that the noise, vibrational shocks, and dust from the rock dumping were severe enough to break windows and damage structures, and windows had to be kept closed. The Board is concerned about potential property damage to the townhomes, and also the mental health, dust, and carcinogenic diesel exposure of our residents, which include the elderly and very young children, in both cases with nowhere else to go during the long days of dust, noise, and vibrational shocks. Toxic diesel exhaust will be very close and at the 2-story height. And we wonder -- could heavy truck traffic cause stress damage to the levee (which we all rely on for flood safety)? Given most of the work is further west, is it necessary to continue to bring trucks in from Mayhew, or could other access be arranged (perhaps at Larchmont Park where there's already a staging area), to avoid loaded trucks passing for the duration of multiple revetment sections? The risk of potential structural damage to homes continues the longer the truck traffic continues.

The Board has a fiduciary duty to the association to request that you find another route. We question whether this "potential erosion" work is even necessary for flood safety, and could just as likely make us **MORE vulnerable** during high flow events, compared to no work at all.

"Access ramps" have additional impacts not disclosed, and which threaten a beloved 300 year old Valley oak that cannot be "mitigated".

We are extremely concerned about the "access ramps" that may be added behind the townhomes, which were indicated on earlier draft maps but are NOT shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR. When we requested the latest ramp information, we were told it could not be provided until the final SEIS/SEIR. This makes it impossible to know exact impacts regarding additional tree loss and visual/aesthetic impacts. Preliminary maps that showed the "access ramps" in the Mayhew/Rio Bravo/Larchmont zone showed them endangering many additional trees, and in particular threatening a beloved 300 year old Valley oak (older than our nation) in the Parkway behind the townhomes. This majestic giant is an irreplaceable visual treasure for the entire length of homes, as well as providing outstandingly remarkable value for bird and wildlife observation, photography, and enjoyment. The permanent loss of such a landmark tree would be a significant impact to our townhomes and the Parkway users. Its status cannot be determined due to the lack of "ramp" coverage in the draft SEIS/SEIR A bald

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eagle frequents the area, and a bobcat was recently sighted under this oak. The loss of nesting cavities in large trees for owl, wood ducks and mergansers is not acknowledged or mitigated.

8

As discussed in the incorporated comment letter from Joshua Thomas (Ref 1), the California Supreme Court said an “EIR is intended to demonstrate to an apprehensive citizenry that the agency has in fact analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action” (under CEQA) The omission of ‘ramps’ and the inability to determine the fate of an irreplaceable 300-year old heritage oak for a Project of questionable efficacy for its stated purpose in “improving” flood safety, is inconsistent with that intent. Viewing with one’s own eyes the denuded landscapes around Sac State does not calm an “apprehensive citizen” to hear nonspecific assurance that USACE is designing these projects to “minimize” loss to vegetation and heritage oaks.

Equipment staging, and blocked access.

Use of the north end of Larchmont Park is planned for equipment staging, with access blocked to the river, for two (or more) years. There is also no assurance in the SEIS/SEIR which/whether trees in Larchmont Park will be saved.

9

If prior work near Howe is an indication, chain-link fencing may be planned to completely block off access from Larchmont Park (and homes) to and perhaps along the levee and the river during the Project duration, potentially from the time of “vegetation clearing” to two years more for construction activity. It would appear that our residents would be completely blocked from walking to any river trails, with dogs or canoes or kayaks, for two and a half years. Areas just east of Mayhew would have available trails, but if Mayhew Drain and levee access is blocked on the east end for truck traffic, those would not be accessible. On the west end it appears work may block all the way to Glenbrook Park. This effectively eliminates ALL river access on foot both ways for over two years. This is unnecessarily severe elimination of ALL foot access to trails and cooling waters in both directions. It should not be necessary to block access so completely. We ask that you keep foot access open behind the townhouses at the east end of Larchmont Park, and at the east end of the townhouses, and allow use of the levee to connect across the Mayhew foot bridge to the trails east of Mayhew (which are not in the construction zone). We ask that you not chain-link in any way that blocks that ability to connect to the Mayhew footbridge and the trails east of it.

Inadequate Notification.

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It is disturbing that the only notification for this extremely destructive proposal was a postcard addressed to “Postal Customer” without any meaningful indication of the magnitude and severity of the proposed degradation of the American River Parkway, and received barely ahead of the SEIS/SEIR release. The CGETA townhomes are “adjacent parcels” to the Project. Isn’t there an obligation under CEQA to provide a first-class, name-and-address letter of notification with a meaningful description of the impacts, to all adjacent parcels? Many CGETA owners remember receiving more personalized notices for prior projects (like the slurry walls), and there were on-site community meetings held at Erlewine school with USACE and SAFCA technical leads to answer people’s questions, show diagrams, and discuss alternatives.

Riprapped banks will ruin access for the community, and create liability.

There are still original owners from 1978, and many others have lived here over 35 years (and counting). Turnover tends to be quite low, and we know of many cases where buyers waited several years for an opportunity to purchase here. Many people tell how they specifically moved here or purchased their home here to be near the American River Parkway. The community makes significant use of Larchmont Park, its safe paths children use to get to Erlewine Elementary School, and residents are just steps from the American River Parkway and its shaded and waterside trails, beaches, paddling access, picnic spots, bird and wildlife observation and photography, fishing, swimming, and opportunities for mental refreshment and solitude. This is a community where neighbors regularly meet each other walking, dog walking, pushing strollers, taking small children to the waters edge, as well as taking canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards to the water. Riprapped banks will permanently ruin waterside access. Trying to walk across will create liability for injury.

Wilderness quality experience.

The miles of connected unpaved, natural footpaths (designated free of motorized use or bicycle use) lined with mature trees and abundant wildlife provide not only recreation, but for many it is a vital, wilderness-quality experience that restores the physical and mental well-being of people from the stresses of urban living and summer heat. Paddling on this river segment has scenic vistas with no visible sign of urban surroundings. This is incredibly rare in the midst of a major urban area. These vistas will be permanently degraded.

Trails, Beaches, and Watercraft Access Must be Mapped, Maintained, Restored.

There are dozens of social trails, beaches, and water access locations, which are vital to our community and the outstandingly remarkable recreation value of the Wild and Scenic designation of the American River Parkway, yet there is zero mention of them in the draft SEIS/SEIR, and therefore likely no plan for returning them. That is a significant impact that is omitted from the SEIS/SEIR. The incorporated Trails, Beaches letter (Ref 2) includes a citizen-science map of the many affected trails and beaches.

Thousands of people use this particular forested area every year for fishing, wildlife-watching, hiking, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding, tubing, picnicking, relaxing, and to escape the urban environment and summer heat. This Project under Contract 3B and 4B threatens to devastate those very values, not just in the short-term but for far greater than the life of the Project, and in many cases forever changing the wild character of the American River for both people and its astonishing wildlife in the midst of a million people.

The Project in this section has not been demonstrated to be necessary or beneficial.

Studies show that the large trees USACE will remove to install the launchable rock features provide highly effective (and self-renewing) natural armoring against the flow velocities of a 200-year flood event (Ref 3). By removing trees, USACE may make us less safe. The Project 3B-south components at the east end of the Project need to be halted until there is clear demonstration of the need for the Project and demonstration of the actual benefit of the Project. Rather than robust justification, we see overgeneralized data, out-of-date modeling, and risk estimation methods that involve so-called “expert opinion elicitations.” This opinion method had widely differing opinions (and great potential for bias) regarding the need for such massive

revetment work, yet these weak methods are used to justify obliteration of treasured resources, without thorough consideration of all feasible alternative methods, in light of many new nature-based solutions being introduced in other USACE projects. Some opinions recommend no need for large-scale engineered intervention here at all.

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This section has already withstood high flows, without threat to levees. This reach has already withstood velocities of the same magnitudes modeled for the design flow of 160,000 cfs, without threat to the levees. They can be expected to withstand an event of this size. If a high flow event were to occur and cause some new erosion, then surveys after the event could evaluate whether any erosion “spot fixes” are needed.

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Do monitoring and maintenance of erosion spots; avoid all-at-once destructive revetment. The spring annual erosion surveys can be used to determine if, where, and when spot maintenance might be warranted. This would avoid the all-at-once revetment resulting in wholesale destruction that’s being proposed for miles of prized mature riparian forest habitat.

Halt Contract 3B pending Folsom Dam Raise and evaluation of prior contract work.

As discussed in the letter by William Avery, “Put C3B on hold until Folsom Dam Raise Project is complete”, February 14, 2024, (Ref 4) and until we see how the prior revetments actually fare in high flows. Photos from that letter show erosion at the revetments in the downstream prior contracts near SacState.

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Photo of new Contract 2 soil surface being rapidly washed away by rain and river waves. Again, this level of erosion is never seen in a natural intact bank.

This calls into question the vulnerability to damage of these revetments during the years of construction, and lasting for many years given the exceedingly slow rate of vegetation regrowth beyond isolated plantings. Contract 3B should be halted until the Folsom Dam Raise is complete, AND until we see how prior work near SacState fares in high flows.

Wait for the Folsom Dam Raise completion.

Once the Folsom Dam Raise projects are complete (2027), SAFCA has said the water control manual will be revised to indicate that for a 200 year event the maximum needed release will be 115,000 cfs, not 160,000 cfs. This means the year Contract 3B would finish, it will be overdesigned for 160,000 cfs, but will have left the Parkway bare of trees.

Worse, the Contract 3B denuded, bare-soil stages of new construction would be happening in the years BEFORE the Folsom Dam Raise begins to provide extra storage capacity, so it might still need to release 160,000 cfs. The area would be vulnerable without natural trees, just when releases might still be planned for 160,000 cfs.

The Contract 3B timing may put us at MORE EROSION RISK than no work at all.

We ask that you halt Contract 3B. The Folsom Dam Raise project must be completed first. Otherwise, the timing of Contract 3B makes us more vulnerable than no work at all. (Later, reassess Contract 3B and consider nature-based solutions).

Worrisome “always strive for more” policy (and why is 92,000 cfs mentioned?)

A key flood agency was quoted regarding a policy that will “always strive for more” in terms of flood control, which included alluding to designing for higher and higher flows to be released through the levee channels. In fact, there appears to be a foretaste of this in the mention of flows of 192,000 cfs in the new “Contract 4B” scoping included in this draft SEIS/SEIR. Where is this number coming from a new design goal? A “500 year flood? But as these design flows go higher and higher, in what can never be perfect safety, it leads to a “vicious cycle” of needing to raise and armor levees to withstand more spillway releases, and so on. Whentaken to its “logical conclusion” this philosophy eventually points to a bareconcrete channel being the only option in short, the LA River.

But in recent times, there is movement now to reverse the LA River. This is not the time to create more concrete river channels. As noted in Joshua Thomas letter (Ref 1), many natural options for various trees, grasses, and round cobble can withstand flow velocities in the ranges needed in this relatively straight stretch of river.

Even concrete channels have backfired

And as discussed in the Joshua Thomas letter (Ref 1), even a concrete channel approach on the San Lorenzo River near Santa Cruz didn’t work out as expected by USACE, and the yearly sediment build-up that must be dredged out every year incurs very high cost to the city.

New ways to consider risk, embrace creative ideas

At some point, there is a societal limit for attempting to reduce risks toward zero. As with many things in life, simply being alive comes with risk from all sorts of things and as a society we land on a tolerable level of risk to avoid the extreme constraints needed to move

even closer to zero risk. Most of us have rejected the option to live in hardened underground bunkers to keep us safe from all sorts of natural and manmade hazards. We weigh exactly what things we value would have to be sacrificed in order to further reduce risk. Given the societal movements like the one to reverse the LA River, there is a growing recognition of the value of nature and natural places. And fortunately, with some creative advances, we often get better at keeping what we value AND finding options that reduce risk. Engineering with Nature publications and nature-based solutions to flood protection are ripe with possibilities. Engaging with organizations and volunteers can generate new ideas. How can we add more “space” to the system? Could the Folsom South Canal be adapted for flood bypass purposes? Could PG&E and SMUD be paid for dam modifications elsewhere in the American River watershed?

Levee, weir, bypass, and Folsom Dam upgrades have already improved flood safety.

The launchable rock toes/trenches proposed in Contract 3B are for “potential bank erosion” NOT new direct work on the levees. Prior projects have already improved our flood safety dramatically. Levees have been fortified by 60 to 70 foot deep slurry cut-off walls inside bringing seepage risk in this area to zero. Improvements have been made to weirs, bypasses, the Mayhew Drain, etc. The new auxiliary spillway at Folsom Dam (and new operating procedures) allow for early release of water if a storm is forecast, to make space in the reservoir. The Folsom Dam Raises (dikes, etc.) are in progress for completion in 2027. Annual erosion surveys and spot maintenance can be implemented, instead of Parkway destruction.

Inadequate analysis and mitigation, inadequate alternative methods

An incomplete and insufficient environmental analysis is provided by the 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR) and the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR. (Ref 1, Ref 5). Both use biased data and outdated modeling to justify one-size-fits-all riprap erosion measures to the exclusion of less environmentally destructive bioengineering alternatives. The analysis ignores or minimizes some important environmental impacts. It offers inadequate mitigation on-site (replanting with an entirely different species mix – e.g., willows and coyotebrush – that do not provide the same wildlife habitat as the lost mature trees). Off-site mitigation at a site 10 miles away does not serve the wildlife or the wildlife corridor needs in this area. We ask USACE to invoke less destructive erosion control measures that are better justified by more up-to-date modeling and more complete data. Neither the General Reevaluation Report (GRR) nor the 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR seriously consider measures that might limit habitat destruction on the Lower American River.

The new directives for USACE to utilize nature-based solutions need to be brought to bear. There are growing examples within USACE’s own erosion research arm, ERDC. We ask USACE to find options that retain existing trees for their natural erosion protection, and/or employ alternative methods that use small equipment for “spot fixes” with rounded cobble, instead of mile-long clearcutting and installation of launchable rock toes and trenches.

Impacts cannot be called “significant unavoidable” if alternatives make them “avoidable”

Implementing alternative methods like these for addressing potential erosion would have far less environmental impacts. That calls into question characterizing the impacts as significant “unavoidable”.

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Decision to use launchable rock toes/trenches is flawed, and it compounds problems

It is acknowledged that launchable rock toes and trenches have issues with erosive “scouring” at their ends --one of the very concerns for “scouring” they are supposed to be preventing. It also leads to the practice of wanting to join one after another to avoid end scour. This harmful policy to use long continuous stretches of these devastating revetment methods in a Wild and Scenic River everywhere without prior revetment, is a policy that is no longer consistent with the high level directives to USACE for whole ecosystem approaches, nature-based solutions, engagement of the community and other agencies, and making ecosystem priorities co-equal with the mission for flood control.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Water vs. land

We are also concerned that as the design stages progressed, there appeared to have been a decision to move to land-based installation rather than thoroughly explore/utilize potential water-based installation, in a seeming trade (“balance”?) between fish impacts and riparian impacts in this upper 3B area. The launchable rock toes/trenches, using land-based installation methods, are highly destructive of riparian habitat. These choices and trades should be revisited, along with the decision to use long stretches of launchable rock toes/trenches at all, because if much more targeted “spot fixes” for erosion were used, there would be less need for such long stretches of damage that impact either fish or riparian habitat. This would allow more options and flexibility in the “balancing”, and overall lesser impacts.

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This level of proposed destruction is not necessary.

We do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, we do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

We are writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4B. A much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4B must be presented.

We do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including consideration at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

Serpentine has not been addressed.

The use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Diesel Air Quality Risk.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive).(Ref 6). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

Inadequacies in data to support claims.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. We incorporate by reference the comments by William Avery et al. (Ref 5). From an engineering perspective there is incomplete and inadequate documentation to support a project with such destructive impact on natural resources. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. We do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this upriver extension and the Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. We strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Proposed methods can make us more vulnerable, not safer.

Further, we believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Planting benches may be lost when launchable rocks launch.

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rock toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

A surgical approach is needed in this Protected Area.

We strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need

Inconsistency with Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

We object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the rivers edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails, used by thousands of people from all over the region.

Our unique wildlife is part of the outstandingly remarkable recreation value.

These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in the midst of an urban area, which is highly valued by recreational Parkway users. (Visitors are amazed to find families of otters, owls, beavers, visiting bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting ducks in trees, and so much more).

This is a finite, bounded habitat that must be protected to stay viable.

This destruction of the wildlife corridor threatens the sustainability of our unique wildlife experience. This is a finite, bounded habitat, making it vulnerable to loss. Displaced wildlife have no vacant territory to absorb them. The cumulative effect of past and proposed destruction threatens the viability of the wild character of this entire American River ecosystem. Allowing methods that obliterate the established landscape and dense, mature trees, which provide vital habitat in this finite, bounded area, threaten our unique wildlife. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and

wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

Heritage oaks will never regrow to centuries in age over jagged quarry riprap.

We object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil. The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

Environmental justice not adequately addressed.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. All summer, the popular spots bring families to swim and spend time at no cost. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

Inconsistency determination and strong conditions are needed for more targeted methods.

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found.

A much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

We respectfully request that you do not move forward with the plans described in lower American River Contracts 3B and 4B (“Project” or “Proposed Project”). This Project should instead be significantly revised in order to avoid the loss of riparian forest, and its associated values, along the lower American River, and to avoid the harmful short and long-term impacts to the community’s health, structures, property and safety, due to the construction-related activities that would be associated with the Project.

Regional treasure deserves far greater care.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

/s Board of Directors of College Greens East Townhome Owners Association (CGETA)

Joe Sheffo, President, CGETA Board of Directors

Mary Beth Schwehr, Vice President, CGETA Board of Directors

Michelle Peattie

Bing Stolzenberg

Susan Mills / Bryann Shim

CC: Susan Rosebrough-Jones, National Park Service

Barbara Rice, National Park Service

Harry Williamson, National Park Service

Liz Bellas, Director, Sacramento Regional Parks

KC Sorgen, Senior Planner, Sacramento Regional Parks

Jonah Knapp, Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Supervisor Rich Desmond

Dr.Ami Bera, US House of Representatives, and Matthew Ceccato

References, incorporated by reference herein, letters we also support:

(Ref 1) Joshua Thomas, “Letter which reviews the environmental analysis and alternatives provided within the December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project”. February 22, 2024

(Ref 1) Willaim E. Avery, “Map, maintain, replace social trails and beaches, small watercraft put-in and take-out points, use only round cobble and gravel for these access points”, February 13, 2024.

(Ref 3) Willaim E. Avery, “Contract C3B will result in loss of natural vegetative armoring and unmitigated loss of heritage oaks and riparian habitat, please suspend or redesign bank protection elements of C3B”, February 20, 2024.

(Ref 4) William Avery, Put C3B on hold until Folsom Dam Raise Project is complete”, February 14, 2024.

(Ref 5) Willaim E. Avery, Joshua Thomas, Gerald William Brattain; “Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) December 2023 Report and Appendices; Specific Comments Pertaining to Hydrology, Erosion, etc.”, 9 February 2024

(Ref 6) Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), Air Toxics Hot Spots Program, Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments, February 2015.
<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/cnr/2015guidancemanual.pdf>

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Ed Corominas Real Estate Group <edcreates@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis

overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Ed Corominas

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:27 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Stan P <srphillippe@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:54 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

- Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis, American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A The American River Parkway is very important to my family, neighbors and me. We live near the proposed project area and walk or bike on the Parkway almost daily. I've taken many thousands of photos of the Parkway, river and local wildlife and led nature tours over nearly 40 years I've lived here. I served eight years on the Board of Directors of the AR Parkway Foundation and have donated thousands of dollars and many volunteer hours helping the Parkway. I've picked up litter, removed invasive plants, repaired infrastructure, and promoted the Parkway in a number of other ways. The AR Parkway is unique among urban parks and rivers.

B I do not support the methods being proposed with this project. I feel that the environmental analysis doesn't adequately characterize the significant impacts. This is a Wild and Scenic River. It deserves a much less devastating approach. The Corps has experience in designing with nature that should be used here, of all places.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement.

My additional specific concerns and comments include the following:

C I understand the recent modifications to Folsom Dam will result in less flow than the 160k cfs the Corps considered for the current project being proposed for the river. The analyses using 160k cfs should be revised to the new design flow, which I understand is considerably less.

D Maps in the EIR/EIS and appendices are often unreadable. Street names left blank. It's hard to tell where the exact project elements will be. This needs to be corrected, preferably with interactive figures and maps.

E Public outreach has been nearly non-existent. Key groups like the American River Parkway Foundation should have been consulted. The Corps should have briefed such local stakeholder groups to gain insight into the Parkway and river use. We only recently heard of the projects even though we are on the Parkway almost daily, often in the affected project areas. The only notices I've seen have been flyers placed by residents in the past week. When I mention the project to people using the Parkway, many are still unaware and are shocked to learn that the ugly disaster that was constructed by the Corps near H Street is being proposed here.

F Many of the trees proposed for removal have been through numerous high river flow events. Why do they need to be removed now?

G The rip rap banks are incompatible with swimming, rafting and other water activities. The AR Parkway has more visitor-days than nearly every National Park in the country. This project as designed would severely curtail many uses by eliminating little swimming and paddling and hiking areas

H | The project will interfere with the many species of wildlife found on the Parkway, each of which have their own seasonal needs. The proposed project can't accommodate all the varying needs and will additionally interrupt wildlife corridors.

I | What about future projects for the AR? Is the long-range plan to 'work your way up' the river? If so, ALL FUTURE PROJECTS contemplated on the river should be described and the cumulative impacts thoroughly considered. People upstream to Folsom Dam should be part of the outreach.

J | In the past few years, there has been extensive planting of elderberry areas that would be destroyed by the proposed projects. How does the Corps explain the lack of coordination that now proposed to bulldoze those areas? Given this, how are we to trust the Corps ability to manage the project responsibly?

| The areas of the Parkway upstream of Watt Ave are sensitive riparian habitat, and are to be protected under the Parkway Plan.

K | What is proposed for the many mid-channel islands and inlets?

| The Corps has published guidance on designing with nature in mind. Why do the designs we're seeing now not reflect the best of those methods, as they should for a Wild and Scenic River and highly used urban parkway?

L | Because so many people are affected and are still unaware of the proposed projects, more time should be given for people to learn about it and for improved analyses to be done.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Polls consistently mention it as THE best attribute of our City. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves. We don't want more "H Street designs" on the river!

Thank you,

Stan Phillippe

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:36 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Susan Fossum <fossumsusan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: jonah.knapp@CVFlood.ca.gov; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; Bellas. Liz <bellase@saccounty.net>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments in this email letter focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. I have lived in Sacramento, near the American River Parkway, for almost 50 years now. I have hiked, biked with my husband and 2 sons (they actually learned to bike on the Parkway) during that time and have over the last 30 years ridden my horses on the equestrian/hiking trail as part of a volunteer patrol that works in concert with Sacramento County Regional Parks Rangers as an extra pair of 'eyes and ears' on the Parkway. During this time I have become intimately involved with the dirt paths that meander through the beautiful oaks, sycamores and other trees, bushes that line the

shores of the river providing necessary and essential habitat for the birds/waterfowl and marine life of the American River. My belief is that the forward progress of the current draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B, will seriously impact the integrity of the entire Parkway, the wildlife that call the Parkway their home, and those recreational users, including myself, who value the recreational opportunities that exist. My belief is that the actions proposed by the Corps are not in compliance with policies laid out in the American River Parkway Plan nor the Natural Resources Management Plan that is a supplemental document within the Parkway Plan.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

I am in support of the critique document provided by Director Liz Bellas, Director of Sacramento County Regional Parks, signed and dated February 23, 2024. I would ask that the Corps engage with Sacramento County Regional Parks and use the Natural Resources Management Plan to take a comprehensive look at all the natural resources and recreational opportunities that would be impacted by the current proposed actions of Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I request that the Corps re-engage and stand-up the Bank Protection Group as well as the Technical and Resource Advisory Committee (TARAC) to re-evaluate the integrity and thoroughness of the project proposals and actions.

The American River Parkway is often called 'the Crown Jewel of Sacramento' and your decisions will affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come and should reflect the care that this public asset deserves.

Sincerely,

Susan Fossum

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:34 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on USACE Proposal 3B

From: Ben Eastvold <beastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on USACE Proposal 3B

To Whom It May Concern,

I know many people have already written about the specifics of the proposal and their concerns. I, too, am concerned and really hoping we can plan a way forward everyone can feel good about.

1 | With that said, my concern lies more with the manner this project is going forward. It seems as if there is very little effort to win over the public and stakeholders. As one who uses the riverfront walking trails regularly, I want to be excited about how this project will help the community and the added benefit it will bring. That hasn't happened yet.

In the KCRA interview with William Polk, Senior Project Manager, American River Erosion, he did little to assuage the concerns of members of our community and instead just told us this is continuing to move forward.

2 | More effort needs to be given towards public outreach. Not just giving out information, but helping us see the value this project will bring. We need some persuasion. I want this to be a win-win scenario - we do necessary work to protect our river and levees, AND bring added value to the communities this impacts.

Sincerely,

Ben Eastvold

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:31 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Carey Knecht <cknecht@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:56 PM
To: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

1 | My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

2 | I am writing as a parent of a child who attends O.W. Erlewine Elementary School and also of an incoming kindergartener. The school is very close to Larchmont Park and has its playground along Whitewater Way, which appears to be one of the construction travel routes. I have concerns about the noise and pollution impacts on the children who attend this school, as well as on the overall community both around the school and along the truck routes.

3 | I have numerous questions below, and as you will see at the end, I would like to respectfully request (1) that greater analysis occur related to the impacts of noise and health impacts on the surrounding community, particularly to school children; (2) that additional project alternatives consider (a) a project with a much lighter footprint and less construction activity and (b) alternative staging and truck route areas that are away from residences and schools; and (3) that additional mitigations be added to better protect the school and community.

I walk my child to school, and two to three times each week, I join him for lunch. As part of these activities, I witness the extensive use of outdoor spaces at O.W. Erlewine. The school is not a single building with indoor hallways connecting different spaces. Instead, the school classrooms are set up “motel-style,” accessible via an outdoor sidewalk. Students, teachers, and administrators travel outdoors between the office, classrooms, and a lunchroom / auditorium.

The daily routine of the school involves students spending significant time outside. In the morning prior to the starting bell, students play outdoors and then line up at the designated time, in an outdoor paved area. They

travel to their classroom along outdoor sidewalks. Both recess and physical education occurs outdoors. At lunchtime, or at other times for school assemblies, they travel to an auditorium / lunchroom via this same outdoor path. Although many students eat indoors, a subset of students, including my son typically eat outdoors under an overhead awning. For those who do eat indoors, the lunchroom generally has its doors open. This can increase ventilation, reduce the spread of respiratory illness, and increase the ability of school staff to monitor children's movement as they finish eating lunch and head to recess. The school also has outdoor garden areas. During the after-school hours, the City of Sacramento's "4th R" program makes additional use of the playground.

At this school, two kindergarten classrooms and the kindergarten playground are on the northeast side of the building, making them the closest areas to Larchmont Park. When my son was a kindergartener, in addition to recess, these young children would gather in a circle at the end of their school time to sing a song before they adjourn.

I am saddened and concerned to imagine the impact on the children and their daily routine during the years in which this construction would occur, especially as I consider sending my younger child to the school. What will be the impact on daily life at the school and the health of the students and faculty to have heavy-duty truck trips delivering truckloads of rock and off-road construction equipment operating in the background?

4 It is my understanding that this school serves a population that is socioeconomically diverse. According to the 2022-2023 O.W. Erlewine School Accountability Report Card, 69 percent of the school's students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 20 percent of the students have disabilities. Not only does O.W. Erlewine appear to receive funds under Title 1 ("Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged"), but 67.7% of students are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, which requires a family population to be below 1.85 times the federal poverty level, according to the California Department of Education's "[Unduplicated Student Poverty – Free or Reduced-Price Meals Data 2022–23](#)" file for the most recent year available (2022-2023).

I have the following questions and concerns about the students' and staff members' proximity to the construction activities:

1. How far from the school will the staging area be situated? The area seemingly designated on the map as an area for use as a staging area is one of the sections of the park that is very close to the front of the school. Utilizing Google Maps aerial imagery, my best estimate is that it would start less than 300 feet from the school's front flagpole (possibly significantly less).
2. How far from the school will the construction along the river occur? Again utilizing Google Maps aerial imagery, it appears to me that the top of the levee and any truck travel there would be between 400 and 500 feet from the school's front flagpole, and that the water's edge might be approximately 600 feet.
3. How far from the playground and outdoor physical education area will the truck travel along Whitewater Way be?

I have the following questions about the noise that will occur due to truck travel and staging-area activity:

4. What are the average and loudest sound levels that will occur during the school day in the staging area of Larchmont Park and along the truck travel routes?
5. What are the typical impacts of this noise level on human activity? For example, will the kindergarteners still be able to sing end-of-class songs outdoors if the teacher would like to do so?
- 5 6. Did the SEIR/SEIS or original Common Features EIR/EIS analyze the impact of this noise level on students' and teachers' mental and physical health, both via any acute noise and also any impacts of chronic loud noise?

I believe that the noise impact could be significant. For instance, the [World Health Organization](#) lists the following impacts of noise on children.

“Impairment of early childhood development and education caused by noise may have lifelong effects on academic achievement and health. Studies and statistics on the effects of chronic exposure to aircraft noise on children have found:

- consistent evidence that noise exposure harms cognitive performance;
- consistent association with impaired well-being and motivation to a slightly more limited extent;
- moderate evidence of effects on blood pressure and catecholamine hormone secretion.”

I also have concerns about the air quality impacts that could result. Air pollution from construction activities can create health risks, particularly for children, as their respiratory systems are still developing. As they play and exercise, children inhale deeply. I am particularly interested in the impacts on the youngest children, such as my incoming kindergartener, as the kindergarten classroom is closest to the staging area. Here are some questions I have about the health impacts:

7. What analysis was done related to the health impacts of exposure to the dust and emissions? How did that take into account the risks to the students who are youngest and/or otherwise most vulnerable?
8. In particular, what analysis was done related to the health impacts of Diesel Particulate Matter?
9. To what extent was the proximity of the school to the staging and construction areas considered? For some pollution types, the concentrations decrease with distance from the source. (See for instance: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1352231002003540>.) How do the distances noted above relate to the distances over which air pollution concentrations decline?
10. To what extent was the background level of air quality and health burdens in the area considered? Exploring the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>), I noticed that in census tract 06067009106 where the school is located, the level of inhalable particles, 2.5 micrometers or smaller (PM 2.5) is in the 98th percentile, the amount of diesel exhaust in the air is already at the 57th percentile, and the share of people who have been told they have asthma is 65th percentile.
11. To what extent do the socioeconomic disadvantages experienced by a majority of the students increase their susceptibility to risk from both noise and air quality impacts and how was this addressed in the analysis?

I believe a thorough analysis of the health risks from the noise and pollution generated by this construction activity may reveal that the significance of these impacts on health and on environmental justice has been understated.

I would also like to request that additional project alternatives consider a project with a much lighter footprint and less construction activity. For instance, an alternative could consider replacing the heavy emphasis on rip-rap with a project design focused on bioengineering, nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, and monitoring of the levee and riverbank conditions to address any small areas where maintenance is needed. In addition, I would like to request that alternative staging and truck routes be considered.

Finally, I would like to suggest that additional mitigations be examined to better protect the school and community, such as the use of "cleaner" trucks and equipment, upgrades to the air filters or sound buffering in the school, and free medical services to any students or school staff who may experience any health incidences that could be related to these exposures, such as an asthma attack.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and of other comments from concerned residents.

Carey Knecht

Dorff, Becky

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:29 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:53 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

Correction: For my comment (Joshua Thomas, February 22, 2024), footnote 137, I cited page 144 of *An Island Called California*. The correct citation is page 146, which I've provided a picture of below.

Elna Bakker, *An Island Called California: An Ecological Introduction to its Natural Communities, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 146.

discussed in Chapter 9, and Chapter 10 will describe grasslands characteristic of the higher plains. In this chapter the primary concern is with the natural levees which, when undisturbed, support communities of towering woodland of a very special type. Such streamside vegetation has been given the name of riparian, a term in frequent use throughout these three chapters. Because it is so much like corresponding riverine woodlands in tropical savannas, or grasslands, it could be referred to as "gallery forest," though this term is often used to describe the riparian woods of the tropics.

The levees are banks of flood-borne sediments some 5 to 20 feet (1.5–6 m.) above the streambed and are up to 10 miles (16 km.) in width. Where both levees and vegetation have remained undisturbed, a heavily wooded landscape borders the river, with more open groves where the levees slope down to the neighboring floodplains. The meandering rivers are often muddy and sluggish, leaving C-shaped sloughs called oxbows where the river has abandoned its meanders in efforts to straighten its course. A gradient of a dozen or so feet (3.6 m.) separates sea level from midcourse out on the valley floor. Too slow to carry rocks, unless in flood, their floors and banks are composed of silt, sand, and gravel. Bars detach themselves from streamflow and are bare or covered with such quick-growing plants as mule fat, whose long limber stems bend with the swifter currents of flood time. During high water, the vertical banks erode into chunks which fall into the stream.

Riparian vegetation is often rampant in growth. Some of the temptation to refer to it as gallery forest is inspired by its junglelike appearance, particularly in summer when wild grape and clematis hang in thick green curtains reminiscent of the lianas in rainforest clearings. Unless one follows trails it is almost impossible to penetrate such profligacy of plant life. Not only are the trees so crowded that the foliage of one merges with that of its neighbor without interruption, but also the underlayers are savage conglomerations of fallen limbs and other debris, berry vines, wild rose snarls, poison oak patches, rank herbaceous growth, and saplings. Away from the river, the woods usually open out into more parklike stands.

It is still possible to find groves of well-developed riparian growth in certain state parks such as Caswell on the Stanislaus

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 4:44 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Jeffrey F. Mount, *California Rivers and Streams: The Conflict Between Fluvial Process and Land Use* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 105, 302, and 304.

viewed as composed primarily of the parent material or bedrock. The C horizon, which is usually light colored due to the absence of abundant organic material, is where the initial breakdown of the bedrock is occurring. In between the A and C horizons is the B horizon. Material leached from the A horizon by percolating water accumulates in the B horizon, collecting as pockets of clay-rich material. Since the material leached from the alluvium zone accumulates in the B horizon, it is known as the *illuvial* zone.

In perhaps the ultimate exercise in button-sorting known to the physical sciences, the soil scientists (or pedologists) have sliced up the soil classification pie into myriad, infinitesimal divisions. It would be pointless to review the entire soil classification scheme here. Explanation of even the simplest classification groups, like *intrazonal hydromorphic planosols*, is beyond the goals of this text. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has created a complex hierarchical classification scheme that recognizes ten orders, twenty-nine common suborders, and innumerable great groups and subgroups. The combinations are endless and, except for experienced pedologists, complicated to use. Suffice it to point out that these combinations reflect a variety of physical and chemical characteristics of soils as well as the climate zone in which they develop.

It should be no surprise that soils in California vary greatly in their thickness, structure, and composition. Climate, vegetation, topography, bedrock, and time all play a role in the development of soils. In general, older soils from shallow slopes in wetter climates tend to be thick, organic-rich, and better developed. Younger soils from more arid climates with steeper topography are thinner, with more poorly developed layering (fig. 6.3). Most important for the rivers of California is the resistance of soils to erosion. Thick, well-developed soils that have well-established vegetative covers tend to be more resistant to erosion. The binding action of roots and clays along with high infiltration capacities increase a soil's resistance to erosion and reduce its contribution of sediment into rivers. Poorly developed, relatively thin soils, whether due to climate, bedrock, or bad land use practices, tend to erode quickly, producing high sediment yields.

HOW EROSION WORKS

The transfer of the by-products of physical and chemical weathering into California's rivers takes place primarily by direct runoff of rainfall. In many steep watersheds with highly unstable soils and bedrock, mass wasting processes (discussed below) may contribute significant amounts of sediment during and after large rainfall events. Snowmelt, groundwater discharge, and subsurface flow contribute only minor amounts of sediment to rivers in California.

LEARNING THE LESSONS

Since a straightened river travels a shorter distance, the slope, velocity, and stream power of the river are increased. The break in slope at the upstream end of the straightened reach acts like a knickpoint. Increased competence and headward migration of this knickpoint can produce scouring upstream of the straightened channel; decline in competence that occurs at the downstream end of the straightened reach can lead to local deposition of material and aggradation of the channel, ultimately reducing its flow capacity.

Irrespective of changes in channel pattern or gradient, simply widening or deepening hydraulic changes that may ultimately undo the original alterations. Enlarged channels are usually designed to handle a specific, very large flow. During the design phase the impact of lower discharge flows is commonly ignored since they will clearly be contained by the channel. Yet the size and shape of a natural river channel is a product of the more frequent, intermediate flows associated with bankfull stage conditions, not the very large or extreme event. An increase in a channel's cross section through dredging produces a decline in the competence of these intermediate flows, because velocity and overall stream power are decreased. In this way, the channel is not capable of handling the sediment load that is delivered to it, resulting in localized deposition. In most cases, the channel size will be reduced until a cross section capable of handling the sediment load is restored.

The pitfalls of channel modification are illustrated in urban areas throughout California. The San Lorenzo River, which runs through downtown Santa Cruz, illustrates this problem well (fig. 15.10). Widespread flooding in downtown Santa Cruz in 1955 created a demand for extensive flood control projects in the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed a series of levees and channel alterations that would afford the downtown area protection from the 100-year flood. The design developed by the corps was the blunt instrument approach most popular at the time. The San Lorenzo River channel was straightened and, more important, deepened and widened. All riparian vegetation was removed from the riverbanks to reduce roughness; channel walls were lined with concrete and riprap to enhance stability. This "new and improved" river became a nearly straight concrete ditch—the pinnacle of river engineering efficiency.

Fig. 15.10. Problems associated with channel modification along the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz. Top: Channel was dredged, straightened, and lined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase flood capacity. Bottom: Channel aggradation within improved reach of river led to significant reduction in flow capacity. Up until recently, the city spent millions of dollars yearly to dredge the channel only to have it refill during winter floods. Photographs from Griggs 1982.

Less than 10 years after completion of the project, the San Lorenzo River had attempted to restore its profile by filling this ditch with more than 12 million cubic feet of sediment. In the end, it was calculated that the channel could only handle the 25- to 30-year flood. Millions of dollars and the complete destruction of the river had provided little to no real improvement in flood protection. To deal with this, Santa Cruz initiated a very expensive maintenance program. Up until recently, every year, like swallows returning to San Juan Capistrano, D9 tractors rumbled into the San Lorenzo ditch to push the sediment around into little piles, hoping that the next winter's flows would scour it and move it away. Not surprisingly, during very high discharge events, such as occurred during 1982 and 1983, a great deal of the sediment is scoured, temporarily increasing the channel capacity. However, the amount of scouring does not substantially increase the capacity of the channel to handle extreme floods.

Impact of Levees

According to the Army Corps of Engineers, there are over 5,000 miles of levees in California. In the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta alone, there are more than 1,100 miles of levees. These levees have turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. On the positive side, many levee projects have saved local communities from regular inundation and the associated Draconian restrictions of the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, the nation's most productive agricultural region, the Central Valley, would be flooded on a regular basis were it not for the extensive levee system. This is especially true of the delta. As a result of intense farming and associated oxidation of peat-rich soils, the elevation of large tracts of land in the delta has been declining steadily. Today, thousands of acres of farmland lie as much as 15 feet below sea level. If there were no levees, the constant interaction between freshwater flowing in from the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and marine waters pushed inland by wind and tides would keep much of the region underwater all year, making it impossible to farm. In addition, the massive pumping of freshwater out of the delta into the Central Valley and State Water projects would be impossible without the levee system. Agriculture and urban development have benefited greatly from the leveeing of the rivers.

On the negative side, the proliferation of levees along California's rivers has enhanced flooding hazards in some areas. Moreover, even those levees that are carefully engineered and maintained by the Corps will eventually fail. The concentrated destruction associated with these failures and the inherent difficulty in predicting failures can make levees an untrustworthy partner in flood management.

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 4:34 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

O. S. Scheifele, 1928. "Protection of River Banks and Levees." *The Canadian Engineer*.

The Canadian Engineer

A Weekly Paper for Civil Engineers and Contractors

Protection of River Banks and Levees

Employment of Angular Submerged Willow Tree Planting to Stop Erosion and Slides of Earth Banks of Rivers, Canals, Lakes, Levees, Cuts and Fills, and for General Flood Control—Some Projects in Canada and the United States Described

By O. S. SCHEIFELE
Waterloo, Ont.

MANY civil engineers and engineers in the employ of governments, railroads and various other big corporations have been of great service in assisting to select a simple and natural process as a substitute for the many other methods, such as timber and sheet piling, concrete or stone, rip-rap, etc., to keep rivers, creeks, lakes and

contractors were privileged to bid on solution such as stone, rip-rap or concrete to comply with the laws of the corporations where no contract could be let for a patented system without competitive bidding.

Many engineers who will read this article will remember other articles published during the last four years detailing



FIG. 1—PROJECT ON MISSOURI RIVER, KANSAS CITY DISTRICT

earth cuts within their present area or channel at a small cost.

To verify this, the writer will cite various individual contracts awarded under competitive bidding where outside

the theory of planting willow logs or poles in trenches in a horizontal or angular position in harmony with the slopes of a river or lake shore bank on a 3 to 1 or 45 degree angle with the result that a tree and root growth will develop the



FIG. 2—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Illustration Shows Original Formation Along Bank of River Near Dubuque, Iowa



FIG. 3—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Willow Poles 40-ft. Long in Position to be Protected With Branch, Stakes and Wire Fencing

Digitized by Go

120

THE CANADIAN ENGINEER

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entire length of each pole planted whether it be 5 or 50 ft. long. This gives many advantages over individual vertical tree planting to reinforce an earth slope.

Advantages Over Vertical Tree Planting

First. For example, the poles are applied on a lake shore or river bank, the butt end of the pole being set into the river bottom or beach at toe of incline bank in harmony with



FIG. 4—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Brush Mattress for Protection of Willow Poles and Bank

the desired slope with the result that the tree growth cannot slide and will immediately assist to prep and support in giving the bank the proper slope and rigidity.

Second. Where logs are placed along a water course at approximately 4-ft. intervals, the ice and water are greatly hindered from creating a straight ledge after the desired slope is made.

Third. A joint row of trees 40 ft. in length growing on a 35 degree slope will never fall, roots and all, into the river.

Fourth. In the average soil formation it would be very difficult to grow an individual tree owing to lack of moisture 20 ft. above the water level. With the joint system of tree planting, the foot of the willow logs is constantly resting submerged below the low water mark, and owing to the joint circulation of a score of trees growing vertically from the willow log, the trees at the extreme upper part of the pole will grow quite as prolifically as those close to moisture.



FIG. 5—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT, ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT
CONSTRUCTION NEAR DUBUQUE, IOWA

Fifth. The last and most valuable advantage is shown on many water courses such as the Mississippi, Missouri and Gattineau Rivers, and others which have their source in the mountains or in the extreme north and which have an annual second flood in late May or June when the growing season is on. Tree and vegetation growth are drowned between the ordinary water level and the high water mark and no resisting root fibre exists to retard erosion. By planting trees in the novel position a portion will always be above high water level and supply the entire length with sufficient air

and sun to sustain life throughout the flood period, and the most extensive root development will be between the low and high water level where needed to resist erosion.

Engineers and others can study the drawings and cuts of various constructions and learn from them how the writer can immediately stop erosion with temporary artificial protection until the tree and root growth is advanced sufficiently to withstand an occasional flood or storm. Formation and attack varies largely, and each formation will require individual study to meet existing conditions with a silt-collecting construction to give immediate service. The writer is grateful for the privilege of being allowed to demonstrate the system on various formations, and is glad to report that results have been very gratifying on most of the formations allotted for an application of the system.

Gattineau River Construction

For cross comparison, I will cite the Gattineau River construction for the Dominion Government in the Ottawa district. For stone rip-rap on identically the same formations adjacent to the writer's work upstream the Government paid \$16 per lin. ft. of river bank while I received approximately \$3.50 per lin. ft. The one construction has now stood the test for three years and the second two seasons, and I feel



FIG. 6—CUT CONTROL NEAR HORNEL, N.Y., ERIE RAILROAD

assured it is past all danger from flood attacks owing to advanced growth and root development.

In 1926, as an experiment, the city of Buffalo awarded the writer a contract amounting to approximately \$27,000, based at \$4 per lin. ft. of river bank. In 1927 I was again awarded a contract by the city of Buffalo for \$25,000 at \$4 per lin. ft. But I was obliged to secure same by competitive bidding to comply with city laws since my system is patented. Stone rip-rap was considered the next cheapest solution and bids were asked and advertised on stone rip-rap. The lowest bid on same was \$19 per lin. ft. of bank.

Mississippi and Missouri Rivers

The writer was privileged to demonstrate his system on both the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers last fall for the U.S. Engineering Department, which will have to produce the same desired results as their standard rivetment and stone rip-rap river bank protection. Both contracts have been executed and must be maintained for three years, and in each case the cost is less than half the cost of U.S. systems.

The various cuts are typical views from some of the constructions. Fig. 1 shows in the foreground the original formations on the Missouri River east of Kansas City, where the system was applied in the fall of 1927. Fig. 1 also shows bank sloped 3 to 1 and angular willow planting applied with construction nearly complete. The distance from crest of bank to low water level on slope is approximately 40 ft. where willow poles are planted and protected as detailed on accompanying diagram.

In addition to a single silt collecting mat of brush, stone and cross-woven wire fencing as shown on diagram at toe of willow poles, I applied four sections which extend approximately 30 ft. into the river beyond the original toe of bank and water level which should give equal service to U.S. standard river rivetment work, to a 30-ft. depth, which was considered extensive enough at portion of river in question. Where deeper scour is expected additional sections should be added.

Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5 are Mississippi views near Dubuque, Iowa. Fig. 2 shows original formation; Fig. 3, bank sloped approximately 2 to 1 and willow poles in position; Fig. 4, local willow brush over top of willow poles, extending 20 ft. into the river to protect under scour; Fig. 5, work complete in accordance with the diagram.

Figs. 6 and 7 show the Erie R.R. near Hornet, N.Y., on a creek cut control. The creek in question is approximately two miles in length from source to mouth and rises 900 ft. At intervals of heavy rains up the valley the flood waters carry silt of various kinds, which they deposit on the railroad, causing frequent delay in transportation. Steam shovel

finally the angular willow planting system was applied at the small cost of \$2 per lin. ft. of river bank. Fig. 8 shows formations at time of construction and Fig. 9 shows results attained in two years. Maintenance expires in spring of 1928 and all engineers familiar with demonstration claim a permanent solution.

Fig. 10 shows results attained on Lake Erie near Port Stanley. A few years previous to 1924 the Dominion Govern-



FIG. 8—ONTARIO HIGHWAY PROJECT ON RIVER NEAR ST. THOMAS, ONT.
Original Formation Before Construction Was Undertaken

ment built 200 ft. of sheet-piling groins at 800-ft. intervals to protect summer homes, but with no results. The cut shows how the earth bank had receded beyond the Government groin, necessitating the removal of many cottages. In the fall of 1924 the writer demonstrated his angular willow planting and Fig. 10 shows results attained in three years. For temporary protection a lumber retaining wall or sand trap was built near the water line on the beach with results to date showing extensive beach reclaimed. The sand trap has



FIG. 9—SHOWING GROWTH IN FIVE YEARS AT PROJECT NEAR ST. THOMAS, ONT.

elevated the beach approximately 5 ft. and the water has receded double the width of original beach.

Erie Canal Project

Figs. 11 and 12 illustrate results on the Erie Canal in the State of New York, near Clyde. Fig. 11 shows original formation in the fall of 1926. This bank was planted to willow as shown in diagram on an approximate 2 to 1 slope, while Fig. 12 shows results attained in 12 months at an approximate cost of \$3 per lin. ft. of bank with a three-year maintenance guarantee.

The forestry branch of the Ontario Government, at the writer's request, made demonstrations for comparison between individual vertical and horizontal planting on pure blow sand to prevent sand dunes from covering good farm land and property. An official report the first year stated that individual planting was largely a failure, while horizontal pole planting is a marked success. Prospects are bright for reforesting drifting sand dunes. An average growth of 2 ft. was attained and roots were traced to a distance of 15 ft. from the buried logs, seeking after moisture.

Mississippi Flood Control

The biggest problem in the United States to-day for engineers and others to solve is how to reinforce and elevate the levees that a disaster similar to that of last spring cannot occur again. Fig. 14 is a view personally secured near Memphis, Tenn., in the early part of June last. The big flood was then playing havoc in the lower valley but was fast receding in this district. An extensive tour was made to study flood conditions. Many sections of the huge levees were extensively eroded and partly washed away by the flood waters. Without doubt some of the levees inspected would



FIG. 12—NEW YORK STATE PROJECT, RESULTS OBTAINED IN 12 MONTHS

have been completely washed away had not the railroads operating over the levee shown in the illustration and the State of Arkansas provided an army of men and trainloads of sandbags to stop the destruction of high waves and prevent the river from eating its way through these levees, which are built of pure river silt. After the thin layer of silt and root fibres is lapped away mostly by wave action, this loose soil has very slight resisting power and many breaks occur before the river runs over the crest, cut away before erosion could be stopped with sandbags as shown on cut, as it is impossible to have material and labor along the hundreds of miles of levees at the critical moment.

With the assurance that levees do break before the water goes over the top, the building of higher and thicker levees will not make them positively proof against destruction. They should be reinforced, at least on the river side, by some method that has a stronger resistance to wave action than Bermuda grass. Concrete and stone riprap are two methods, but the cost would be too great. Many engineers are favorably inclined towards tree growth and others are opposed for various reasons. First, experience has shown that where a clump of trees were allowed to spring up on the river face of levees eddies were caused and erosion started down stream from trees. Second, levees must be constantly patrolled for the detection of burrowing animals, to prevent them from cutting a tunnel. The crawfish or crab seems to be the most destructive in lower regions where the river flows on a higher level than the surrounding country. In these regions the writer would strongly advise the angular planting of willows on the land side of levees. The crawfish do not operate on a dry levee 11 months in the year and only cut tunnels where they have water following them.

Willow Extensive Root System

Certain species of trees are barred by many of our cities for boulevard and lawn planting owing to the fact that they

operations have been resorted to several times and basins have been excavated for the next occurrence. Each operation became more expensive owing to lack of space to deposit material. Concrete dams had been considered at intervals up the creek, but the cost was almost prohibitive. In the spring of 1923 the writer planted approximately 65,000 running ft. of white willow poles on the slopes of the creek channels and to protect the extensive planting from being carried down stream in case of an early flood before the trees became fortified by a few years' growth, he resorted to local young trees and built timber catch-basins at intervals. The result was that the basins have been sufficient to date, although most of them are bristling with silt.

Fig. 6 shows a timber basin and three years' growth of willow forcing its way up through the accumulated silt. As the timber walls weaken the willow growth gets stronger and a permanent solution is assured. Instead of the creek bed cutting deeper, it is filling up.

Fig. 7 shows the growth attained on upper regions of creek and the practical impossibility of the creek getting out of its present channel. Both banks are lined with trees and the creek channel is gradually becoming lined with roots, limiting the possibilities of deeper cutting.

Highway Bank Protection

Figs. 8 and 9 illustrate results attained for the Ontario Department of Highways near St. Thomas, Ont. The spring flood of 1925 eroded the river bank to the extent of 11 ft. and almost destroyed the rounded abutment of the bridge. An elaborate concrete wing dam was contemplated and

Fig. 13 shows results attained in three years from horizontal tree planting on a prairie farm for a windbreak or shelter belt. Only one continuous row of willow poles was placed in an ordinary plowed furrow and then slightly covered with earth. Results far exceed individual vertical tree



FIG. 13—LAKE ERIE PROJECT AT PORT STANLEY
Results Obtained in Three Years. Note the Lumber Sand Trap

planting. First, there is no tree or stake sticking up in the air to be whipped about by strong winds and to be kept alive by disconnected roots. Secondly, seedlings or cuttings supplied by nurseries of Government forestry farms are small and of weak vitality. If weather conditions are not favorable immediately after planting they are burnt or dried up by sun or strong winds and results are often discouraging on the treeless farm.

If poles of any length varying in thickness from 2 to 4 in. are planted in shallow trenches similar to the planting of potatoes, readers can be assured that results will far exceed individual vertical planting, providing the poles or limbs are cut and planted in proper seasons. Equally satisfactory results can be obtained from any of the cottonwood and poplar family of trees as from the willow.

To demonstrate the theory that poles planted horizontally give better results than cuttings. Many readers of this



FIG. 14—ORIGINAL FORMATION NEAR CLYDE, N.Y., NEW YORK STATE ERIE CANAL PROJECT

article have noticed piles of cordwood and poles of varying diameter. The smaller limbs soon burn where often some of the bigger limbs start to sprout and keep growing well into summer even when not in contact with any earth whatever. The stronger vitality extra moisture in the thicker wood causes this. If 2 or 3 ft. of sprouts can be produced from the vitality of a log not in contact with any moisture except rain and dew, what might be expected if this same log was resting an inch below good cultivated land? Roots as well as limbs would develop along the entire length of poles and from 3 to 6 ft. in length the first season.

penetrate sewer and storm drains with their roots and completely block drain pipes of large diameter. If trees of this nature were planted extensively and systematically along the levees where the crawfish is harmful owing to its minute tunnels, it seems logical that willow or poplar roots would plug these tunnels more efficiently than mere plugging on the surface, since roots have been known to follow a tile drain over 100 ft. and completely block it in one season.

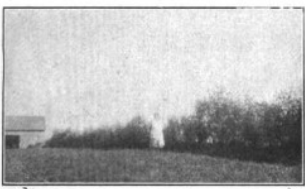


FIG. 13—PRAIRIE WIND BREAK, RESULTS OBTAINED IN 3 YEARS

It was interesting to inspect various sections of the levees after the big flood. Wherever a heavy stand of native willows or other forest trees were growing in the burrow pits and on the land between the river the erosion from wave action and current was very slight and on miles of levee where tree growth existed no injury was caused whatever. On the contrary, where land was cleared and there were no obstructions to break the waves, injury and destruction were evident along the entire distance.

With these conditions as evidence, it is clear that tree growth should be encouraged along each levee to stop the action of waves and currents. If the levees were reforested with angular tree planting and the entire face supported from toe to crest with domestic willow poles spaced at

approximately 4 ft. intervals, there is no doubt that the score of trees springing from each buried log would soon make the whole face of the levee immune to erosion and burrowing animals. Each log would be a support from base to crest. The danger pointed out by some engineers regarding the formation of eddies cannot be realized when a continuous and



FIG. 14—VIEW ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEAR MEMPHIS, TENN.

even tree growth springs up over the entire slope. Erosion would cease and reclamation of silt would collect and make the levees thicker.

For private agricultural gains the writer has had experience for 25 years on earth levee building for river control and 100 per cent. of the success attained is due to willow planting in conjunction with levees to make them immune to erosion and burrowing animals.

With four years of experience in the planting of willow by the novel angular system on a score of varying formations, many engineers estimate that the system is a big asset to the country. To date, no construction has been executed without the writer's personal supervision.

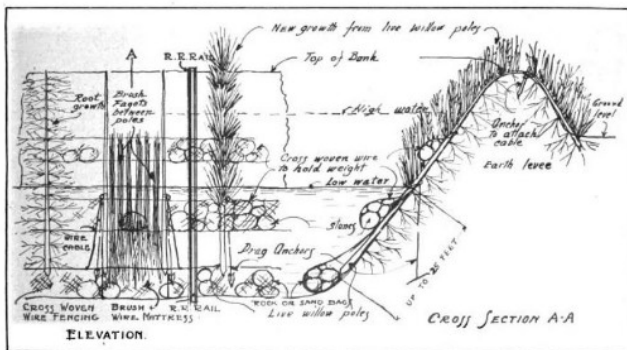


FIG. 15—SKETCH SHOWING SYSTEM OF RIVER CONTROL BY WILLOW POLE PLANTING

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:22 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy (November 2016), Appendix D. Vegetation Management Strategy

Annalisa Louise Batanides Tuel. 2018. "Levee Vegetation Management in California: An Overview of Law, Policy, and Science, and Recommendations for Addressing Vegetation Management Challenges," *Environs*

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:17 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

J.P. Dwyer and D.R. Larsen, 1997. "Value of Woody River Corridors in Levee Protection Along the Missouri River in 1993."

Elizabeth A. Cook, 2003. "Missouri River Flood of 1993: Role of Woody Corridor Width in Levee Protection." *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*.

Rood, S. B., Bigelow, S. G., Polzin, M. L., Gill, K. M., and Coburn, C. A. (2015). Biological bank protection: trees are more effective than grasses at resisting erosion from major river floods. *Ecohydrol.*, 8: 772–779. Doi: 10.1002/eco.1544.

Council on Environmental Quality, "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations," (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

People ex rel. Department of Public Works v. Bosio, 47 Cal. App. 3d 495

California Oaks Foundation, "Care of California's Native Oaks" in *Bulletin of the California Oak Foundation* (Oakland, 2016)

Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011

Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:00 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 2:58 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers and CA Department of Water Resources public comment recipients,

I am submitting the following documents to make them part of the project record.

FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th

Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors, 8 Cal. 3d 247

HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, "Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4," (2019)

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:39 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Parkway Devistation on the American River

From: Jhilleg102 <jhilleg102@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Parkway Devistation on the American River

Corp. of Engineers,

1 | Survey, evaluate and assess the damage this Project has caused between the Guy West and Howe Ave. bridges.

The lower release gates from Folsom Lake greatly reduce the chance of flooding.

2 | I urge you to pause and consider alternative and less destructive and less costly designs.

I lived adjacent to the levy witness the American rise to within three feet of cresting the levy. 1n 1986. This event make me fully value of flood control. I am a former employee of the Corp in Washington D.C..

Respectfully,

JON A. HILLEGEIST

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:34 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Oppose Devastation Along American River Parkway the wild in Scenic Jewel of Sacramento
Attachments: 20240221_162011.jpg; 20240219_111107.jpg

From: Naomi Ennis <stopparkwaydevastation@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:57 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Oppose Devastation Along American River Parkway the wild in Scenic Jewel of Sacramento

Hello,

I agree with the attached documentation provided by Dr. Michelle Stevens & Joshua Thomas.

1 I have attached several photos that show the erosion that has happened within the last 2 months in the project work area that was completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. This erosion was not happening before the project work the project work was supposed to make the riverbank stronger and less prone to erosion but the opposite has happened.

2 In addition, I am writing to ask that you and Sacramento County officials persuade the US Army Corp of Engineers to perform a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway for bank erosion protection. The USACE claim that this protection is needed is based on minimal, overgeneralized data. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as

likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the brute force bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are needed for flood safety.

This new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I object to the extreme destruction of trees (including potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion spot fixes are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

As you know, the American River is often called the Crown Jewel of Sacramento. Please do not let our jewel be stolen from us!

We need your support as you coordinate with Sacramento Regional Parks regarding the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway and make a determination of inconsistency with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Thank you.
Naomi Ennis

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:42 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Christie Vallance <christiev44@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:59 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

1 Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients: My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is very important to me and as a wildlife corridor.

Concern:

2 I recently noticed in your International Guidelines on Nature and Nature Based Features for Flood Risk Management under your Engineering with Nature Program, that for your projects there was a focus on gathering community support with “early and frequent engagement with stakeholders and affected communities.” (p 23). Can you explain the methods you used to conduct early and frequent engagement with our community? Can you share the notifications materials beyond the postcard received in December of 2023 with select neighbors

that helped reach out to the community? Can you also share the neighborhoods identified that received these postcards and can you confirm whether the RiverBlu or Apex apartment residents received notification of your work, and if not, the reason? Can you share if any postings were placed publicly along the river to help inform the public?

Respectfully,

Christie Vallance

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:40 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns with discrepancies on velocity models impacting PProject 3b for USACE work on American river

From: Alicia Eastvold <aliciaeastvold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:58 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns with discrepancies on velocity models impacting PProject 3b for USACE work on American river

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients & Related Agencies:

1 As a concerned citizen, I wanted to understand Project 3b for the lower American River. From the USACE reports and presentations I learned that the measures are built off the premise that there is significant erosion occurring at the riverbanks for this area. I went to study this further with your [USACE's ARCF GRR Appendix C on Erosion Protection Analysis](#) which makes up the premise of the USACE's design for Project 3b. When I reviewed the images of hydraulic models on Pg 41, and 42, they appear to show a very different data than other models. I noticed that the Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report of 2017's velocity contours shows very different data (image attached). Can you explain why these show such significantly different data for velocity along the riverbank? Can you explain how your project plan is informed by this information?

See below images for comparison.

Thank you,

Alicia Eastvold

Larchmont Resident

Image from USACE's GRR Report:

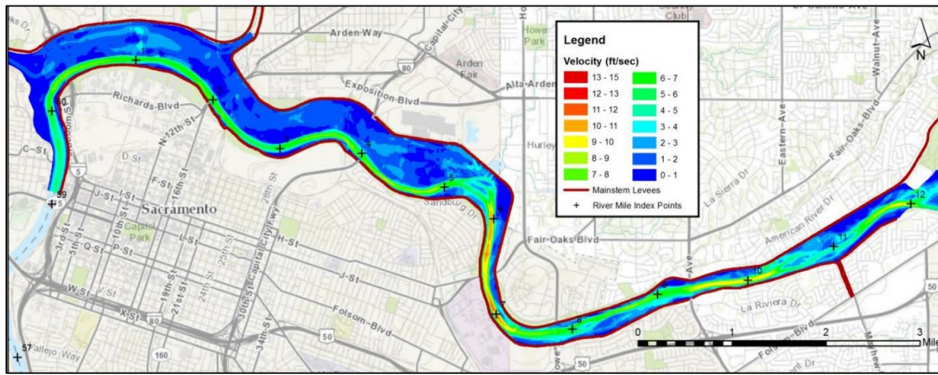
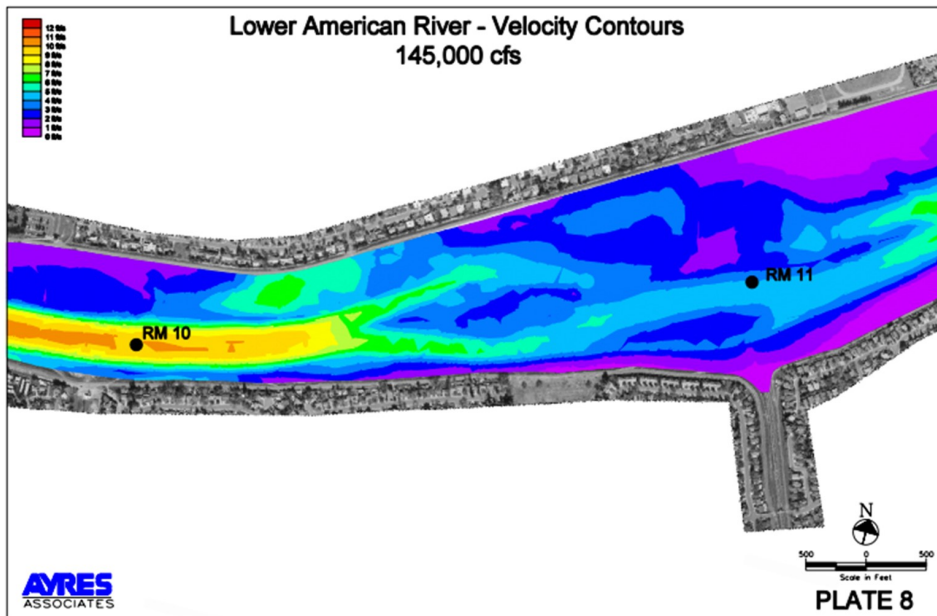


Figure 4-4. Two-dimensional velocities for a discharge of 115,000 cfs in the Lower American River

significantly different velocities at river.

Alternate study that shows



From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:29 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment on American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft SEIS-SEIR - December 2023
Attachments: Wildlife at Kassis_022124docx (1).pdf; ARCF DSEIS BRECA comments F (1).pdf; M-24-03-Advancing-Climate-Resilience-through-Climate-Smart-Infrastructure-Investments Budget Office of the White House.pdf; 164986 Dry Creek Enhancement.pdf

From: Brenda Gustin <bkgustin@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:49 PM
To: Central Valley Flood Protection Board <Questions@cvflood.ca.gov>; Jane Dolan <Jane.dolan@cvflood.ca.gov>; Michael.Wright@cvflood.ca.gov; Greg.Harvey@cvflood.ca.gov; Andrea.Buckley@cvflood.ca.gov; Kathryn.Baines@cvflood.ca.gov; Amber.Woertink@cvflood.ca.gov
Cc: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comment on American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft SEIS-SEIR - December 2023

Thank you for your work.

I am here to comment as a Volunteer of Preserve the American River regarding the American River Common Features Project.

As our local, non-Federal Agency who will review this project, we implore you to help the residents of this city understand and work with you and the Army Corp by:

1. Taking the time to review the copious number of public comments and reports submitted thus far.
2. Re-open the Public Comment Period.
3. Hold an on-site meeting to discuss this proposal with attendance by the professionals who will implement this project to answer questions.
4. Hold a workshop after the on-site meeting.
5. Hold a Public Hearing for testimony to be recorded on the Public Record.

This proposal by the US Army Corp of Engineers (Corp) now covers 73 acres of riparian tree canopy and appears to project the destruction of significant aspects of the ecological diversity living along and in the river which is irreplaceable. The American River Wildlife Corridor extends 23 miles along this Federal and State Designated Wild and Scenic River covering 5,000 acres.

Mitigation measures have not been fully established to satisfy the needs this project will produce.

Documentation such as the recent study by Biologist, K. Shawn Smallwood of the Kassis property upstream and the American River (see attached) provides detailed information on the need to protect and preserve this

unique habitat. In fact, the Kassis property is the Central Valley Flood Protection Board's Designated Floodway and can be utilized to mitigate loss of habitat and support higher flows in the river. This might help the Corp implement their Engineering with Nature Program and disburse high flows into the floodway.

3 Please slow this project down. Expediency doesn't make for a better project.

4 While it is imperative to protect our city from future flood incidents, our evaluation of the project proposal reveals excessive measures are planned to address potential streambank erosion. Documentation presented does not provide adequate justification for these highly destructive actions as "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River. The public has not been sufficiently informed nor acknowledged as a well-informed local source of information and expertise acquired over decades of observation. The Corp stated in your last workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". To date, that has been us asking questions without specific answers.

Our desire is to help the Army Corp accomplish their goal to "Communicate.....as soon as possible." We are committed to collaborating and are proving our abilities through reports, emails and public comments being submitted daily.

As our local, non-Federal Lead Agency, please facilitate a partnership with the Corp and us. Please require the Corp to provide a clear proposal with specific information to evaluate whether more suitable efforts are appropriate. Right now, it is not even clear which trees will be removed or will stay. This basic information needs to be provided.

5 Please work with the Bank Protection Group, USACE and the public on a collaborative level to succeed with a sustainable, safe habitat utilizing nature-based solutions and "Engineering with Nature".

We know this can be done well and invite you to visit the [American River Trees](#) website to see the research, information and better ways to accomplish protection for our citizens from erosion by working with nature-based solutions preserving the natural baseline of our Wild and Scenic River. There are substantial socio-ecological benefits the American River provides to our ecosystem, its wildlife, the habitat and citizens who depend upon its present health and wellness. This website is ever-green and continues to be enhanced so please visit often. Bring us in to work alongside you.

6 A great example of this type of collaboration done with USACE with more narrowly tailored measures is the [Dry Creek Project in Healdsburg, California](#). The unique environment of the American River deserves this type of focused and professional attention.

7 Let's do it right now! Our City, your agency, USACE and the citizens have the ability, expertise and knowledge. There is no reason to repeat similar mistakes as were made in 1936 with the LA River. Having to step in decades later to correct known errors in judgment is not the legacy we wish to pass on to future generations. We can employ our talents to create a successful project aligned with the [Wild and Scenic Rivers Act](#) and the [Biden-Harris administration's "Nature Based Solutions Roadmap"](#) directing all of its agencies to implement nature-based solutions with each of its projects. The White House [November 2023 Memorandum](#) "emphasizes that nature-based solutions should not be an afterthought in the climate fight, but rather a starting point for building resilience, to ensure communities benefit from investments for decades to come." (see attached)

Included with this Public Comment are a few letters and reports that have been submitted thus far. Mr. Josh Thomas' Public Comment for your February 23, 2024 Board Meeting shows major erosion happening on USACE revetment projects near Sac State because of the ordinary high-water mark and ordinary February 2024 rains.

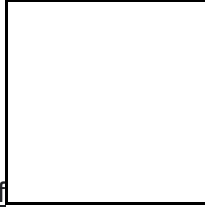
8 Please do take the time to review these and respond to our request to hold an onsite public meeting, a Workshop, and public hearing so that you will make an informed decision to deny the SEIS/SEIR and work on your project with USACE to revise these contracts utilizing their [Engineering with Nature Program](#) and live up to its byline: "the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to efficiently and sustainably deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits through collaboration."

Sincerely,

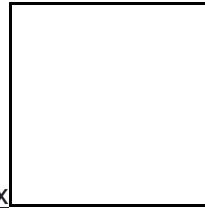
Brenda Gustin

Volunteer and Concerned Native & Citizen of Sacramento

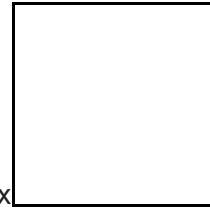
CVFPB 2-9-24 Meeting by Sergio Diaz.pdf



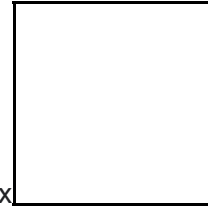
Feb 9 2024 CVFPB Public Comment by Peter Spaulding.docx



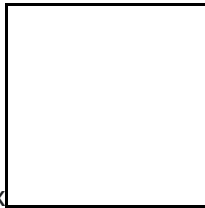
February 23, 2024 CVFPB Public Comment by Joshua Thomas.docx



Josh Thomas' Public Comment to CVFPB Workshop 2.9.2024.docx



USACE and DWR Comment by Josh.docx



From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:53 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Naomi Ennis <stopparkwaydevastation@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:05 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of

hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal,

overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior

contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the

most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these

locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

There must be a better US Army Corp of Engineers plan for American River 3B project

Laura Petty <laura@laurapettylaw.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 5:00 PM

To: RichDesmond@saccounty.gov <RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>

Cc: PatHume@saccounty.gov <PatHume@saccounty.gov>; Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>; Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

You don't often get email from laura@laurapettylaw.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Supervisor Desmond and Supervisor Hume, and Mr. Knapp and Mr. Lief,

I am writing to ask that you and other Sacramento County officials persuade the US Army Corp of Engineers to find a LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

The US Army Corps of Engineers Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. As I understand it, the Corp of Engineers plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway for "bank erosion protection". They apparently claim this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data". I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River.

Further, I believe the proposal to leave bare dirt banks for 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Corps of Engineers proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

I object to the extreme destruction of trees (including potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and all future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Please do not let our "jewel" be stolen from us!

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to you in your role as county supervisors, as well as members of the SAFCA Board. I do not support the claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions

that require the Corps of Engineers to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Thank you.

Laura M. Petty

she/her/hers

Certified Criminal Law Specialist

State Bar of Cal. Board of Legal Specialization

This message is confidential and intended only for the person to whom it was addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, do not copy, distribute, or take any action related to this message. If you received this in error, please notify Laura Petty by email or by calling 805-242-2286.

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Patricia Prendergast <pprender22@yahoo.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 4:11 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

You don't often get email from pprender22@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for “bank erosion protection” on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to “Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible”. It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for “bank erosion protection”. The USACE claim that this protection is “needed” is based on minimal, overgeneralized “data”, and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the

river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you,
Patricia Prendergast

Central Valley Flood Protection Board Friday February 23, 2004 Agenda Item # 6

Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 8:26 AM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

You don't often get email from joshjhthomas@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear President Dolan and Board Members,

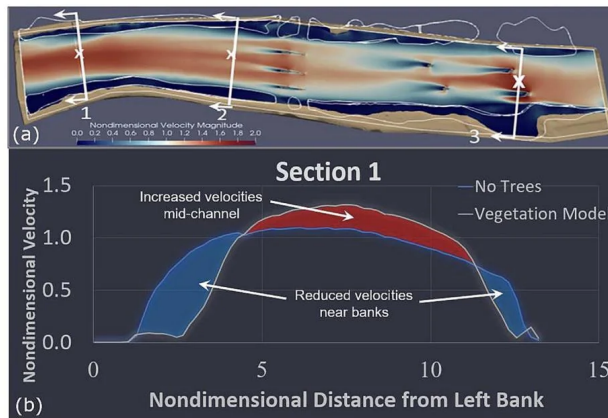
Thank you for taking my comment and for all the great work you do keeping the Sacramento Region safe from flooding. My name is Joshua Thomas. I am a Ph.D. candidate at UC Davis who just finished a dissertation on the history of flood control in the Sacramento Valley.

1 I want to address the Army Corps of Engineers false dichotomy between public safety and preservation. The Corps likes to claim that to keep Sacramento safe from flooding, they must decimate habitats along the Lower American River to install launchable riprap. Yesterday, William Polk of the Army Corps of Engineers told NBC News that they were moving forward with their flood control plans as fast possible even though they have yet to receive most of the public comments, some of which come from Professional Engineers and members of the Bank Protection Working Group, who are asking for a pause and redesign. This stated intent to move forward as fast as possible before even looking at the public comments violates both the letter and spirit of the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, which state that the comment period is meant to help the public work with lead agencies to develop plans that are less environmentally destructive. The Army Corps of Engineers seems intent on treating the public review process as a cursory exercise.

2 The Army Corps of Engineers in their comments to the public have stated that they ruled out less destructive alternatives to riprap because river velocities are too high. They base this claim off of 2-d hydraulic modeling. Recent Caltrans commissioned research looked at areas of the Lower American River with dense strands of mature trees. Their 3-d hydraulic modeling showed that with dense strands of mature trees, velocities along the banks were much slower than what 2-d hydraulic models show. At much slower velocities, the Army Corps of Engineers could consider less destructive measures, including using smaller cobble or adding different types of vegetation. Removing trees to install riprap may make us less safe, because river velocities will dramatically increase across the banks, exposing them to greater risk of erosion for years to come, which is already coming to fruition on their recently completed projects near Sac State. To ascertain less destructive methods for protecting our precious Lower American River, I am asking that the Central Valley Flood Protection Board hold a public workshop on Contract 3B and 4B of the December 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR, pause Contract 3B in the meantime, initiate an independent peer review of the project, and reinstate the bank protection working group.

Sincerely,
Joshua Thomas

FIGURE 7 Cross-sections were compared along three locations of the American River (a). At Section 1-1, the vegetation model significantly damped out flows along both banks (blue regions) and increased velocities in the centre of the channel (red region) compared to LES without trees (b).



From

Kevin Flora and Ali Khosronejad. 2023. "Uncertainty Quantification of Bank Vegetation Impacts on the Flood Flow Field in the American River California Using Large-Eddy Simulations." *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/esp.5745>: 7.

Also from the academic team which worked with Caltrans to come up with high-fidelity hydrodynamic modeling along the Lower American River.

Incorporating vegetation into high-fidelity computational models is imperative for obtaining accurate modeling results. In this study, when trees were accounted for in large-eddy simulations, a drastic effect on redistributing the high-velocity flow away from the banks and increasing its magnitude near the center of the American River was observed.

-Kevin Flora, Christian Santoni, and Ali Khosronejad. 2021. "Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River Under Flood Conditions." *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering*: 05021006-12. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)HY.1943-7900.0001912](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)HY.1943-7900.0001912).

Here are pictures of major erosion that is happening on USACE revetment projects near Sac State because of the ordinary high water mark and ordinary February 2024 rains.





In the picture below, you can see that where there are trees, there is no erosion.



Notably, academic research has shown that mature trees very effectively armor riparian banks against erosion, even more so than grass. You can see in the first picture there is no erosion around where USACE spared the tree. Rood et al (2014) recommended that "riparian forests should be conserved to provide bank stability and to maintain and equilibrium of river and floodplain dynamics."

-S.B. Rood, S.G. Bigelow, M.L. Polzin, K.M. Gill, and C.A. Coburn. (2015). "Biological bank protection: trees are more effective than grasses at resisting erosion from major river floods." *Ecohydrol*, 8: 772–779.

Doi: [10.1002/eco.1544](https://doi.org/10.1002/eco.1544).

INDIV-741

Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Lori Ward <fosllori64@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 12:08 AM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from fosllori64@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for "bank erosion protection". The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data", and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

In peace,
Lori Ward

Sent from my iPhone

TIME SENSITIVE: Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

LESLIE WATTS <leslie.watts@prodigy.net>

Fri 2/23/2024 2:20 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>;Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>
Cc:ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>;DWR Public Comment ARCF 16
<PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>;richdesmond@saccounty.gov <richdesmond@saccounty.gov>;
Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov <Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov>;Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov
<Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>;Bellase@saccounty.net <Bellase@saccounty.net>

You don't often get email from leslie.watts@prodigy.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate the dedication of your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Avenue.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

I respectfully request that your Board:

Conduct workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period beyond Feb. 23, 2024, to ensure the above occurs;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The USACE presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible." It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

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As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave. to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for "bank erosion protection." The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data", and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. My neighborhood community strongly questions whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. While we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I

strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles -- almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then **less destructive alternative methods** should be used, such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the USACE is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the USACE to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location as one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento.” Sacramento’s “jewel’ deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Leslie A. Watts

INDIV-743

Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Harry Weller <hwastrel@sbcglobal.net>

Fri 2/23/2024 12:32 AM

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>

Cc: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov <SorgenKC@saccounty.gov>; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov <Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>; Kelvin.Lum@mail.house.gov <Kelvin.Lum@mail.house.gov>; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov <Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov>; BellasE@saccounty.net <BellasE@saccounty.net>; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov <RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>; Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>; Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov <SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov>; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov <SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov>; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov <Barbara_Rice@nps.gov>; hbwillia44@gmail.com <hbwillia44@gmail.com>; PatHume@saccounty.gov <PatHume@saccounty.gov>

You don't often get email from hwastrel@sbcglobal.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

My respectful greetings to US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR).

1

I add my voice to the many concerned Sacramento area residents who treasure the American River Parkway and the related trails along the north and south banks. Erosion control projects in the area, particularly east of Watt Ave., are described in the "2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR)", specifically Contracts 3B, and 4B.

2

The riparian forest ecosystem in this area has withstood severe floods for decades. There are historic oaks which are thrived for over a century, which is strong evidence that this section of the river is not subject to serious erosion. It is not clear why the SEIS/SEIR analysis does not use "modern, advanced modeling for peak 160,000 cubic feet per second flow [which] predicts that **water velocities are low at the levees**" in the lower American River (for example, on the south bank of the river in the general area of Larchmont Park). (quote from "List of Key Concerns", <https://www.americanrivertrees.org/official-comments-to-usace>).

The map of the area affected by Contract 3B shows that the riparian forest on the south bank of the American River will be devastated, through a combination of actual re-engineering of the river bank ("Construction Buffer"), and enormous related disruption of the woodlands simply to get the large construction equipment to the river ("Construction Access"). (Document: American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, California, Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV Figure 3.5.2-9. American River Erosion Contract 3B South Site 4-1 Details) (link to document: https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/WRD_A16/Documents/SEIS-SEIR/ARCF_Draft-SEIS-SEIR_Dec2023.pdf).

You are no doubt already familiar with the many other very persuasive objections raised by the American River Trees organization and associated groups.

3

The assumptions that the SEIS/SEIR is based on need to be reviewed much more thoroughly, not just by parties whose entire purpose is to design and perform large engineering projects, but by parties

who are instead focused on what the cost/benefit ratio would be, and whether these projects are even necessary in the first place.

4 Specific sites in the areas covered by these contracts may benefit from modest erosion remediation engineering, but it is not clear from the SEIS/SEIR that this much more limited, specifically targeted analysis was ever done.

No further work should be planned for these contracts until the numerous objections are considered, and the merits of much smaller, much more reasonable amount of erosion control work are analyzed.

Regards,

Harry Weller, Sacramento resident, **VOTER**, and daily enthusiastic user of the American River Parkway

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Pamela Hatton <pamelahattonito@icloud.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 1:25 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

You don't often get email from pamelahattonito@icloud.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

And, yes, this is a “form letter,” but, as indicated by my modifications, I have read it. ***AND I AGREE WITH THE ISSUES IT ADDRESSES.***

Thank you,

Pamela Hatton

American River USACE Contracts 3B, 4A, 4B

Lisa Howard <lisad_howard@yahoo.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 1:30 PM

To:ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil <arcf_seis@usace.army.mil>;DWR Public Comment ARCF 16

<PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>

Cc:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>;Bellase@saccounty.net <Bellase@saccounty.net>

You don't often get email from lisad_howard@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

1 I am writing today to share my concerns about planned work on the lower American River, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I have serious concerns with the proposed project.

2 Trees are an important stabilizing agent along rivers. Their root systems can bind together soil and strengthen the riverbank. Yet the USACE is proposing the elimination of more than 500 trees, including heritage oaks, to create an artificial riprap.

This would leave the banks bare for two years of construction and put us at more risk of erosion and flooding. Historically, levee failures are more associated with areas where riparian forests have been thinned or clear-cut.

2 Clear-cutting mature trees will also destroy wildlife habitat and remove carbon-sequestering trees at a time when we should be protecting mature trees that are already sequestering carbon and helping to keep our air clear. It would take decades for new growth to provide the benefits already being provided by the trees along the American River.

Clear-cutting would:

- 3
- pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon;
 - disrupt the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations, many of which have already seen drastic declines in number over the past few decades;
 - destroy the shade from large canopies, which could affect the survival rate of various species of salmonids;
 - disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning, and feeding activities

4 In addition, the American River is designated as a Wild and Scenic destination, and an artificial shoreline would detract from the natural beauty that earned the river that designation.

I encourage you to:

- evaluate alternative methods that are more targeted and less destructive to habitat and wildlife.
- consider "spot fixes," small equipment, and maintenance.
- support the use of stabilizing vegetation, aligning with the National Park Service's recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration and your efforts to ensure the American River remains a healthy and beautiful part of Sacramento.

Sincerely,
Lisa Howard
Rocklin, CA

To Whom it May Concern,

1 I am writing this comment to critique's USACE's inadequate environmental analysis in the 2023 Draft ARC SEIS/SEIR and to implore USACE to consider less destructive, alternative erosion control measures that are better justified by more up-to-date modeling and more complete data. The risk to our Wild and Scenic River, to endangered species, to precious resources of the American River Parkway, and to the safety of Sacramento Region are too great for USACE not to reconsider their current proposed measures for American River Erosion Contract 3B in the 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR.

2 Neither the General Reevaluation Report nor the 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR seriously considered measures that might have limited habitat destruction on the Lower American River. The "no-action alternative" in the 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR is simply the proposal of the 2016 GRR, which includes "bank protection" (i.e. riprap armoring) and launchable rock trenches.¹ The 2023 preferred alternative is basically the 2016 preferred alternative with the addition of launchable rock toes and tiebacks.² Launchable rock toes are functionally the same as launchable rock trenches except they are placed at rivers edge instead of higher up the bank.³ Tiebacks are riprap laid perpendicular instead of parallel to the river.⁴ No biotechnical or bioengineering alternatives were explored. The "choice" USACE offers the public is between riprap and more riprap. This choice, according to a USACE presentation to the Lower American River Task Force in December of 2023, will remove at least 685 trees between Howe Ave and Larchmont Community Park.⁵

3 USACE's choice to give the public essentially no alternative besides riprap makes a mockery of the review process. CEQ calls the alternatives section "the heart of the EIS."⁶ This section, according to CEQ, is supposed to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives.⁷ CEQA requires that an EIR provide a range of alternatives to a project that "will feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project."⁸ Note that these alternatives do not have to attain all of the objectives of a project, but there must be a choice so as to "foster informed decision making and public participation."⁹ While CEQA does allow the lead agency to limit the range of alternatives to "ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project," it is clear the law intends that the public and decision makers should have an actual range of choices.¹⁰ Such intent was articulated by the Third District of

¹ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, 3-48.

² 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-11, 3-25, and 3-26.

³ Ibid, 3-29.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lower American River Task Force, December 12, 2023. <https://waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/LARTF-Dec-2023-Slides.pdf>

⁶ Council on Environmental Quality, "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations," (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ CEQA, 15126.6(a).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Appeal in *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou*. In this case, the Court ruled that making project objectives so narrow “as to preclude any alternative other than the Project” violated CEQA.¹¹ In particular, the Court scolded the County for ensuring that “the results of its alternatives analysis would be a foregone conclusion.”¹² In making the alternatives a foregone conclusion, the County “transformed the EIR’s alternatives section—often described as part of the ‘core of the EIR’—into an empty formality.”¹³ By limiting the public’s choice to nothing but riprap and more riprap for Contract 3B, USACE’s has turned the public review process for the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR into an empty formality.

4 The alternatives of riprap or more riprap not only mocks the review process, it likely runs afoul of both the National and State Wild and Scenic River Acts. These facts require preserving protected rivers “in free flowing condition.”¹⁴ The national WSRA defines free flowing as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, **riprapping**, or other modification of the waterway.”¹⁵ The WSRA allows for the existence of riprap on the waterway at the time of a river’s inclusion, but clarifies that “this shall not be construed to authorize, intend, or encourage future construction of such structures within components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.”¹⁶ The California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act only makes an explicit exception for the Eel River, declaring that “nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any measures for flood protection, structural or nonstructural, necessary for the protection of lives and property along the Eel River.”¹⁷ The fact that the California WSRA explicitly makes an exception for the Eel River indicates that the CWSRA was meant to prohibit the construction of new flood control measures, structural or non-structural, including riprapping, on all the other rivers included in the CWSRA system.

5 USACE claims that river velocities ruled out less destructive alternatives, but that position is not justified by the technical documents they cite. USACE explained in a letter to Rene Hamlin in the 2016 Final EIS/EIR Public Involvement Appendix of the 2016 Final EIS/EIR that

the proposed bank protection and launchable rock trench measures are the only two possible measures that could address the significant erosion problem on the American River. Other measures were eliminated from consideration because the river velocities render them infeasible. More information on the erosion problem on the American River can be found in the Erosion Protection Appendix to the GRR (GRR Appendix C, Attachment E).¹⁸

¹¹ *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou* (April 20, 2022) 78.Cal.App.5th 683.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 1(b). California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.50.

¹⁵ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 15(b).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.57.

¹⁸ ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement.

The document USACE advised Rene Hamlin to read, the Erosion Protection Report, casts doubt on USACE's one size fits all approach. The experts consulted in the Erosion Protection Report understood that for USACE to properly prioritize work, they would need "systematic and justifiable criteria for site stabilization."¹⁹ For that to be achieved, USACE would need to analyze more borings due to a "high degree of variability in the bed materials."²⁰ USACE's experts recommended analyzing more borings "to assure continuity of various layers," and they warned USACE that "interpretations made of connecting the dots between borings could be erroneous."²¹ Analyzing core borings could avoid needless devastation by accounting for "the horizontal and vertical location of the scour resistant clay" for project designs..²² **Instead of following their expert panel recommendations to analyze borings from erosion resistant places along the American River Parkway, USACE instead resorts to overgeneralized data to justify a one-size-fits-all approach to erosion protection.** USACE relied on 2 borehole samples to estimate erosion risk on the Lower American River, none upstream of Howe Avenue Bridge where USACE proposes to bulldoze 522 trees as part of American River Erosion Contract 3B South.²³ The use of a borehole sample near Howe Avenue Bridge to justify work two miles upstream is especially egregious because the Erosion Protection Report indicates that the banks upstream of Howe Avenue consist of fundamentally different bed materials than the banks downstream of Howe Avenue. According to the Erosion Protection Report, the area between river mile 6.6-7.5 contains "broader areas of scour where the formation is likely more widely exposed in the channel bed or lies concealed beneath a thin cover of active channel only a few feet thick."²⁴ This unit "contains no bank resistance to lateral erosion and will not contribute to levee stability."²⁵ This is, in other words, an area with highly erodible bed materials. Thus, installing launchable rock toes or trenches at this location may be justifiable. However, the area upstream of Howe Avenue, especially the area near the entrance of SARA Park where the Corps proposes to install a launchable rock trench and launchable rock toe, contains significant amounts of erosion-resistant clay hardpan, which the technical documents refer to as the "Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation."²⁶ The only modeling results USACE provides for the area containing Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation, between RM 7 and RM 11, indicate that "for all the flows simulated the sheer stress in the reach with locally exposed hard material is below the critical stress for erosion of moderately resistant material

¹⁹ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 15.

²⁰ Ibid, 17.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 15.

²³ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, p. 18.

²⁴ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 32.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25, 38. American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 12, 31, 32.

(clay and cemented sand with silt).” **Therefore, significant scour below this erosion resistant material/surface is not anticipated.”**²⁷

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Proposing destructive launchable rock riprap for Contract 3B after failing to follow their expert recommendations is inconsistent with the laws which aim to protect the environment in general and the Lower American River in particular. The American Parkway Plan requires designing erosion projects “to minimize damage to riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat.”²⁸ “Minimizing damage” would also entail avoiding unnecessary work. Without carefully accounting for the erosion resistant areas of the LAR, USACE is proposing unnecessary erosion measures and therefore failing to minimize damage to the environment. CEQA makes it “a duty for public agencies to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible.”²⁹ According to the California Supreme Court, CEQA was intended to be interpreted in such a manner as to afford the fullest possible protection to the environment within the reasonable scope of the statutory language.³⁰ It is not unreasonable for a lead agency to carefully determine where they can avoid environmentally destructive measures, especially when such determinations can be made by well-established methods recommended by that agency’s own consulted experts. Likewise, according to CEQ, NEPA “was enacted to promote efforts that will prevent or eliminate damage to the human environment.”³¹ Thus, the failure to follow through with the recommendations within its own technical reports is inconsistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, which also requires agencies to undertake new scientific or technical research when it “is essential to a reasoned choice among alternatives.”³² How could USACE make a “reasoned choice among alternatives,” including an alternative of taking no action, when it has ignored the recommendations within its own technical reports to analyze more boring samples from the LAR? Boring samples help evaluate the durability of riverbank segments. Clearly distinguishing between problem spots and durable spots would enable USACE to devise more targeted approaches for erosion work and avoid mass deforestation and devegetation caused by long stretches of launchable rock trenches and launchable rock toes.

8

To determine risk of levee failure for each segment of the LAR, USACE contracted with HDR Ford Engineers, who elicited expert opinions to estimate probabilities of levee failure.³³ The expert opinions do not support USACE’s one-size-fits all launchable rock measures. USACE incorporates by reference the “Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4” technical memo but not the more expansive document from which the memo is based, “Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4.”³⁴ This is a regrettable

²⁷ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 24.

²⁸ *Sacramento County American River Parkway Plan 2008*, Section 4.16, p. 85.

²⁹ CEQA, 15021(a).

³⁰ *Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors*, 8 Cal. 3d 247.

³¹ Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011.

³² National Environmental Policy Act, Sec. 106(b)(3)(B).

³³ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, “Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4 Tier Classification,” Technical Memo - Nov. 13, 2019.

³⁴ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 10-1.

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decision considering the latter document contains the full range of expert opinions for tier classification, including what they see as favorable conditions. By contrast, the technical memo only pulls opinions on the adverse conditions for tier 1 segments. For the highest risk tier 1 segments, the technical memo almost completely excludes expert views on favorable conditions. Not including the document with the full range of expert opinions on both adverse and favorable conditions creates the illusion that there is consensus for USACE's singular measure of launchable rock where none exists. Experts might have agreed on risk rating, although even this proposition is dubious. For left bank rm 9.8-10, one expert wrote "yikes" while another indicated he was a no-vote on intervention.³⁵ Likewise, despite its tier 1 classification risk, one expert noted that left bank rm 10.4-10.5 segment had a history of good performance.³⁶ CEQA does not require "technical perfection in an EIR, but rather adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure."³⁷ CEQA also acknowledges that "disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate."³⁸ However, it does require that the EIR "summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts."³⁹ **Neglecting to cite "Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment," as well as neglecting to summarize the substantial points of disagreement, is a disservice to the public and to policy makers, who have not been given sufficient information to determine the adequacy of USACE's very limited proposals which do not include biotechnical and bioengineering alternatives.**

9

Experts notably lacked consensus about USACE's overly broad assertion that the banks all along the LAR are subject to high river velocities. Experts noted low velocities for several areas where USACE has proposed launchable rock features. For left bank river mile 9.8-10.0, where USACE proposes a launchable rock toe, one expert stated that water velocities were too low on levee at 160kcfs to cause serious damage.⁴⁰ For left bank rm 10.0-10.3, where USACE proposes two launchable rock toes and a launchable rock trench, two of the experts cited low velocities on levee and upper bank, with one stating that "water velocities low on levee face at 160k cfs."⁴¹ For river mile 10.4-10.5, an expert stated that water velocities were low on the levee at 160kcfs.⁴²

Such observations are consistent with the velocity contour maps in the General Reevaluation Report.⁴³ These maps show that at 160kcfs, velocities along the banks of the LAR can range anywhere from 0-1ft/sec to 16ft/sec.

³⁵ Ibid, E38.

³⁶ Ibid, E48.

³⁷ CEQA, 15003.

³⁸ CEQA, 15151.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, E-38.

⁴¹ Ibid, E-46.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, 2-21.

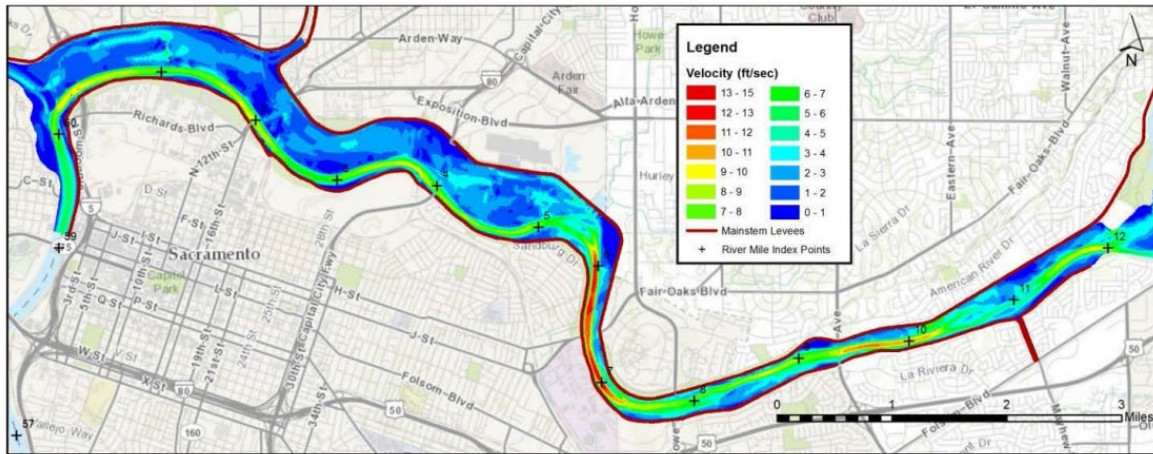


Figure 2-8: Velocities in the Lower American River at a discharge of 160,000 cfs

Between left bank river miles 10 and 11, which comprises most of Contract 3B South, estimated velocities along the banks during a 200 year, 160k cfs event range from 0-1 ft/sec to 6-7 ft/sec. At these velocities, there are many types of lining materials for erosion protection USACE could have considered, at least according to table 4-4 of the Erosion Protection Report. The permissible velocity for 6 inch gravel/cobble is 4-7.5 ft/sec, 6-8 ft/sec for class A turf vegetation, and some types of soil bioengineering can withstand up to 19 ft/sec.⁴⁴ Launchable rock riprap, in short, was most certainly not the only option USACE could have deployed. For left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, the consultants who put together the Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report recommended “cobble with vegetation or other biotechnical measures such as brush mattress, willow waddles or brush boxes (all supplemented with plantings).”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 43.

⁴⁵ MBK Engineers, “2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report,” (April 2018), 12.

Table 4-4. Permissible shear and velocity for selected lining materials (Fischenich 2001)

Permissible Shear and Velocity for Selected Lining Materials ¹				
Boundary Category	Boundary Type	Permissible Shear Stress (lb/sq ft)	Permissible Velocity (ft/sec)	Citation(s)
<u>Soils</u>	Fine colloidal sand	0.02 - 0.03	1.5	A
	Sandy loam (noncolloidal)	0.03 - 0.04	1.75	A
	Alluvial silt (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	2	A
	Silty loam (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	1.75 - 2.25	A
	Firm loam	0.075	2.5	A
	Fine gravels	0.075	2.5	A
	Stiff clay	0.26	3 - 4.5	A, F
	Alluvial silt (colloidal)	0.26	3.75	A
	Graded loam to cobbles	0.38	3.75	A
	Graded silts to cobbles	0.43	4	A
	Shales and hardpan	0.67	6	A
	1-in.	0.33	2.5 - 5	A
<u>Gravel/Cobble</u>	2-in.	0.67	3 - 6	A
	6-in.	2.0	4 - 7.5	A
	12-in.	4.0	5.5 - 12	A
<u>Vegetation</u>	Class A turf	3.7	6 - 8	E, N
	Class B turf	2.1	4 - 7	E, N
	Class C turf	1.0	3.5	E, N
	Long native grasses	1.2 - 1.7	4 - 6	G, H, L, N
	Short native and bunch grass	0.7 - 0.95	3 - 4	G, H, L, N
	Reed plantings	0.1-0.6	N/A	E, N
	Hardwood tree plantings	0.41-2.5	N/A	E, N
<u>Temporary Degradable RECPs</u>	Jute net	0.45	1 - 2.5	E, H, M
	Straw with net	1.5 - 1.65	1 - 3	E, H, M
	Coconut fiber with net	2.25	3 - 4	E, M
	Fiberglass roving	2.00	2.5 - 7	E, H, M
<u>Non-Degradable RECPs</u>	Unvegetated	3.00	5 - 7	E, G, M
	Partially established	4.0-6.0	7.5 - 15	E, G, M
	Fully vegetated	8.00	8 - 21	F, L, M
<u>Riprap</u>	6 - in. d_{50}	2.5	5 - 10	H
	9 - in. d_{50}	3.8	7 - 11	H
	12 - in. d_{50}	5.1	10 - 13	H
	18 - in. d_{50}	7.6	12 - 16	H
	24 - in. d_{50}	10.1	14 - 18	E
<u>Soil Bioengineering</u>	Wattles	0.2 - 1.0	3	C, I, J, N
	Reed fascine	0.6-1.25	5	E
	Coir roll	3 - 5	8	E, M, N
	Vegetated coir mat	4 - 8	9.5	E, M, N
	Live brush mattress (initial)	0.4 - 4.1	4	B, E, I
	Live brush mattress (grown)	3.90-8.2	12	B, C, E, I, N
	Brush layering (initial/grown)	0.4 - 6.25	12	E, I, N
	Live fascine	1.25-3.10	6 - 8	C, E, I, J
	Live willow stakes	2.10-3.10	3 - 10	E, N, O
<u>Hard Surfacing</u>	Gabions	10	14 - 19	D
	Concrete	12.5	>18	H

¹ Ranges of values generally reflect multiple sources of data or different testing conditions.

A. Chang, H.H. (1988).	F. Julien, P.Y. (1995).	K. Sprague, C.J. (1999).
B. Florineth. (1982)	G. Kouwen, N.; Li, R. M.; and Simons, D.B., (1980).	L. Temple, D.M. (1980).
C. Gerstgraser, C. (1998).	H. Norman, J. N. (1975).	M. TXDOT (1999)
D. Goff, K. (1999).	I. Schiechl, H. M. and R. Stern. (1996).	N. Data from Author (2001)
E. Gray, D.H., and Sotir, R.B. (1996).	J. Schoklitsch, A. (1937).	O. USACE (1997).

ERDC TN-EMRRP SR-29

10 Considering that experts cited low velocities at 160kcfs between river miles 9.8 and 10.5 on the left bank of the LAR, and with confirmation from the GRR's velocity contour maps, USACE could have explored biotechnical alternatives. For left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, one expert observed that a favorable condition was "dense veg/root mats" that cover much of the bank, as well as a fully grass levee and a dense shrub mass at the top of the bank that attenuates

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velocity and wind wave.⁴⁶ Yet another expert highlighted “good past performance” and “vegetation on berm” as a favorable condition for this segment.⁴⁷ Some experts expressed concern over encroachment, sill degradation, and bed lowering.⁴⁸ But given that velocities in this area are low and vegetation protects the bank, USACE could have explored alternatives that aim to increase sediment recruitment in these segments. One example of this being done in a “high energy river environment” was on the Middle Green River in Washington, where, instead of hard armoring, King County built a bioengineered bank stabilization project by using logs at the river’s toe secured to the bank with coir fabric, soil wraps, and vegetation, adding roughness and recruiting sediment. One of the project designers emphasized that “this type of technique is what I would advocate even in a high energy environment.”⁴⁹ USACE could also explore techniques that preserve, enhance, and augment on-site vegetation instead of completing removing all vegetation. For left bank river miles 9.8-10, 10.0-10.3, and 10.4-10.5, experts noted the presence of vegetation as a favorable condition. However, they also warned that if erosion took bank vegetation, the risk of levee failure could increase.⁵⁰ Since experts recognized the importance of vegetation for levee stability, bioengineering methods should be feasible for many of the areas where USACE now proposes launchable rock features.

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Much is at risk if USACE neglects to explore bioengineering alternatives, including public safety. **Research going back nearly a century indicates that riparian forests play a vital role in bank stability and flood control.** Over 95 years ago an engineer observed that during the catastrophic flood of 1927, levees only seemed to fail where trees had been removed:

It was interesting to inspect various sections of the big flood. Wherever a heavy stand of native willows or other forest trees were growing in the burrow pit and on the land between the river the erosion from wave action and current was very slight and on miles of levee where tree growth existed no injury was caused whatsoever. **On the contrary, where land was cleared and there were no obstructions to break the waves, injury and destruction were evident along the entire distance.**⁵¹

Likewise, studies of the catastrophic 1993 Missouri Flood found that where riparian forest was less than 300 feet wide, levee failure was 74-88% more likely.⁵² Trees also play a special role in

⁴⁶ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, Memorandum: Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4,” (July 25, 2019), E48.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*, 11-12.

⁵⁰ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, Memorandum: Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4,” (July 25, 2019), E46.

⁵¹ O.S. Scheifele, 1928. “Protection of River Banks and Levees.” *The Canadian Engineer*: 123.

⁵² J.P. Dwyer and D.R. Larsen, 1997. “Value of Woody River Corridors in Levee Protection Along the Missouri River in 1993.” *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230348698_Value_of_Woody_River_Corridors_in_Levee_Protection_Along_the_Missouri_River_in_1993. Stephen B. Allen, John P. Dwyer, Douglas C. Wallace, and Elizabeth A. Cook, 2023. “Missouri River Flood of 1993: Role of Woody Corridor Width in Levee Protection.” *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1752-1688.2003.tb04416.x>

armoring banks from erosion. According to Rood et al (2014) mature riparian trees are highly effective at preventing erosion, even superior to grass, and they recommend that “riparian forests should be conserved to provide bank stability and to maintain an equilibrium of river and floodplain dynamics.”⁵³ Besides armoring banks, trees make armor less necessary by redirecting the energy of rivers from the banks towards the center of the channel. Such phenomenon was observed almost a century ago. As a 1920s engineer remarked, “experience has shown that where a clump of trees were allowed to spring up on the river face of levees eddies were caused and erosion started down stream from trees.”⁵⁴ More recent modeling has confirmed old observations. When Johannes DeVries applied vegetation models specifically for the dimensions of the Sacramento River, looking at areas with and without vegetation on levees, he found that reducing vegetation or dense vegetation next to levees generally increased the velocity of water, and therefore, the potential for scour.⁵⁵ More pertinently, an academic team working with the California Department of Transportation incorporated vegetation into a high-fidelity model to account for trees in large-eddy simulations of the Lower American River. Their modeling found that trees had “a significant impact on the computed flow field by diverting the high-velocity core of the flood away from the banks toward the center of the channel.”⁵⁶ Results showed that “velocities in the center of the river increased by approximately 50%” and “were nearly damped out entirely along the banks.”⁵⁷ For the case without vegetation, the flow was “distributed throughout the full river width, with high velocities near the banks.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Rood, S. B., Bigelow, S. G., Polzin, M. L., Gill, K. M., and Coburn, C. A. (2015). Biological bank protection: trees are more effective than grasses at resisting erosion from major river floods. *Ecohydrol.*, 8: 772–779. Doi: [10.1002/eco.1544](https://doi.org/10.1002/eco.1544).

⁵⁴ O.S. Scheifele, 1928. “Protection of River Banks and Levees.” *The Canadian Engineer*: 122.

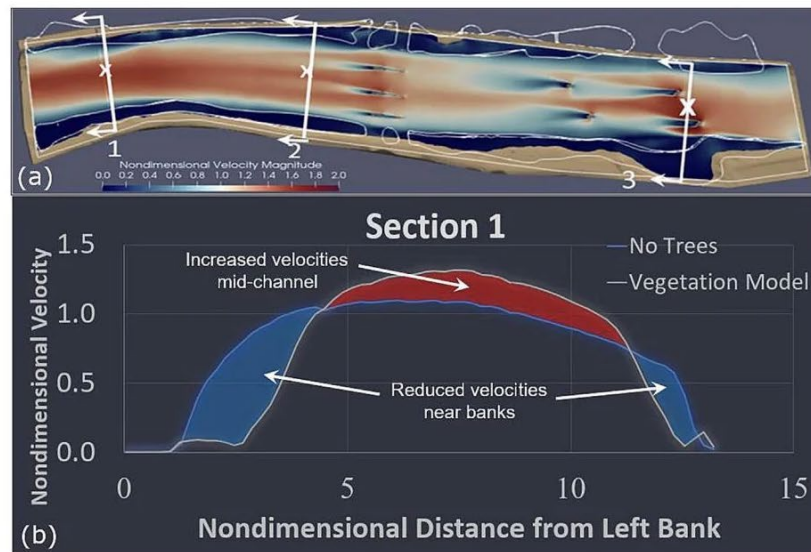
⁵⁵ Johannes DeVries, Vegetation Effects on River Hydraulics, Floodway Conveyance & Velocity Response, SACRAMENTO AREA FLOOD CONTROL AGENCY (Aug. 28, 2007).

⁵⁶ Kevin Flora, Christian Santoni, and Ali Khosronejad. 2021. “Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River Under Flood Conditions.” *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering*: 05021006-8. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)HY.1943-7900.0001912](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)HY.1943-7900.0001912).

⁵⁷ Ibid, 05021006-12.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 05021006-8.

FIGURE 7 Cross-sections were compared along three locations of the American River (a). At Section 1-1, the vegetation model significantly damped out flows along both banks (blue regions) and increased velocities in the centre of the channel (red region) compared to LES without trees (b).



Anecdotally, residents have provided pictures of the 2017 80k cfs high waters, where waters along the banks of river mile 10.4-10.5 were so stagnant that dogs could wade in them.



By contrast, USACE is limiting their proposals based on the 2-D hydraulic model developed in the 2004 Ayres Report, “Lower American River —Erosion Susceptibility Analysis for Infrequent Flood Events.”⁵⁹ This 2-D hydraulic model almost certainly overestimates velocities along banks with large vegetation. As the academic team which worked with Caltrans observed,

Incorporating vegetation into high-fidelity computational models is imperative for obtaining accurate modeling results. In this study, when trees were accounted for in large-eddy simulations, a drastic effect on redistributing the high-velocity away flow away from the banks and increasing its magnitude near the center of the American River was observed.⁶⁰

Removing 685 trees along the lower american river risks making erosion much worse for years to come by allow river flows to crash against the banks during high water events. **Therefore, USACE risks making us less safe with mass tree removal in the Contract 3B area.**

Even though USACE obtained approval for the 2016 Record of Decision, they still should have explored a full range of alternative measures in the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR. CEQ urges agencies to carefully reexamine EIS’s when a proposal has not been implemented within five years of the Record of Decision in order to take into account new “information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.”⁶¹ As already outlined, **in the 7.5 years since the Chief of Engineers issued his 2016 ROD, new Caltrans commissioned research has shown that river velocities along the banks of the Lower American River are significantly lower where there is mature vegetation than what had been previously indicated by the older model USACE relies upon. Considering that USACE ruled out alternative measures because of high river velocities, it is critical for them to now consider this more recent research.** Furthermore, the requirement to identify the least environmentally destructive approach applies whenever a public review process is initiated. As CEQ makes clear, the purpose of the review process is for the public and other agencies to assist the lead agency in developing and determining environmentally preferable alternatives.⁶² If an alternative is identified in public comments that is not unreasonable, CEQ requires lead agencies to issue a new SEIS to explore that alternative.⁶³ Finally, USACE assured citizens concerned about their overly broad, one-size-fits all proposals in the 2016 EIS/EIR that before initiating work on individual contracts and project segments, they would explore a fuller range of alternatives. As USACE wrote to Matthew Carr, after analyzing individual segments of the LAR, “if some sort of bank protection is determined to be necessary, other options to reduce impacts,

⁵⁹ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Appendix, 47.

⁶⁰ Kevin Flora, Christian Santoni, and Ali Khosronejad. 2021. “Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River Under Flood Conditions.” *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering*: 05021006-12. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)HY.1943-7900.0001912](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)HY.1943-7900.0001912).

⁶¹ Council on Environmental Quality, “Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations,” (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

including bioengineering measures, will be analyzed.”⁶⁴ Not only did USACE break its promise to analyze bioengineering measures in supplemental EIS/EIR’s, but when the EPA suggested in the 2022 Public Scoping comments that USACE offer bioengineering alternatives in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR, USACE dismissively responded that it had already explored alternatives measures in the 2016 GRR.⁶⁵ USACE should heed the EPA’s suggestions. If USACE installs launchable rock toes and trenches where alternatives measures were feasible, it not only risks public safety, but it could also irreparably damage precious resources of the American River Parkway.

One of the endangered precious resources of the American River Parkway is heritage oak trees. CEQA states that “knowledge of the regional setting is critical to the assessment of environmental impacts.”⁶⁶ Thus, **“special emphasis should be placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to that region and would be affected by the project.”**⁶⁷ **Heritage Oaks constitutes such a rare and special resource for Sacramento County, so much so that their protection is enshrined in law.** The Sacramento County Code defines a “heritage tree” as a “California oak tree growing on any land in Sacramento County, including privately owned land, with a trunk sixty inches or greater in girth measured four and one-half feet above the ground.”⁶⁸ The Sacramento County Tree Ordinance declares that “in order to promote the health, safety, and enhance the beauty and general welfare of Sacramento County,” it shall be the policy of the County “to provide for the special protection of heritage and landmark trees within the unincorporated area of the County.”⁶⁹ Contract 3B South is contained entirely within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. The 2023 ARCF SEIS/SEIR lists the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance as one of the state and local plans which govern activities within this project area.⁷⁰ There is no other mention of the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR, even though USACE’s proposal to remove hundreds of trees in the Contract 3B Area is inconsistent with the goals and purpose of Sacramento County’s tree code. **Considering that some of the heritage trees in the area of Contract 3B South are over 250 years old, their removal would constitute an essentially “unmitigable” impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway.**

Given that the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance affords special protection to heritage trees within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County, dozens of which are found in the Contract 3B South area, one would expect the SEIS/SEIR to address potential impacts that pertain specifically within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. There is no distinction in this SEIS/SEIR made between the impacts on heritage trees in unincorporated Sacramento County and in the city of Sacramento, which does not provide for the same level of protection to heritage trees. The environmental impacts of Contract 3B North, which is located in Sacramento

⁶⁴ Letter to Matthew Carr from Josephine R. Axt, May 24, 2016, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement. P. 1.

⁶⁵ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendix A. Nepa Scoping Materials, Appendix D. Response to Comment Number 15-1.

⁶⁶ CEQA, 15124(c).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Sacramento County, California County Code, Chapter 19.04.030.

⁶⁹ Ibid, Chapter 19.04.010.

⁷⁰ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 1-7.

City, and Contract 3B South, which is located in unincorporated Sacramento County, are treated together. This is an inadequate level of environmental analysis that fails to account for how different areas within the project study protect and regard their environmental resources.

The actual discussion of what proportion of heritage trees will be impacted in this project is also incomplete. In the entire SEIS/SEIR, heritage trees are only mentioned on 9 pages.⁷¹ On some of those pages those mentions are only incidental. As for Contract 3B South specifically, where heritage trees enjoy special protection, the heritage oaks are mentioned on two pages. The first mention, on page 3-5, is that one alternative was dismissed as “it would have required removal of heritage oaks.”⁷² The second mention is on page 3.1-23, where it states that “a buffer of heritage oaks would be kept in place near both Oak Meadow Park and Larchmont Park, so the viewshed of trees from those parks would be not be affected.”⁷³ The language of the first mention of heritage oaks for the Contract 3B South area implies USACE has designed the project to avoid removing any heritage oaks. But the language of the second mention implies USACE is only keeping heritage oaks in select areas, such as in front of parks, in order to preserve their “viewshed.” If USACE was not removing heritage oaks in other areas of the project footprint, why would USACE mention keeping a buffer of heritage oaks near Larchmont Park?

In general, the SEIS/SEIR is incredibly vague, inadequate, and incomplete in communicating to the public the impacts they could expect to heritage trees, which constitute an important visual resource in these project areas. The SEIS/SEIR mentions selecting designs to “minimize impacts to heritage oaks” or to “reduce impacts to heritage oaks” or making refinements that would “substantially reduce or avoid several of the significant impacts” to “riparian vegetation, and loss of heritage oaks.”⁷⁴ But does this language of reduction, minimization, and avoidance really convey anything coherent to concerned citizens? Would the end result match anything of their expectations based on USACE’s language? Let’s use American River Contract 2 to explore the consistency between USACE’s language and what the public might expect. In the SEIS/SEIR for American River Contract 2, USACE stated it would “minimize the removal of existing riparian vegetation” and that “impacts to forested wetlands will be minimized to the greatest extent feasible.”⁷⁵ The following picture shows some of the work USACE did on American River Contract 2. The picture was taken from the Guy West Bridge facing the right bank looking left.

⁷¹ Ibid, 3-4, 3-5, 3-42, 3-107, 4-144, 3. 1-3, 3.1-23, 3.1-25, 4.1-40.

⁷² Ibid, 3-5.

⁷³ Ibid, 3.1-23.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 3-5, 3-107.

⁷⁵ American River Contract 2 Final SEIS/SEIR - September 2021, 3-97, 5-7.



Based on the little information USACE provides to the public, I cannot determine whether or not USACE could have saved at least one tree in this project section. What I can say is that if

somebody told me they were going to minimize forest tree removal, and in the end no trees remained, I would feel like I had been bamboozled. USACE's language may or may not be technically accurate, but it conveys nothing of the actual impacts. **If no trees will remain in a segment, USACE should state that. If only a few trees will remain in a section after construction, USACE should state that.** Likewise, if most of the trees will remain, USACE should state that. But "minimizing vegetation loss" tells the public nothing about how much forest will actually be lost and how much the visual resources of the Parkway will actually be impacted.

USACE should consider that, in the words of the California Supreme Court, an "EIR is intended to demonstrate to an apprehensive citizenry that the agency has in fact analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action."⁷⁶ USACE's vague and contradictory language as regards heritage trees does not demonstrate more than a perfunctory consideration of the ecological implications of its measures for heritage trees, especially considering concerns about riparian removal were raised for the 2016 EIS/EIR. In a letter dated February 22, 2016, a concerned citizen lamented that it would not be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of USACE's mitigation for cutting down forest "without knowing what sections of forest will be cut and what sections will be replaced on the same site versus replaced nearby versus replaced on a distant site. In short, the Corps is saying, 'trust us to do the right thing.'"⁷⁷ With so little detail on heritage oaks, USACE is still asking the public to trust it to do the right thing.

USACE certainly could give the public a more clear indication in the SEIR/SEIS of how many trees they will remove, and what type of trees they will remove, and which segments of the LAR will suffer the most tree removal. At the December 12, 2023 public presentation for the Lower American River Task Force, USACE told the public that at 65% design 719 trees were going to be removed and at 95% designs that number was 522.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ People ex rel. Department of Public Works v. Bosio, 47 Cal. App. 3d 495.

⁷⁷ Letter from Matthew Carr, Graham Brownstein, et al, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement.

⁷⁸ Lower American River Task Force, December 12, 2023. <https://waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/LARTF-Dec-2023-Slides.pdf>.



LAR C3B SOUTH, SITE 4-1 HABITAT IMPACT FOOTPRINT CHANGES

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Site 4-1	VELB		YBCU (Riparian)			NMFS (Salmonid)			Tree
Species	Impact (acres)	Mitigation Offsite (3:1)	Impact (acres)	Mitigation Onsite (acres)	Mitigation Offsite (2:1)	Impact (acres)	Mitigation Onsite (acres)	Additional Mitigation Needed (2:1)	Number of Trees Removed
35% Designs	13.58	40.74	6.48	14.13	(1.17)	7.55	3.1	12	Not calculated
65% Designs	7.29	21.87	5.61	11.2	0	9.96	4.3	15.17	719
95%* Designs	6.44	19.32	3.97	15.31	7.94	8.21	TBD	TBD	522

*Impacts for the 95% designs were calculated using construction limits and tree demo footprints from the PDT review design set in September 2023. These impact calculations do not reflect the most up to date designs.

USACE could not provide this information to the public unless they knew either exactly every tree they were going to cut down, or at least mapped out all the areas in the project footprint and estimated the relative density of trees in each segment. Notably, however, this information was not provided in the actual Draft SEIS/SEIR. USACE could either provide the public with a tree inventory map, or a map which indicates through a color-coded intensity key what minimum proportion of trees could be expected to be removed in each segment. No such map exists in the SEIS/SEIR, although USACE was able to provide a tree inventory map upon request in September of 2023 that marked every tree in the contract 3b area along with their size.



USACE does provide a chart showing the total number of riparian forest/scrub removed, but USACE gives no indication of what proportion of heritage oaks they will cut down, where they will cut down these heritage oaks, and the makeup of the 685 trees they are planning to cut down.⁷⁹ To reiterate, the loss of heritage oaks, some of which are older than this country, is essentially unmitigable.

Table 4.1-2: Existing Habitats and Land Cover Types (acres)

Item	American River Erosion Contract 3B and 4B	American River Erosion Contract 4A	ARMS	Sacramento River Erosion Contract 3	SRMS	MCP
Vernal Pools	-	-	-	-	-	0.22
Riparian Forest/Scrub	51.32	65.23	14.53	5.04	46.37	-
Oak Woodland	-	-	-	-	45.0	2.60
Rural Herbaceous/ Grassland	71.18	99.51	44.9	1.31	2.80	37.43
Wetlands	-	18.95	2.5	-	47.34	2.4
Riverine/Open Water	12.07	4.02	55.4	20.7	-	-
Agricultural	-	-	-	-	7.67	13.02
TOTAL	134.57	187.71	99.74	27.05	149.18	55.67

AR C3B – Riparian Forest/Scrub composed of Native and Nonnative scrub and woodland. LAR C4A – Riparian Forest/Scrub composed of Native and nonnative scrub and woodland. ARMS - Riparian Forest/Scrub and Oak Woodland is composed of Native and nonnative scrub and woodland. SRE C3 – Riparian Forest/Scrub is composed of Fremont cottonwood forest, sandbar willow thicket, and valley oak woodland. SRMS – Riparian Forest/Scrub is composed of Hardwood Woodland and Scrub. Totals are Estimates.

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USACE also provides a low-quality image of the various habitats in the project footprint, but fails to distinguish with any detail the different habitats and much tree loss each segment will suffer.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR Appendices, 4.1-13.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 4.1-2.

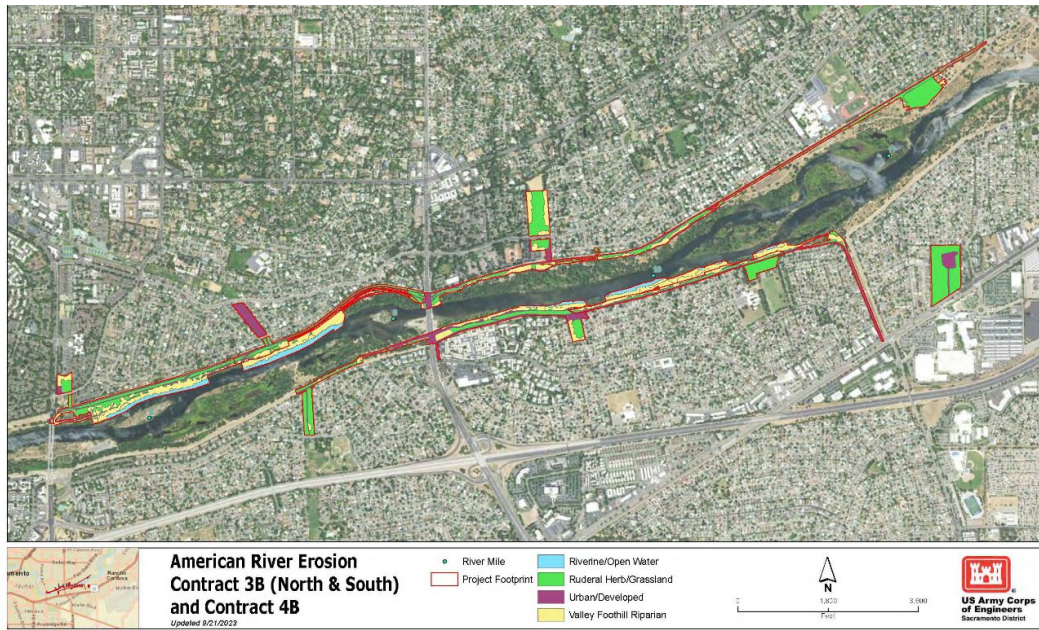


Figure 4.1-1. American River Erosion Contract 3B and 4B Land Cover Types

ARCF Comprehensive SEIR/SEIR Appendix B 4.1-2 Vegetation and Wildlife

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In addition to the low-quality image of the various habitats in the project footprint, USACE provides a vague and confusing map of “project impacts.”⁸¹ The project impacts maps identifies three kinds of areas within the project footprint: construction access, construction buffer, and staging. What each of these terms precisely mean is left up to the public to interpret. Contrary to standard practice, USACE does not define these terms in the SEIS/SEIR. An apprehensive citizen could reasonably surmise that construction access refers to where construction equipment will be moving and construction buffer to the areas where construction will actually occur. Yet consider the project impact for Contract 3B.

⁸¹ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-30.

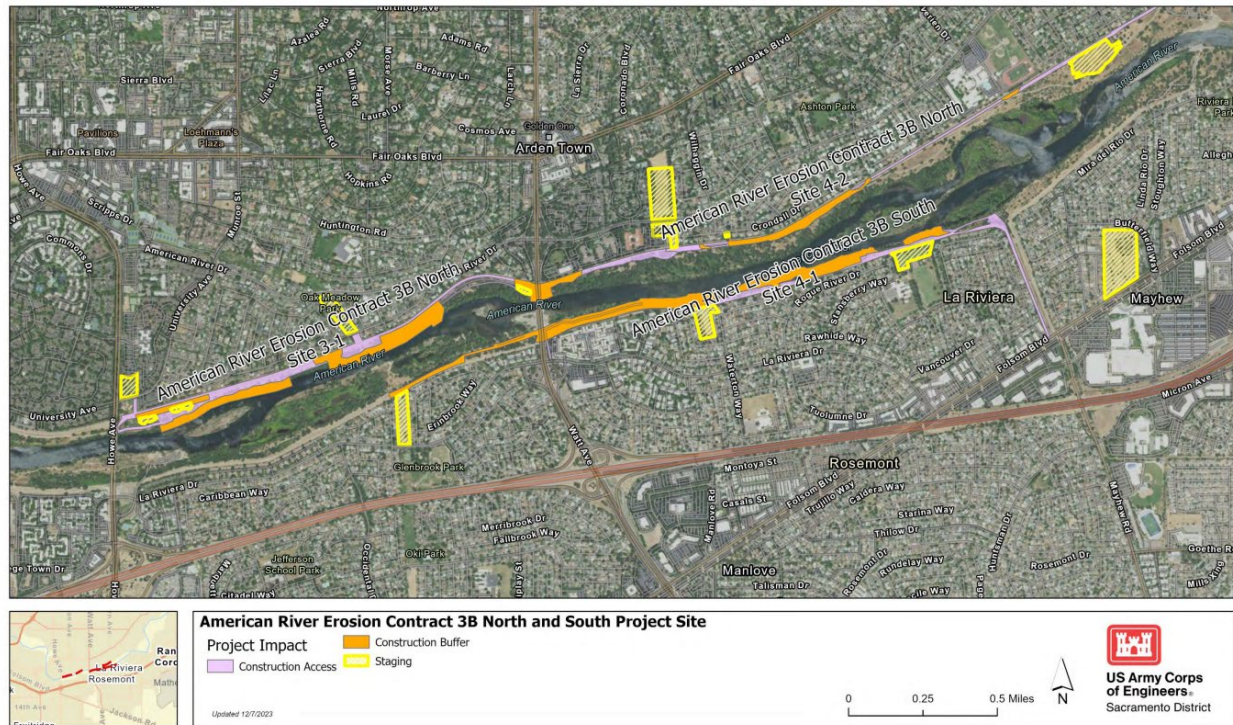
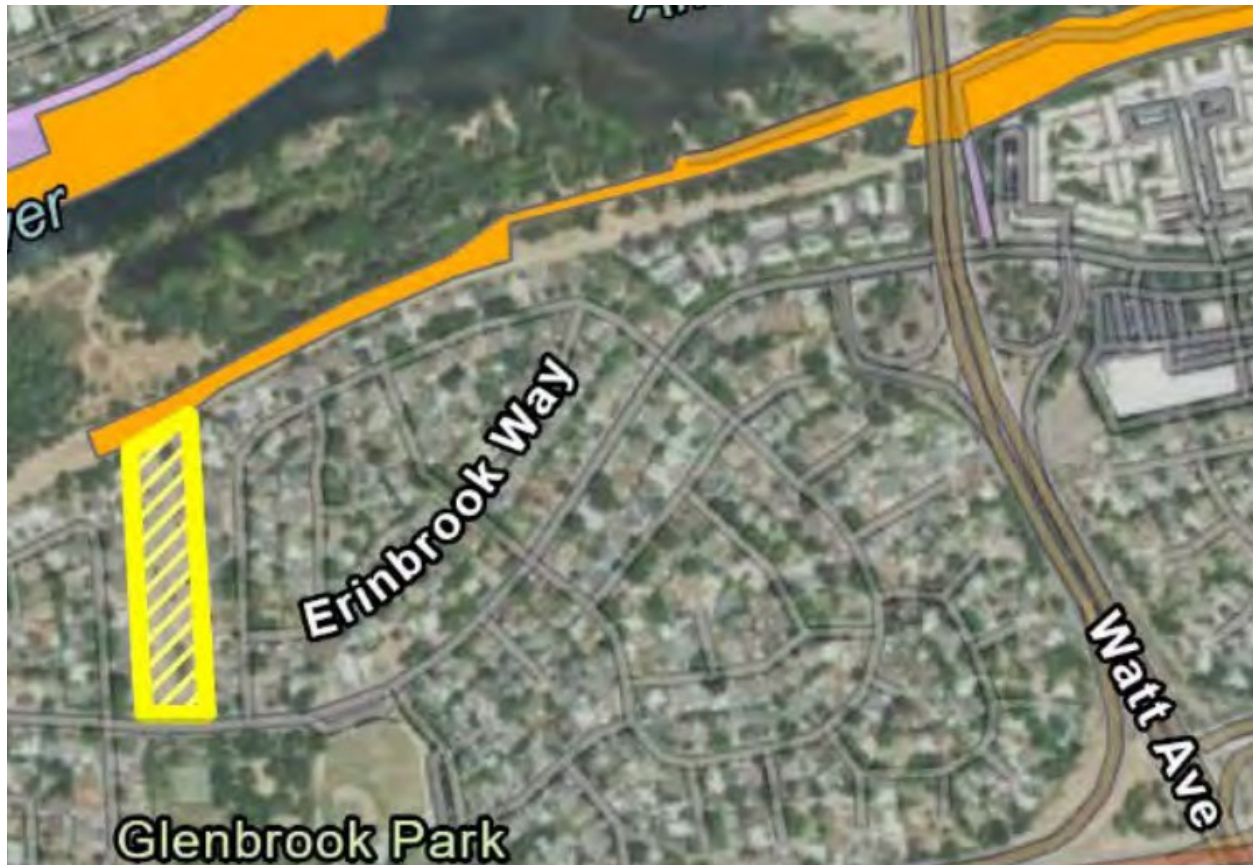


Figure 3.5.2-3. American River Erosion Contract 3B Project Footprint

On the south bank (contract 3b south) all the bank protection and launchable rock measures are proposed for the area between Larchmont Community Park and the Watt Bridge. However, there are staging areas to the west of the project area at Glenbrook Park Access and to the east of the Project area at a private parcel. The area between Larchmont Community Park and the Mayhew Canal is colored purple, indicating “construction access.” This makes sense. Though no construction is scheduled between Larchmont Park and the Mayhew Canal, trucks may have to use the canal and the levee leading to Larchmont Park to transport materials to and from the staging area along Folsom Blvd.



As with the area between Larchmont Park and Mayhew Canal, the area between Watt Bridge and Glenbrook River Access is not slated for erosion protection measures, but trucks will need to use this area to transport materials in and out of the project area. Unlike the area between Larchmont Park and Mayhew Canal, the area between Watt and Glenbrook River Access is colored orange, indicating it is a “construction buffer” zone.

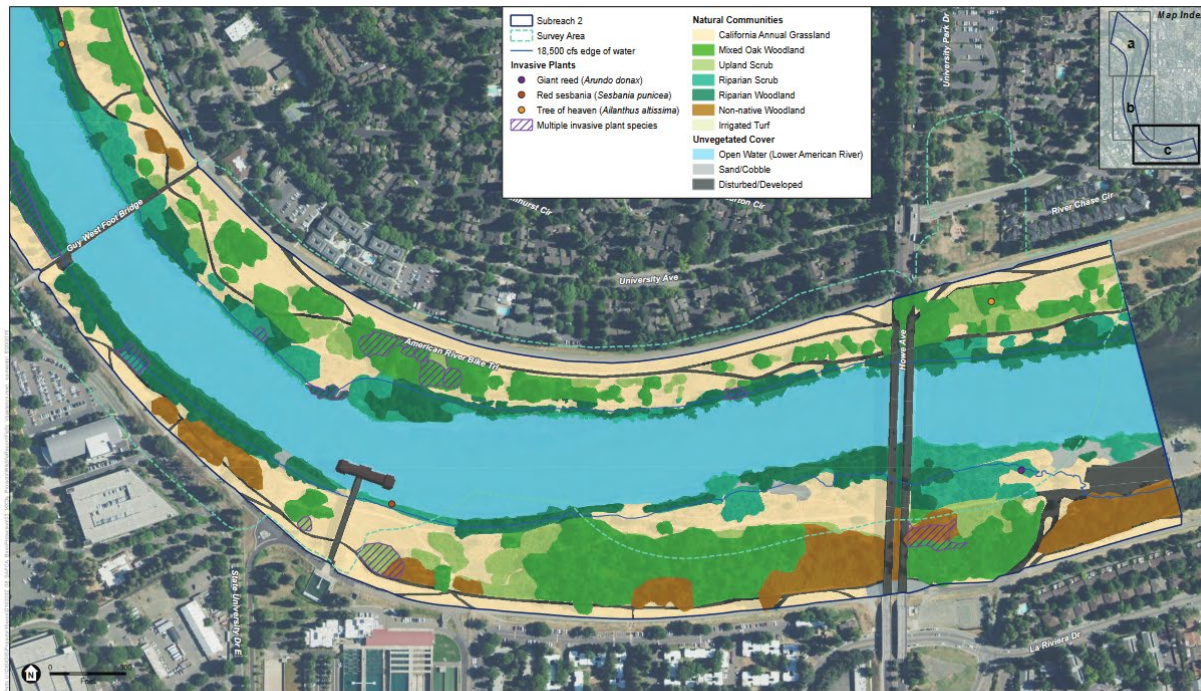


What is an apprehensive citizen supposed to make of these differences? Why is the non-project area between Watt and Glenbrook River Access labeled a construction buffer zone while the non-project area between the Mayhew Drain and Larchmont Park is labeled a construction access zone? Does this mean that either people living in Glenbrook or people living near Larchmont will lack walkable access to the river for two years? There is no effort on USACE’s part to clearly communicate what this graphs and what implications it will have for residents near the Contract 3B South footprint.

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The practice of providing very low-detail, zoomed out maps of the entire project area notably contrasts with the habitat maps USACE provided for previous Draft SEIS/SEIR’s, such as American River Contract 2, which provided not only section by section habitat maps, but identified 13 types of habitat, compared to only 4 for the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR. Furthermore, the habitat maps for in American River Contract 2 SEIS/SEIR Appendices identified various types of woodland, including oak woodland, which the map for the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR does

not do.⁸² At the very least, USACE is capable of marking out the areas of the Contract 3B segments which have oak trees.



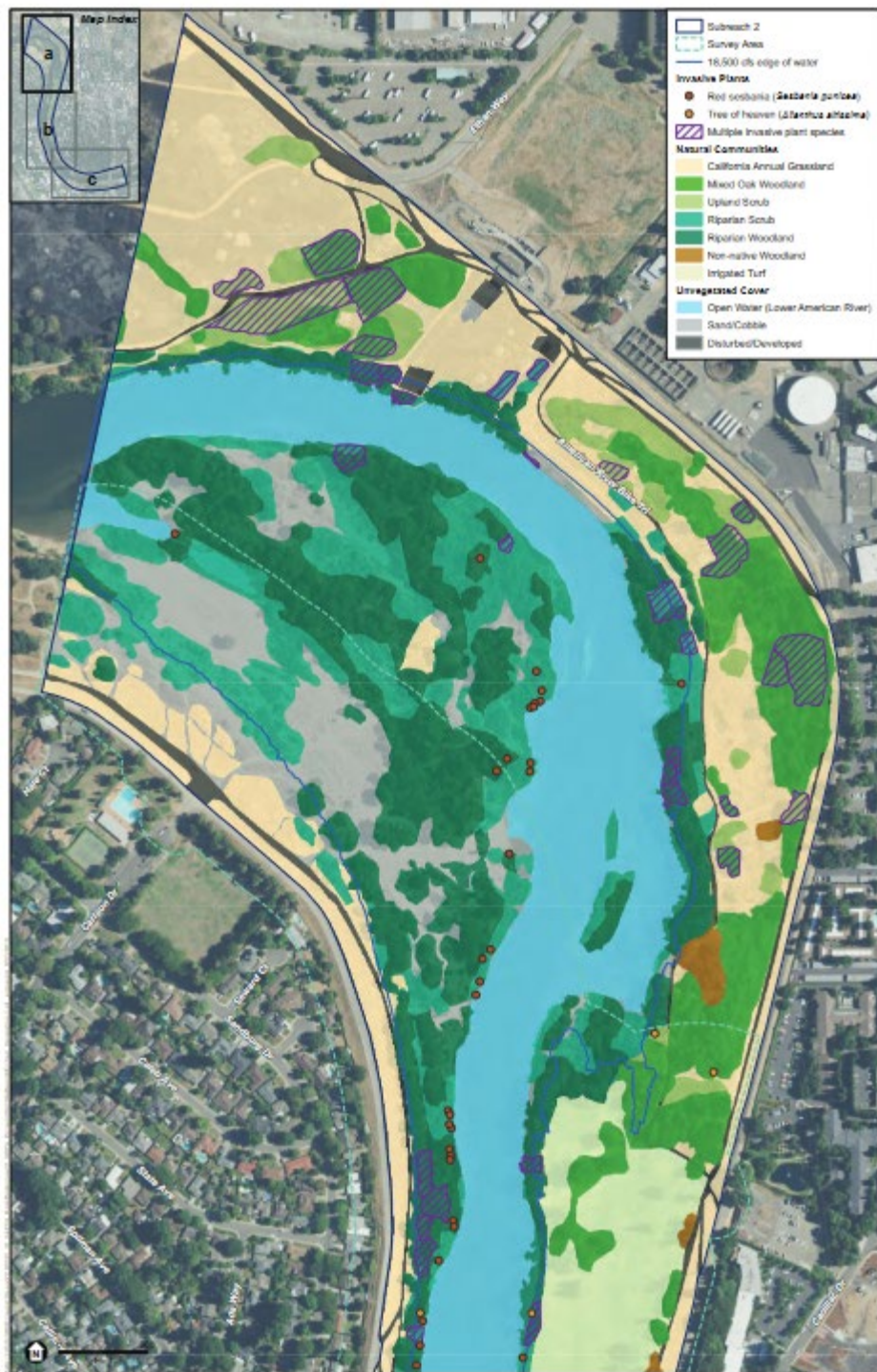
SOURCE: NHC, 2016; ESA, 2019

American River Common Features 2016 Project American River Contract 1

ESA

Figure 3c
Natural Communities of the
Lower American River Subreach 2

⁸² American River Contract 2 Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendix B. Wildlife Habitat Survey Reports for Subreaches 1, 2, 3, and 4, Including Arden Pond and for Rossmoor East and West, Figure 3A, Figure 3B, Figure 3c.

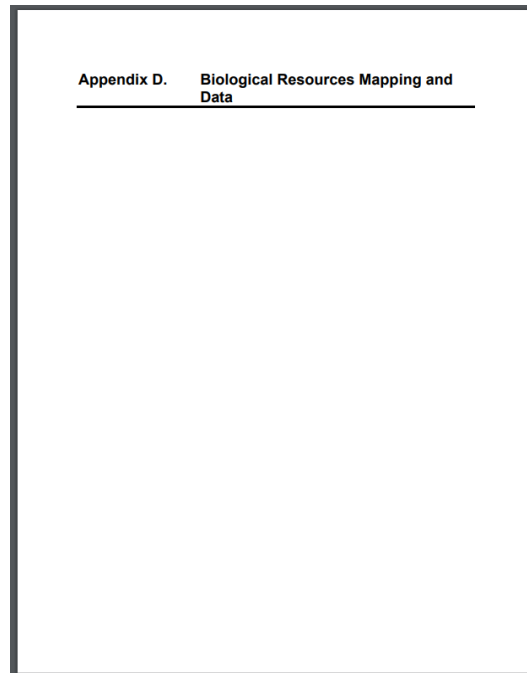


SOURCE: NHD, 2016; ESA, 2016

American River Common Feature 2016 Project American River Contract 1

Figure 3a
Natural Communities of the
Lower American River Subreach 2

Here is the visual USACE has for biological resources mapping and data in Appendix D of the 2023 SEIS/SEIR.⁸³



USACE's claim that the loss of forest land is less than significant long-term with mitigation, which allows vegetation to "grow back and provide a natural visual character again," is unjustified.⁸⁴ **If heritage trees are part of the vegetation lost, then the visual character of the area will never be the same.** Furthermore, USACE's claim that project features which will remain even after construction completion, i.e. "the O&M ramps, tie backs, and vegetation free zone areas," will constitute an insignificant long-term impact on visual and aesthetic resources because they "are only a small portion of the project site for American River Erosion Contract 3B North and South" is also inadequate and incomplete.⁸⁵ It's like saying removing 2% of a person's body weight will be insignificant only to find out that the 2% comes from extracting the brain. Likewise, the "portion" of a project site is an inadequate measure of its impact on the visual and recreational resources of the Parkway. If a ramp, for example, goes through a 300 year old oak tree, that is a "substantial degradation to the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site." Again, it should be noted that USACE does not actually show in the Draft SEIS/SEIR where the O&M ramps and tiebacks will be. USACE needs to show where the access ramps will be and how they will in general avoid impacts to heritage oaks. Otherwise, it is impossible to determine whether or not the long-term impacts to the existing visual character and quality of this project area will be significant and long-term.

⁸³ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR Appendices, Appendix D. Biological Resources Mapping and Data

⁸⁴ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3.1-23.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

A Few of the Irreplaceable Heritage Oak Trees in the Contract 3B South Area







The loss of heritage oak trees would be unmitigable, but to mitigate the other significant impacts of habitat removal, USACE proposes, where feasible, to cover launchable stone with several feet of topsoil, then plant native trees such as cottonwoods, valley oaks, box elders, and alders.⁸⁶ However, the flawed design of the planting benches along with the limited period of performance monitoring calls into question whether they are an adequate mitigation measure for the potential long-term, significant impacts caused by Contract 3B's proposed erosion protection features.

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When launchable stone launches, it is expected to take down the planting benches. According to the Geotechnical Report, the waterside berm next to a launchable trench is expected to erode, and "will eventually reach the launchable trench."⁸⁷ When this happens, the "soils surrounding the trench will allow for the riprap contained in the trench to 'launch' into the void created adjacent to the trench."⁸⁸ If the trench launches as expected, they will likely take down the planting benches with them. This concern was expressed by the National Marine Fisheries Service 2021 Biological Opinion for ARCF. They wrote that a launchable toe rock is "also designed to launch to protect the levee from scour."⁸⁹ "The launching of this type of stone," NMFS writes, "is likely to result in the loss of some of the mitigation planting bench" and to NMFS "the lack of durability of this mitigation is concerning."⁹⁰ Given that it could not "be accurately determined at what future time this planting bench will be damaged from launchable rock, the overall benefit of the mitigation becomes less certain."⁹¹

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To address this concern about the durability of planting benches, USACE has agreed to develop a vegetation management plan in coordination with USFWS and NMFS to "Ensure that native riparian plantings installed within the planting benches are protected, managed, monitored, and maintained for 8 years, not to exceed 10 years following installation."⁹² According to USACE's Tier Classification Memo, ARCF has a 50-year design.⁹³ Since erosion is cumulative, the likelihood that launchable features launch would only increase each subsequent year after the monitoring period ends, and thus would also increase the likelihood of damage to mitigation planting benches. **This increasing likelihood means that without a plan to monitor and protect the planting benches over the entire 50 year life of the project, USACE cannot reasonably claim that planting bench mitigation will make the long-term impact of this project in the area of Contract 3B "less than significant under CEQA."**⁹⁴

⁸⁶ Ibid, 4.1-46.

⁸⁷ American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 17.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Current NMFS Biological Opinion - 12 May 2021: 80.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² ARCF Draft 2023 SEIS/SEIR, 3-66.

⁹³ HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, "Lower American River - Subreach 1, 3, and 4 Tier Classification," Technical Memo - Nov. 13, 2019, 1.

⁹⁴ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3.4-12

USACE has also inadequately addressed how erosion of the planting benches will nullify their effectiveness as long term mitigation. As USACE observed in the 2016 General Reevaluation Report Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report, “Both the Sacramento River and the American River are confined by levees and have very little sediment in the water. Additionally, on the American River, Folsom Dam blocks sedimentation from upstream sources. Therefore, the energy of the flow tends to erode riverbanks and levees.”⁹⁵ Contract 3b is not widening levees, nor is it increasing the amount of sediment flowing from Folsom Dam. Therefore, it can be expected that the same erosion processes which necessitated ARCF will operate even after the installation of launchable rock toes and trenches as well as planting benches. According to geologist Jeffrey Mount, “Thick, well-developed soils that have well-established vegetative covers tend to be more resistant to erosion.”⁹⁶ If the mature trees and thick vegetation which currently armor the banks of the American River in the Contract 3B area are insufficient to prevent erosion, then how can we expect planting benches made up of loose, newly laid soil held in place by immature trees with (for many years) weak roots to not erode away?

USACE’s answer to the problem of planting bench erosion are tiebacks, but even they can only state that tiebacks “limit the extent of erosion,” not prevent it altogether.⁹⁷ Natural banks have deep, layered soils amassed over millennia from fluvial overflow deposit.⁹⁸ Even as topsoils erode away, there is still room in the bed materials of natural levees for roots to expand into. In contrast, launchable stone creates an absolute floor. As the planting bench erodes away, the space for roots to grow gets shallower and shallower, until there is nowhere for the roots to go at all. Thus, an adequate mitigation measure based on planting benches would need to provide mechanism for the continual replenishment of the planting bench over the entire life-design of the project, 50 years. USACE provides no details in the 2023 SEIS/SEIR as to how deep the planting benches will, how fast they may erode under different flow conditions, and how they may be replenished.

In response to concerns about the possibility of launchable rock features damaging planting benches, USACE relies on an assumption of inevitable habitat degradation, but such an assumption is irrelevant in light of CEQA and NEPA requirements. In the public scoping comments for the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR, comment 8-3 raised concern over launchable features damaging planting benches. USACE’s response was that “in the case of catastrophic flood USACE expects the bank protection features to perform as flood control features, and without these features, habitat loss would most likely be greater than without these erosion protection features in place.”⁹⁹ There are a number of problems with this response. First, where USACE has installed launchable rock toes and trenches, they have left virtually no habitat, as shown in the picture of erosion protection features installed near Guy West Bridge for American River Erosion Contract 2 as well as USACE’s own erosion updates.

⁹⁵ ARCF Final EIS/EIR - Jan. 2016, 9.

⁹⁶ Jeffrey Mount, *California Rivers and Streams*, 105.

⁹⁷ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-38.

⁹⁸

⁹⁹ 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, Appendices, Appendix A. Nepa Scoping Materials, comment number 8-3.



https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/WRDA16/construction-updates/2023/ARCF16_AR_SitRep_MAR2023.pdf?ver=GF4ENLWXHjne5Lhrg5GPcg%3d%3d

23

In best case scenarios, USACE leaves a few trees, but a few trees no more makes a habitat than a few houses makes a town. Even where USACE has spared a few trees, there is no other vegetation left—no bushes, shrubs, grasses, vines, etc. USACE cannot reasonably claim that habitat loss would be greater without erosion protection measures when they remove all the habitat in order to install the erosion protection measures.



One of the Segments where USACE did not remove all the trees

Second, the likelihood of habitat loss due to catastrophic flooding is not an inevitability. **There are trees in these forests which have survived multiple 160kcf flood events. We should not trade the possibility of future habitat damage for the certainty of present habitat annihilation.**

24 Third, mitigation for CEQA and NEPA is measured against baseline conditions, not against projected future conditions. In other words, both CEQA and NEPA require mitigation measures that attempt to restore conditions as they existed before project implementation. As outlined in CEQA, “the lead agency should describe physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is publication.”¹⁰⁰ A lead agency may use projected future conditions as a baseline “only if it demonstrates with substantial evidence that use of existing conditions would either be misleading or without informative value to decision-makers and the public.”¹⁰¹ A brief response to a public comment does not constitute “substantial evidence.” Furthermore, an existing conditions baseline “shall not include hypothetical conditions.”¹⁰² Under NEPA, environmental data collection and analyses is completed prior to project implementation to provide an understanding of the baseline conditions for each potentially affected resource for reference when determining the predicted efficacy of mitigation commitments is being achieved.¹⁰³ In short, mitigation for both NEPA and CEQA are primarily based on existing conditions before project implementation, not on hypothetical future conditions, and USACE has not provided substantial evidence that future conditions should be used as a baseline.

25 NEPA also demands a “Commitment to seek funding” for the entire life of a project, and “if it is reasonably foreseeable that funding for implementation of mitigation may be unavailable at any time during the life of the project, the agency should disclose in the EA or EIS the possible lack of funding and assess the resultant environmental effects.”¹⁰⁴ CEQ declares that “if the agency committing to implementing mitigation has not disclosed and assessed the lack of funding, and the necessary funding later becomes unavailable, then the agency should not move forward with the proposed action until funding becomes available or the lack of funding is appropriately assessed.”¹⁰⁵ USACE has not identified mitigation funding for the 50 year life of ARCF, nor has it assessed what the environmental impacts of this lack of funding will be. According to the Army’s regulations, “unless money is actually budgeted and manpower assigned, the mitigation does not exist.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, without identifying mitigation funding for the 50 year life of ARCF, USACE cannot be said to be mitigating their environmental impacts and cannot claim impacts that are long term less than significant with mitigation.

¹⁰⁰ CEQA, 15125(a)(1).

¹⁰¹ CEQA, 15125(a)(2).

¹⁰² CEQA, 15125(a)(3).

¹⁰³ Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 17.

Identifying the potential long term costs of maintaining planting benches is critical because USACE has a history of implementing measures which end up burdening local governments with costly long-term commitments. For example, after storms inundated Santa Cruz during the 1950s, the Corps devegetated the San Lorenzo River, straightened it, and lined its channel with concrete and rip rap. They promised that these “improvements” would protect downtown Santa Cruz from a 100-year flood. Instead, the river attempted to restore its profile by filling the channel with 12 million cubic feet of sediment within 10 years of the project’s completion. Santa Cruz subsequently spent millions of dollars to annually dredge a channel which can now only handle 25–30-year floods.¹⁰⁷ USACE should identify the possibility that planting benches will be a long term commitment for local agencies, particularly County Regional Parks. CEQ requires that the lead agency identify “all relevant, reasonable mitigation measures” even “if they are outside the jurisdiction of the lead agency” so as to “serve to alert agencies or officials who can implement these extra measures.”¹⁰⁸

Fourth, both the California and National Wild and Scenic River Acts make it policy that protected rivers and “their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”¹⁰⁹ The National WSRA declares that “each component of the wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system.”¹¹⁰ In essence, both WSRAs imply a “you break it you buy it” policy. It is the policy of the state and federal government to preserve and protect rivers in the condition they were in when they were inducted into the Wild and Scenic River Systems for both present and future generations.

Even with planting bench mitigation, USACE’s policies still likely run afoul of the State and Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. The Lower American River from the confluence to the Nimbus Dam was added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in 1981 as a recreational river. In Appendix E of the “Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System,” the US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service notes that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.”¹¹¹ In other words, the scenic, aesthetic, and natural appearance of the river and its banks cannot be separated from what makes the river “recreational.” Later in the chapter, the Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service identify the resource values which made the Lower American River a suitable candidate for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System. Among

¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey Mount, *California Rivers and Streams*, 302-304

¹⁰⁸ Council on Environmental Quality, “Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations,” (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

¹⁰⁹ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 1(b). California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.50.

¹¹⁰ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 10(a).

¹¹¹ US Interior Department and Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, “Appendix E” in *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System* (1981), p. 9.

these values was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.”¹¹² Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected,” allowing for the uniform dispersal along the river of “birdlife, including raptors and wading birds.”¹¹³ We cannot say that vegetation has been “Carefully protected” after removing it altogether. Thus, any significant impacts from intentional actions, even short-term, to the riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly degrade the INTRINSIC conditions which makes the LAR a State and National Wild and Scenic River.

According to the secretarial designation which made the LAR a Wild and Scenic River, the LAR is to be managed in accordance with the classifications determined appropriate by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.¹¹⁴ In the Heritage Conservation’s “Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System,” they observed that the American River “is lined with lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood, and sycamore trees.”¹¹⁵ In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service observed that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.”¹¹⁶ It singled out the “Parkway greenbelt” which provides “many recreation opportunities” that include “hiking” and “canoeing.”¹¹⁷ They add that the American River and its adjoining riparian lands possess “notable wildlife and botanic values considering its proximity to an urban setting.”¹¹⁸ Because of the proximity of lush riparian habitat to urban Sacramento, “students of all ages and members of the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club spend a considerable amount of time along the river observing wildlife.”¹¹⁹

In short, the riparian forests of the American River Parkway constitute an essential feature of its outstanding recreational values. Cutting down the forests for any reason may impair the outstanding remarkable values which makes the Lower American River recreational. Certainly, if the riparian forests can never come back because of the inevitability of the launchable stone launching, or because erosion diminishes the planting bench over time, then USACE’s chosen mitigation measure of planting benches fails. But even with mitigation, the act of mass habitat decimation may be irreconcilable with Wild and Scenic Rivers. Nevertheless, USACE needs to address the erodibility of planting benches, the long-term prospect of launched stone damaging

¹¹² Ibid, 26.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

¹¹⁵ Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, “Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System,” (1981), II-32.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

the benches, and how they aim to restore and sustain riparian forests over the 50 year life of this project.

27 Even if USACE addresses the 50 year life of the project for planting benches, it is still uncertain whether or not their measures can be reconciled with the second outstanding remarkable value of the Lower American River, anadromous fishery. As stated in the vegetation management strategy of the 2017 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy, the removal of woody vegetation found on and near Central Valley levees “can result in ecological impacts that are considered essentially ‘unmitigable’ due to the unique nature of this landscape feature.”¹²⁰ The NMFS Recovery Plan points to the construction of “armored banks” as a major contributor to the decline of endangered salmonids which rely on wetlands and riparian habitats.¹²¹ Approximately 95% of the historical wetlands and riparian habitats no longer exist in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley, and the remaining riparian habitat is highly fragmented.¹²² Consequently, more than 16 species associated with the habitats of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley are now listed under the California Endangered Species Act or ESA, and 22 other animal species dependent on floodplain habitat are considered sensitive species.¹²³ Salmonids have especially been hurt by revetment projects, which have eliminated much of the high value SRA cover along the banks of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Systems.¹²⁴ Spawning salmon need clean gravel with small to moderate pebbles to build their redds.¹²⁵ By replacing small rocks and pebbles with large stones, revetments such as launchable rock features impair salmonid habitat. Planting benches do not necessarily mitigate the habitat destruction caused by launchable rock revetments. The 2017 CVFPP Conservation Strategy found that “for anadromous fish, the habitat value of woody vegetation planted in revetment, relative to SRA cover, is uncertain.”¹²⁶

28 Both CEQA and NEPA require that lead agencies consider the cumulative impacts of their projects. CEQ’s NEPA regulations define cumulative impacts as the “impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.”¹²⁷ CEQA asks agencies to look at whether or not projects are “cumulatively considerable,” which means that “individual effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.”¹²⁸ **USACE has not considered how removing 685 trees from the riparian corridor between Larchmont**

¹²⁰ CVFPP Conservation Strategy (November 2016), Appendix D. Vegetation Management Strategy, D-3.

¹²¹ Annalisa Louise Batanides Tuel. 2018. “Levee Vegetation Management in California: An Overview of Law, Policy, and Science, and Recommendations for Addressing Vegetation Management Challenges,” *Environs*: 381.

¹²² *Ibid*, 394.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 395.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 397-398.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 397.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 8-8.

¹²⁷ June 24, 2005 Memorandum, Council on Environmental Quality, Re: Guidance on the Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis, p. 2.

¹²⁸ CEQA, 15065.

Community Park and Howe Avenue and in many places installing large stones at river's edge so soon after decimating the riparian habitats at river park and before mitigation plantings can mature will compound environmental impacts on SRA habitat that vulnerable salmonid populations need to survive. If USACE carries through with Contract 3B, for at least several years there will not be a single fully intact mile of riparian corridor on the Lower American River from Larchmont Community Park to Paradise Beach, a stretch covering 6 miles, more than a quarter of the 23 mile Wild and Scenic Lower American River. Given how fragmented and narrow SRA habitat is already, this does not bode well for salmonids.

Certainly, apprehensive local fisherman, based on years of experience, are not convinced that USACE has fully considered the ecological implications of its actions, nor that its selected mitigation methods will work. The following is the perspective of a local area fisherman, who wishes to remain anonymous.

“Coming from a family of fishermen and being a fisherman myself, I find it hard to believe that anyone who had done their research before destroying many miles of the river bank, would not have concluded the massive damage they would be creating for the fish and their natural habitat. From my many years of fishing, we always stayed close to and fished the banks of the water. Whether a river, lake or stream, the fish naturally hide, feed from and have their habitat along the water's edge. If you want to find fish, you almost always stay along the edge of the water where you find rocks, fallen trees, branches, grasses and overhangs where they protect themselves. This goes for many types of fish, of which I am used to fishing for.

After going out to see the American River and following the edge of the water, all I could think of is what about the fish? Their entire natural habitat is completely destroyed from this project. I also have seen the absolutely useless areas, where this project had chained old trees along the river, thinking it would be the new fish habitat. We are in the middle of winter, which is our rainy season and the majority of these trees are not even in the water. The only time they would be, is in a flood season where the river would come up high enough to do anything at all for the fish and even then would only be a tenth of what was destroyed. Being here, in California, it seems like we are in drought more years than not, so the conclusion is what a futile waste and where will the fish go? Someone did not think this through very well or at least did not do their research well, or maybe at all! “

Below is another picture taken from the Guy West Bridge, this time facing the right bank looking left. As the fisherman observed, the bundles of woody material that is supposed to provide habitat for fish populations is nowhere near the water's edge in most cases.



Not only will destroying mature forest threaten salmonid populations, but the laying down of launchable rock on numerous beaches in the contract 3b area will make several beloved beaches in the contract 3b area forever inaccessible. Once again, this was a concern raised in 2016. Apprehensive citizens wrote that

The final EIS/EIR does not adequately characterize the many varied uses of the river and Parkway. Thus, it cannot and does not catalog and assess the harms to such uses that will be the result of the proposed project. For instance, the impacts to recreation seem focused on use of the parkways paved bikeway. While a key

asset, there are other equally worthy of close consideration, such as **swimming, shoreline recreation, fishing**, walking, and bird watching.¹²⁹

Another comment, from M.B. Schwehr, recalls how after five years where USACE installed revetments at left bank river mile 10.3 in 2011,

“the shady, serene river trails and river shoreline no longer exist, and will not for decades due to removal of nearly all the majestic trees in that stretch, despite assurances that ‘most’ would be spared. The shoreline is un-useable for any recreation due to the large quarried rocks.¹³⁰ “

We can better understand M.B Schwehr’s dismay by comparing what the revetted shoreline of left bank river mile 10.3 to the as yet unrevetted shoreline of the adjacent shoreline.



Riveted left bank river mile 10.3

¹²⁹ Letter from Matthew Carr, Graham Brownstein, et al, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement.

¹³⁰ Letter from M.B. Schwehr, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement.



Adjacent shoreline at left bank river mile 10.4-10.5

The unrevetted shoreline is usable for walking, swimming, launching a canoe, or fishing. The rivetted shoreline is covered with large rocks and is unusable for the public.

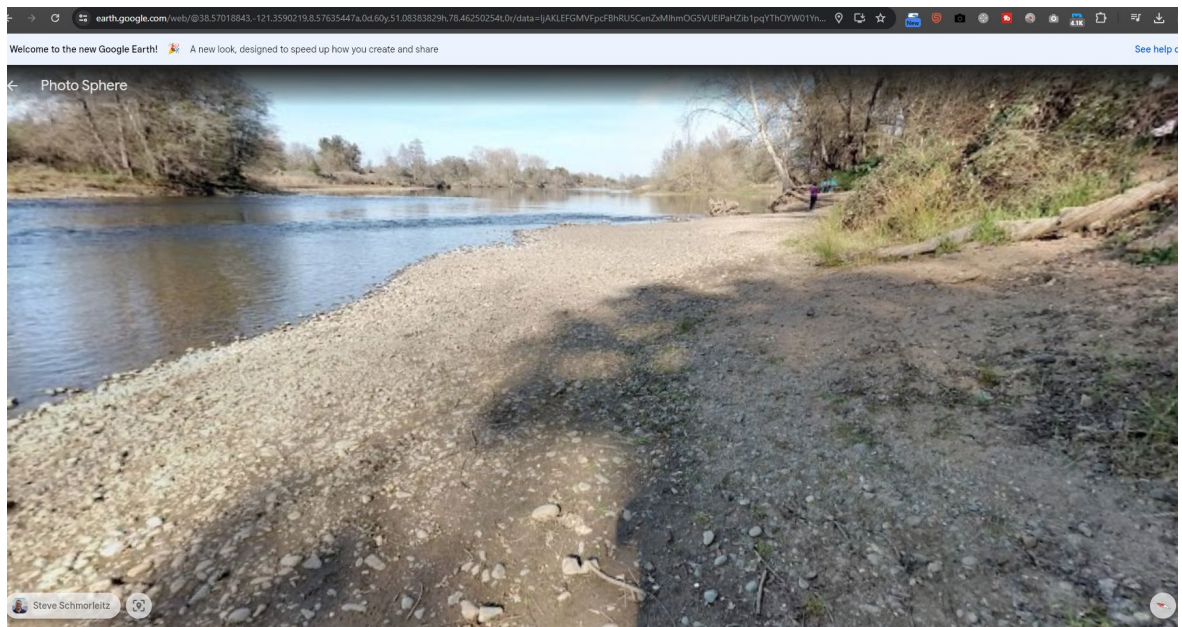
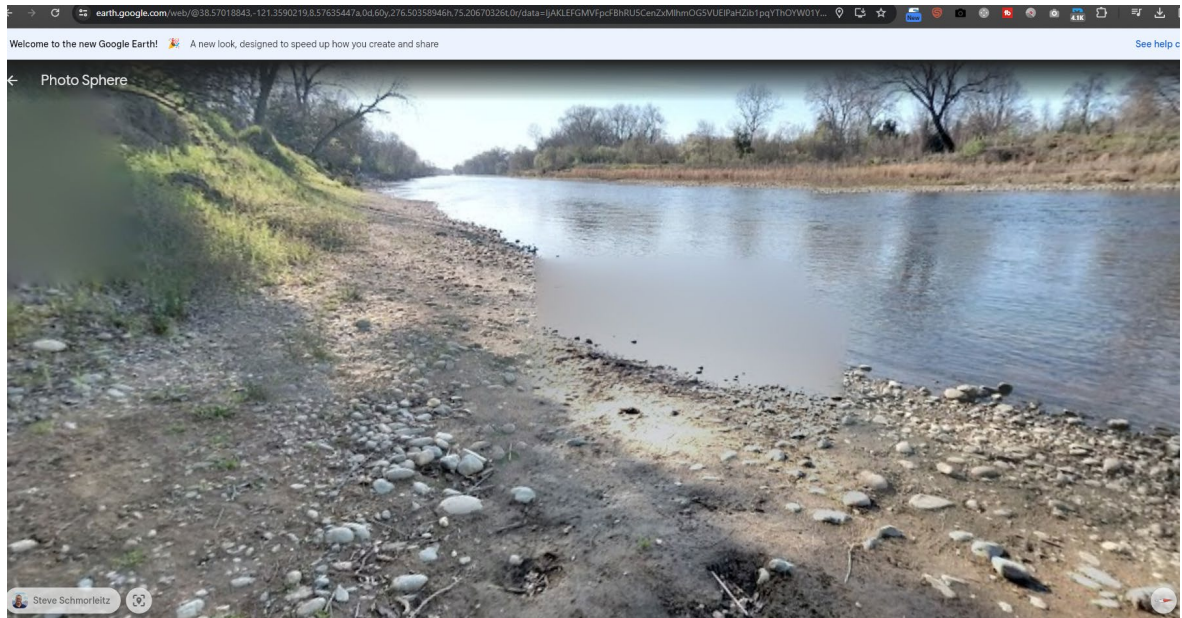
To apprehensions about loss of access to shoreline recreation, fishing, and swimming, USACE assured that “once construction is complete and mitigation plantings have been established, access to the water’s edge in the construction footprint will be permitted.”¹³¹ This does not address concerns that launchable stone will eliminate beaches altogether. In fairness, launchable rock toes had not been proposed in the 2016 GRR. But now that they are part of USACE’s proposals, USACE needs to address how they will affect access to beaches and consider what mitigation measures can be taken for launchable stones at water’s edge. USACE understands that beaches are an aesthetic and visual resource. Section 4.4 of the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR lists “sandy beaches” as part of the aesthetics and visual resources of the SRMS.¹³² Elsewhere in the SEIS/SEIR, USACE mentions that “shorelines provide hunting grounds for wading birds such as herons and egrets, and for kingfisher waterfowl, and shorebirds.”¹³³ Yet not once in the 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR does USACE address loss of shoreline due to the installation of launchable rock toes. At left bank river mile 10.4-10.5, USACE’s proposed launchable rock toe may make two beloved beaches forever inaccessible.

¹³¹ Letter to Graham Brownstein from Josephine R. Axt, May 24, 2016, in ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016, Appendix F-Public Involvement. P. 2.

¹³² 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 4-139.

¹³³ Ibid, 4.1-16.

Here are the beaches at left bank river mile 10.4-10.5 as they were photographed for google earth



<https://earth.google.com/web/@38.57018843,-121.3590219,8.57635447a,0d,60y,0h,85t,0r/data=!jAKLEFGMVFcFBhRU5CenZxMIhmOG5VUEIPaHZib1pqYThOYW01YnRLVF9JRDRpEAU6AwoBMA>



Launchable Rock Toe Near Sac State

CEQ states that

Mitigation measures must be considered even for impacts that by themselves would not be considered “significant.” Once the proposal itself is considered as a whole to have significant effects, all of its specific effects on the environment (whether or not “significant”) must be considered, and mitigation measures must be developed where it is feasible to do so.¹³⁴

USACE has not considered the impacts of its proposals on the beaches of the contract 3b area. NEPA requires that it not only consider those impacts, but also consider any feasible mitigation measures.

American River Erosion Contract 3B creates so much uncertainty for public safety, for heritage trees, for mature riparian forest, for salmonid populations, and for recreational resources that the only prudent course of action for USACE is to reconsider and redesign the whole project. USACE should follow the recommendations of its own experts and account for erosion resistant areas of the LAR in its analysis. They should take into account recent, advanced high-fidelity hydraulic modeling instead of relying on a 20 year out of date 2-d model that likely overestimates velocities along banks with mature riparian vegetation. Where erosion measures are still deemed necessary after accounting for erosion resistant areas and using more up-to-date hydraulic modeling simulations, USACE should sincerely explore biotechnical and bioengineering alternatives and present those alternatives to the public in another SEIR/SEIS. Too much is at stake for our Wild and Scenic River for USACE to do otherwise.

¹³⁴ Council on Environmental Quality, “Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations,” (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Karen Kunstler <karenkunstler@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 4:43 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov <RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from karenkunstler@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for “bank erosion protection” on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to “Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible”. It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for “bank erosion protection”. The USACE claim that this protection is “needed” is based on minimal,

overgeneralized “data”, and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a

determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

Karen Kunstler

INDIV-748

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

Beth McClure <bethmcclure1@me.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 2:00 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[You don't often get email from bethmcclure1@me.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Thank you.

Elizabeth McClure MD

SIERRA OAKS VISTA RESIDENT, Sacramento County

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:45 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Christie Vallance <christiev44@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:03 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

1 Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients: My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

Concerns:

2 I recently discovered in my review of your velocity modeling that makes up the premise of your decision to restructure the river banks for Project 3b, that the Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report of 2017 and their map of velocity contours differs significantly from the model that you are using. I also noticed that the 2021 Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydronamics of the American River under Flood Conditions” report shows the positive effect that trees on riverbanks has on the velocities along the banks. Can you explain the differences between these findings and the velocity models you

present in your report? Can you explain how your project plan is informed by this information? I will be looking for this explanation in your report.

Sincerely,

Christie Vallance

February 23, 2024

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
California Department of Water Resources,
Central Valley Flood Protection Board
Email: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

**SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON DRAFT AMERICAN RIVER COMMON FEATURES, 2016 FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT PROJECT, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, SEIS/SEIR XIV**

Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

So that I am not repetitive with other commenters, whose thoroughness of review and depth of analyses are excellent and worthy of serious consideration, I submit that I fully concur with and support the concerns and requests expressed by these commenters.

1 Regarding mitigation, Urrutia Pond provides important habitat for wetland-dependent bird species, plants and associated insects. I am concerned that the change in character and resources brought about by the conversion of Urrutia Pond to a *seasonally* flooded riparian area would significantly impact the species that rely on the pond for feeding, resting and night-roosting.

The SEIS/SEIR does not, but needs to, acknowledge the *impacts* from a possible conversion of Urrutia Pond, as well as provide the assessments completed and the rationale used for the rejection of other alternative sites considered. Unfortunately, the SEIS/SEIR *does not include* alternatives to the Urrutia Pond for mitigation, though there *are* alternative sites, since SAFCA had GEI prepare a report identifying multiple potential mitigation sites. These must be identified and considered as possibilities and the SEIS/SEIR needs to reflect this. I believe it will be necessary, therefore, for the public comment period to be further extended (or put on hold) until this oversight can be rectified and the public can evaluate and comment on the impacts to, and suitability of, these alternative sites. Please confirm for the public that comments to be provided in a new or extended comment period will be combined with comments already submitted.

For the reasons given here, I ask that Urrutia Pond be removed from consideration and, at least, be left AS IS.

2 I am deeply concerned about the great loss of valley oaks and associated habitat and the long-term, cumulative, direct and indirect impacts on the effected ecosystem and elimination of the biological resources and processes from the project impact areas. I am appealing with you to go over and beyond the standard approach to mitigation. To put it simply, but clearly, the complete removal of habitat down to soil, with the resulting loss of ecological value, nutritive soil and mycorrhizal fungi and other micro-nutrients, means the *return to the pre-project condition is too great to "mitigate,"* given the time window required to go through the process of succession to reach maturity, while also mitigating for failed plantings, low vigor, or project-related problems. For all intents and purposes, these long-term impacts to more mature habitat may as well be considered permanent. The standard cookie-cutter mitigation formula is grossly inadequate for the full extent of such long-term impacts.

The riverbanks of already-completed sections have been razed, and birds, wildlife, insects, amphibians, and reptiles have been displaced or killed, either directly or indirectly. Significant food sources, like acorns, walnuts, elderberries, many types of seeds from trees, shrubs, annual and perennial forbs, and grasses, and the refuge of shade are gone from these sites, and will be for quite some time. Breeding habitat for some species is also gone, with vacancies in other areas in the Parkway being hard to find. This reduces annual recruitment, the data about which will be unknown, although trends might show up in the annual wildlife counts. The impacts of this complete habitat loss are truly immeasurable and are unacceptable to us who love and value our American River Parkway, Sacramento's "Crown Jewel," with many jewels now stripped from her crown.

3 Important, too, though not critical life-or-death for us, are the losses experienced by the people of Sacramento County, who come to the Parkway for its beauty, peacefulness, wildlife viewing, fishing, paddling, cycling, running, horseback riding, escape from stress and the busy workweek, and many other wellness-related qualities that brought the river to be both state and federally designated as a "Scenic River." The project has left major, unsightly scars on the view-shed that are distressing to people, and which were potentially avoidable and/or greatly minimizable, per

<https://nbsguidance.org/> **Nature-Based Solutions**
<https://ewn.erdc.dren.mil/international-guidelines-on-natural-and-nature-based-features-for-flood-risk-management/>

Given the extreme nature of this project and the severity of impacts, I urge that an alternate formula for higher mitigation ratios be determined in conjunction with community stakeholders, that would also include an additional dollar amount, with the first priority for purchase of 1) land that would be incorporated in to the American River Parkway (i.e., 20 lower acres of TruMark property); then 2) obtainable land of equal value that would be incorporated into one or more Sacramento County Regional Parks units; or, if 1 or 2 cannot be accomplished, 3) a payment equal to the value of #1 above, to Regional Parks for future purchase.

I realize my mitigation request is unorthodox. The multiple layers of very long-term, ecologically destructive and unsightly impacts from the project are many, significant and complex. The least USACOE can do is to apply the funds necessary to make as whole as possible the American River Parkway, and in so doing, the people for who it has been created and preserved by law.

4 If you are willing for the future to explore other avenues for erosion control, see Nature-Based Solutions at <https://nbsguidance.org/> -and- <https://ewn.erdcdren.mil/international-guidelines-on-natural-and-nature-based-features-for-flood-risk-management/>, the now reams of comments and protest by the public and non-profits would become minimal by comparison. Looking at this link and attached photos, you will see that USACE is represented. Why not here in Sacramento? I urge you to contact your partners and seek guidance on employing nature-based solutions. If it can prevent razing river banks, wouldn't it be worth a try?

Thank you for extending the comment period to Feb 23; although I am asking for it to be further extended for the reasons I provided above.

Respectfully,

KELLY COHEN

Attachments

CC Save the American River Association

COMMENT: Plantings in rows make it easier for people looking to "cut through." Native plant species like wild rose or wild blackberry, & native shrubs with spines or hard-to-bend branches, where planting locations are suitable, are good deterrents. I suggest more random spacing so there isn't the appearance of a trail from any direction, so that when it appears used once, it will soon establish itself as one trail, then will come another, as evidenced in aerial photos:



Even with fast-growing willow & cottonwood near the river & other riparian-associated species up to the levee shoulder, it will be a long haul through succession to the prior level of habitat





OVERVIEW

NNBF

International Guidelines on Natural and Nature-Based Features for Flood Risk Management


EDITED BY:

Todd S. Bridges, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, United States*
Jeffrey K. King, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, United States*
Jonathan D. Simm, *HR Wallingford, United Kingdom*
Michael W. Beck, *University of California, Santa Cruz, United States*
Georganna Collins, *Aqua Strategies, United States*
Quirijn Lodder, *Rijkswaterstaat, the Netherlands*
Ram K. Mohan, *Anchor OEA and Texas A&M University, United States*

Final document assembled, technically reviewed, copyedited, and designed by Anchor OEA, LLC, under contract to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Jonathan Simm of HR Wallingford provided technical and quality reviews of the document, and Georganna Collins of Aqua Strategies provided consulting on graphics and layout, as subcontractors to Anchor OEA. Refer to the Acknowledgments section of this Overview for a full listing of the NNBF Guidelines' respective chapter lead authors and co-authors and collaborating organizations.

maturity & complexity, if human use/overuse doesn't hinder it or riddle it with cut-through trails. How will you protect it during establishment?:

nbsguidance.org



The fields of engineering and design have made great strides in developing solutions for the modern world, and see the need to continue this forward momentum. To support that forward momentum, USACE is updating its technical guidance resources to include the design and construction of NBS.

NBS have been used for decades to support a variety of objectives in the natural landscape. This update acknowledges the advantages of using a hybrid approach to problem-solving to achieve a comprehensive solution.

A comprehensive solution endeavors to address multiple issues and reduce potential negative impacts by using a combination of traditional "gray" infrastructure, and nature-based "green and blue" infrastructure components.

A robust library of technical resources is available for traditional components, it lacks the same level of instruction and organization for the NBS components.

To alleviate this gap, the documents developed through this project are intended to be the source of technical guidance on NBS components to ensure more holistic design solutions can be implemented and to support technical professionals involved in the design and implementation of engineering solutions with NBS components. This guidance is being organized and developed in alignment with EWN Guiding Principles, and content is structured to follow the typical Planning Process of Project Design.

LEARN MORE

EWN Engineering With Nature
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to efficiently and sustainably deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits through collaboration.

US Army Corps

USACE in partnership with



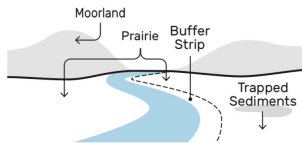
River and Floodplain Management

- Slows flood flows
- Encourages flood storage
- Creates bypasses to move water away from communities
- Provides ecological and aquatic habitat benefits



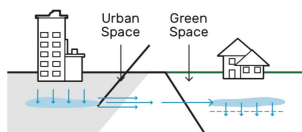
Vegetation Management

- Slows water
- Encourages infiltration in soil
- Enables evapotranspiration
- Increases roughness and slows flow



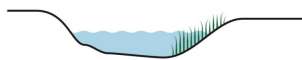
Rural Runoff Management

- Captures water flow
- Slows and stores water
- Encourages infiltration
- Traps sediments



Urban Runoff Management

- Retains and stores water in green space
- Slows delivery of water to sewer system



Erosion Management

- Protects riverbanks
- Reduces erosion of banks
- Replaces hard engineering with vegetated banks

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Key Messages

1. Past modifications of rivers and their basins have increased the risk of flooding. Climate change, anthropogenic features, and land use changes have increased the stress on natural fluvial systems and their functions, asserting more pressure on FRM infrastructure.
2. NNBs help mitigate these impacts, reducing both the level of flood risk and our dependence on engineered flood control structures while also restoring the natural environment, providing societal and ecological co-benefits.
3. As the benefits of NNBs are realized, more people are likely to see these benefits and want NNBs implemented in their watersheds. Monitoring and adaptive management of NNBs are needed to demonstrate the added benefits.

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:10 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

From: Jamie Hall <maxjoe1997@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:13 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to “Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible”. It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for “bank erosion protection”. The USACE claim that this protection is “needed” is based on minimal, overgeneralized “data”, and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge

Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

Ron Hall

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:10 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Jamie Hall <maxjoe1997@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:13 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a

much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The

modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.
Jamie Hall

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:09 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: billy langford <wizardcody@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:12 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

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Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

Sent from my iPhone

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
Central Valley Flood Protection Board/California Dept of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, California 95821
Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov

Submitted via email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

February 23, 2024

Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the reports pertaining to this important project. I am a lifelong naturalist, bird watcher, photographer, and the daughter of a professional artist and an engineer, who channeled capacity for innovation with tangible problem solving into specialization as a physiatrist, with a concentration on catastrophic care and care coordination. I am also a nationally recognized expert on Environmental Health, and in particular, the adverse impacts of disasters upon vulnerable populations. My NFP, the Multicultural Health Institute represents thousands of vulnerable individuals and communities across the country. My daily work involves preventing, educating about and treating catastrophic injuries and teaching health systems about preparation and response to environmental disasters for vulnerable communities..

Any good clinician knows the importance of clinical judgement, lifelong commitment to learning and acquisition of “clinical experience” to apply to achieve greater success in subsequent cases and scenarios, while also exercising, at times, independent critical analysis and decision making for the best outcomes.

When I diagnosed my own mother with lung cancer, after failure of the disconnected health care system to do so, the standard of treatment at that time was annihilation of the patients’ immune system with potent chemotherapeutic agents with the hope that the more rapidly dividing malignant cells would be more adversely impacted than the ‘acceptable collateral damage’ of healthy tissue. Dire side effects and poor outcomes did not deter such approaches for decades, it is what medicine had to work with.

We stepped right past that, and were able to secure a variety of treatments for her only just emerging at that time nearly 2 decades ago, but far more logical-targeting the invading abnormal cancer cells, without pulverizing and paralyzing the entire immune system, permitting her own defenses to help fight back. Knowing she had survived pneumonia as a child in pre-antibiotic era, we knew she had a very strong immune system, and it was so, defying all odds, she not only beat slim odds to make 5 years, going to prolifically to enjoy nearly 3 x that amount of extended quality of life.

Yet ironically, speaking of antibiotics, due to their wanton overuse, we have cultivated armies of resistant microbes, and in some places, physicians have gone full circle, resorting to more “natural approaches” to

treat minor infections, with better outcomes, rather than excessive prescribing of antibiotics and cultivating more and more resistance.

The analogy is-nurture nature, work together with and play to strengths. Thus in the case of the decimation of the carefully balanced ARC ecosystem that has evolved over millennia, such folly will end in similar results as my mother's unfortunate elder sister and many others who only had the options of brute force destruction of their natural defenses in attempt to blunt the progression of their cancers before new thought/innovative approaches and international collaborations produced far better options.

My motivation to live near the incredible jewel of the American River Parkway is similar to that of my neighbors, most of whom share a sense of caretaking devotion for the privilege of living near and being able to enjoy this unique, nationally recognized, well studied and treasured ecosystem. The engineer daughter that grew up on an island part of me carefully studied the history and risks of living so close to the river, and I was and remain quite reassured that we are and have been on the safest, straightest, widest low flow stretch, in large part due to the natural defenses that exist and have been proven to WORK WELL over time. In medicine, "1st Do No Harm" is a very useful adage to follow, same with regard to this project.

As part of my consulting work, I perform complex analyses of forensic cases, considering all sides as an Agreed Medical Examiner, to produce an objective set of recommendations and conclusions. In analyzing available data and speaking with neutral and objective engineers and water experts who do not stand to benefit from whatever final outcome of the C3B project, they echo and confirm the following factual evidence:

1. There is little to no historical precedence of trees being a risk factor for levee stability, in fact, removing them has served to destabilize other levee projects and we all know it takes not just years, but decades and centuries to re-establish complex Riparian habitats.
2. The removal of large heritage oak trees and other habitat along the levee so that rock/riprap can be placed is a costly and unnecessary action, these trees already provide erosion protection along the levee.
3. Erosion is a minute concern, and as has been tested repeatedly in the C3 and C3b sections, nature restores loss through gradual recession of high waters in a majestic and breathtaking display of balance between the trees, vegetation and water cycles. For example, during the floods of 1997 and high water levels last winter, the flow rates along the levee were nearly stagnant with higher flows towards the center of the river channel, well away from the levee. Recovery during receding flows was rapid and well complete.
4. Such flows occur infrequently, are of short duration and will be further abated by the new spillway at Folsom Dam.
5. Removal of well matured, compacted soils replacing with alternatives based on soil samples from other locations not reflective of unique qualities of this location will result additional failed plantings (status update on prior areas welcomed) and further washing away and exposure of dangerous jagged rocks as has already happened in denuded areas downstream.
6. There is acknowledged risk to environmentally threatened species and their habitats, and the risk vs Benefit is insufficient to justify proceeding with clear cutting a stable, and previously deemed stable with no need for intervention, section of the river parkway.
7. Working with the natural inclinations and defenses of the river, rather than literally undermining them by tearing out historic and protected old grown Heritage Oaks and other layers of the forest, will continue and ensure stabilization and enjoyment for continued generations of humans and wildlife to come.
8. It is the 50th anniversary of the endangered species act, and we averted mass death and destruction of habitats, and species, however, we know significant threat continues. Every effort must be

7

made to keep balance and preserve rare urban reserve sites such as targeted 4, C3 and C3b North and South sections of the river.

8

9. This action is likely to further adversely affect critical habitat and threatened species including the Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, North American Green Sturgeon, Long Horn Beetle (“mitigated” Elderberry bushes from other sections mostly dead/dying off, failed effort) as well as hundreds of local and migratory bird populations whose nesting, mating and feeding habits will be disrupted by noise, habitat destruction and greater vulnerability to predators.

10. 2023 was the hottest year on record, Sacramento was sweltering, however near the river, we were always benefitting from the breezes and cooling effect of the trees and vegetation through shade and transpiration, losing that will worsen the “heat island effect” with adverse population health consequences. The IRA seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of heat, it is illogical to contribute to worsening life threatening conditions in the name of preventing a problem that does not exist-erosion.

9

11. This area is prioritized for recreational access and enjoyment by the public for kayaking, fishing, bird watching, fishing, wading with dogs, nature photography, spiritual practices, all of which will be severely interrupted and access forever limited by replacement of accessible shoreline beach with jagged rocks of uncertain source.

10

12. Communities with strong cohesive social connection and exposure to nature are hallmarks of well touted “blue zones” around the world. It is well documented that even in economically limited resourced communities, people live longer, healthier and more satisfied lives when there are strong social connections, regular physical activity and connection to the natural world. Average blood pressures are lower, there is lower incidence of Diabetes and other autoimmune disorders and life expectancy is longer. This is why, despite having lived and worked in a variety of other beautiful and desirable national and international locations, I repeatedly return to enjoy my home in College Greens East, and the American River Parkway adjoining our community is central to that. There are decades of neighbors and intergenerational family connections creating a rich fabric of support, celebration of life contributing to great resilience, improved health and mental health for us all. Destruction of this may contribute to destruction of decades of such relationships as well, with resultant destabilization and adverse mental health and health effects.

11

13. The Elementary school and its activities as well as the Larchmont Park are other extremely active components of healthy and happy community life. This area is used year round by youth groups, intramural sports teams, multicultural communities enjoying the playground and socializing with their children, dog walkers and tennis and pickleball players. Heavy equipment rumbling through with clouds of dust, diesel, vibrations, destruction of the beautiful vista at the end of the park and possible further destabilization of the levee in order to put in a few extra rocks along the edge seems an incredible waste of resources and unnecessary disruption in community life.

14. I have already treated a patient who was out walking with her family in the recently “improved” areas near Sac State, the sandy inadequately reinforced levee gave way underneath her, causing her to tumble down and onto the jagged rocks, sustaining fractures, lacerations and head trauma. Sad irony that an intervention meant to protect the public leads to greater risk and further restriction from doing what I like to see as a physician-exercising, managing stress through peaceful interaction with natural surroundings, breathing healthy air and generally enjoying themselves.

Thus on behalf of my community, which includes humans as well as the myriad forms of wildlife and vegetation, we urge the Army Corps to reconsider the further work on the American River Parkway.

This parkway is a nationally designated wild and scenic area heavily enjoyed by the public and safe habitat for endangered and threatened species that shall be severely degraded including as noted:

May 12, 2021

Alicia E. Kirchner
Chief, Planning Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Re: Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion, Magnuson-Stevens
Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Response for the
American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report
Reinitiation 2020

Enclosure

cc: 151422-WCR 2020-SA00019

Andrea Meier, Andrea.J.Meier@usace.army.mil
Rena Eddy, Rena.Eddy@usace.army.mil
Robert Chase, Robert.D.Chase@usace.army.mil



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, California 95814-4700

**Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion and
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish
Habitat Response**

American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report

NMFS Consultation Number: WCRO-2020-03082

Action Agency: United States Army Corps of Engineers

Affected Species and NMFS' Determinations:

ESA-Listed Species	Status	Is Action Likely to Adversely Affect Species?	Is Action Likely To Jeopardize the Species?	Is Action Likely to Adversely Affect Critical Habitat?	Is Action Likely To Destroy or Adversely Modify Critical Habitat?
Central Valley spring-run Chinook Salmon ESU (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No

California Central Valley steelhead DPS (<i>O. mykiss</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No
Southern DPS of North American green sturgeon (<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon ESU (<i>O. tshawytscha</i>)	Endangered	Yes	No	Yes	No

Fishery Management Plan That Identifies EFH in the Project Area	Does Action Have an Adverse Effect on EFH?	Are EFH Conservation Recommendations Provided?
Pacific Coast Salmon	Yes	Yes

Consultation Conducted By: National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region

Issued By:

A. Catherine Marcinkevage

Cathy Marcinkevage

Assistant Regional Administrator for the California Central Valley Office

Date: May 12, 2021

I take issue with the following purported minimal impacts extracted from the 2016 and supplemental 12.2023 SEIR including :

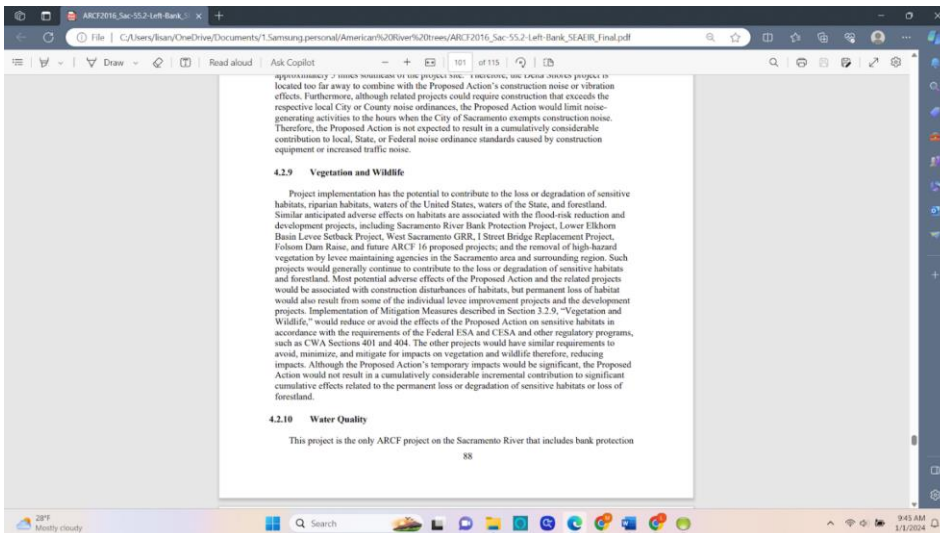
- changes in scenic view and existing visual character,
- creation of new sources of substantial light and light pollution,
- conflicts with existing environmental standards including violation of air quality standards
- increased noise,
- increased vibrations,
- destruction of culturally and spiritually significant areas,
- interruption and contamination of optimal storm and groundwater management

Table 1. Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Action[illegible]Table 1. Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Action

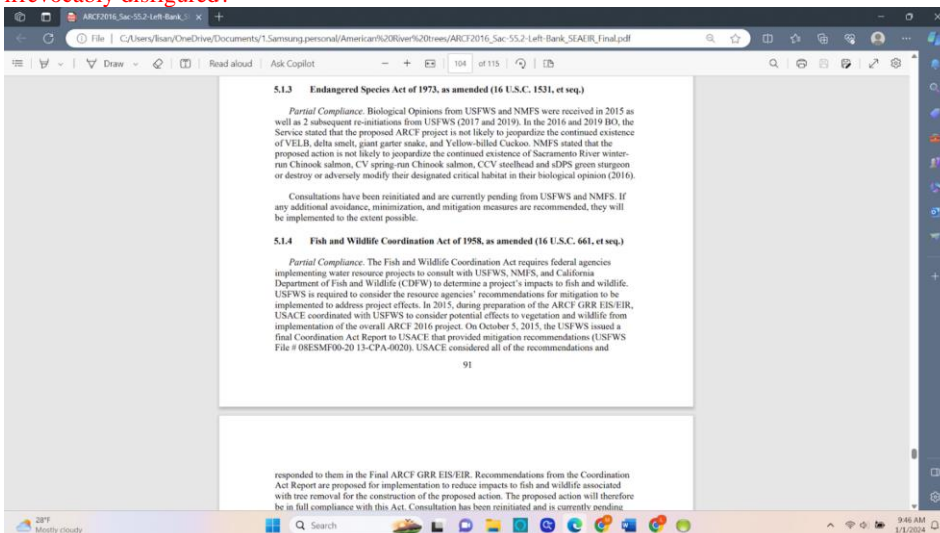
Effect Threshold	Significance Before Mitigation	Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures	Significance After Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures
		BEED-1: Euphorbia Measures to Protect Nesting Migratory Birds	
		BAT-1: Euphorbia Measures to Protect Maternity Roosts of Spotted-Breast Birds	
		PLANT-1: Euphorbia Measures to Protect Special-Status Plants	
		WATERS-1: Compensate for FLE of State and Federally Protected Waters	

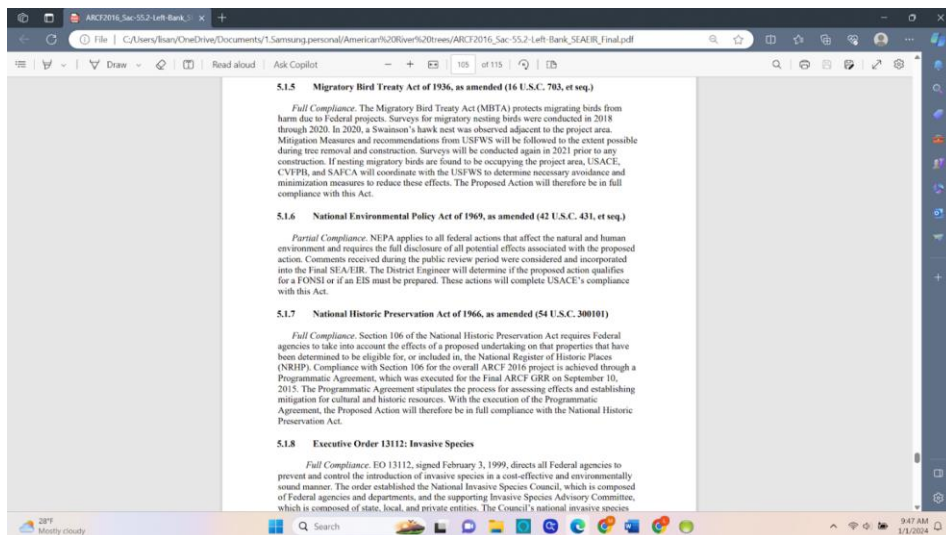
Table 1. Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Action[illegible]Table 1. Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Action

Effect Threshold	Significance Index Mitigation	Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures	Significance Index Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures
		Mitigation Measure T-1a: Implement Measures to Avoid, Minimize, and Compensate for Effects on Shadec Riverine Aquatic Habitat	
Adverse Effect on Special-status Species; Streamers & Bank and Other Special-status Birds	5	Mitigation Measure R2D-1: Implement Measures to Protect Nesting Migratory Birds	13%
Adverse Effect on Special-status Species: Severe	5 (HIGH)	Mitigation Measure R-AT-1: Implement Measures to	13% (HIGH)

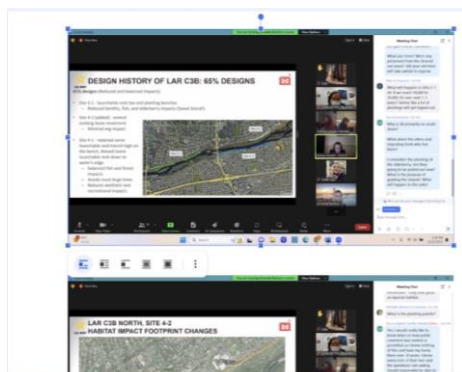


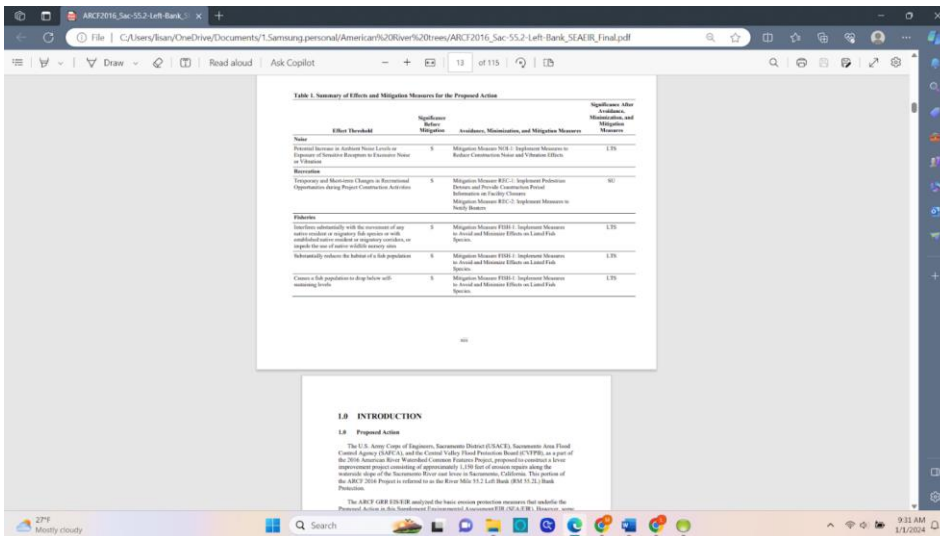
Only “partial compliance” ? How can you be in full compliance when identified Hawks and Eagles are trying to nest in area being disrupted and a historic location is going to be dug up and irrevocably disfigured?



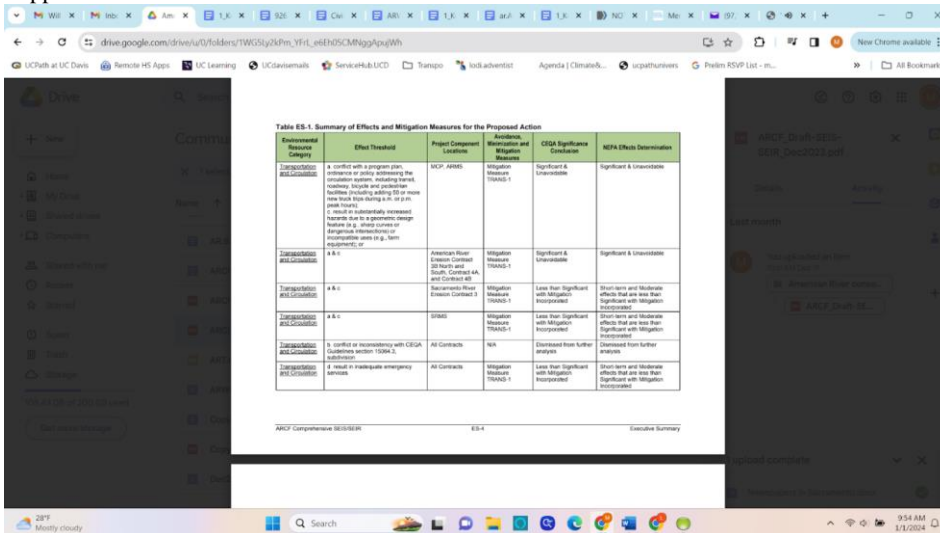


We request objective Peer review and further modification or elimination of any planned activities as intended for:





Supplemental SEIR continues to admit:



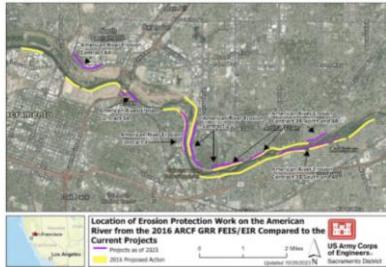


Figure 3.5.2.1. Previously Analyzed and Currently Proposed American River Erosion Protection Sites

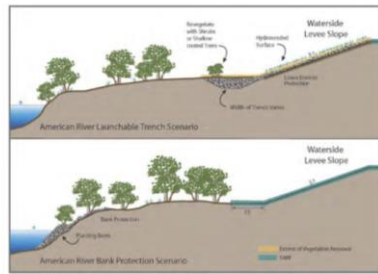


Figure 3.5.2.2. Launchable Trench and Bank Protection Designs

The following are photos and general questions .



high water



dry

Last winter the water was elevated and covering the trail behind where I am standing in this picture. With the wide berm, trees, there was very slow or almost no flow. See how placid it is in the photo above.

Once the surge stopped, the levels receded quickly, sucked up by the well established vegetation, none of which was lost even though several feet of trunks were submerged during the event.

This has been repeatedly observed throughout the years.

I have walked this trail over 35 years

Part of the beauty is the timeless unchanging nature, hard clay, no erosion.



Compare proposed well vegetated and armored 3B on the chopping block for clear cutting in area previously reinforced, stable, previously noted not requiring intervention

with area of intervention near Sac State with sandy already eroding areas, and still not growing in vegetation, no trees in sight, grasses not taking, soft, sandy hard to walk on unsightly soft muddy



wasteland barren regions.



13

What was the justification of cutting well established trees BEHIND the levee? How sad and unseemly and now will be termite palaces, eroding the previous armoring root systems of beautiful shade rendering, carbon neutralizing tree cover that also helped neutralize toxics and air pollution from heavily trafficked H Street bridge. Yet a small band of trees was kept on the ridge at back of the

park for "park like" esthetics? But that doesn't work because the fences, barriers, greatly limit access and are further visually unappealing.

Additional Questions:

Please explain:

<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Oct/07354626787.pdf>

What is the status of 10-15 year monitoring?

“ In 2003, the Corps worked with local, state, and federal agencies to develop a project that established approximately 650 linear feet of shaded riverine aquatic (SRA) habitat at RM 2.4L. The habitat is now under active maintenance by a landscaping contractor and this site will be monitored for 10–15 years after planting. “

Engineering and Hydrology Concerns:

In stark contrast to other sections of river, this basically straight section has proven to resist observable erosion or scour during flood control releases comparable to the new 160 kcfs emergency design flow (eg, 1964's 115 kcfs, 1986's 134 kcfs, 1997's 110 kcfs, & 2017's 80 kcfs releases), as witnessed by local residents and river experts. For this stretch, what, if any, physical observations or measurements does USACE have of either river velocities or erosion at or near the river bank (eg, photographs, video, velocity measurements), or is USACE relying entirely or almost entirely on model simulation output for this large scale tree and habitat removal project?

Please explain if the modelling of Safca and observed river behavior demonstrates low flow rates along the border of the river, what modelling is being used to justify high flow velocity requiring erosion control?

Safca Modelling at new maximum flow 160 shows that velocities along the edge of the bank during high water events is extremely slow 0-2ft/second, That is not considered enough to cause erosion, so how can you explain why that makes the bank is more susceptible to erosion to justify removing 500 trees?

History and modern numerical flow modeling both show that removal of vegetation, or roughness, along river banks increases river velocity at the river banks. If flow velocities at the river bank increase after vegetation and tree removal, won't that worsen the erosion conditions for the river banks, including any habitat or soil above the riprap?

Please explain the logic that your plan calls for development of planting benches that fall in to launchable rock toes, yet you are removing trees and vegetation and then having to replant them in sandy soil, how will this impact heat island effect and habitat interim and long term stability?

13
cont.

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RECREATION CONCERNS:

The American River Parkway is a highly visited "Wild and Scenic Area" attracting more visitors than Yosemite National Park annually. Thousands of birdwatcher and other nature lovers from around the world come to visit.

How will the sharp rocky installations impact recreational activities and access such as kayaking, fishing, wading?

How many linear feet of shoreline will be removed from public access after you install the launchable rock toes, planting benches, and bank armoring with very sharp rocks of unknown source in area 3B?

Will there be more toxic serpentine laden rocks for this infill?

How will this, along with loss of shade, usual habitat and general disruption, impact the beleaguered Salmon life cycle and waterfowl and other wildlife?

Research has linked exposure to trees to both physical and mental restoration. For example, a number of studies have found that exposure to urban forests generally reduces mental and physical stress, anxiety, and depression, and that they improve moods.

How will removal of 500 heritage oak trees impact wildlife as well as the mental health of human visitors? Trees provide several benefits that relate to well-being. Research has also found that tree canopy cover significantly contributes to neighborhood social connection and social support, both important to mental well-being.

The study authors, Thomas Astell-Burt, Ph.D. and Xiaoqi Feng, Ph.D. with the University of Wollongong, in New South Wales, Australia,

EPA/CLIMATE/EQUITY QUESTIONs:

<https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/heat-island-compendium>

Evidence from other similarly mitigated habitats shows that a half century later, there remains substantial habitat loss. **How will we be reaching the EPA goal of reducing heat islands by cutting trees and clearing vegetation with anticipated several years delay before partial restoration might possibly be achieved?**

What protection or mitigation can be provided to the Tile 1 Elementary School locate in the epicenter of this intended work? How will school children be able to concentrate with substantial noise pollution? Will you be providing Ear protection to mitigate the

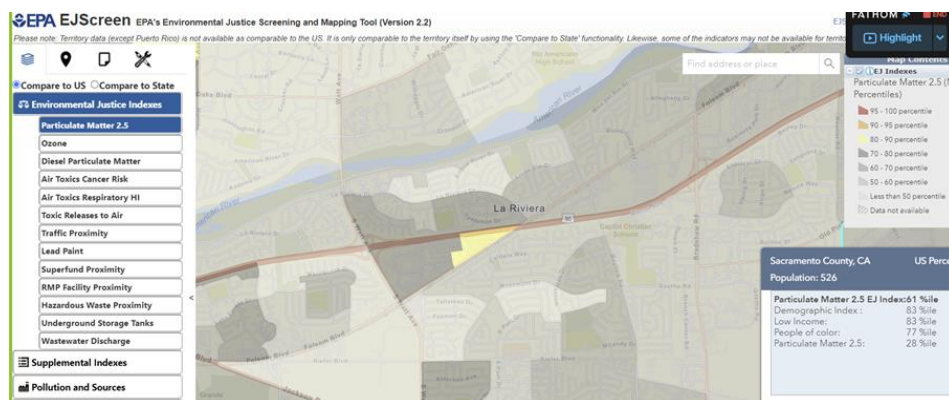
hearing loss and headaches? Will you be providing Hepa Filters and other anti-pollution devices or measures to protect them in their classrooms?

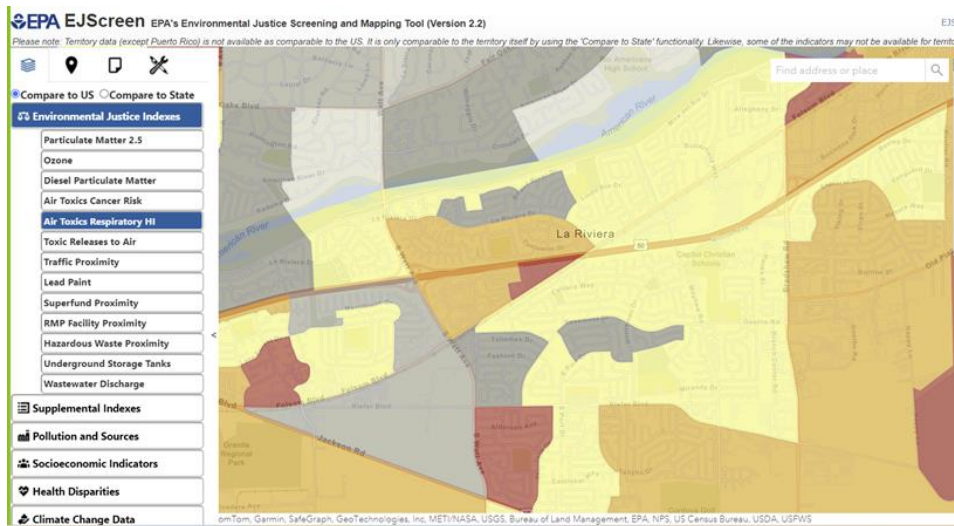
We know from 2017 SMUD report Page 28 specifies the amount of carbon storage in Sac County that forests provide - there is an associated map that identifies the forested area as basically the Blue Oak Woodlands in the Southeast County. There is another section starting on page 41 - Urban Forestry that details additional carbon capturing benefits within the urban areas.

Page 28, 3.1 CURRENT INVENTORY AND FORECAST SCENARIOS

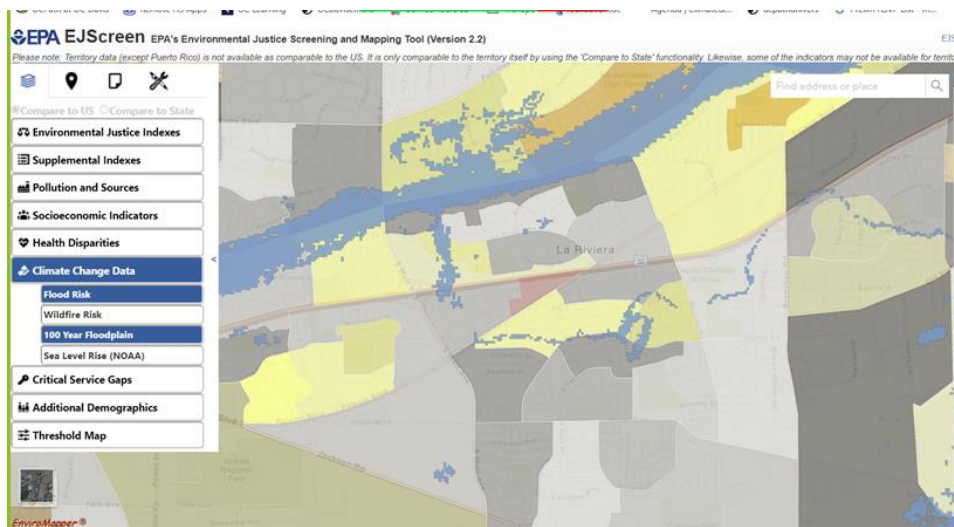
The results of the carbon inventory reflect that there is a substantial quantity of carbon sequestered by lands in Sacramento County. Based on LANDFIRE 2014, Sacramento County lands held roughly 36.3 million MTCO₂e in aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, and soils. General agriculture, shrublands and urban areas make up a majority (approximately 80 percent) of landscape carbon in the 2014 inventory (Figure 14). Forests and grasslands consist of about 16 percent of the landscape carbon in the county with the rest of the LULCs accounting for approximately 3 to 4 percent of the inventory. These results are intuitive given that urban, agriculture and shrubland areas dominate the acreage of the county. Furthermore, although forests only make up approximately 3 percent (Figure 15) of county acreage, their high biomass and soil carbon sequestration rates cause them to account for 8 percent of the 2014 inventory (Figure 14).

It is a move backward to deforest when history has demonstrated deforested regions were MOST susceptible to flooding, and we know forested regions have lower temperature, better air cleaning capacity and water saturation recovery and are more beautiful and offer needed shade for the wildlife on land and in the waters.

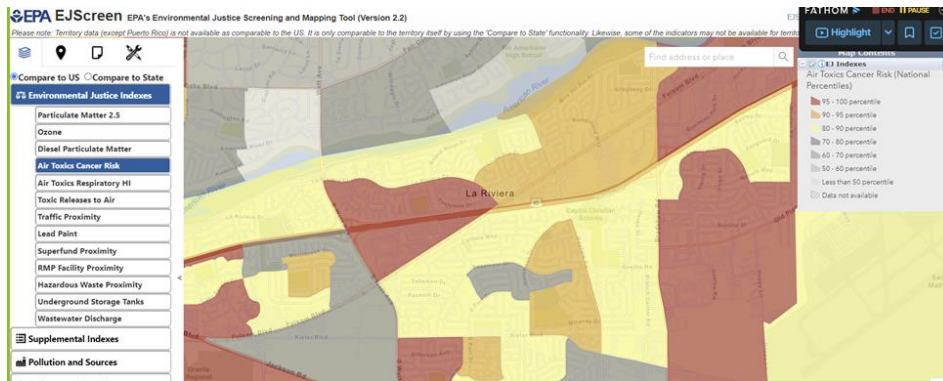




Lower risk particulate matter by river, higher by Watt and Rt 50



100 yr flood risk minimal along our portion of levee



Commented [1]: My opinion is EPA is not up to date on the latest and greatest analyses USBR/NOAA/DWR/USACE have done considering various duration 100/200/1000-yr events and how Folsom would be able to dampen them, so I'd say to not bring this one up.

Note baseline Air toxics risk 95-100% along rt 50, watt corridor, 80th % along South side river, 70th along North Side in areas of planned interventions.

How much will this further exceed EPA standards with as yet not clearly designated staging, heavy equipment maneuvering and staging, potential compromise of Levees with situation of said equipment and accompanying noise, vibration, heavy exhaust compromising residents and habitat along the 3B corridor.

There appears to be a baseline protective effect of the river parkway heavily forested habitat, with natural mitigation of effects of high volume traffic areas high toxics cancer risk along Rt 50 Corridor and Watt Avenue which are at the 95-100% percentile on the EJ Screening tool, but reduced to the 80th percentile closer to the river, what is the predicted impact of this project on heat, air quality, fine particulates, increased cancer risk and risk of aggravation of respiratory disorders.

My daughter lives with lung cancer, the last thing we need is for her to be exposed to increased fine particulates and fugitive dust. What will you do to protect her health and the health of other vulnerable members of our community not only from the intended demolition, but which shall be forever impacted for our lifetimes once the trees are gone?.

The anticipated devastation that contract 3B North and South of the American River Watershed Common Features Project proposes for over a mile of the Riparian Habitat will be a costly loss to the regional ecosystem. Since California became a state in 1850, riparian forest in the Sacramento Valley has declined more than 98% from 800,000 acres to less than 14,000

(Stephen Johnson, Gerald Haslam, and Robert Dawson, *The Great Central Valley: California's Heartland*, p. 96). This rare treasure including trees protected by local ordinances, within urban Sacramento County must be preserved and protected, not decimated due to lack of careful consideration of risks vs benefits.

In same way we now know physiatrists obtain far better outcomes in function, symptom management and return to productive lifestyle for people with spinal conditions than any other specialty, including spine

surgeons, we must take into consideration the power of working With the River and it's natural resources, not AGAINST it.

Thus I urge the Army Corps to reconsider and cease and desist the pending work in areas 3B North and South of the American River.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Merritt MD
Executive Director, MHI

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:49 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices
Attachments: ACOE Comment Letter Final.pdf

From: Laurie Weir <laurieweir@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:03 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Laurie Weir <laurieweir@comcast.net>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Hello,

I am the immediate past president of the American River Natural History Association. The Association is a long standing non-profit whose mission is: To provide opportunities for the visitor that will promote awareness, appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the natural and cultural resources of the Sacramento Region. The Natural History Association manages the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, and is one of the largest providers of environmental education in the Sacramento metropolitan area.

My husband, Jacek Lisiewicz and I have lived over 20 years within minutes of the American River Parkway in Carmichael, California and are long time members of the Carmichael Colony Neighborhood Association.

Over the past several years, I have worked with and observed the work of the Water Forum. The Water Forum has accomplished large scale projects in multiple locations along the American River Parkway that provide salmon spawning and importantly salmon rearing habitat. This work has educated many, many Sacramento residents on the importance of providing varied river shorelines planted with native species, that allow salmon and other wildlife habitat that is

critical to the viability of their species. It is clear that carefully varied, planted, and managed river edges are critical to the sustainability of multiple species that are native to the Parkway.

I am aware of other comments submitted to you voicing concern over the Army Corp's current approach to the Lower American River. I echo Edward Smith's comments (see below) on the erosion control plan for the lower American River.

1 I am deeply concerned that the Army Corps Of Engineers is not taking a more thoughtful approach to the protection of the lower American River. I ask that you stop the current proposed project and work with environmental and community leaders, including members of native tribes with deep historical roots along the American River.

The Army Corps Of Engineers has the opportunity to make a huge difference in how critical animal species, and people, will interact with the American River for years to come. Nothing is set in stone, including your current erosion control plans for the American River. Please take advantage of this important opportunity to change your plans to make a positive difference to improve the environmental sustainability of the American River.

Thank you very much,

Laurie Weir

Edward Smith's Email:

I am alarmed to learn the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is planning to proceed with extreme, so-called "erosion protection" measures across more than six miles of riparian area in the lower American River (hereinafter, "LAR"). While the ecosystem restoration community, including several of your own staff and federal agency acknowledge the value of a more effective and less destructive approach to erosion prevention and protection through engineering with nature strategies (<https://ewn.erdc.dren.mil/>), this project chooses to ignore its own science under the banner of expediency or because "Congress asked us to move ahead." To hear last night (2/22/24) on the news from the ACOE that citizens of the area "just need to be educated" is an insult to our intelligence and sophistication.

Thank you for considering the attached ten pages of comments.

Sincerely,

Edward Smith
Carmichael-by-the-River

Edward Bennett Smith

Subject: Ten pages of Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Date: 2/22/2024

Dear Staff of the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and Department of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River (LAR) components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B which are proposed to be installed in 2025 and 2026.

A To establish my credibility, I am a 27-year career Senior Regional Scientist for The Nature Conservancy and Vice President of the Board of Directors for the American River Natural History Association and Effie Yeaw Nature Center. However, all of the views, opinions and comments represented by this letter are my own and come from me as a citizen of Sacramento County for the past 10 ½ years.

My wife and I live within ½ mile of the American River in Carmichael, and on a daily basis enjoy the peace, tranquility and conservation and recreational services provided by this beautiful reach of the lower American River and its aquatic habitat and riparian woodlands, grasslands and forests. We enjoy hiking, researching, birdwatching, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, bike riding and simply sitting and people-watching along the banks of the American River, from the city of Sacramento to Folsom in the American River Parkway, City, Regional and State Parks and Wild and Scenic areas on both banks of the river.

B I am alarmed to learn the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is planning to proceed with extreme, so-called “erosion protection” measures across more than six miles of riparian area in the lower American River (hereinafter, “LAR”). While the ecosystem restoration community, including several of your own staff and federal agency acknowledge the value of a more effective and less destructive approach to erosion prevention and protection through engineering with nature strategies (<https://ewn.erdcdren.mil/>), this project chooses to ignore its own science under the banner of expediency or because “Congress asked us to move ahead.”

For the Final SEIS/SEIR, please consider analyzing a more complete range of effective and less destructive erosion protection strategies more in alignment with the latest science and technology available to incorporate. Our community deserves better.

The overarching intention of my letter is to encourage ACE to work with interested community and academic stakeholders to revise the current proposed action and find a tried and true set

of solutions that are acceptable to all and avoid a costly and time-consuming legal battle that will delay implementing important and effective erosion reduction strategies, while enhancing the scenic, recreational and conservation values of the riparian forest and woodlands along the LAR.

The Alternatives presented in the draft SEIS/SEIR do not adequately address the reasonable full range of activities required under NEPA and CEQA and are thus in violation of these acts.

However, as this is only a draft, I strongly encourage you to address these shortfalls, with concomitant public meetings and design workshops. I would be happy to help with this effort.

The American River Parkway and its woodlands and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. As I mentioned previously, my wife and I live within ½ mile of the American River in Carmichael, and on a daily basis enjoy the peace, tranquility and conservation and recreational services provided by this beautiful reach of the lower American River and its aquatic habitat and riparian woodlands, grasslands and forests. We enjoy hiking, researching, birdwatching, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, bike riding and simply sitting and people-watching along the banks of the American River, from the city of Sacramento to the City of Folsom in the American River Parkway, City, Regional and State Parks and Wild and Scenic areas on both banks of the river.

I have reviewed the documents supplied by USACOE and my interpretation of your data and that of your consultants indicates to me that I do not support the preferred selection of utterly

“necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River, let alone downstream water quality impacts to several species of federally listed, candidate and species of conservation concern, as well as CA state listed and protected species of fish and other wildlife in the American and Sacramento Rivers and the San Francisco Bay and Delta.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

My reading of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B are in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 701–706, and in violation of meeting either the letter or intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et Case: 3:21-cv-00306, and possibly Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”), 33 U.S.C. § 1344, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”), 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2), and corresponding administrative rules. ACE and DWR may also be vulnerable to the citizen suit provision of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. § 1540(g), for Defendants’ violations of Section 7 of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2). If allowed to proceed, the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and

4A and 4B will have significant negative immediate and cumulative impacts on protected “waters of the United States,” both direct and indirect, as well as on wildlife, outdoor recreation, protected public lands, private conservation lands, family farms, and property values.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage. For example, in a study commissioned by the American River Flood Control District & Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (MBK Associates 2018), the consultants identified seven areas along the LAR that could be vulnerable to erosion during flood events. Over this 11-mile stretch, which is beyond the scope of the current ACE and DWR draft SEIS and SEIR, there is far fewer than six miles of LAR in need of extreme bank hardening (Figure 1).

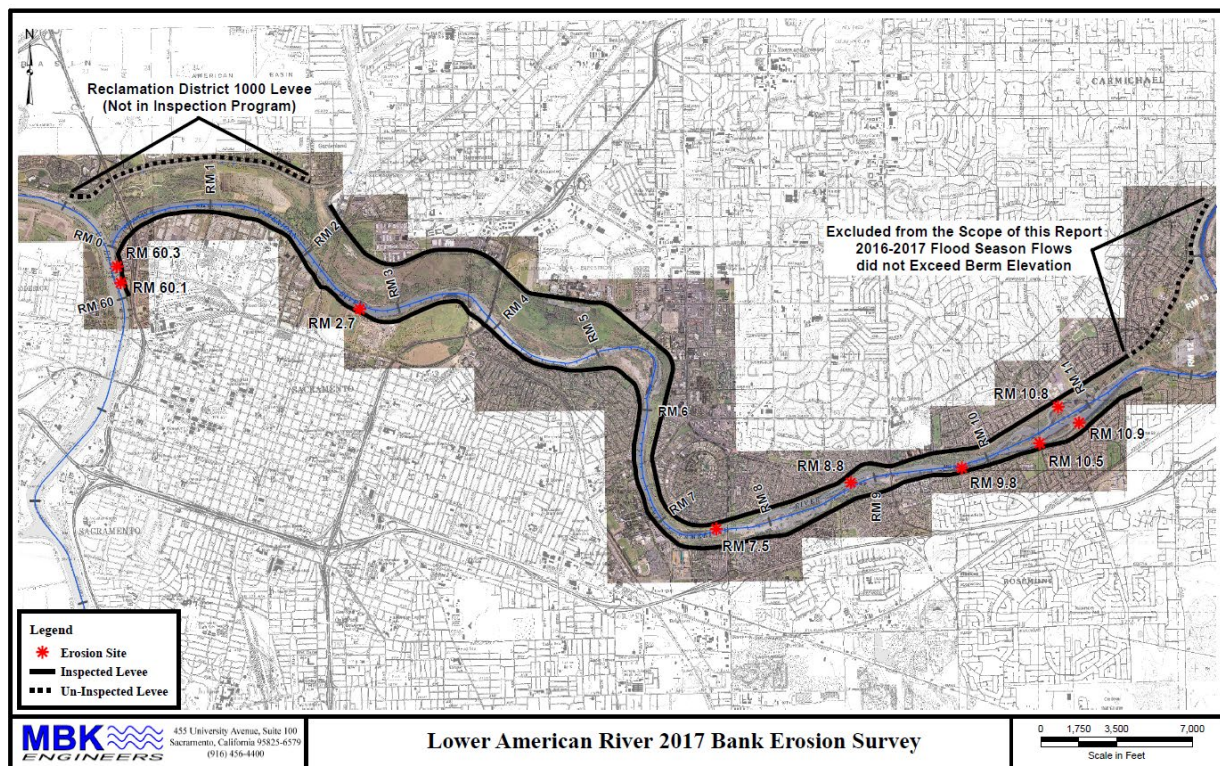


Figure 1

Figure 1 Potential erosion sites identified along the LAR by MBK Associates (2018).

The velocity contours for two flood stage flows in the Ayres Associates' report show that the bank velocities are much lower (1-6 fps) in Figure 2, with shear stress at or below tolerance of intact vegetation ranging from turf grasses to intact native hardwood vegetation (Figure 3).

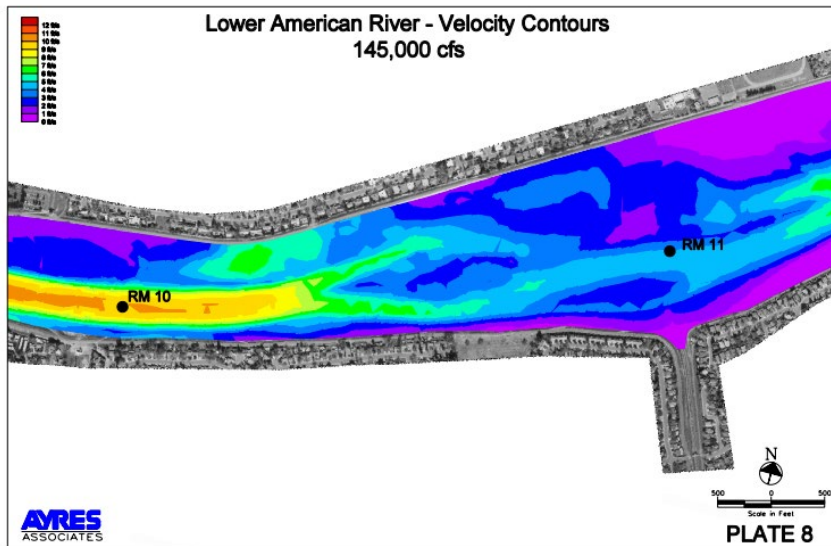
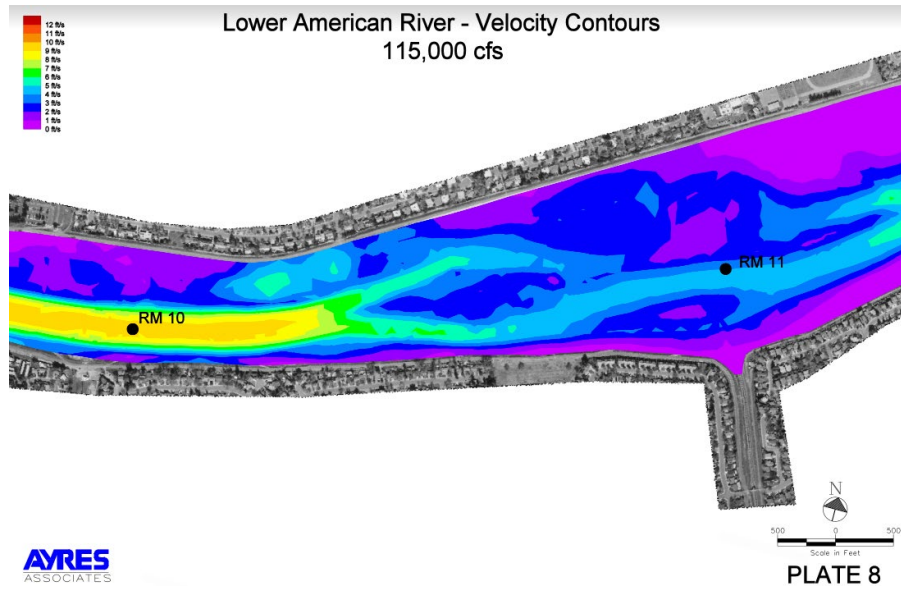


Figure 2 Modeled river velocity contours for specific reaches of the LAR (river mile 10 to river mile 11) by Ayres Associates (2017)

Table 4-4. Permissible shear and velocity for selected lining materials (Fischenich 2001)

Permissible Shear and Velocity for Selected Lining Materials ¹				
Boundary Category	Boundary Type	Permissible Shear Stress (lb/sq ft)	Permissible Velocity (ft/sec)	Citation(s)
<u>Soils</u>	Fine colloidal sand	0.02 - 0.03	1.5	A
	Sandy loam (noncolloidal)	0.03 - 0.04	1.75	A
	Alluvial silt (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	2	A
	Silty loam (noncolloidal)	0.045 - 0.05	1.75 - 2.25	A
	Firm loam	0.075	2.5	A
	Fine gravels	0.075	2.5	A
	Stiff clay	0.26	3 - 4.5	A, F
	Alluvial silt (colloidal)	0.26	3.75	A
	Graded loam to cobbles	0.38	3.75	A
	Graded silts to cobbles	0.43	4	A
	Shales and hardpan	0.67	6	A
<u>Gravel/Cobble</u>	1-in.	0.33	2.5 - 5	A
	2-in.	0.67	3 - 6	A
	6-in.	2.0	4 - 7.5	A
	12-in.	4.0	5.5 - 12	A
<u>Vegetation</u>	Class A turf	3.7	6 - 8	E, N
	Class B turf	2.1	4 - 7	E, N
	Class C turf	1.0	3.5	E, N
	Long native grasses	1.2 - 1.7	4 - 6	G, H, L, N
	Short native and bunch grass	0.7 - 0.95	3 - 4	G, H, L, N
	Reed plantings	0.1-0.6	N/A	E, N
	Hardwood tree plantings	0.41-2.5	N/A	E, N
<u>Temporary Degradable RECPs</u>	Jute net	0.45	1 - 2.5	E, H, M
	Straw with net	1.5 - 1.65	1 - 3	E, H, M
	Coconut fiber with net	2.25	3 - 4	E, M
	Fiberglass roving	2.00	2.5 - 7	E, H, M
<u>Non-Degradable RECPs</u>	Unvegetated	3.00	5 - 7	E, G, M
	Partially established	4.0-6.0	7.5 - 15	E, G, M
	Fully vegetated	8.00	8 - 21	F, L, M
<u>Riprap</u>	6 - in. d ₅₀	2.5	5 - 10	H
	9 - in. d ₅₀	3.8	7 - 11	H
	12 - in. d ₅₀	5.1	10 - 13	H
	18 - in. d ₅₀	7.6	12 - 16	H
	24 - in. d ₅₀	10.1	14 - 18	E

Figure 3 Lining Materials and their permissible shear stress and river velocities.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts, using appropriately sited lining materials such as undisturbed hardwood riparian and other vegetation strategies identified in Figure 3.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone. This is a blatant example of not using the best available science and violates the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 701–706, and is in violation of meeting either the letter or intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et Case: 3:21-cv-00306, and possibly Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”), 33 U.S.C. § 1344, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”), 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2), and corresponding administrative rules.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant

impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees.

Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable to flooding and erosion, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely if not more likely to put us at risk in higher water flows as conducting no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms [31,300 cfs over March 10-15, 2023]).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events, and the downstream effects of silt and water turbidity on listed species have not been disclosed.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A more fine-grained, “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need. The USA taxpayers do not like to throw away good money after poorly spent dollars, and Congress also would not support such a boondoggle. However, they will be notified.

I am personally very worried about being able to kayak and swim safely in the LAR anywhere above or adjacent to where the proposed activities would be installed. I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much-loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River.

H | In the 2016 GRR comment responses, ACE said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were denuded with removal of all vegetation. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too? Your track record in this area is abysmal, and the practice of Adaptive Management would require you to learn from your mistakes.

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry-sourced riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River. These cumulative impacts have not been adequately addressed in the draft SEIS/SEIR in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 701–706, and in violation of meeting either the letter or intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et Case: 3:21-cv-00306, and possibly Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”), 33 U.S.C. § 1344, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”), 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2), and corresponding administrative rules.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE

Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Finally, it is unclear to me how well the proposed project and its impacts have been discussed with Native American Tribes, and the tradeoffs between the proscribed measures versus more nature-based design strategies disclosed. What impacts will be revetment have on cultural sites? Have all areas been surveyed completely? Is this project in compliance with the American Antiquities Act?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to hearing from you and working toward a more complete range of alternative actions to safeguard the health and prosperity of the Lower American River and all of its inhabitants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "EBSmith".

Edward Bennett Smith

Carmichael, CA

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:32 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Re: American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: David Ingram <David@tennantingram.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re: American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

I wish to direct these comments to the draft SEIS/SEIR documents concerning the lower American River projects, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. Not only has it provided a lifetime of recreational enjoyment for myself and my family, I have spent a good portion of the past 3 years heavily involved in volunteer efforts to clean it up after decades of unchecked abuse. My passion for restoring and protecting the Parkway erupted a couple of years ago, leading to my decision to become a Board Member with the **Sacramento Area Creeks Council**. Moreover, in January 2023, I joined 3 amazing friends and volunteer comrades in launching **River City Waterway Alliance**. In only 13 months, this volunteer group has hosted 360 waterway cleanups in the Sacramento area and removed a whopping **1,236,500 pounds of trash**.

As further background, I live on Garden Highway along the Sacramento River and experienced the Natomas Levee Improvement Project work right in my front yard. This allowed me to gain vast knowledge about these types of projects and witness first-hand the widely varying expert opinions regarding the impact of vegetation on levees. It's obvious, the science is not settled. Therefore, I strongly question whether the proposed "bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clear-cut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. Many qualified experts agree with my opinion, as I am sure you are all aware.

I do not support the devastating methods proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns. I fail to see how the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, or provides adequate mitigation. The analysis also fails to adequately consider feasible alternatives to the “unavoidable” impacts, including the consideration of alternative methods to achieve the Project’s ultimate goals.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA still requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR fails to meet this requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, finely tuned approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The American River Parkway is often referred to as the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated as a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B would cause substantial damage to this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4 until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

Thank you.

David Ingram

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:30 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Christie Vallance <christiev44@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

Concern: I just noticed that in your authored book for International Guidelines on Nature and Nature Based Features for Flood Risk Management under your Engineering with Nature Program, a significant principle is to identify solutions that produce multiple benefits that “enhance quality of human life, advance social equity and increase environmental integrity” (p 23). Explain to the public how project 3b will implement this principal that you provide to your other projects?

Respectfully,

Christie Vallance

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:30 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Waterway destruction

From: Brandt Holland <brandt1111@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:56 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Waterway destruction

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed

project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this

protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as

“scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of

all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much

MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Brandt Holland

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:25 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:45 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, Ca

1 | Jeffrey F. Mount, *California Rivers and Streams: The Conflict Between Fluvial Process and Land Use* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 105, 302, and 304.

viewed as composed primarily of the parent material or bedrock. The C horizon, which is usually light colored due to the absence of abundant organic material, is where the initial breakdown of the bedrock is occurring. In between the A and C horizons is the B horizon. Material leached from the A horizon by percolating water accumulates in the B horizon, collecting as pockets of clay-rich material. Since the material leached from the alluviation zone accumulates in the B horizon, it is known as the *illuvial* zone.

In perhaps the ultimate exercise in button-sorting known to the physical sciences, the soil scientists (or pedologists) have sliced up the soil classification pie into myriad, infinitesimal divisions. It would be pointless to review the entire soil classification scheme here. Explanation of even the simplest classification groups, like *intrazonal hydromorphic planosols*, is beyond the goals of this text. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has created a complex hierarchical classification scheme that recognizes ten orders, twenty-nine common suborders, and innumerable great groups and subgroups. The combinations are endless and, except for experienced pedologists, complicated to use. Suffice it to point out that these combinations reflect a variety of physical and chemical characteristics of soils as well as the climate zone in which they develop.

It should be no surprise that soils in California vary greatly in their thickness, structure, and composition. Climate, vegetation, topography, bedrock, and time all play a role in the development of soils. In general, older soils from shallow slopes in wetter climates tend to be thick, organic-rich, and better developed. Younger soils from more arid climates with steeper topography are thinner, with more poorly developed layering (fig. 6.3). Most important for the rivers of California is the resistance of soils to erosion. Thick, well-developed soils that have well-established vegetative covers tend to be more resistant to erosion. The binding action of roots and clays along with high infiltration capacities increase a soil's resistance to erosion and reduce its contribution of sediment into rivers. Poorly developed, relatively thin soils, whether due to climate, bedrock, or bad land use practices, tend to erode quickly, producing high sediment yields.

HOW EROSION WORKS

The transfer of the by-products of physical and chemical weathering into California's rivers takes place primarily by direct runoff of rainfall. In many steep watersheds with highly unstable soils and bedrock, mass wasting processes (discussed below) may contribute significant amounts of sediment during and after large rainfall events. Snowmelt, groundwater discharge, and subsurface flow contribute only minor amounts of sediment to rivers in California.

LEARNING THE LESSONS

Since a straightened river travels a shorter distance, the slope, velocity, and stream power of the river are increased. The break in slope at the upstream end of the straightened reach acts like a knickpoint. Increased competence and headward migration of this knickpoint can produce scouring upstream of the straightened channel; decline in competence that occurs at the downstream end of the straightened reach can lead to local deposition of material and aggradation of the channel, ultimately reducing its flow capacity.

Irrespective of changes in channel pattern or gradient, simply widening or deepening channel reaches to accommodate larger flows can also trigger numerous hydraulic changes that may ultimately undo the original alterations. Enlarged channels are usually designed to handle a specific, very large flow. During the design phase the impact of lower discharge flows is commonly ignored since they will clearly be contained by the channel. Yet the size and shape of a natural river channel is a product of the more frequent, intermediate flows associated with bankfull stage conditions, not the very large or extreme event. An increase in a channel's cross section through dredging produces a decline in the competence of these intermediate flows, because velocity and overall stream power are decreased. In this way, the channel is not capable of handling the sediment load that is delivered to it, resulting in localized deposition. In most cases, the channel size will be reduced until a cross section capable of handling the sediment load is restored.

The pitfalls of channel modification are illustrated in urban areas throughout California. The San Lorenzo River, which runs through downtown Santa Cruz, illustrates this problem well (fig. 15.10). Widespread flooding in downtown Santa Cruz in 1955 created a demand for extensive flood control projects in the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed a series of levees and channel alterations that would afford the downtown area protection from the 100-year flood. The design developed by the corps was the blunt instrument approach most popular at the time. The San Lorenzo River channel was straightened and, more important, deepened and widened. All riparian vegetation was removed from the riverbanks to reduce roughness; channel walls were lined with concrete and riprap to enhance stability. This "new and improved" river became a nearly straight concrete ditch—the pinnacle of river engineering efficiency.

Fig. 15.10. Problems associated with channel modification along the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz. Top: Channel was dredged, straightened, and lined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase flood capacity. Bottom: Channel aggradation within improved reach of river led to significant reduction in flow capacity. Up until recently, the city spent millions of dollars yearly to dredge the channel, only to have it refill during winter floods. Photographs from Griggs 1982.

Less than 10 years after completion of the project, the San Lorenzo River had attempted to restore its profile by filling this ditch with more than 12 million cubic feet of sediment. In the end, it was calculated that the channel could only handle the 25- to 30-year flood. Millions of dollars and the complete destruction of the river had provided little to no real improvement in flood protection. To deal with this, Santa Cruz initiated a very expensive maintenance program. Up until recently, every year, like swallows returning to San Juan Capistrano, D9 tractors rumbled into the San Lorenzo ditch to push the sediment around into little piles, hoping that the next winter's flows would scour it and move it away. Not surprisingly, during very high discharge events, such as occurred during 1982 and 1983, a great deal of the sediment is scoured, temporarily increasing the channel capacity. However, the amount of scouring does not substantially increase the capacity of the channel to handle extreme floods.

Impact of Levees

According to the Army Corps of Engineers, there are over 5,000 miles of levees in California. In the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta alone, there are more than 1,100 miles of levees. These levees have turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. On the positive side, many levee projects have saved local communities from regular inundation and the associated Draconian restrictions of the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, the nation's most productive agricultural region, the Central Valley, would be flooded on a regular basis were it not for the extensive levee system. This is especially true of the delta. As a result of intense farming and associated oxidation of peat-rich soils, the elevation of large tracts of land in the delta has been declining steadily. Today, thousands of acres of farmland lie as much as 15 feet below sea level. If there were no levees, the constant interaction between freshwater flowing in from the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and marine waters pushed inland by wind and tides would keep much of the region underwater all year, making it impossible to farm. In addition, the massive pumping of freshwater out of the delta into the Central Valley and State Water projects would be impossible without the levee system. Agriculture and urban development have benefited greatly from the leveeing of the rivers.

On the negative side, the proliferation of levees along California's rivers has enhanced flooding hazards in some areas. Moreover, even those levees that are carefully engineered and maintained by the corps will eventually fail. The concentrated destruction associated with these failures and the inherent difficulty in predicting failures can make levees an untrustworthy partner in flood management.

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 4:34 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

O. S. Scheifele, 1928. "Protection of River Banks and Levees." *The Canadian Engineer*.

The Canadian Engineer

A Weekly Paper for Civil Engineers and Contractors

Protection of River Banks and Levees

Employment of Angular Submerged Willow Tree Planting to Stop Erosion and Slides of Earth Banks of Rivers, Canals, Lakes, Levees, Cuts and Fills, and for General Flood Control—Some Projects in Canada and the United States Described

By O. S. SCHEIFELE
Waterloo, Ont.

MANY civil engineers and engineers in the employ of governments, railroads and various other big corporations have been of great service in assisting to perfect a simple and natural process as a substitute for the many other methods, such as timber and sheet piling, concrete or stone, rip-rap, etc., to keep rivers, creeks, lakes and

contractors were privileged to bid on solution such as stone, rip-rap or concrete to comply with the laws of the corporations where no contract could be let for a patented system without competitive bidding.

Many engineers who will read this article will remember other articles published during the last four years detailing



FIG. 1—PROJECT ON MISSOURI RIVER, KANSAS CITY DISTRICT

earth cuts within their present area or channel at a small cost.

To verify this, the writer will cite various individual contracts awarded under competitive bidding where outside

the theory of planting willow logs or poles in trenches in a horizontal or angular position in harmony with the slopes of a river or lake shore bank on a 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 degree angle with the result that a tree and root growth will develop the



FIG. 2—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Illustration Shows Original Formation Along Bank of River Near Dubuque, Iowa



FIG. 3—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Willow Poles 40 ft. Long in Position to be Protected With Brush, Stones and Wire Fencing

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entire length of each pole planted whether it be 5 or 50 ft. long. This gives many advantages over individual vertical tree planting to reinforce an earth slope.

Advantages Over Vertical Tree Planting

First. For example, the poles are applied on a lake shore or river bank, the butt end of the pole being set into the river bottom or creek at toe of incline bank in harmony with

and sun to sustain life throughout the flood period, and the most extensive root development will be between the low and high water level where needed to resist erosion.

Engineers and others can study the drawings and cuts of various constructions and learn from them how the writer can immediately stop erosion with temporary artificial protection until the tree and root growth is advanced sufficiently to withstand an occasional flood or storm. Formation and attack varies largely, and each formation will require individual study to meet existing conditions with a silt-collecting construction to give immediate service. The writer is grateful for the privilege of being allowed to demonstrate the system on various formations, and is glad to report that results have been very gratifying on most of the formations allotted for an application of the system.

Gatineau River Construction

For cross comparison, I will cite the Gatineau River construction for the Dominion Government in the Ottawa district. For stone rip-rap on identically the same formations adjacent to the writer's work upstream the Government paid \$16 per lin. ft. of river bank while I received approximately \$3.50 per lin. ft. The one construction has now stood the test for three years and the second two seasons, and I feel



FIG. 4—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT
Brush Mattress for Protection of Willow Poles and Bank

the desired slope with the result that the tree growth cannot slide and will immediately assist to prep and support in giving the bank the proper slope and rigidity.

Second. Where logs are placed along a water course at approximately 4-ft. intervals, the ice and water are greatly hindered from creating a straight hedge after the desired slope is made.

Third. A joint row of trees 40 ft. in length growing on a 35 degree slope will never fall, roots and all, into the river.

Fourth. In the average soil formation it would be very difficult to grow an individual tree owing to lack of moisture 20 ft. above the water level. With the joint system of tree planting, the foot of the willow logs is constantly resting submerged below the low water mark, and owing to the joint circulation of a score of trees growing vertically from the willow log, the trees at the extreme upper part of the pole will grow quite as prolifically as those close to moisture.



FIG. 5—MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT, ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT
CONSTRUCTION NEAR DUBUQUE, IOWA

Fifth. The last and most valuable advantage is shown on many water courses such as the Mississippi, Missouri and Gatineau Rivers, and others which have their source in the mountains or in the extreme north and which have an annual second flood in late May or June when the growing season is on. Tree and vegetation growth are drowned between the ordinary water level and the high water mark and no resisting root fibre exists to retard erosion. By planting trees in the novel position a portion will always be above high water level and supply the entire length with sufficient air



FIG. 6—CUT CONTROL NEAR HORNELL, N.Y., ERIE RAILROAD

secured it is past all danger from flood attacks owing to advanced growth and root development.

In 1926, as an experiment, the city of Buffalo awarded the writer a contract amounting to approximately \$27,000, based at \$4 per lin. ft. of river bank. In 1927 I was again awarded a contract by the city of Buffalo for \$25,000 at \$4 per lin. ft. But I was obliged to secure some by competitive bidding to comply with city laws since my system is patented. Stone rip-rap was considered the next cheapest solution and bids were asked and advertised on stone rip-rap. The lowest bid on same was \$19 per lin. ft. of bank.

Mississippi and Missouri Rivers

The writer was privileged to demonstrate his system on both the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers last fall for the U.S. Engineering Department, which will have to produce the same desired results as their standard rivetment and stone rip-rap river bank protection. Both contracts have been executed and must be maintained for three years, and in each case the cost is less than half the cost of U.S. systems.

The various cuts are typical views from some of the constructions. Fig. 1 shows in the foreground the original formations on the Missouri River east of Kansas City, where the system was applied in the fall of 1927. Fig. 1 also shows bank sloped 3 to 1 and angular willow planting applied with construction nearly complete. The distance from crest of bank to low water level on slope is approximately 40 ft. where willow poles are planted and protected as detailed on accompanying diagram.

In addition to a single silt collecting mat of brush, stone and cross-woven wire fencing as shown on diagram at toe of willow poles, 1 applied to sections which extend approximately 30 ft. into the river beyond the original toe of bank and water level which should give equal service to U.S. standard river rivetment work, to a 30-ft. depth, which was considered extensive enough at portion of river in question. Where deeper scour is expected additional sections should be added.

Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5 are Mississippi views near Dubuque, Iowa. Fig. 2 shows original formation; Fig. 3, bank sloped approximately 2 to 1 and willow poles in position; Fig. 4, local willow brush over top of willow poles, extending 20 ft. into the river to protect under scour; Fig. 5, work complete in accordance with the diagram.

Figs. 6 and 7 show the Erie R.R. near Hornel, N.Y., on a creek cut control. The creek in question is approximately two miles in length from source to mouth and rises 900 ft. At intervals of heavy rains up the valley the flood waters carry silt of various kinds, which they deposit on the railroad, causing frequent delay in transportation. Steam shovel



FIG. 7—RESULTS OBTAINED IN THREE YEARS
ERIE RAILROAD PROJECT

operations have been resorted to several times and basins have been excavated for the next occurrence. Each operation became more expensive owing to lack of space to deposit material. Concrete dams had been considered at intervals up the creek, but the cost was almost prohibitive. In the spring of 1925 the writer planted approximately 60,000 running ft. of white willow poles on the slopes of the creek channels and to protect the extensive planting from being carried down stream in case of an early flood before the trees became fortified by a few years' growth, he resorted to local young trees and built timber catch-basins at intervals. The result was that the basins have been sufficient to date, although most of them are kind of silt.

Fig. 6 shows a timber basin and three years' growth of willow forcing its way up through the accumulated silt. As the timber walls weaken the willow growth gets stronger and a permanent solution is assured. Instead of the creek bed cutting deeper, it is filling up.

Fig. 7 shows the growth obtained on upper regions of creek and the practical impossibility of the creek getting out of its present channel. Both banks are lined with trees and the creek channel is gradually becoming lined with roots, limiting the possibilities of deeper cutting.

Highway Bank Protection

Figs. 8 and 9 illustrate results attained for the Ontario Department of Highways near St. Thomas, Ont. The spring flood of 1925 eroded the river bank to the extent of 11 ft. and almost destroyed the roadbed approaching the bridge. An elaborate concrete wing dam was contemplated and

finally the angular willow planting system was applied at the small cost of \$2 per lin. ft. of river bank. Fig. 8 shows formations at time of construction and Fig. 9 shows results attained in two years. Maintenance expires in spring of 1928 and all engineers familiar with demonstration claim a permanent solution.

Fig. 10 shows results attained on Lake Erie near Port Stanley. A few years previous to 1924 the Dominion Govern-



FIG. 8—ONTARIO HIGHWAY PROJECT ON RIVER NEAR
ST. THOMAS, ONT.

Original Formation Before Construction Was Undertaken

ment built 200 ft. of sheet-piling groins at 500-ft. intervals to protect summer homes, but with no results. The cut shows how the earth bank had receded beyond the Government groin, necessitating the removal of many cottages. In the fall of 1924 the writer demonstrated his angular willow planting and Fig. 10 shows results attained in three years. For temporary protection a lumber retaining wall or sand trap was built near the water line on the beach with results to date showing extensive beach reclaimed. The sand trap has



FIG. 9—SHOWING GROWTH IN FIVE YEARS AT PROJECT NEAR
ST. THOMAS, ONT.

elevated the beach approximately 5 ft. and the water has receded double the width of original beach.

Erie Canal Project

Figs. 11 and 12 illustrate results on the Erie Canal in the State of New York, near Clyde. Fig. 11 shows original formation in the fall of 1926. This bank was planted to willow as shown in diagram on an approximate 2 to 1 slope, while Fig. 12 shows results attained in 12 months at an approximate cost of \$3 per lin. ft. of bank with a three-year maintenance guarantee.

Fig. 13 shows results attained in three years from horizontal tree planting on a private farm for a windbreak or shelter belt. Only one continuous row of willow poles was placed in an ordinary plowed furrow and then slightly covered with earth. Results far exceed individual vertical tree



FIG. 13—LAKE ERIE PROJECT AT PORT STANLEY
Results Obtained in Three Years. Note the Lumber Sand Trap

planting. First, there is no tree or stake sticking up in the air to be whipped about by strong winds and to be kept alive by disconnected roots. Secondly, seedlings or cuttings supplied by nurseries of Government forestry farms are small and of weak vitality. If weather conditions are not favorable immediately after planting they are burnt or dried up by sun or strong winds and results are often discouraging on the treeless farm.

If poles of any length varying in thickness from 2 to 4 in. are planted in shallow trenches similar to the planting of potatoes, readers can be assured that results will far exceed individual vertical planting, providing the poles or limbs are cut and planted in proper seasons. Equally satisfactory results can be obtained from any of the cottonwood and poplar family of trees as from the willow.

To demonstrate the theory that poles planted horizontally give better results than cuttings. Many readers of this



FIG. 11—ORIGINAL FORMATION NEAR CLYDE, N.Y., NEW YORK
STATE ERIE CANAL PROJECT

article have noticed piles of cordwood and poles of varying diameter. The smaller limbs soon burn where often some of the bigger limbs start to sprout and keep growing well into summer even when not in contact with any earth whatever. The stronger vitality and extra moisture in the thicker wood causes this. If 2 or 3 ft. of sprouts can be produced from the vitality of a log not in contact with any moisture except rain and dew, what might be expected if this same log was resting an inch below good cultivated land? Roots as well as limbs would develop along the entire length of poles and from 3 to 6 ft. in length the first season.

The forestry branch of the Ontario Government, at the writer's request, made demonstrations for comparison between individual vertical and horizontal planting on pure blow sand to prevent sand dunes from covering good farm land and property. An official report the first year stated that individual planting was largely a failure, while horizontal pole planting is a marked success. Prospects are bright for reforesting drifting sand dunes. An average growth of 3 ft. was attained and roots were traced to a distance of 15 ft. from the buried logs, seeking after moisture.

Mississippi Flood Control

The biggest problem in the United States to-day for engineers and others to solve is how to reinforce and elevate the levees that a disaster similar to that of last spring cannot occur again. Fig. 14 is a view personally secured near Memphis, Tenn. in the early part of June last. The big flood was then playing havoc in the lower valley but was fast receding in this district. An extensive tour was made to study flood conditions. Many sections of the huge levees were extensively eroded and partly washed away by the flood waters. Without doubt some of the levees inspected would



FIG. 12—NEW YORK STATE PROJECT, RESULTS OBTAINED IN
12 MONTHS

have been completely washed away had not the railroads operating over the levee shown in the illustration and the State of Arkansas provided an army of men and trainloads of sandbags to stop the destruction of huge waves and prevent the river from eating its way through these levees, which are built of pure river silt. After the thin layer of soil and root fibers is lapped away mostly by wave action, this loose soil has very slight resisting power and many breaks occur before the river runs over the crest, cut away before erosion could be stopped with sandbags as shown or cut, as it is impossible to have material and labor along the hundreds of miles of levees at the critical moment.

With the assurance that levees do break before the water goes over the top, the building of higher and thicker levees will not make them positively proof against destruction. They should be reinforced, at least on the river side, by some method that has a stronger resistance to wave action than Bermuda grass. Concrete and stone rip-rap are two methods, but the cost would be too great. Many engineers are favorably inclined towards tree growth and others are opposed for various reasons. First, experience has shown that where a clump of trees were allowed to spring up on the river face of levees eddies were caused and erosion started down stream from trees. Second, levees must be constantly patrolled for the detection of burrowing animals, to prevent them from cutting a tunnel. The crawfish or crab seems to be the most destructive in lower regions where the river flows on a higher level than the surrounding country. In these regions the writer would strongly advise the angular planting of willows on the land side of levees. The crawfish do not operate on a dry levee 11 months in the year and only cut tunnels where they have water following them.

Willow Extensive Root System

Certain species of trees are barred by many of our cities for boulevard and lawn planting owing to the fact that they

penetrate sewer and storm drains with their roots and completely block drain pipes of large diameter. If trees of this nature were planted extensively and systematically along the levees where the crawfish is harmful owing to its minute tunnels, it seems logical that willow or poplar roots would plug these tunnels more efficiently than mere plugging on the surface, since roots have been known to follow a tile drain over 100 ft. and completely block it in one season.



FIG. 13—PRAIRIE WIND BREAK, RESULTS OBTAINED IN 3 YEARS

It was interesting to inspect various sections of the levees after the big flood. Wherever a heavy stand of native willows or other forest trees were growing in the burrow pits and on the land between the river the erosion from wave action and current was very slight and on miles of levee where tree growth existed no injury was caused whatever. On the contrary, where land was cleared and there were no obstructions to break the waves, injury and destruction were evident along the entire distance.

With these conditions as evidence, it is clear that tree growth should be encouraged along each levee to stop the action of waves and currents. If the levees were reforested with angular tree planting and the entire face supported from toe to crest with domestic willow poles spaced at

approximately 4 ft. intervals, there is no doubt that the score of trees springing from each buried log would soon make the whole face of the levee immune to erosion and burrowing animals. Each log would be a support from base to crest. The danger pointed out by some engineers regarding the formation of eddies cannot be realized when a continuous and



FIG. 14—VIEW ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEAR MEMPHIS, TENN.

even tree growth springs up over the entire slope. Erosion would cease and reclamation of silt would collect and make the levees thicker.

For private agricultural gains the writer has had experience for 25 years on earth levees building for river control and 100 per cent. of the success attained is due to willow planting in conjunction with levees to make them immune to erosion and burrowing animals.

With four years of experience in the planting of willow by the novel angular system on a score of varying formations, many engineers estimate that the system is a big asset to the country. To date, no construction has been executed without the writer's personal supervision.

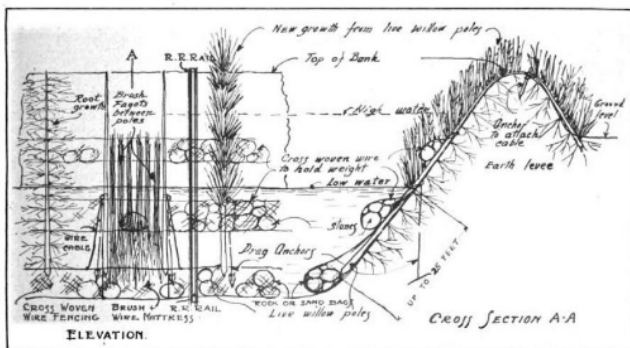


FIG. 15—SKETCH SHOWING SYSTEM OF RIVER CONTROL BY WILLOW POLE PLANTING

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:22 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy (November 2016), Appendix D. Vegetation Management Strategy

Annalisa Louise Batanides Tuel. 2018. "Levee Vegetation Management in California: An Overview of Law, Policy, and Science, and Recommendations for Addressing Vegetation Management Challenges," *Environs*

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:17 PM Josh Thomas <joshjthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

J.P. Dwyer and D.R. Larsen, 1997. "Value of Woody River Corridors in Levee Protection Along the Missouri River in 1993."

Elizabeth A. Cook, 2003. "Missouri River Flood of 1993: Role of Woody Corridor Width in Levee Protection." *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*.

Rood, S. B., Bigelow, S. G., Polzin, M. L., Gill, K. M., and Coburn, C. A. (2015). Biological bank protection: trees are more effective than grasses at resisting erosion from major river floods. *Ecohydrol.*, 8: 772–779. Doi: 10.1002/eco.1544.

Council on Environmental Quality, "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations," (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

People ex rel. Department of Public Works v. Bosio, 47 Cal. App. 3d 495

California Oaks Foundation, "Care of California's Native Oaks" in *Bulletin of the California Oak Foundation* (Oakland, 2016)

Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, Memorandum for heads of Federal Departments and Agencies, January 14, 2011

Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Designation of Five California Rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Evaluation Report on the Eligibility of Five California Rivers for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:00 PM Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

On Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 2:58 PM Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear United States Army Corps of Engineers and CA Department of Water Resources public comment recipients,

I am submitting the following documents to make them part of the project record.

FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th

Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors, 8 Cal. 3d 247

HDR David Ford Consulting Engineers, "Lower American River Erosion Conditional Risk Assessment: Subreach 1, 3, and 4," (2019)

MBK Engineers, "2017 Lower American River Streambank Erosion Monitoring Report," (May 2018)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:27 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Heidi Mclean <mcleanheidi@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:53 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; Heidi McLean <mcleanheidi@aol.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I've lived in Sacramento for over 30 years and I love the American River because of its natural beauty, bountiful wildlife, and the fact that it looks like a river should. The proposed work makes it look

B

like a ditch, not a river. You are eliminating the elements that are essential to it being a "Wild and Scenic River" with the massive demolition of the riverbanks and the vegetation that is already present which protects us from flooding. All over the world there are efforts to undo projects and go back to nature's way of protecting the areas around waterways. Wetlands are being recreated and restored.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcutting all the trees, and having bare banks during two years of construction will protect us. The construction is followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, that do not replace the mature wetlands we currently have and are just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures

be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts. These impacts include:

- C | The need for large earthmoving equipment, a hundred truck trips per day which will damage existing roads and existing levees
- D | Massive amounts of rocks from unspecified sources, which puts residents in danger of more exposure to asbestos containing serpentine rock which is commonly found in the surrounding foothills. There is no accounting for the associated dust of placing these rocks within a quarter mile of a school. This SEIS/SEIR is not complete without this analysis.
- E | The unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have

not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Heidi McLean

February 22, 2024

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil
 From: Dr. Michelle Stevens, Emeritus Professor, CSUS Environmental Studies
 Department and Project Manager Bushy Lake Restoration Project, Alexandra von
 Ehrenkrook, CSUS Masters Graduate Student and Senior Research Assistant Bushy
 Lake Project. Emily Turner, Research Assistant. Contact: stevensm@csus.edu
 Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
 Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com
 Subject: Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent
 Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common
 Features Project, Sacramento CA

Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft
 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact
 Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices - Urrutia Site/
 ARMS mitigation project and American River Erosion Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B
 draft EIR/EIS and Mitigation Measures VEG-1, VEG-2, BIRD-1, VIS-2, and
 WATER-1 for impacts on vegetation and wildlife.

1 In this letter, our comments focus on native plants and wildlife recommendations, based on our long-term research at Bushy Lake. The ecological and cultural significance of the Urrutia Property, Woodlake, Bushy Lake, and Arden Pond are clear from the environmental assessments in combined Corps documents and the public and agency responses to this documentation. The four lacustrine features on the lower American River provide vital habitat corridors, biodiversity, and cultural and ecological value for the lower American River. The information provided is based on a thorough literature review and data collected over several years at the Bushy Lake Restoration Site (BushyLake.com). We use our data from Bushy Lake as an analogue/reference template for the ARMS and American River Erosion Control projects.

The American River Parkway riparian corridors, lacustrine habitat, native vegetation and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I have spearheaded the Bushy Lake Project near Cal Expo since 2015. We are funded by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, among other sources, and have collected three years of detailed data on the culturally important native plants, birds, mammals and northwestern pond turtles. We have written a separate letter regarding the northwestern pond turtle. Our data can be viewed on the Bushy Lake web site (BushyLake.com) in our 2023 Conceptual Restoration Plan Baseline Information plus Appendices.

The detailed research at Bushy Lake provides both an environmental baseline and analogue for management and conservation on the lower American River. We are in the process of completing the 35% Conceptual Restoration Plan for Bushy Lake, and our background and data may prove helpful for the Urrutia/ Arms site.

1. Birds – Avian Diversity

2 Bushy Lake provides an analogue to the Urritia Property with important and diverse bird habitat. Daniel Williams, a professional biologist and Audubon representative, conducted avian point count surveys at Bushy Lake every other weekend in 2020 beginning February 1st. He recorded 120 species of birds at Bushy Lake. CSU Sacramento researchers have continued these surveys, recording over 140 species of birds. The avian diversity of Bushy Lake is truly astounding; many avian species move between the Urritia property Wood Lake and Bushy Lake. We concur with all aspects of the letter from Dan Airola and Central Valley Bird Club on the subject project SEIS/SEIR.

2. Wildlife – Mammals and Beavers as Ecosystem Engineers

We use wildlife cameras to monitor turtles, beavers, and other wildlife species at Bushy Lake. At Bushy Lake, beaveways or canals appear to be an important element contributing to habitat complexity, interspersed and diversity. The turtles and other wildlife species utilize the beaveways for as corridors through the site, as a conduit from lacustrine to terrestrial habitat, and from Bushy Lake back and forth to the American River. Terrestrial habitat is critical for turtle nesting and successful reproduction.

3 During the June 2021 wildfire, the wetland area south of Bushy Lake expanded due to beaver activity and increased hydration. This area proved to be a wildlife refuge where wildlife could seek shelter and habitat remained after the fire.

3. Wildlife

A plethora of wildlife species have been captured utilizing the beaveways and the areas surrounding Bushy Lake. These species use the lower American River as a habitat corridor, and their presence at Bushy Lake indicates their presence at the Urritia property and along the rest of the lower American River corridor. Common species documented within the project site included the non-native California quail (*Callipepla californica*), western bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*), a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), California mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), eastern gray squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*), desert cottontails (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), feral cats, North American beavers (*Castor canadensis*), and North American river otters (*Lontra canadensis*), and non-native turtles. Deer beds occur frequently in the Bushy Lake area; does with spotted fawns have been frequently observed bedding down in the *in-situ* restoration area.

Many migratory species must establish migration routes commonly used by resident and migratory species for passage from one geographic location to another. Corridors are present in a variety of habitats and can link otherwise fragmented acres of undisturbed areas. Maintaining the continuity of established wildlife corridors is important to: a) sustain species with specific foraging requirements; b) preserve a species' distribution potential; and c) retain diversity among many

wildlife populations. Therefore, resource agencies consider wildlife corridors to be a sensitive resource.

Wildlife diversity extending along the lower American River corridor through Urrutia property, Wood Lake, and Arden Pond, act as a vital wildlife corridor and habitat refuge. These remnant patches of open water lacustrine, wetland and riparian habitats within the leveed and fragmented lower American River corridor are essential meristematic pulse points in the watershed. Lacustrine open water habitat is very limited along the lower American River watershed. Due to the limited corridor habitat available, wildlife species are not able to simply move away from construction projects in urbanized areas like the American River Parkway. The Final NRMP (January 2023) identifies the value of open water habitat on the Parkway (Section 4.9.1, Open Water):

“Habitats associated with lakes are also considered open water habitat and are characterized by depressions filled with standing water. This habitat type can vary in size, from small ponds to large areas such as flooded lakes or reservoirs. The primary lacustrine features are Urrutia, Wood Lake, Bushy Lake, Arden Pond, Sailor Bar pond, and the series of mining ponds at Sacramento Bar. As noted above these ponds provide important resting and foraging habitat for many aquatic bird species, including diving ducks, and the deeper ponds may be preferred by many. Lacustrine habitat typically supports species of plankton, as well as other microorganisms in the still, open water. Lacustrine habitats are important for reproduction, food, water, and cover requirements for the northwestern pond turtle, as well as many mammals, birds, other reptiles, and amphibians. Lacustrine habitats exist throughout California, and often occur alongside riverine and freshwater water emergent wetland habitats.”

4. Culturally Significant and Fire Resilient Native Plants

The following plants are recommended for revegetation within the ARMS/Urrutia Project area. These plants are all shown to promote wildlife habitat, help with erosion control, promote fire resiliency, promote pollinator habitat, and are culturally significant in this area.

I am happy to share our experimental data and results incorporated into the Bushy Lake Conceptual Restoration Plan from our Pilot Project supplemented by experimental results. Our comments utilize this research to design a fire resilient native plant palette, with emphasis on culturally significant plants, pollinators. Some of these plants are excellent at erosion control and streambank stabilization due to extensive rhizome and root development. In particular, valley sedge (*Carex barbarae*), beardless wild rye (*Elymus triticoides*) and California mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*) have extensive rhizome systems, are extremely beneficial for erosion control, and are resilient to fire. Based on my doctoral research, *Carex barbarae* can produce as many as 100 rhizomes in a year, is environmentally plastic and able to withstand both flooding and drought, is resilient to fire, and is a cultural keystone species for California Indian basketweavers (Stevens 1999, 2020, 2024). Culturally significant plant species, adapted to centuries of traditional fire management, will be incorporated into the Bushy Lake planting design to promote fire resiliency. Plant species selection will further provide an opportunity to showcase Native American cultural knowledge and ethnobotany to the public.

Cultural Plants - The proposed restoration recommendations are based on culturally significant plants for gathering, tending, and stewardship. Cultural plants are developed using four key sources of information: 1) personal knowledge of ethnoecology and culturally important plants; 2) conversations with both California Indian traditional knowledge holders and restoration ecologists; 3) historic maps and records of riparian habitat types in the Cal Expo floodway; and 4) experimental data from the Bushy Lake in situ restoration. Revegetation recommendations are based on native and culturally significant plants with added benefits for pollinators and wildlife.

We are recommending the following cultural plants be planted or maintained in the Corps project areas. Narrowleaf Willow (*Salix exigua*), Buttonwillow (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*); Walnut (*Juglans hindsii*); Elderberry (*Sambucus Mexicana*); White Root (*Carex barbarae*); Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*); Tule Hardstem Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus acutus*) and Cattail (*Typha* species); Pinole-Pollinator Prairie and Milkweed and open water.

a) Narrowleaf Willow (*Salix exigua*)

Narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*) is the willow species treasured by basket weavers (Stevens, Fencel, Hoag and Anderson 2024). This willow is prolific, is very fire resilient, and environmentally plastic. Willow poles are burned, coppiced or pruned to create long straight shoots for basketry. The value of willow as the raw material necessary for the manufacture of a family's household goods cannot be over-estimated (Stevens and Anderson, NRCS, 2024). Willow branches are used as the warp for twined baskets and the foundation in coiled baskets. Willows are used to weave cradleboards for infants, hats, cooking vessels, serving bowls, trays, seed beaters, and storage baskets. Some tribes use willow roots as a sewing strand. Virtually all California tribes use willow in their baskets (*Ibid.*). Willow flycatchers and other avian species utilize willow thickets. Willows establish well from cuttings, are fire resilient, and are quite prolific. Pole cuttings can easily be obtained on-site to expand the willow thickets.

b) Buttonwillow (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Buttonwillow is prolific in the wetted areas around Bushy Lake. Buttonwillow is known to have exceptional wildlife benefits, attracting many types of pollinators, waterfowl, birds, and mammals. Many species of waterfowl and shorebirds eat common buttonwillow seeds; deer browse on the foliage; and bees and other pollinators preferentially utilize the nectar and pollen of buttonwillow. Buttonwillow is thriving at Bushy Lake. No action is needed to maintain plant cultural alliance.

c) Walnut (*Juglans hindsii*)

Walnut thickets are prolific at Bushy Lake and thrived and expanded after fire. Tribal uses for walnuts produced by *Juglans hindsii* are used for food, the husks as a black dye element for baskets, and the shells are used as “dice” for gambling game pieces. The bark of black walnut was used by many native groups to make brown and black dyes, often used as design elements in baskets. The nuts of the black walnut are eaten by tribal people and many wildlife species. Walnuts produce a toxin, known as “juglone”, which inhibits the growth of other plants around it, thereby reducing competition. No action is needed to expand or maintain Walnut Cultural Alliance.

d) Elderberry (*Sambucus Mexicana*) Savanna

Elderberries are abundant, prolific and reproducing at Bushy Lake. These plants provide food, medicine, musical instruments, flowers and fruits for Indigenous and local people, pollinators and wildlife. Elderberries also provide critical habitat for the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), a Threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Elderberries are thriving at Bushy Lake, and young elderberries are prolific throughout the site. Elderberries are fire resilient and thrive with Indigenous Traditional Fire Management. There could be dissonance between Federal Endangered Species Act regulations for VELB, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, fire management, gathering, and ceremonial uses by Nissenan, Miwok, Maidu, and other California Indians.

All parts of the elderberry plant are considered to be a valuable healing plant in many folk medicine traditions (Hutchens 1991, Walker et al. 1993; Barrett et al. 1933; Clarke 1977). The fruit is dried and then cooked, and made into medicinal syrup, jams, jellies, fruit juice, and wine. “Medicinally, elderflowers are a febrifuge and have a diaphoretic quality which lowers fever. They are steeped in water and made into a tea. Flowers can also be used to make tinctures; the alcohol or glycerin or vinegar act as a preservative and also help draw the medicine from the plant” (Sage LaPena, 2024, *Nomtipom and Tunai Wintu ethnobotanist and certified Medical Herbalist*, “Indigenous Perspectives on Elderberry”, https://ucanr.edu/sites/Elderberry/Indigenous/Indigenous_perspectives/).

The dark blue fruit is not eaten fresh off the plant. The fruits are dried and then cooked to avoid consuming the cyanide-inducing glycoside in the seeds. Once dried, the berries can be cooked or stewed and then made into syrups.

Elderberry stems are made into a clapperstick, a percussive musical instrument commonly used by California Indians in the Roundhouse and other ceremonies. Smaller wood is used for whistles used daily by many practitioners or traditional people for song and prayer. Flutes are also created from the stems, most commonly played in Maidu tradition. Traditional Management Practices for elderberry includes traditional fire, coppicing and pollarding.

Elderberry produces a good seed crop almost every year. The seeds are dispersed by birds and other animals that eat the fruit. The seeds have a hard seed coat and embryo dormancy; they may remain viable for up to 16 years in storage. Without pretreatment, seed germination may be delayed from 2 to 5 years after planting. Plants may flower and fruit after only 2-3 years and can reach full size in 3-4 years. They are said to be “short-lived.” Cuttings of elderberry tend to have lower survival success than establishment from seed (Stevens, Nesom and Anderson 2024).

e) White Root (*Carex barbarae*)

White root is a cultural keystone species to California Indians. White root is a significant basketry material used by central California Native Americans, who use the long white rhizomes for the sewing strand in coiled baskets. White root was used by over one third of California tribes for basket weaving (Stevens 1999, Stevens 2020, Stevens and Anderson 2024). We have established a vital stand of white root in the in situ restoration project at Bushy Lake, and it occurs in prolific patches in the riparian forest/ woodland understory. Plants can be divided into plugs and planted to increase white root around the perimeter of Bushy Lake.

White root is an important riparian understory plant for riparian forests and woodlands. The rhizomes on this plant are important for basket weaving, erosion control, and flood protection. *Carex barbarae* is increasingly being recommended for riparian restoration, streambank stabilization, and erosion control. Because of their wide availability in riparian corridors, the lens-shaped seeds of sedges are eaten by many kinds of wildlife, particularly waterfowl. (M. Stevens 1999, 2020, 2024)

f) Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*)

There is a patch of dogbane in the south side of Bushy Lake. As the beavers built canals, they expanded the southern wetlands. Dogbane is a valued and important cultural plant, and very scarce in California and is highly reduced from pre-settlement abundance. Also known as Indian hemp, this plant is widely used by Native Americans as a source of strong fiber for ropes, nets, baskets, headbands, sally bags, ceremonial regalia, and other uses. In California, Indian hemp and milkweed are used somewhat interchangeably for cordage. The stems are cut in the fall; they are then split open and the long, silky fibers are removed. The fibers are then twisted into string which provides cordage. String, thread, rope, baskets, snares, netting, and clothing were made from the bast fibers of the Indian hemp plant because they are so silky yet strong. Cordage was then used to make tump straps, belts, netted bags, hairnets, and ceremonial regalia (capets, skirts, and head-dresses).

The seeds are collected after pods have ripened, but before they have split open. This usually occurs in late summer, from August to September. Seeds can be directly sown into the ground in the fall. Plants can also be divided and planted. Both milkweed and dogbane are burned in the fall to eliminate dead stalks, to stimulate new growth, and to remove competitive plant species. Burning causes new growth to have taller, straighter stems (with longer fibers). It also stimulates flower and seed production. (Stevens, 2024, NRCS Plant Guide)

g) Tule – Hardstem Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus acutus*) and Cattail (*Typha* species)

Tule is culturally very important to local tribes. Traditional fire management is needed to control senescent vegetation, encroachment on other habitat types, and evapotranspiration induced water loss. While tule can be an increaser without Traditional Resource Management, it is also a cultural keystone species. The US Army Corps of Engineer Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX) has facilitated an alliance with tribal partners dedicated to combining Traditional Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Western Ecological Knowledge to achieve successful tule recovery. Tule reeds play a vital part in the lives of native people (Tule Restoration Alliance, 2024, <https://www.spa.usace.army.mil/Missions/TNTCX/Traditional-Ecological-Knowledge/Tule-Restoration-Alliance/>).

The harvested material has traditionally been utilized for sacred and cultural practices critical to the continuity of Indigenous lifeways (Ekness Norton 2009). Tule reeds are collected and used to build boats, houses, sleeping mats, duck decoys, and baskets. The roots and seeds are also edible contributing to a healthy Indigenous traditional diet.

Tribes believe fire is medicine. Cultural burns are not prescriptions to reduce fuel load, rather they are restorative and used to cultivate new, healthier, stronger growth of important species like tule. The cultural burns are also ceremonial and play an important role in preserving and passing on cultural heritage to future generations.

Tule provides many benefits to the ecosystem such as fish and wildlife habitat, erosion prevention, flood control, and improved water quality.

h. Establish a Pinole-Pollinator Prairie (with the establishment of milkweed)

At this time, areas to be planted as Pinole-Pollinator Prairie are best suited to replace both drier and wetter ruderal weedy herbaceous vegetation. Pinole is a porridge or seed cake that provides reliable food throughout the year. Pinole provided a staple food source composed of seeds and grains harvested from California forbs and grasses. California grasslands and wetlands were productive “breadbasket” regions for California Indians. There is no historic record of starvation due to wildland bounty. Millions of pounds of seeds were gathered from the grasslands and wetlands of the Great Central Valley in California (Anderson et al., 2012). Indians relished the taste of many kinds of small seeds and grains gathered from the inflorescences of wildflowers and grasses. Tarweed and other native plant seeds in pinole formed a staple food in the diet of the Indians of the Great Central Valley. In particular, pinole consisted of the seeds of common madia (*Madia elegans*) and other tarweeds (*Hemizonia* and *Madia* species), wild sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), chia (*Salvia Columbariae*) and many species of native and non-native grasses. Seeds were traditionally harvested by women in late summer when they were ripe. Traditionally, a seed beater and a basket were used to gather the seeds. Then, the seeds were winnowed and ground very fine in a bedrock mortar with a stone pestle. Traditional Fire Management is an important management tool for prairie plants and seeds. After prairies are burned, seeds gathered from the scorched plants needed no further parching before being crushed into flour.

The dark seeds (achenes) of tarweeds are used as food by many birds and small mammals, including mourning doves, quail, blackbirds, finches, Oregon juncos, California horned larks, western meadowlarks, American pipits, sparrows, towhees, chipmunks, ground squirrels, and mice.

With the establishment of the above Pinole-Pollinator Prairie, it is also recommended to establish milkweed populations to the Project area. Milkweed promotes pollinator habitat, which is especially important for migratory monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) habitat. Two species that have seen success in this type of habitat are Narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), and Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*).

Revegetation Plant Palette

We propose utilizing a native plant species palette based on plant species tested experimentally in the Bushy Lake in-situ restoration area. We are happy to provide this information to you. We proposed plants based on their successful establishment as seeds and seedlings proven experimentally to be adapted to site conditions. They were also chosen if they are beneficial to pollinators and provide wildlife habitat. We have created a preliminary plant palette focusing on native species observed during a 1986 plant survey (Wymar 1986) and personal ethnobotanical knowledge/ tribal input. This gives us a reference baseline for the re-establishment of native species known to occur on this site that are also on the lower American River plant list developed by Sacramento County Parks.

5. Endorsement

We endorse the concerns expressed by other entities including the letters submitted by Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks, California Native Plant Society, Central Valley Bird Club, Save the American River Association, Preserve the American River, Sierra Club and ECOS regarding the environmental process, conflicts with adopted plans, legal

compliance, and impacts on other resource values, including other wildlife (especially the NWPT), vegetation communities, rare plants, general dispersed recreation, and visual quality impacts.

We also note the inconsistency with the County's Natural Resource Management Plan Regarding the American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices - Urrutia Site/ ARMS mitigation project and American River Erosion Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B draft EIR/EIS. These projects as described conflict with the American River Parkway Plan Integrated Area Plan Concept for the Reaches of Discovery Park, Woodlake, and Bushy Lake (February 2006).

Speaking as a citizen and resident of this area, and a dedicated restoration ecologist and ethnobotanist, the Urrutia, Woodlake and Bushy Lake areas are deeply loved and valued by myself and my Bushy Lake Awanata Team, including faculty, stakeholders on the lower American River, and hundreds of students from Sacramento State.

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From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:26 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Christie Vallance <christiev44@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:53 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear Army Corps of Engineers,

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients: My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

1 **Concern:** I just discovered through my own observations that significant erosion has occurred on contract 1 and 2 of the American River project. I have pictures that back this up. You also mention this in several of your updates to the community. Can you explain how your project design for Contract 3b is informed by this information? Please tell me any further field studies you have completed on the success rate of this prior approach in light of this information? I personally would like to know that your Contract 3b design does not make us more vulnerable to erosion as tree roots direct water to mid channel, rather than tearing into the banks

as I have witnessed in your latest update region. Please answer this in your reaction to public comments. I will be looking for this information.

Thank you,

Christie Vallance

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:25 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Thomas Vallance <vallance219@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:49 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients: My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

1 I just noted that SAFCA's published Urban Level of Flood Protection 2022 Annual Report mentions that once the Folsom Dam raise is completed, the "200-year flood discharge into the American River will not exceed 115,000cfs. Project 3b is built around a 160,000cfs model." Please explain how you are incorporating this information into the project design and approach for 3b?

Respectfully

Christie Vallance

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:25 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] 3B American River Proposal

-----Original Message-----

From: Theresa Weaver <tmw6258@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:47 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Theresa Weaver <tmw6258@gmail.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] 3B American River Proposal

To USACE,

I deeply implore your attention and revisioning of your plan for the American River project 3B. For an area vital to the ecological sustainability for vistas and wildlife, your proposal and plan is destructive, unnecessarily invasive, and lacks utilization of natural, alternative options already in place.

1 The area designated in Plan 3B includes destruction of the sensitive riparian areas that are "Protected Areas" in the American River Parkway Plan. The USACE plan proposal is extreme for the "potential erosion" concern and while cited as preventative, the proposed actions are more destructive to the ecological balance than that of potential erosion. The loss of habitat for many important species, including migrating birds, will hugely impact the biodiversity of this complex, interconnected ecosystem.

The unnecessary, major loss of wildlife and critical habitats will be due mostly to the heavy equipment and machinery used to execute this plan. The American River Tree Project notes "modern, advanced modeling predicts that water velocities are low at the levees. The older models used did not account for the protective effect of trees slowing the velocities at the edges. The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new spillway at Folsom dam and new operating protocols allow for better managing of flows, including earlier, release of water when storms are forecast."

As the "City of Trees," I'm shocked Sacramento has allowed this deforestation to occur along our city's jewel. Major levee flooding has been known to occur in areas of clear-cutting, such as proposed in 3B. Let's allow the beautiful and historic greenery to not only remain as some have longer than our country has been established, but to honour the riverbank as a hundreds of years old, self-renewing natural barrier. Although new vegetation planting is proposed, natural regrowth will be limited due to the proposed modifications and planted vegetation will take longer than my lifetime to reach the maturity and stability of some of the currently residing trees.

2 The American River Parkway is home to over 5 million visitors a year- more than Yosemite. This urban sanctuary provides a connection and access for Sacramento community members and all visitors including disadvantaged populations to

enjoy the true beauty and spiritual oasis the parkway provides. Green spaces are scientifically noted to contribute to improved mental health, and linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. In these times of social injustices, political unrest, threats to human rights, increased cost of living, and as pandemic COVID outbreaks continue, we as humans need to address and prioritize mental health more than ever.

With available technology, other completed projects, targeted spot erosion improvements, and partnership with local environmental groups, we must do our best to protect ALL communities - people, wildlife, and nature. Let's work together to address these critical issues and maintain the title of City of Trees for which I'm so proud to be a part of. The City of Riprap is not a place I want to call home.

Theresa Weaver

April Weaver

David Powell

Jana Noel

Casey Thimjon

Nicole Eichenberg

Satbir Singh

Roland Muniz

Sheryl Muniz

Jason Weaver

Marea Filmer

Susana Guzman

Sharan Singh

Steve Pogozeleski

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:24 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Proposed erosion control project on lower American River

From: john@johnacameron.com <john@johnacameron.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:40 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Proposed erosion control project on lower American River

1 | Your one-size-fits-all plan calls for erosion control measures in areas of where there is no measurable erosion. Why?

John A. Cameron

Writer, Speaker, Soft-Skills Trainer, Freedom Fighter

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:23 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Jack McKeon <jpmckeon@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:40 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I am a public land owner and believe the compulsion and need for this project has not been clearly elucidated and justified by the USACE and other stakeholders in the project.

A

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is very important to my family and neighbors. I have two young sons who are being raised on the banks of the American River with a

respect for nature and appreciation of our public lands. This project will practically destroy their access to the river and Larchmont Park.

B The toxic exposure to O.W. Erlewine school by the proximity of the staging site is also unacceptable.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:18 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Karen Kunstler <karenkunstler@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:35 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov; repamibera@mail.house.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

Please support both flood control and trees.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

My daughter and family moved to the Sacramento area 5 years ago. I loved visiting them, especially our many walks by the river, enjoying

A

various access points. Then my son and his young family moved here a year ago. When my husband and I retired last year we moved from LA and bought a house in Arden Park to be close to the American River Parkway. We also helped our third child move from LA and buy a house on La Riviera Drive, within walking distance of river access so that he can enjoy walking his dog daily on the path through the trees by the river. We all regularly meet and delight in these walks, so close to the city, especially the 200 year old oak trees, the wildlife and birds. We were devastated to learn that these ancient trees and vegetation are planned to be bulldozed.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has

not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more

sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among

different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet

to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the

environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to

find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B—south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Bring in smaller equipment so as not to damage the whole area.

I demand spot-by-spot evaluation and preservation of our precious resources, which have taken hundreds of years to grow.

Put a preservation order on these ancient trees!

Thank you.

Karen Kunstler

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:17 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Nancy McGee <ncmcgee_2000@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:35 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to Sacramento.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by

years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented. Nature based alternatives have not been presented. USACE has an Engineering With Nature program which could be used to present alternatives more in line with the American River’s Wild and Scenic Designation.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. We see the results at the H drive bridge and this is not acceptable solution

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Nancy McGee

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:16 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report)

From: Dan Sendek <dansendek54@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:34 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PubliccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; Rep. Ami Bera, M.D. <repamibera-CA06@emanager.house.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report)

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

I am a Registered Professional Forester who has lived in Sacramento for over 25 years and along the American River for over ten. I am VERY familiar with forested ecosystems, riparian biology and the NEPA/CEQA processes. With all due respect your proposed project is an abomination in its current form. Those of us who have viewed and lived with the effects of your first

foray into this project (Campus Commons), are terrified with the prospect of our River being turned into another “Los Angeles River North”.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

1. After over 150 years of healing and natural restoration following the destruction resulting from gold mining, specifically dredging, the Corps is proposing to negate the equilibrium which the River current exhibits. The exposure of significant portions of what is now a fully vegetated riparian zone will result in erosional habitat losses, both short and long term. THE LOSSES CANNOT BE MITIGATED.

- C 2. I am particularly opposed to any bank erosion work proposed on the north side of the River. This portion contains a fully sufficient levee with minimal to no tree growth within its boundaries. This levee exhibits no signs of damage or potential for breach. To proposed bank erosion work below this levee will destroy countless acres of established riparian vegetation on this Wild and Scenic River with no discernable benefit.
- D 3. I find it wrongheaded and ironic that the Corp proposes to remove bankside vegetation of a River which supports a viable and endangered anadromous salmon population. The removal of bankside tree cover will eliminate stream side food contributions as well as act to increase stream temperatures by eliminating shading within the system. This is particularly offensive considering future projections of global warming and its impacts.
4. I have viewed what the Corp considers “mitigation” for removing streamside tree cover. The few groups of woody debris anchored along the bank does not mitigate the loss of shade cover and the inputs of coarse woody debris resulting from recent project work.

The US Army Corp of Engineers MUST perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should NOT go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Daniel R Sendek

Registered Professional Forester 2285

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Harsch, Fritz H <fharsch@csus.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:25 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I grew up on the parkway 55 years ago, before the bike trail had been constructed, and have lived in the Paradise Beach area for over 22 years. Proximity to the American River near the Paradise Beach access is a primary reason that I purchased a residence in that neighborhood. The parkway between Paradise Beach and the H street bridge has provided me with years of solace and recreation. Throughout that area I have swum, hiked, flyfished, trained dogs, observed the fauna, practiced nature and bushcraft skills, and sought privacy and serenity among the trees on the many small

walking trails. I am appalled at the desecration it has suffered. The concealed walking trails are now destroyed or roped off to prohibit foot traffic and beautiful trees that were decades old were chopped down and hauled away. The area is now an eyesore, barren and covered by ugly jute ground cloth. It will take years before new growth replaces the old. Direct access to the water itself between Glenn Hall Park and the H St bridge is almost entirely cut off. That stretch of water used to hold some of the finest steelhead and shad fishing on the Lower American. It is now eradicated. The results of the work done in that area almost feel malicious, as if the local residents have been spit upon.

Consequently, I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along these sections of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,
George Harsch iv

Barry, Devin

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Anne Kimmerlein <akimmerlein@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A I have grown up enjoying the Wild and Scenic American River Parkway between Watt Ave and the Mayhew drainage channel. I have kayaked, cycled, walked my dogs, and trained for marathons along that stretch of river. Although I spent my early adult life away from the area, I now make the neighborhood directly adjacent to that stretch of levy and river my home. The beauty, trees, and nature of the parkway are one of the main reasons that I chose to live in this neighborhood.

B I live in the neighborhood directly adjacent to the area of riverbank that will be drastically changed by the proposed project. I recognize the need to adapt and adjust to a quickly changing climate and am very aware of the flood risks that living this close to a river poses. I deeply care about my neighborhood and the larger community of Sacramento and support work that helps protect us against flooding. However, I strongly question whether the proposed bank erosion work is necessary along this particular section of the American River. Additionally, I am concerned that the proposed approach of removing mature trees and vegetation, two years of construction, and the many following years that it will take the replacement plantings to mature will put the levy at increased, rather than decreased risk for erosion. Furthermore, scientific studies as far back as the 1990's clearly show that areas of greenspace remain significantly cooler than surrounding, cleared areas of land even as summer temperatures continue to rise. Removing the trees and mature vegetation along the American River not only will increase the local surface temperatures in an already warming climate, but also will remove the places that the local community goes to cool off under shade trees and in the shallows at the river's edge.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns. I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than currently proposed.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have less significant impacts.

The use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of an elementary school and in a residential neighborhood has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). Although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities and within a school zone. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

USACE plans to remove over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for potential bank erosion protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I am concerned that the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable to levy erosion, not less. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. In fact, I understand that a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms, which had much lower water levels/velocities than what is meant to be addressed by the project in it’s current form.

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to launch as designed, that the on-site planting benches may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly urge the US Army Corp of Engineers to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop targeted, alternative methods for project subcomponents, then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents, and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a less destructive approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented and considered. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a Regional Treasure. The Contract 3B actions greatly impact a zone designated a Protected Area under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Sincerely,

Anne Kimmerlein, DVM, MPVM, DACVPM

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:10 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Jennifer Banville <jennifer.banville@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:22 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A | Im 74 years old and a Sacramento native. Our city has changed so much already with. Population growth, clogged freeways, surface streets and now you want to remove the NATURAL trees long our gorgeous river? NO NO NO! Let people live elsewhere.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you—jennifer Banville

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:06 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA
Attachments: USACE_PS_FNL.pdf

From: Peter Spaulding <petenyvtca@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:20 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; sorgenkc@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
Central Valley Flood Protection Board/California Dept of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, California 95821
Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov

Submitted via email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the reports pertaining to this important project. The American River Parkway is the Crown Jewel of Sacramento and recognized across the country for its outstandingly remarkable recreational features. It is very likely the only river in the country with a federal and state Wild and

Scenic River designation flowing through, and located entirely within, a major metropolitan area. And you are about to destroy it.

For the reasons contained in this letter, the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA, for Contracts 3B and 4 MUST NOT BE APPROVED.

The American River Parkway Plan “acts as the management plan for the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts.” The “Plan is the policy document for the Parkway. It contains policy statements of a general and flexible nature. The Parkway Plan addresses the entire length of the Parkway which includes areas in the unincorporated County, the City of Sacramento, the City of Rancho Cordova and the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreational Area. The County of Sacramento adopts the Parkway Plan as an element of its General Plan. The City of Sacramento and City of Rancho Cordova reference the Parkway Plan in their General Plans. The locally adopted Plan is then submitted to the State legislature for adoption through the *Urban American River Parkway Preservation Act*, Public Resources Code §5840. The Plan acts as an informational document and an invitation for citizen participation in the planning process. It also provides basic policy guidance for the future of the Parkway.”

Following is a list of the Goals and Policies of the American River Parkway Plan that are being violated by this Project:

Policy 1.1 Balanced Management

The American River Parkway is a unique regional asset that shall be managed to balance the goals of controlling flooding; preserving and enhancing native vegetation, native fish species, the naturalistic open space and environmental quality within the urban environment; maintaining and improving water flow and quality; providing adequate habitat connectivity and travel corridors to support migratory and resident wildlife; providing recreational opportunities; and ensuring public safety.

The proposed project destroys vegetation, inhibits native fish species from reproducing, hinders habitat connectivity and diminishes recreational opportunities.

Terrestrial Resource Policies

Policy 3.2

Agencies managing the parkway shall protect, enhance and expand the parkway’s native willow, cottonwood, and valley oak-dominated riparian and upland woodlands that provide important shaded riverine aquatic habitat (SRA), seasonal floodplain, and riparian habitats; and the native live oak and blue oak woodlands and grasslands that provide important terrestrial and upland habitats.

The proposed project not only does not enhance nor expand native species of trees, it removes them. Hundreds of the trees and acres of upland woodlands that shade and support the spawning areas for native fish will be removed, and not replaced.

Aquatic Communities Policies

Policy 3.7

The parkway shall be managed to preserve, protect and/or restore riparian and in-channel habitat necessary for spawning and rearing of fish species, including native Chinook salmon (fall-run), steelhead, and Sacramento splittail, and recreational non-native striped bass and American shad. Priority shall be on providing diversity and complexity of habitat, consistent with recreational safety needs.

The proposed project destroys habitat for native Chinook salmon and steelhead by replacing natural river rock and gravel with excavated quarry stone. The exact amount of destruction cannot be calculated due to the lack of data in the environmental reports.

Policy 3.8

It is the intent of this plan that available water provide adequate seasonal river flows and water temperatures to achieve and maintain viable populations and life stages of federal or state listed species, such as the Central Valley steelhead trout. In addition, species of primary concern include: naturally spawning Chinook salmon (fall-run) and Sacramento splittail; non-native American shad and striped bass; and their macroinvertebrate food sources in the lower American River.

The proposed project removes hundreds of trees that provide shade at the river's edge, thus lowering the water temperature to allow the early life stages of steelhead trout to survive.

Policy 3.11

Agencies managing the parkway shall identify, enhance and protect:

- a areas where maintaining riparian vegetation will benefit the aquatic and terrestrial resources;
- b current shaded riverine aquatic habitat; and
- c other areas that can support a shaded riverine aquatic habitat, as time and resources permit, especially as associated with flood control or federally/state mandated species protection projects.

The proposed project destroys current shaded riverine aquatic habitat. The exact amount of destruction cannot be calculated due to the lack of data in the environmental reports.

Flood Control Policies

Policy 4.12

Vegetation in the parkway should be appropriately managed to maintain the structural integrity and conveyance capacity of the flood control system, consistent with the need to provide a high level of flood protection to the heavily urbanized floodplain along the lower American River and in a manner that preserves the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational quality of the parkway.

The proposed project destroys the structural integrity of the riparian vegetation that maintains the natural flood control system. Further, it destroys the aesthetic and outstandingly remarkable recreational quality that has earned the American River both a federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers designation. The exact amount of destruction cannot be calculated due to the lack of data in the environmental reports.

Policy 4.16

Bank scour and erosion shall be proactively managed to protect public levees and infrastructure, such as bridges, piers, power lines, habitat and recreational resources. These erosion control projects, which may include efforts to anchor berms and banks with rock revetment, shall be designed to minimize damage to riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat, and should include a revegetation program that screens the project from public view, provides for a naturalistic appearance to the site, and restores affected habitat values.

The proposed project destroys habitat, social trail, beaches, watercraft access sites, fishing, and wildlife viewing areas. It also destroys acres of riparian vegetation and provides no mitigation to restore affected habitat and recreational values. Once again, the exact amount of destruction cannot be calculated due to the lack of data in the environmental reports.

I have chosen to focus my comments on the violations of the American River Parkway Plan, the management plan for the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. There are numerous other comments being submitted that carefully describe and document shortcomings of the environmental reports with respect to research, modeling, engineering, design, construction, and even public outreach.

Because of these violations of the American River Parkway Plan, this project MUST be halted, re-evaluated and re-designed. There is no emergency, our levees are not crumbling before our eyes. There is plenty of time to get more soil borings, run new hydrology models, engineer with nature, not against her, and design a more targeted, data driven, evidence-based project for the Contract 3B area. Involve the public by conducting in-person and on-line workshops and meetings. Since the Parkway is a regional asset, expand the public participation areas to include all of Sacramento County, and adjacent parts of Yolo, El Dorado and Placer counties. By working with affected agencies and the public that uses the Parkway on a regular basis, and employing the vast skills of the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), a project can be designed with a win-win-win outcome:

Flood protection plus Erosion Control plus Preserving the American River Parkway, the Crown Jewel of Sacramento, for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Peter Spaulding

Mile Steward, Mile 11 South

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:54 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: annde ewertsen <ewertsen@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:18 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is an amazing resource. I challenge you to find anything similar in another city. My first experience with the river was in 1986, when my then boyfriend took me to see it. I was from out-of-state; he was born and raised in Sacramento. It was the first place he took me, and it was magical. I moved to Sacramento in 1987 and we made every effort to visit the river on a daily basis. In 1996, we bought a house across from Sara Park. We saw the realtor putting the sign in the ground when we were parking our car on our daily visit to the Parkway. Since purchasing the house, my family including my husband, our now-grown son and I spend at least a part of everyday enjoying the serene beauty and magnificence of the area. I walk the dog along the trails each morning and night. On the weekends, we take a 3 mile walk with the dog. We swim, kayak, and paddleboard weekly from late Spring to early Fall. My son learned how to fish there and ride his bike. He also developed a love of nature and an understanding of the natural order of things from this Parkway. I

can't even begin to imagine what my life and others in the neighborhood will do once it is bulldozed. The loss of habitat for the birds, beavers, river otters, deer, fish, turtles, and coyotes is beyond comprehension. A number of trees in the area are hundreds of years old. This area will never--not in my lifetime or those of my great-grandchildren--be a refuge and place of beauty, if this project goes through as planned.

I strongly question whether this "potential bank erosion" work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns include the following:

****loss of habitat***

****loss of heritage oak trees and other vegetation***

****inability to access the water***

****air pollution***

****reduction of tree canopy, which increases temperatures and enhances not diminishes climate change concerns***

****denuded the area instead of further investigating nature-based solutions***

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Annde Ewertsen

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:43 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Amy Pine <amypine76@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:19 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A I'm a frequent long distance runner along the parkway. For over 30 years, I have run along this amazing trail several times a week and get to take in the beauty of the river and what surrounds it: trees, wildlife, the serenity of it all. Many times, it's an escape and can be my therapy. I've spent many hours and many miles and seeing so much destruction of the area and wildlife get displaced, is just heartbreaking.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:43 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Shulamit Shroder <shulamit.shroder@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:16 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

This project threatens the work many have done to make this section of the Lower American River the most iconic, swimmable river in the Country.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate

justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River. If the project proceeds as planned the project will cause significant impacts economically, ecologically and disparately to adjacent communities, making this project environmentally unjust and racially inequitable. In addition, the project will affect communities outside the local area, as many events and tourists use this area to recreate (and will go elsewhere for many years). Migratory wildlife will be significantly affected, too, from the removal of habitat and shaded riparian areas. Finally, this will increase human contribution to climate change due to reduced bike commuters and an increase of urban heat island effect during and beyond the construction window.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much more targeted and less impacting approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” everywhere there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already

required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior

contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the

wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Questions:

(1) have you done a community centered economic and health analysis of the proposed solution using racial demographically disaggregated community data? What was your method and does it consider cumulative impacts like air pollution, heat island effect, mental health and other drivers?

(2) does the project as proposed align with studies the Corps of Engineers has produced over the last two decades showing trees can be both helpful to levee strength as well as potential risks for levee failure? Based on what we saw in River Park it seems like the current thought is that virtually any and all trees on levees and within floodplains are considered a risk that needs to be mitigated.

(3) do you have up to date user data for this reach and surrounding parkway, including data on swimmers and boaters? Would it be possible to synthesize demographic or economic data to help the communities impacted have a better sense of the value of their losses?

Thank you,

Shulamit Shroder

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:43 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] TIME SENSITIVE: Please help ensure a better USACE Proposal for American Rive 3B

From: LESLIE WATTS <leslie.watts@prodigy.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:14 PM
To: BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Cc: richdesmond@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] TIME SENSITIVE: Please help ensure a better USACE Proposal for American Rive 3B

Dear Chairperson and Members,

1 Without a doubt, you are aware that community advocates of American River Trees (americanrivertrees.org), are reaching out to ask that US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" to the Lower American River between Howe Avenue and the Mayhew Drain be entirely reconsidered.

2 I am writing to ask that the Sacramento Regional Parks and the American River Parkway Advisory Committee work with USACE to revise the proposal and not proceed until a more targeted and less destructive approach is developed. **USACE must extend the public comment period, currently TODAY at 5:00 p.m., until further consideration is given.**

3 We request that you work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees (including heritage oaks) and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses.

4 I wish to cite the **Sacramento County American River Parkway Plan 2008**; County of Sacramento Municipal Services Agency Planning and Community Development Department. 2008. Accessed online 2023/02/23
https://regionalparks.saccounty.gov/Parks/Documents/Parks/ARPP06-021909_sm.pdf
Flood Control Policies

4.0 Water flows, water quality and flood control Water Flow Policies Water Flow Policies

5 4.1 It is the intent of this Plan that available water flows protect the lower American River ecosystems and recreational resources. These resources include water quality, appropriate water temperatures, waterway recreation, aesthetics, riparian vegetation, fisheries and other aquatic species, wildlife and other river-dependent features and activities. Flow policies shall include the minimum flows in the flow regime consistent with Lower American River Flow Management Standard (LARFMS) as identified in the 2006 Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Game and Water Forum draft technical report or in substantial conformance with that standard.1

1 Note: A flow management standard for the LAR has been developed by the Water Forum in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and state and federal resource agencies. In 2006 agreement was reached on the flow management standard, which includes a flow regime, water temperature objectives, river monitoring and a river management group to implement the standard.

Flood Control Policies (continued)

5

4.12 Vegetation in the Parkway should be appropriately managed to maintain the structural integrity and conveyance capacity of the flood control system, consistent with the need to provide a high level of flood protection to the heavily urbanized floodplain along the lower American River and in a manner that preserves the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational quality of the Parkway.

6

4.16 Bank scour and erosion shall be proactively managed to protect public levees and infrastructure, such as bridges, piers, power lines, habitat, and recreational resources. These **erosion control projects**, which may include efforts to anchor berms and banks with rock revetment, **shall be designed to minimize damage to riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat, and should include a revegetation program that screens the project from public view, provides for a naturalistic appearance to the site, and restores affected habitat values.** (*emphasis added*)

4.17 Projects to address bank stabilization and erosion that are threatening privately-owned structures shall secure appropriate permits. **The engineering of these projects should give preference to biotechnical or non-structural alternatives, where feasible,** over alternatives involving revetments, bank re-grading, or installation of river training structures. Use of rubble, gunnite, bulkheads and similar material in these projects is prohibited. (*emphasis added*)

I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway consistent with your ethos, and to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and to impose strong conditions that require the USACE to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B. Exploring "Engineering with Nature" at <https://ewn.erc.dren.mil/> is not an unreasonable request to make.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Leslie A. Watts

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:42 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Susan Solarz <solaking19@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:10 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; Desmond. Rich <desmondrr@saccounty.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I am writing to express my serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. While I certainly recognize the importance of flood protection, I want to bring to your attention that we can achieve this objective in a way that is more protective of our environment.

The American River is extremely important to me. I live north of the American River within a short distance from the proposed Contract 3B North Site 4-2. I walk regularly on the river, especially on the trails between Watt Avenue and my home, a mile east of Rio Americano High School. I chose to live where I do because I can walk to the American River. I also am a docent at the nearby Effie Yeaw Nature Center, where I work with students and members of the public to learn about and experience the beauty and the significance of the wildlife and habitat of the American River. I recognize the rich biodiversity of the American River, including serving as a migration pathway for many bird and salmonid fish species. I observe beaver, otter, coyote, and deer as well as countless endemic and migratory bird species.

I have an educational background in environmental science and engineering, public health and biology from UCLA, and spent my 30 year career as an environmental scientist with the State of California Cal-EPA.

I value protection of the American River as a national Wild & Scenic River and under the Lower American River Conservancy as well as the American River Parkway Plan. I am particularly concerned about the potential impact of the vegetation removal to wildlife habitat of the American River.

Below are some of my key concerns:

Limited Evidence for Extensive Removal of Trees and Vegetation for Erosion Control:

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns. Trees and vegetation provide natural armoring of the banks that would be eliminated. **Better understanding and methods for implementing nature-based solutions exist. The U.S. Army Corps has endorsed an Engineering with Nature program. It appears that these guidelines need to be incorporated here.**

When the Folsom Dam raise is complete, the work may be unnecessary. Modeling cited in SAFCA's Final Urban Level of Flood Protection Plan indicates that the maximum discharge for a 200-year flood would not exceed 115,000 cfs rather than 160,000 cfs cited as the basis for this project.

Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids as well as potential reductions of aquatic invertebrates. Extensive vegetation removal would disrupt the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations. The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation. These impacts are potentially longer term because the vegetation will take years to return. Creating mitigation in an alternate location is not an adequate substitute for the interconnectedness of this significant wildlife corridor.

Recreational Access/Mental Health/Environmental Justice:

This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Natural settings decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration and tranquility. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.

The American River Parkway provides natural recreational opportunities proximate to an urban population, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice issue has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

As Local Residents We Do Not Want What We See Near Sacramento State University (Contracts 1 and 2)

What we see is a project that fundamentally and perhaps irrevocably alters the landscape, changing the aesthetics, its biological value, reduction in potential for carbon sequestration, and recreational (perhaps even economic) value for our community.

*Sincerely,
Susan Solarz*

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:41 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features SEIS/SEIR

-----Original Message-----

From: jasmine@shahbandi.com <jasmine@shahbandi.com>
 Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:08 PM
 To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
 Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
 Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features SEIS/SEIR

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

I am writing to express my concern about proposed clearing of the American River Parkway for erosion control. My focus is on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A As a professional interpreter working with immigrants adapting to Sacramento life, I can attest to the fact that visiting the American River Parkway is a tremendous source of healthy, inexpensive recreation for immigrant families. The enjoyment of nature crosses all language barriers. When people enjoy nature in proximity, they form common bonds. The American River Parkway provides an incredible environment for such opportunities, so it is very shocking to see the USACE reducing the American River Parkway to a lifeless ditch, just so that the area might possibly have a decreased risk of bank erosion.

I object to the destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south, potentially including heritage oaks over 300 years old. Similar trees will never again attain such longevity in a few shallow feet of soil over jagged, quarry riprap and therefore, I urgently ask that the USACE perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of their proposed project and its subcomponents. I ask that the USACE not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4 until a targeted and less damaging approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is designed. Future erosion control projects should be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code §

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. An analysis of alternative methods for a more surgical, fine-grained approach has not been presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012, it was designated a Regional Treasure. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated as a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B will alter this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for current residents and for future generations. I ask that USACE planning better reflect the respect that the American River Parkway deserves.

Thank you.

Jasmine Shahbandi

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:36 AM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection Project slated for the American River

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

From: Ed Harper <calidris@surewest.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:07 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection Project slated for the American River

To Whom it may concern:

1 I am shocked by the poorly drafted project replete with errors that is designed for the American River
Parkway. Furthermore, there has been little opportunity, given the time restraints, to sufficiently address the slated
project. The community deserves to have their concerns addressed. Surely there is overwhelming opposition to the
2 project as it is presently outlined. We value our riparian areas and the American River Parkway is a living jewel. The
trees that define the area must be treasured, not destroyed. The U. S. Army Corp should be actively working to protect
and restore vital riparian areas rather than destroying them. Given our knowledge about climate change, we know how
essential trees are. Riparian corridors provide essential habitat to the vast majority of birds and terrestrial
3 mammals. Destroying trees along the American River would have a profound and deleterious impact to the salmon
fishery since trees help keep the waters cooler, provide food resources for young salmon, and enhance habitat and
survival of young salmon.

Please keep in mind "No natural landscapes of California have been so altered by man as its bottomlands" (Bakker 1972). The once-lush riparian forests, forming natural vegetation corridors along many of the Central Valley's watercourses, are mostly gone today. These forests were, in Thompson's words, ". . . modified with a rapidity and completeness matched in few parts of the United States" (Thompson 1961)."

Please listen to my pleas. No destruction to our valued riparian areas of the American River Parkway.

Sincerely,

W. Edward Harper

INDIV-784

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

jessica epperson <epperson.wiseman@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 11:39 AM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from epperson.wiseman@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

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Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Keri Miner <handwing2011@yahoo.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 2:37 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[You don't often get email from handwing2011@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Thank you.

Keri Miner

INDIV-786

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Laurel G Larsen <laurel@berkeley.edu>

Thu 2/22/2024 11:58 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

You don't often get email from laurel@berkeley.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am writing as a resident of River Park, Sacramento, and a daily visitor to the Lower American River Parkway to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

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Thank you.

Laurel G. Larsen, PhD (she/her)
Associate Professor, Depts. of Geography and Civil & Environmental Engineering, UC Berkeley

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

max hall <maxjmhall@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 9:51 AM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from maxjmhall@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Thank you.
Max Hall

Fwd: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Melina Cacciurri <cacciurri@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 10:26 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>;BellasE@saccounty.net <BellasE@saccounty.net>; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov <SorgenKC@saccounty.gov>;Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov <Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov <Barbara_Rice@nps.gov>;hbwillia44@gmail.com <hbwillia44@gmail.com>; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov <RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>;PatHume@saccounty.gov <PatHume@saccounty.gov>; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov <SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov>;SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov <SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov>;SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov <SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov>; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov <Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov>;repamibera@mail.house.gov <repamibera@mail.house.gov>

You don't often get email from cacciurri@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Forwarding my message to USACE, please support the citizens of Sacramento

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melina Cacciurri** <cacciurri@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 22, 2024 at 10:18 PM

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To: <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>

Cc: <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>

Dear US Army COrrps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I purchased my home in my home in this neighborhood specifically to be close to the parkway which I enjoy several times per day with dog walking, running, biking, bird watching and enjoying our beautiful natural landscape and water resource. It's truly a unique and great treasure and exists in very few other cities across the nation and likely the world. It took me a whole year of waiting for houses in the area to come onto the market and bidding against many buyers to finally secure my home in this neighborhood in 2017.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

1. Limited Evidence for Unnecessary Removal of Trees and Vegetation:

Trees are not a significant risk to levee stability. In fact, trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural armoring of the banks that would be eliminated. Removing trees may make us less safe.

Historically, levee failures were more associated with areas where riparian forests had been thinned or clear-cut.

Inadequate environmental analysis of the removal of 200+ years old heritage oaks would constitute an “unmitigable” impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway

Destruction of vegetation worsens the heat island effect.

“Access ramps” will destroy additional trees but were not accounted for in the draft

SEIS/SEIR.

2. Rip Rapped streambanks present significant negative consequences:

Shorelines composed of large, angular rock make access by people for swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, and other uses dangerous at worst and highly unpleasant at best.

The river's Wild and Scenic designation is compromised by a rigid, artificial shoreline. Riprapped shorelines are ugly and detract from the natural feel of the Lower American River that makes it such a special place and refuge in our city and area.

Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth. Heritage trees would be forever lost.

The planting benches being proposed on top of the launchable rock toes and trenches will likely collapse ("launch") when the launchable rock toes and trenches eventually launch. No provisions or commitments have been made to replace lost planting benches.

3. Erosion is minimal in USACE's Contract 3B:

Experts disagree about the erosion risk along this stretch of the river. More empirical data was recommended, but generally concluded that erosion resistant material was present and significant scour below it was not anticipated. Seepage data show no issue for seepage, especially after the deep slurry walls were added inside the levees.

Modern, advanced modeling for peak 160,000 cubic feet per second flow predicts that water velocities are low at the levees. The older models used did not account for the protective effect of trees slowing the velocities at the edges.

The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new spillway at Folsom dam and new operating protocols allow for better managing of flows, including earlier release of water when storms are forecast.

4. Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife

Clear-cutting and rip rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon.

Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.

Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost.

The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.

The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.

High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities

5. Recreational Access:

This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Why should we think that the Corps will do anything different than at River Park, where all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed? Sac State is used as a restoration example, but we know of no beaches, footpaths, fishing access points there, either. Why should we trust that 3B will be different when even the SEIS/SEIR does not address these issues?

Installation of miles of angular rock (riprap) will make river access dangerous along

large stretches of river, and will greatly impede swimming, fishing, and deployment of watercraft such as kayaks. This will be a permanent and significant loss of irreplaceable recreational amenities to the community that is not accounted for in the SEIS/SEIR, despite promises by the Corps in 2016 to address these significant issues.

The permanent loss of mature trees, beaches, river access points, footpaths, and other recreational amenities is not “less than significant” as stated in the SEIS/SEIR. The Corps needs to document these losses and redo the SEIS/SEIR to account for them, including proposals to modify the project where possible to minimize losses.

The public has a right to know how specific recreational amenities will be affected by this project. The level of detail in the SEIS/SEIR makes it impossible for the public to see what will be done, and all we can assume is everything in 3B upstream of Watt Avenue on the south side will be ripped out like at River Park. The public has a right to know the details at this stage of review and should not be required to “trust” the Corps. We want the Corps to document and justify specifically which of our trails, trees, beaches, fishing access, and riparian forest must be destroyed to keep us safe from floods, and how much of that destruction will be replaced, versus what will be lost permanently given current design.

What mitigation for lost beaches, trails, forests, etc. will there be? The SEIS/SEIR does not discuss the loss of these features, so it also inappropriately fails to discuss mitigation for permanent impacts to features that the Corps cannot replace onsite. If beaches or trails are lost forever onsite, will other beaches or trails be installed?

6. Mental Health and Vegetation

Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.

Research has shown that “green exercise” may confer mental health benefits in addition to improving physical health.

Natural park settings decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration

and tranquility.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.

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https://www.sarariverwatch.org/kassis_property_easements

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Thank you.

Melina Cacciurri

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Melina Cacciurri <cacciurri@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 10:39 PM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cacciurri@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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And, I respectfully request that your Board:

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Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.

Melina Cacciurri

Fwd: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Melina Cacciurri <cacciurri@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 10:26 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>;BellasE@saccounty.net <BellasE@saccounty.net>; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov <SorgenKC@saccounty.gov>;Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov <Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov <Barbara_Rice@nps.gov>;hbwillia44@gmail.com <hbwillia44@gmail.com>; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov <RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>;PatHume@saccounty.gov <PatHume@saccounty.gov>; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov <SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov>;SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov <SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov>;SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov <SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov>; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov <Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov>;repamibera@mail.house.gov <repamibera@mail.house.gov>

You don't often get email from cacciurri@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Forwarding my message to USACE, please support the citizens of Sacramento

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melina Cacciurri** <cacciurri@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 22, 2024 at 10:18 PM

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To: <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>

Cc: <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>

Dear US Army CORps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I purchased my home in my home in this neighborhood specifically to be close to the parkway which I enjoy several times per day with dog walking, running, biking, bird watching and enjoying our beautiful natural landscape and water resource. It's truly a unique and great treasure and exists in very few other cities across the nation and likely the world. It took me a whole year of waiting for houses in the area to come onto the market and bidding against many buyers to finally secure my home in this neighborhood in 2017.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

1. Limited Evidence for Unnecessary Removal of Trees and Vegetation:

Trees are not a significant risk to levee stability. In fact, trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural armoring of the banks that would be eliminated. Removing trees may make us less safe.

Historically, levee failures were more associated with areas where riparian forests had been thinned or clear-cut.

Inadequate environmental analysis of the removal of 200+ years old heritage oaks would constitute an “unmitigable” impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway

Destruction of vegetation worsens the heat island effect.

“Access ramps” will destroy additional trees but were not accounted for in the draft

SEIS/SEIR.

2. Rip Rapped streambanks present significant negative consequences:

Shorelines composed of large, angular rock make access by people for swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, and other uses dangerous at worst and highly unpleasant at best.

The river's Wild and Scenic designation is compromised by a rigid, artificial shoreline. Riprapped shorelines are ugly and detract from the natural feel of the Lower American River that makes it such a special place and refuge in our city and area.

Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth. Heritage trees would be forever lost.

The planting benches being proposed on top of the launchable rock toes and trenches will likely collapse ("launch") when the launchable rock toes and trenches eventually launch. No provisions or commitments have been made to replace lost planting benches.

3. Erosion is minimal in USACE's Contract 3B:

Experts disagree about the erosion risk along this stretch of the river. More empirical data was recommended, but generally concluded that erosion resistant material was present and significant scour below it was not anticipated. Seepage data show no issue for seepage, especially after the deep slurry walls were added inside the levees.

Modern, advanced modeling for peak 160,000 cubic feet per second flow predicts that water velocities are low at the levees. The older models used did not account for the protective effect of trees slowing the velocities at the edges.

The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new spillway at Folsom dam and new operating protocols allow for better managing of flows, including earlier release of water when storms are forecast.

4. Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife

Clear-cutting and rip rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon.

Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.

Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost.

The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.

The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.

High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities

5. Recreational Access:

This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Why should we think that the Corps will do anything different than at River Park, where all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed? Sac State is used as a restoration example, but we know of no beaches, footpaths, fishing access points there, either. Why should we trust that 3B will be different when even the SEIS/SEIR does not address these issues?

Installation of miles of angular rock (riprap) will make river access dangerous along

large stretches of river, and will greatly impede swimming, fishing, and deployment of watercraft such as kayaks. This will be a permanent and significant loss of irreplaceable recreational amenities to the community that is not accounted for in the SEIS/SEIR, despite promises by the Corps in 2016 to address these significant issues.

The permanent loss of mature trees, beaches, river access points, footpaths, and other recreational amenities is not “less than significant” as stated in the SEIS/SEIR. The Corps needs to document these losses and redo the SEIS/SEIR to account for them, including proposals to modify the project where possible to minimize losses.

The public has a right to know how specific recreational amenities will be affected by this project. The level of detail in the SEIS/SEIR makes it impossible for the public to see what will be done, and all we can assume is everything in 3B upstream of Watt Avenue on the south side will be ripped out like at River Park. The public has a right to know the details at this stage of review and should not be required to “trust” the Corps. We want the Corps to document and justify specifically which of our trails, trees, beaches, fishing access, and riparian forest must be destroyed to keep us safe from floods, and how much of that destruction will be replaced, versus what will be lost permanently given current design.

What mitigation for lost beaches, trails, forests, etc. will there be? The SEIS/SEIR does not discuss the loss of these features, so it also inappropriately fails to discuss mitigation for permanent impacts to features that the Corps cannot replace onsite. If beaches or trails are lost forever onsite, will other beaches or trails be installed?

6. Mental Health and Vegetation

Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.

Research has shown that “green exercise” may confer mental health benefits in addition to improving physical health.

Natural park settings decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration

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Thank you.

Melina Cacciurri

INDIV-791

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

pscorcoran827@gmail.com <pscorcoran827@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 12:46 AM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from pscorcoran827@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Thank you.

Patrick Corcoran

Sent from my iPhone

INDIV-792

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Sarah Strand <scstrand@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 9:34 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc:Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

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The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and biotechnical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Sacramento’s “jewel” deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you.
Sarah Strand
Gulfport Way

Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Sarah Strand <scstrand@gmail.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 9:27 PM

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>

Cc: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>; Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB

<Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>; BellasE@saccounty.net <BellasE@saccounty.net>; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov

<SorgenKC@saccounty.gov>; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov <Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov>; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov

<Barbara_Rice@nps.gov>; hbwillia44@gmail.com <hbwillia44@gmail.com>; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov

<RichDesmond@saccounty.gov>; PatHume@saccounty.gov <PatHume@saccounty.gov>; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov

<SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov>; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov <SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov>;

SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov <SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov>; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov

<Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov>; repamibera@mail.house.gov <repamibera@mail.house.gov>

You don't often get email from scstrand@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

Long before I ever moved to this area, I would drive from where I lived in Sacramento to the Sac State campus and then run along the trail to the very neighborhood where I now live. I dreamed that one day I would own a home here. It is a peaceful refuge where I can feel like I am nearby the woods even in the middle of Sacramento. The lower path that will be destroyed if this project moves forward was where I took one last walk with my dog who died of cancer. I love this area where we live BECAUSE of this beautiful American River nature area.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed "unavoidable" impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain "significant and unavoidable" after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met

that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee

conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our

astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as "an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway," the Heritage Conservation Service noted that "the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities." Among the values noted was "lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees." Part of what makes this "riparian hardwood strip" so valuable for recreation is that "the riparian vegetation is carefully protected". The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as "scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife," all "link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers." Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and biotechnical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.
Sarah Strand
Gulfport Way

INDIV-794

Please Help Ensure a Better USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project

Barbara Beeman <butterfingrz@gmail.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 11:33 AM

To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc: Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from butterfingrz@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)



Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for “bank erosion protection” on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at

your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to “Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible”. It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for “bank erosion protection”. The USACE claim that this protection is “needed” is based on minimal, overgeneralized “data”, and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other

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Thank you.

Barbara Beeman

INDIV-795

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

brian agnell <daredevilcourier@yahoo.com>

Fri 2/23/2024 5:41 AM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc:Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[You don't often get email from daredevilcourier@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Thank you.

Brian Agnell
Owner
Bizfox
Apostille & Notary •

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

Charles <mlbccd@comcast.net>

Thu 2/22/2024 10:43 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc:Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

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Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

Now that the Agenda for your next meeting on February 23, 2024 has been posted and does not have this project listed, the extension of the public comment period is crucial to helping the public gain further understanding and support USACE in their above stated goal to communicate.

As you are aware, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway (south bank alone) for "bank erosion protection". The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data", and does not use advanced modern modeling to account for the protective effects of trees. I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River. The plans shown on the USACE website and presentations lack sufficient data and details for such a major construction project, and documents are not clear regarding what and where data were collected to warrant such extreme measures. And while we appreciate the extension to February 23, over 1,000 pages were provided just before the holidays in December for public review and comment, and there is still not enough time to answer all the questions posed, especially considering the fact that many aspects of the proposal do not seem to follow guidelines within the American River Parkway Plan and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years

during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

The new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I oppose the extreme destruction of trees (including some potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of existing trees and other stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to county, state, and federal officials when the Army Corps is involved. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are "needed" for flood safety in this zone; and instead it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of "inconsistency" with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. The O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has been suggested as a meeting location that has been used in the past and is also one of the proposed staging areas for heavy equipment in the latest proposal, and a short walk from pristine areas endangered by the proposed project. Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

As you know, the American River is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Sacramento's "jewel" deserves the utmost care now and for future generations!

Thank you,
Charles C. Dallas

INDIV-797

[UPDATED] Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Click to view/send)

Carla Dillinger <rachaelunrest@icloud.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 8:18 PM

To:Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>

Cc:Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>

[You don't often get email from rachaelunrest@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I appreciate you dedicating your time and expertise to serve on the Board and listening to members of the public who are concerned about the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposed Contracts 3B and 4 for "bank erosion protection" on the lower American River east of Howe Ave.

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

And, I respectfully request that your Board:

Hold a workshop specifically addressing this proposal and public hearing on the proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project;

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur;

Work with other agencies to address the many unanswered questions and concerns that have been expressed by so many members of the public at the USACE virtual public meetings, in comment letters, and at other public forums. Professionals and specialists with detailed information and questions concerning the proposed removal of nearly all trees and vegetation to keep residents safe from future flooding potential have spoken up and require respectful responses. The US Army Corps of Engineers presented at your February 9, 2024 Workshop their goal to "Communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible". It is necessary this goal be accomplished now.

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Thank you.

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:06 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: C3B Comments

From: MHI Gtpr <mhigtpr@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:00 PM
To: Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil; Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Cc: Peter Spaulding <petenyvtca@comcast.net>
Subject: C3B Comments

You don't often get email from mhigtpr@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
Central Valley Flood Protection Board/California Dept of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, California 95821
Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov

Submitted via email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

February 23, 2024

Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the reports pertaining to this important project. I am a lifelong naturalist, bird watcher, photographer, and the daughter of a professional artist and an engineer, who channeled capacity for innovation with tangible problem solving into specialization as a physiatrist, with a concentration on catastrophic care and care coordination. I am also a nationally recognized expert on Environmental Health, and in

particular, the adverse impacts of disasters upon vulnerable populations. My NFP, the Multicultural Health Institute represents thousands of vulnerable individuals and communities across the country. My daily work involves preventing, educating about and treating catastrophic injuries and teaching health systems about preparation and response to environmental disasters for vulnerable communities..

Any good clinician knows the importance of clinical judgement, lifelong commitment to learning and acquisition of “clinical experience” to apply to achieve greater success in subsequent cases and scenarios, while also exercising, at times, independent critical analysis and decision making for the best outcomes.

When I diagnosed my own mother with lung cancer, after failure of the disconnected health care system to do so, the standard of treatment at that time was annihilation of the patients’ immune system with potent chemotherapeutic agents with the hope that the more rapidly dividing malignant cells would be more adversely impacted than the ‘acceptable collateral damage” of healthy tissue. Dire side effects and poor outcomes did not deter such approaches for decades, it is what medicine had to work with.

We stepped right past that, and were able to secure a variety of treatments for her only just emerging at that time nearly 2 decades ago, but far more logical-targeting the invading abnormal cancer cells, without pulverizing and paralyzing the entire immune system, permitting her own defenses to help fight back. Knowing she had survived pneumonia as a child in pre-antibiotic era, we knew she had a very strong immune system, and it was so, defying all odds, she not only beat slim odds to make 5 years, going to prolifically to enjoy nearly 3 x that amount of extended quality of life.

Yet ironically, speaking of antibiotics, due to their wanton overuse, we have cultivated armies of resistant microbes, and in some places, physicians have gone full circle, resorting to more “natural approaches” to treat minor infections, with better outcomes, rather than excessive prescribing of antibiotics and cultivating more and more resistance.

The analogy is-nurture nature, work together with and play to strengths. Thus in the case of the decimation of the carefully balanced ARC ecosystem that has evolved over millennia, such folly will end in similar results as my mother’s unfortunate elder sister and many others who only had the options of brute force destruction of their natural defenses in attempt to blunt the progression of their cancers before new thought/innovative approaches and international collaborations produced far better options.

My motivation to live near the incredible jewel of the American River Parkway is similar to that of my neighbors, most of whom share a sense of caretaking devotion for the privilege of living near and being able to enjoy this unique, nationally recognized, well studied and treasured ecosystem. The engineer daughter that grew up on an island part of me carefully studied the history and risks of living so close to the river, and I was and remain quite reassured that we are and have been on the safest, straightest, widest low flow stretch, in large part due to the natural defenses that exist and have been proven to WORK WELL over time. In medicine, “1st Do No Harm” is a very useful adage to follow, same with regard to this project.

As part of my consulting work, I perform complex analyses of forensic cases, considering all sides as an Agreed Medical Examiner, to produce an objective set of recommendations and conclusions. In analyzing available data and speaking with neutral and objective engineers and water experts who do not stand to benefit from whatever final outcome of the C3B project, they echo and confirm the following factual evidence:

- 1 | 1. There is little to no historical precedence of trees being a risk factor for levee stability, in fact, removing them has served to destabilize other levee projects and we all know it takes not just years, but decades and centuries to re-establish complex Riparian habitats.
- 2 | 2. The removal of large heritage oak trees and other habitat along the levee so that rock/riprap can be placed is a costly and unnecessary action, these trees already provide erosion protection along the levee.
- 3 | 3. Erosion is a minute concern, and as has been tested repeatedly in the C3 and C3b sections, nature restores loss through gradual recession of high waters in a majestic and breathtaking display of balance between the trees, vegetation and water cycles. For example, during the floods of 1997 and high water levels last winter, the flow rates along the levee were nearly stagnant with higher flows towards the center of the river channel, well away from the levee. Recovery during receding flows was rapid and well complete.
- 4 | 4. Such flows occur infrequently, are of short duration and will be further abated by the new spillway at Folsom Dam.
- 4 | 5. Removal of well matured, compacted soils replacing with alternatives based on soil samples from other locations not reflective of unique qualities of this location will result additional failed plantings (status update on prior areas

welcomed) and further washing away and exposure of dangerous jagged rocks as has already happened in denuded areas downstream.

- 5 6. There is acknowledged risk to environmentally threatened species and their habitats, and the risk vs Benefit is insufficient to justify proceeding with clear cutting a stable, and previously deemed stable with no need for intervention, section of the river parkway.
- 6 7. Working with the natural inclinations and defenses of the river, rather than literally undermining them by tearing out historic and protected old grown Heritage Oaks and other layers of the forest, will continue and ensure stabilization and enjoyment for continued generations of humans and wildlife to come.
- 7 8. It is the 50th anniversary of the endangered species act, and we averted mass death and destruction of habitats, and species, however, we know significant threat continues. Every effort must be made to keep balance and preserve rare urban reserve sites such as targeted 4, C3 and C3b North and South sections of the river.
- 8 9. This action is likely to further adversely affect critical habitat and threatened species including the Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, North American Green Sturgeon, Long Horn Beetle (“mitigated” Elderberry bushes from other sections mostly dead/dying off, failed effort) as well as hundreds of local and migratory bird populations whose nesting, mating and feeding habits will be disrupted by noise, habitat destruction and greater vulnerability to predators.
- 9 10. 2023 was the hottest year on record, Sacramento was sweltering, however near the river, we were always benefitting from the breezes and cooling effect of the trees and vegetation through shade and transpiration, losing that will worsen the “heat island effect” with adverse population health consequences. The IRA seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of heat, it is illogical to contribute to worsening life threatening conditions in the name of preventing a problem that does not exist-erosion.
- 10 11. This area is prioritized for recreational access and enjoyment by the public for kayaking, fishing, bird watching, fishing, wading with dogs, nature photography, spiritual practices, all of which will be severely interrupted and access forever limited by replacement of accessible shoreline beach with jagged rocks of uncertain source.
- 11 12. Communities with strong cohesive social connection and exposure to nature are hallmarks of well touted “blue zones” around the world. It is well documented that even in economically limited resourced communities, people live longer, healthier and more satisfied lives when there are strong social connections, regular physical activity and connection to the natural world. Average blood pressures are lower, there is lower incidence of Diabetes and other autoimmune disorders and life expectancy is longer. This is why, despite having lived and worked in a variety of other beautiful and desirable national and international locations, I repeatedly return to enjoy my home in College Greens East, and the American River Parkway adjoining our community is central to that. There are decades of neighbors and intergenerational family connections creating a rich fabric of support, celebration of life contributing to great resilience, improved health and mental health for us all. Destruction of this may contribute to destruction of decades of such relationships as well, with resultant destabilization and adverse mental health and health effects.
- 12 13. The Elementary school and its activities as well as the Larchmont Park are other extremely active components of healthy and happy community life. This area is used year round by youth groups, intramural sports teams, multicultural communities enjoying the playground and socializing with their children, dog walkers and tennis and pickleball players. Heavy equipment rumbling through with clouds of dust, diesel, vibrations, destruction of the beautiful vista at the end of the park and possible further destabilization of the levee in order to put in a few extra rocks along the edge seems an incredible waste of resources and unnecessary disruption in community life.
14. I have already treated a patient who was out walking with her family in the recently “improved” areas near Sac State, the sandy inadequately reinforced levee gave way underneath her, causing her to tumble down and onto the jagged rocks, sustaining fractures, lacerations and head trauma. Sad irony that an intervention meant to protect the public leads to greater risk and further restriction from doing what I like to see as a physician-exercising, managing stress through peaceful interaction with natural surroundings, breathing healthy air and generally enjoying themselves.

Thus on behalf of my community, which includes humans as well as the myriad forms of wildlife and vegetation, we urge the Army Corps to reconsider the further work on the American River Parkway. This parkway is a nationally designated wild and scenic area heavily enjoyed by the public and safe habitat for endangered and threatened species that shall be severely degraded including as noted:

May 12, 2021

Alicia E. Kirchner
Chief, Planning Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Re: Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion, Magnuson-Stevens
Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Response for the American River
Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report Reinitiation 2020

Enclosure

cc: 151422-WCR 2020-SA00019

Andrea Meier, Andrea.J.Meier@usace.army.mil
Rena Eddy, Rena.Eddy@usace.army.mil
Robert Chase, Robert.D.Chase@usace.army.mil

Error! Filename not specified.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Response

American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report

NMFS Consultation Number: WCRO-2020-03082

Action Agency: United States Army Corps of Engineers

Affected Species and NMFS' Determinations:

ESA-Listed Species	Status	Is Action Likely to Adversely Affect Species?	Is Action Likely To Jeopardize the Species?	Is Action Likely to Adversely Affect Critical Habitat?	Is Action Likely To Destroy or Adversely Modify Critical Habitat?
Central Valley spring-run Chinook Salmon ESU (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No
California Central Valley steelhead DPS (<i>O. mykiss</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No
Southern DPS of North American green sturgeon (<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>)	Threatened	Yes	No	Yes	No

Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon ESU (<i>O. tshawytscha</i>)	Endangered	Yes	No	Yes	No
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Fishery Management Plan That Identifies EFH in the Project Area	Does Action Have an Adverse Effect on EFH?	Are EFH Conservation Recommendations Provided?
Pacific Coast Salmon	Yes	Yes

Consultation Conducted By: National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region

Cathy Marcinkevage

Assistant Regional Administrator for the California Central Valley Office

Date: May 12, 2021

I take issue with the following purported minimal impacts extracted from the 2016 and supplemental 12.2023 SEIR including :

- changes in scenic view and existing visual character,
- creation of new sources of substantial light and light pollution,
- conflicts with existing environmental standards including violation of air quality standards
- increased noise,
- increased vibrations,
- destruction of culturally and spiritually significant areas,
- interruption and contamination of optimal storm and groundwater management

Only “partial compliance” ? How can you be in full compliance when identified Hawks and Eagles are trying to nest in area being disrupted and a historic location is going to be dug up and irrevocably disfigured?

We request objective Peer review and further modification or elimination of any planned activities as intended for:

Supplemental SEIR continues to admit:

The following are photos and general questions .

high water and dry

Last winter the water was elevated and covering the trail behind where I am standing in this picture. With the wide berm, trees, there was very slow or almost no flow. See how placid it is in the photo above.

Once the surge stopped, the levels receded quickly, sucked up by the well established vegetation, none of which was lost even though several feet of trunks were submerged during the event.

This has been repeatedly observed throughout the years.

I have walked this trail over 35 years

Part of the beauty is the timeless unchanging nature, hard clay, no erosion.

Compare proposed well vegetated and armored 3B on the chopping block for clear cutting in area previously reinforced, stable, previously noted not requiring intervention

with area of intervention near Sac State with sandy already eroding areas, and still not growing in vegetation, no trees in sight, grasses not taking, soft, sandy hard to walk on unsightly soft muddy wasteland barren regions.

What was the justification of cutting well established trees BEHIND the levee? How sad and unseemly and now will be termite palaces, eroding the previous armoring root systems of beautiful shade rendering, carbon neutralizing tree cover that also helped neutralize toxics and air pollution from heavily trafficked H Street bridge. Yet a small band of trees was kept on the ridge at back of the park for “park like” esthetics? But that doesn’t work because the fences, barriers, greatly limit access and are further visually unappealing/.

Additional Questions:

Please explain:

<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Oct/07354626787.pdf>

What is the status of 10-15 year monitoring?

“ In 2003, the Corps worked with local, state, and federal agencies to develop a project that established approximately 650 linear feet of shaded riverine aquatic (SRA) habitat at RM 2.4L. The habitat is now under active maintenance by a landscaping contractor and this site will be monitored for 10–15 years after planting. “

Engineering and Hydrology Concerns:

In stark contrast to other sections of river, this basically straight section has proven to resist observable erosion or scour during flood control releases comparable to the new 160 kcfs emergency design flow (eg, 1964's 115 kcfs, 1986's 134 kcfs, 1997's 110 kcfs, & 2017's 80 kcfs releases), as witnessed by local residents and river experts. For this stretch, what, if any, physical observations or measurements does USACE have of either river velocities or erosion at or near the river bank (eg, photographs, video, velocity measurements), or is USACE relying entirely or almost entirely on model simulation output for this large scale tree and habitat removal project?

Please explain if the modelling of Safca and observed river behavior demonstrates low flow rates along the border of the river, what modelling is being used to justify high flow velocity requiring erosion control?

Safca Modelling at new maximum flow 160 shows that velocities along the edge of the bank during high water events is extremely slow 0-2ft/second, That is not considered enough to cause erosion, so how can you explain why that makes the bank is more susceptible to erosion to justify removing 500 trees?

History and modern numerical flow modeling both show that removal of vegetation, or roughness, along river banks increases river velocity at the river banks. If flow velocities at the river bank increase after vegetation and tree removal, won't that worsen the erosion conditions for the river banks, including any habitat or soil above the riprap?

Please explain the logic that your plan calls for development of planting benches that fall in to launchable rock toes, yet you are removing trees and vegetation and then having to replant them in sandy soil, how will this impact heat island effect and habitat interim and long term stability?

RECREATION CONCERNS:

The American River Parkway is a highly visited “Wild and Scenic Area” attracting more visitors than Yosemite National Park annually. Thousands of birdwatcher and other nature lovers from around the world come to visit.

How will the sharp rocky installations impact recreational activities and access such as kayaking, fishing, wading?

How many linear feet of shoreline will be removed from public access after you install the launchable rock toes, planting benches, and bank armoring with very sharp rocks of unknown source in area 3B?

Will there be more toxic serpentine laden rocks for this infill?

How will this, along with loss of shade, usual habitat and general disruption, impact the beleaguered Salmon life cycle and waterfowl and other wildlife?

Research has linked exposure to trees to both physical and mental restoration. For example, a number of studies have found that exposure to urban forests generally reduces mental and physical stress, anxiety, and depression, and that they improve moods.

How will removal of 500 heritage oak trees impact wildlife as well as the mental health of human visitors? Trees provide several benefits that relate to well-being. Research has also found that tree canopy cover significantly contributes to neighborhood social connection and social support, both important to mental well-being.

The study authors, Thomas Astell-Burt, Ph.D. and Xiaoqi Feng, Ph.D. with the University of Wollongong, in New South Wales, Australia,

EPA/CLIMATE/EQUITY QUESTIONS:

<https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/heat-island-compendium>

Evidence from other similarly mitigated habitats shows that a half century later, there remains substantial habitat loss. **How will we be reaching the EPA goal of reducing heat islands by cutting trees and clearing vegetation with anticipated several years delay before partial restoration might possibly be achieved?**

What protection or mitigation can be provided to the Tile 1 Elementary School locate in the epicenter of this intended work? How will school children be able to concentrate with substantial noise pollution? Will you be providing Ear protection to mitigate the hearing loss and headaches? Will you be providing Hepa Filters and other anti-pollution devices or measures to protect them in their classrooms?

We know from 2017 SMUD report Page 28 specifies the amount of carbon storage in Sac County that forests provide - there is an associated map that identifies the forested area as basically the Blue Oak Woodlands in the Southeast County. There is another section starting on page 41 - Urban Forestry that details additional carbon capturing benefits within the urban areas.

Page 28,

3.1 CURRENT INVENTORY AND FORECAST SCENARIOS

The results of the carbon inventory reflect that there is a substantial quantity of carbon sequestered by lands in Sacramento County. Based on LANDFIRE 2014, Sacramento County lands held roughly 36.3 million MTCO_{2e} in aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, and soils. General agriculture, shrublands and urban areas make up a majority (approximately 80 percent) of landscape carbon in the 2014 inventory (Figure 14). Forests and grasslands consist of about 16 percent of the landscape carbon in the county with the rest of the LULCs accounting for approximately 3 to 4 percent of the inventory. These results are intuitive given that urban, agriculture and shrubland areas dominate the acreage of the county. **Furthermore, although forests only make up approximately 3 percent (Figure 15) of county acreage, their high biomass and soil carbon sequestration rates cause them to account for 8 percent of the 2014 inventory (Figure 14).**

It is a move backward to deforest when history has demonstrated deforested regions were MOST susceptible to flooding, and we know forested regions have lower temperature, better air cleaning capacity and water saturation recovery and are more beautiful and offer needed shade for the wildlife on land and in the waters.

Lower risk particulate matter by river, higher by Watt and Rt 50

100 yr flood risk minimal along our portion of levee[\[1\]](#)

Note baseline Air toxics risk 95-100% along rt 50, watt corridor, 80th % along South side river, 70th along North Side in areas of planned interventions.

How much will this further exceed EPA standards with as yet not clearly designated staging, heavy equipment maneuvering and staging, potential compromise of Levees with situation of said equipment and accompanying noise, vibration, heavy exhaust compromising residents and habitat along the 3B corridor.

There appears to be a baseline protective effect of the river parkway heavily forested habitat, with natural mitigation of effects of high volume traffic areas high toxics cancer risk along Rt 50 Corridor and Watt Avenue which are at the 95-100% percentile on the EJ Screening tool, but reduced to the 80th percentile closer to the river, what is the predicted impact of this project on heat, air quality, fine particulates, increased cancer risk and risk of aggravation of respiratory disorders.

My daughter lives with lung cancer, the last thing we need is for her to be exposed to increased fine particulates and fugitive dust. What will you do to protect her health and the health of other vulnerable members of our community not only from the intended demolition, but which shall be forever impacted for our lifetimes once the trees are gone?.

The anticipated devastation that contract 3B North and South of the American River Watershed Common Features Project proposes for over a mile of the Riparian Habitat will be a costly loss to the regional ecosystem. Since California became a state in 1850, riparian forest in the Sacramento Valley has declined more than 98% from 800,000 acres to less than 14,000 (Stephen Johnson, Gerald Haslam, and Robert Dawson, *The Great Central Valley: California's Heartland*, p. 96). This rare treasure including trees protected by local ordinances, within urban Sacramento County must be preserved and protected, not decimated due to lack of careful consideration of risks vs benefits.

In same way we now know physiatrists obtain far better outcomes in function, symptom management and return to productive lifestyle for people with spinal conditions than any other specialty, including spine surgeons, we must take into consideration the power of working With the River and it's natural resources, not AGAINST it.

Thus I urge the Army Corps to reconsider and cease and desist the pending work in areas 3B North and South of the American River.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Merritt MD
Executive Director, MHI

My opinion is EPA is not up to date on the latest and greatest analyses USBR/NOAA/DWR/USACE have done considering various duration 100/200/1000-yr events and how Folsom would be able to dampen them, so I'd say to not bring this one up.

Sarasota Community Action COVID Dashboard: <https://resiliencesystem.org/dashboards/sarasota-county/>

Multicultural Health Institute
1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Way,
Sarasota, Florida 34234

2443 Fair Oaks Blvd #168
Sacramento, California 95825
Office: 941-706-3362 | Fax: [941-225-8198](tel:941-225-8198)
www.the-MHI.org | [Facebook](#)

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From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:45 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: USACE Contract 3B Public Comment

From: Elizabeth Ganz <eganz482@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:43 PM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: USACE Contract 3B Public Comment

You don't often get email from eganz482@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

1 I am the grandmother of an 8 year old little boy who lives next to Larchmont Park and O.W. Erlewine Elementary School. The current project proposal predicts significant and harmful impact to the air quality to the area including the school. I am very concerned for how the dust and fumes will impact health as well as the other children in the community. Please consider a less destructive and more targeted approach to strengthening the levees. Please implement mitigation measures such as moving construction away from O.W. Erlewine Elementary School and Larchmont Park.

Elizabeth Ganz

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:25 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: Contract 3B site

From: Kristi Anderson <kaeberle@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:38 AM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: Contract 3B site

You don't often get email from kaeberle@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

1 Please I beg you do not take out more than a handful of trees along this section of the AR Parkway. I have lived near and recreated along the bike trail there almost daily since 1975. The loss of trees and shade will make that entire section hot, desolate and unappealing for the next 200 years. This parkway is a treasure, the likes of which are rare across this entire country. You will destroy it with these plans. There is certainly a way to protect from floods without this environmentally abusive approach. You just have not figured it out yet.

Kristi Anderson

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:24 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River Project, whatever the designation for East of Watt Av.

From: Randy Fisher <rndyfshr@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:33 AM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River Project, whatever the designation for East of Watt Av.

You don't often get email from rndyfshr@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Thank goodness I finally found some volunteers who could provide some information on the American River project - whatever you call it for the project East of Watt Av. Searching Army Corps websites for hours I've found nothing about this area. There are some shallow descriptions of already completed sections near Howe Av. and 2-hour deeply technical videos covering the entire area. What the hell? Is the Army Corps trying to sneak this by because it's such a huge governmental funding commitment?

I find no effort to explain to residents what the need is? Yes there were floods in 1950 before the levees, etc etc. That's not explanation for THIS project. First of all, I find no mention of the huge fairly recent project inserting the "slurry walls" - is that what it was called? Because I understand the purpose of that project, but I can't find any mention of it or why now it is decided it was not adequate. Was the current plan already part of that project and we're just discovering it? 1

I've been involved with Community Engagement for the arts for decades. The #1 thing understood since the 1980s is that, to persuade, you have to speak the language of those you are talking to. Otherwise, you're doing more harm than good in gaining any interest in your work because you're building more resistance to your purposes.

So far, every time I try to gain information about this project, I just get more pissed off and ready to block your work in any way possible. You've got full resistance getting ready for you unless you actually care to explain to us that this project does something for us and not just yourselves in your insular world that clearly cares only about persuading politicians and self-perpetuating funding.

1

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:00 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River parkway tree cutting

From: Chris Beegan <dvdgbgn@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:55 PM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River parkway tree cutting

You don't often get email from dvdgbgn@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that

requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

The US Army Corp of Engineer would perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you. David C. Beegan

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:45 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River Common Features public comment

From: Lissa Souther <lsouther@newbelgium.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:14 PM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River Common Features public comment

You don't often get email from lsouther@newbelgium.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello

I live on Middleton Way, in Sierra Oaks, with the levee in sight and the Parkway as my neighboring jewel. Finding out about the current plan for it to soon look denuded as it does near Sac State in the name of levee improvement has me greatly troubled. While I appreciate the need for flood control, it is hard for me to fathom that razing the land and decimating both flora and fauna is the only route available. And in saying this, I feel as if I one of many. Are there no engineers within the Army Corps who can figure out alternatives that find a balance between respect for the environment and keeping homes and infrastructures safe? If not, other opinions and ideas need to be sought out and considered. A targeted approach maybe? Again, there has to be a better way than the plan outlaid, which seems to me, simply crazy and without thought or concern for our wild and scenic river and the life beside it. And yes, I am saying that as a homeowner.

Adding my name to the masses,

Lissa Souther

LISSA SOUTHER

Sacramento/Tahoe/Chico Regional Ranger

916-879-0191

lsouther@newbelgium.com



Fwd: Delta Stewardship Council staff forget concerns expressed by local agencies about Delta Levees Investment Strategy

Deirdre Des Jardins <ddj@cah2oresearch.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 1:21 PM

To: Selvamohan, Selvaratnam@CVFPB <Selvaratnam.Selvamohan@cvflood.ca.gov>; Dolan, Jane@CVFPB <Jane.Dolan@cvflood.ca.gov>
Cc: DWR CVFPBQuestions <Questions@CVFlood.ca.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ddj@cah2oresearch.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello

FYI -- The Delta Stewardship Council staff seem to have totally forgotten the concerns expressed by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and local agencies about the failure of the Delta Levees Investment Strategy to prioritize investments in the State Plan of Flood Control levees on the Sacramento River, as shown by yesterday's presentation to the Delta Independent Science Board.

As you know, it's a major issue because there is already inadequate funding for maintaining primary Delta levees and upgrading them to deal with sea level rise.

I sent this followup email to the Delta Independent Science Board, the Delta Lead Scientist, and DSC Chair Virginia Madueno. Trying to let the folks who raised concerns in the Delta Levee Investment Strategy hearings know as well.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Deirdre Des Jardins** <ddj@cah2oresearch.com>

Date: Wed, Feb 21, 2024 at 12:36 PM

Subject: Concerns expressed by Delta local flood agencies at August 2021 DLIS hearing

To: Delta Independent Science Board <disb@deltacouncil.ca.gov>, lisamarie.windham-myers@deltacouncil.ca.gov <lisamarie.windham-myers@deltacouncil.ca.gov>, <erin.mullin@deltacouncil.ca.gov>, Madueno, Virginia@DeltaCouncil <virginia.madueno@deltacouncil.ca.gov>

At the August 2021 hearing on DLIS, the DSC Executive Director said that the concerns expressed by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, the Central Valley Flood Protection Association, Central Delta Reclamation Districts, and Gil Cosio could be addressed going forward. But the presentation today by the Delta Stewardship Council staff showed that these concerns have been completely forgotten. Further, none of the local flood agency folks who expressed concerns were asked to present to the Delta Independent Science Board. This fails to give adequate information to the Delta ISB for independent oversight of the Delta Stewardship Council.

The characterization of the DLIS as prioritizing "risk reduction" is also fundamentally obfuscatory. The Council's decisionmaking documents showed that the Council did not choose the option that would have prioritized protecting lives and property. The decision making instead chose the option that would prioritize protecting statewide interests -- Delta export water supply and ecosystem restoration.

You can see this in the categorization of restoration of Grizzly Island and Hasting Tracts as "very high" priority, above that of most levees protecting Delta legacy communities.

<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/dlis/2024-01-02-closeup-extent-1.pdf>

<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/dlis/2024-01-02-closeup-extent-2.pdf>

<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/dlis/2024-01-02-closeup-extent-3.pdf>

This is my blog post on the August 2021 hearing (with a transcript of my concerns about protecting lives and property in Delta legacy communities.)

[Revised Delta Levees Investment Strategy approved over objections by Delta stakeholders](#) The DLIS maps continue to fail to even show the location of Delta Legacy Communities.

Transcript of comments by Melinda Terry of the Central Valley Flood Protection Association, Dante Nomellini Sr. representing Central Delta Reclamation Districts, and Gil Cosio, the levee engineer for North Delta Reclamation Districts.

[Comments of Delta stakeholders on revised Delta Levees Investment Strategy](#)

The table below (updated from our 2019 brief) shows actual conditions of the levees protecting Delta legacy communities.

Hazard Level definitions are from the Lower Sacramento River/Delta North Regional Flood Management Plan, July 2014. Available at <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=28753>

When water reaches the Levee Assessment Tool assessed Water Surface Elevation:

- Hazard Level A –low likelihood of either levee failure or the need to flood-fight to prevent Levee failure.
- Hazard Level B – moderate likelihood of either levee failure or the need to flood-fight to prevent levee failure.
- Hazard Level C – high likelihood of either levee failure or the need to flood-fight to prevent levee failure.
- Lacking Sufficient Data (LD) – There is currently insufficient data about past performance or hazard indicators to assign a hazard level, or there is poor correlation between past performance and hazard indicator scores.

Community	DLIS Island /Tract or portion	SPF	RD	Hazard Level	Standard	2010 population (whole island / tract)	Probability of Flooding (Hydrologic 2012 Baseline)	Priority
Freeport	Maintenance Area 9 North	Y	744			38*	1.4%	Very High
Clarksburg	Netherlands	Y	999	All B		917	1.2%	High
Clarksburg area	Lisbon	Y	307	C		163	1.0%	Other
Clarksburg area	Merritt island	Y	150	A or B, B, C		173	1.2%	Other
Hood	Maintenance Area 9 South	Y	746	C		1,495	6.6%	Very High
Courtland	Pearson District	Y	551	B, LD		696	1.7%	High
Lockett	Libby McNeil	Y	369	A		108	0.9%	Other

Walnut Grove – East Bank	Walnut Grove (Has its own RD)	Y	554	Att		502	1.5%	High
Walnut Grove – West Bank	Grand Island	Y	3	B, C		1,388	2.2%	High
Ryd	Grand Island	Y	3			1,388	2.2%	Very High
Isle	Brannan-Andrus Island	Y	407	B and C		1,586	1.9%	Very High
Rio Vista	DLIS-22				2.4 m of waterfront need upgrade	158 (within flood area)	0.1%	High
Bethel Island	Bethel Island				11.5 m att HMP	2,137	1.0%	Very High
Knight	DLIS-07 (Adjacent Hotchkiss Tract)					216	0.0%	High
Knight	Veale Tract				4.2 m att HMP (100%)	55	1.0%	High

Other sources:

Report 1607, Delta Levees in Contra Costa County: How well do we protect this vital safety system, Contra Costa Grand Jury, 2015-16. Available at http://www.cc-courts.org/civil/docs/grandjury/1607_ReportSigned.pdf

From the Yolo Bypass Draft EIS-EIR Chapter 4:

The Rio Vista waterfront is vulnerable to flooding along a 2.4-mile reach that extends along the waterfront from downtown near California Street to the Mellin Levee and northward along the Mellin Levee to high ground (Figure 5-18) (Solano County Water Agency, 2015). Rio Vista has proposed a combination of floodwalls, closure structures, and levee improvements to protect the city from 200-year flooding and higher sea level rise due to climate change. In the event that changes in the Yolo Bypass contribute to stage increases in the vicinity of Rio Vista, the State could potentially participate in the implementation of the local 200-year flood protection project as mitigation for such effects.

Deirdre Des Jardins

California Water Research

Climate change, adaptation & western water from nonlinear dynamics & complex systems perspective
Former researcher, Santa Fe Institute, Center for Nonlinear Studies at Los Alamos National Lab, NASA Ames

"We aren't just failing to address the growing climate crisis to come; we're unprepared even for the impacts already here—in part because they keep surprising us with their intensity and in part because we can't seem to fathom our genuine vulnerability." – David Wallace Wells

831 566-6320

cah2oresearch.com

twitter: [@flowinguphill](https://twitter.com/flowinguphill)

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:29 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: Oppose the American River parkway project

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Gates <melissa.gatesdvm@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:00 PM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: Oppose the American River parkway project

[You don't often get email from melissa.gatesdvm@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the destruction of valuable riparian habitat along the American River. This is unnecessary and will cause irreparable harm to valuable and necessary habitat for wildlife.
Melissa Gates

1

From: Brown, Josh@DWR <Josh.Brown@water.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:23 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: Bailey.Hunter@usace.army.mil
Subject: [EXT] FW: American River project between Howe and Watt

From: Mary Swisher <maryeswisher@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:15 PM
To: DWR Public Comment ARCF 16 <PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov>
Subject: American River project between Howe and Watt

You don't often get email from maryeswisher@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Re: comment on American River flood project between Howe and Watt

The Army Corps of Engineers' plans for flood control along the American River Parkway between Howe and Watt Ave would be a devastation of animals and habitat.

In summer the trees and river banks provide an outdoor living area. We swim, kayak, bike and walk in the access to the cool river and lush trees. It is our back yard for many Sacramento families.

The concentration of wild life would be destroyed. Where can you go to see deer with their fawn or a coyote; all within a few minutes walk or bike ride. There are otter and beaver that can be approached in a canoe or Kayak. Fishermen sit peacefully in the early morning, waiting for a fish to bite. Children swing on ropes to drop into the cool water. I've watched a hawk sweep down to snatch a baby duck. This is where we take our children to see nature.

The destruction of the trees will make a once desirable place to live and play a wasteland for both humans and animals. The coyote and deer will be pushed into to neighborhoods causing panic and death.

The Army Corp of Engineers solutions for flood control should be tempered by concern for people and habitat. We bought a house seventy years ago in a flood plain knowing the risk. We chose to live here because of the trees and nature. It is time to have a more balanced approach than what the Corps is offering.

Mary Swisher
Elizabeth Swisher
Tom Freeman



From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:47 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: bikesaba@gmail.com <bikesaba@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:08 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) - December 2023 Report and Appendices

American River Common Features (ARCF) SEIS/SEIR

The American River Parkway Plan has a goal “To preserve, protect, interpret and improve the natural, archaeological, historical and recreational resources of the Parkway, including an adequate flow of high quality water, anadromous and resident fishes, migratory and resident wildlife, and diverse natural vegetation.” 1

2 The project is inconsistent with that goal. The project denaturalizes the parkway’s natural resources by imposing a man-made topography and removing vegetation. It’s ironic to note that this extensive, expensive denaturalization is occurring not too long after considerable effort and taxpayer expense separately was required to do just the opposite, namely, to naturalize Cordova Creek in the parkway.

The American River Parkway Plan has a requirement for public notifications.
“Any proposed project within the Parkway which is inconsistent with the goals and policies or land use designations of this Plan, shall require an amendment to this Plan and is subject to public notification as required by State law. Subsequent changes to local General Plans or the County and City’s Zoning Ordinance must also be presented at designated General Plan amendment hearings. Actions which are consistent with this Plan do not require special public notice, but must be clearly posted on published agendas for the Commissions, City Council and the Board of Supervisors in order for action to be taken.” To my knowledge the Parkway Plan has not been amended as required. 3

4 It is not possible to comment fully on the project’s impacts and proposed mitigation measures because the environmental statement does not clearly describe what changes will be made to the parkway trail, the duration of trail closure, and what the detours will be. What is clear is the project will impact transportation and recreational use of the parkway trail for years.

However, based on the previous phase of the project, we recommend that the mitigations include:

Well-signed, ADA compliant detours.

Detours with adequate paving quality in place before project start.

Additional or improved access points, for example at Kadema

Native tree planting to shade the refurbished trail

Proper striping of refurbished trail

Additional mitigation if project schedule is exceeded

These mitigations were not done during the previous phase. As a result, during the height of the Covid pandemic, when many people turned to bicycling for transportation and recreation, they were deterred by the project's lacking or inadequate mitigations.

Signage for the prior project phase was not initially adequate. The ramp to the levee top detour at Howe Avenue was not ADA compliant. No warning signs about the steepness of the ramp grade were ever placed.

The levee top detour was not resurfaced prior to or during the project. The pavement on the levee top was substandard: rough and potholed.

The quality of the access points at the Fair Oaks Bridge and Campus Commons Golf Course was worsened by the project and not corrected resulting in trail flooding/puddling.

6

No shade trees have been planted along the refurbished trail exposing trail users to the hot summer sun, increasing the likelihood of malignant health effects, diminishing user enjoyment, and missing an opportunity to fight global warming.

The striping of the refurbished trail was a solid yellow line for its entire length. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices calls for a dashed yellow line where passing is allowed.

7

8

Project work and trail closure extended well past schedule. No adjustment to mitigations were made for this extra disruption.

Walt Seifert
Sacramento Trailnet

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:34 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re. American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project , Sacramento CA

Importance: High

From: Jeri Langham <jerilangham@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re. American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project , Sacramento CA
Importance: High

February 23, 2024

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento. CA 95814

Mr. Josh Brown
Central Valley Flood Protection Board / California Department of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, CA 95821

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown,

On December 22, 2023, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) published the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

(SEIS/SEIR) for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project (ARCF), Sacramento, CA. My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, Contract 3B, 4A and 4B.

I am a Professor Emeritus who taught Principles of Ecology and Plant Biology for 38 years in the Department of Biological Sciences, California State University, Sacramento, CA 95819; who has led birdwatching tours all over the world for 37 years for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours; and who purchased a home in July 1993 whose back fence gate opens up to the American River Parkway.

Since July 1993, 209 bird species have been seen and/or heard by me while I am in my yard and 238 species have been identified by me between the CSUS campus and the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. This is to show the incredible ornithological diversity of the American River Parkway.

After I retired from CSUS in 2008, I have invited as many as 5 friends to bird the American River Parkway 2-3 times a week when I am not away leading tours for VENT. I never tire of the diversity...something your project will eliminate as it already has by what you did near CSUS where I used to take some of my classes for field work.

There is no need for me to repeat all that has been pointed out in excellent, very detailed, and specific letters from:

Liz Bellas [Director of Regional Parks] (51 pages) and K.C. Sorgen [Senior Planner, Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks]

Dan Airola [Certified Wildlife Biologist] and Pat Bachetti [President, Central Valley Bird Club] (21 pages)

William Avery [Professor Emeritus CSUS], Joshua Thomas [Ph.D. candidate U.C. Davis], Gerald Djuth [retired P.E. Civil Engineer], and William Brattain [P.E.] (22 pages)

Dr. Michele Stevens, Emeritus Professor, Environmental Studies Department, CSUS (7 pages)

Barbara Leary, Chair Sierra Club Sacramento Group (3 pages)

Dan Meier, Sacramento Valley Chapter, California Native Plant Society

Paul Miller, President Sacramento Audubon Society

Leo Winternitz

Chris Conard

etc. etc. etc.

One thing that may not have been mentioned is the plan to use the levee side of Larchmont Community Park as one launch pad for all the heavy equipment needed for portions of this project. It has taken many years to perfect the grass in the two soccer fields used by hundreds of area soccer players.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the habitat destruction proposed within the American River Common Features 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR). In the strongest terms possible I urge that the proposed actions in the SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B, be put on hold, and that the flood control objectives be designed in a way to maximally preserve habitat consistent with the American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan.

Jeri M. Langham, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences

OR

langhamjm@csus.edu

Neotropical Grassland Conservancy, Director
<http://conservegrassland.org/>

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Leader
<https://ventbird.com/our-team/JeriLangham/34>

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD KIN"
William Shakespeare

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:32 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

From: juliegabele@sbcglobal.net <juliegabele@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:00 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; sorgenkc@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Feb 23, 2024

Subject: Comments for American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Dra> Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the Lower American River projects listed in the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts

3B, 4A and 4B, as well as general comment to the overall study, gaps, deficiency, and failure on public outreach. USACE must address and not advance this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Comment 1:

1 I have serious concerns regarding proposed actions and mitigation proposed for Contracts 3B, 4A, and 4B. The current proposed actions and alternatives show a need for much greater study, understanding and appreciation of the serious and very real lasting impacts USACE proposed actions and poor mitigation options will have on the lower American River, community, wildlife, and countless ecosystems struggling to survive us, as well as the unique

1 | and sensitive nature that sites listed in contract 3B, 4A, and 4B have on the daily lives, health, well-being, social, and economic benefits for our community, and the millions who visit each year.

After careful review of the draft SEIS/SEIR and earlier documents I have observed significant gaps in data, outdated data, unverified assumptions, old methods, and aged data and approaches repackaged and perpetuated to support assumptions, site selection, alternative actions, and mitigation options (which are woefully inadequate). 2

After significant research and review, I strongly question Contracts 3B, 4A, and 4B erosion site selection. I do not support the proposed actions, and I find the current alternatives and mitigation unacceptable. Serious and lasting impacts are ignored or dismissed.

3 | **Please conduct further study to better understand this section of the river, the sensitive habitat and ecosystems, its role and very real impacts to wildlife and people using and or living nearby.**

Please ensure USACE works with the community and project partners to develop much less invasive, surgical options to address erosion where needed and restore and develop much better restoration and mitigation plans that will be onsite at all locations disturbed (not offsite or use green credits).

Comment 2:

It is unclear what increased benefit or goals (other than generalized improved flood protection) that USACE and others are targeting, in exchange for devastating this section of the lower American River and using crucial tax payer dollars. USACE estimates performance assurance for sites in contract 3B today without any work are at 45% and 47% in a 1/200 ACE flood event. USACE then stated the levees assurance would be at 60% and 57% in a 1/200 ACE after work proposed is completed for sites contract 3B. This is discussed in earlier EIS/EIR documents, but not mentioned in the draft SEIS/SEIR).

Please explain specific assurance for the levees in a 1/200 ACE flood event for levees in contracts 3B before and after work using proposed actions. Please also provide copies of complete study that support this assurance assessment.

Please also explain specific assurance for the levees in a 1/200 ACE flood event for levees in contracts 4A & 4B before and after work using proposed actions. Please also provide copies of complete study that support this assurance assessment.

Please also provide cost/budget by project – i.e. listing cost/ budget for each of the contracts 3B, contract 4A, & contract 4B (as this is part of economic analysis).

Comment 3:

Tree & Habitat - USACE has failed to provide detailed maps of what habitat and or trees are to be removed (or what would be kept) for contracts 3B, 4A, & 4B.

USACE SEIS/SEIR documents (appendices and earlier EIR & EIS documents) – do not adequately inform and answer the question about what trees will be removed – despite the fact the public has asked repeatedly for this information. The public, congress, USACE, and others need this data to accurately assess impacts of proposed actions and suggested alternatives based on the tree loss. **This is impeding our review and ability to recommend better alternatives to USACE .**

The one page “Tree Surveys” USACE posted to the Sac Levee website on 2/16/24 for contracts 3B North and contract 3B South fail to answer this question and were posted just 7 days before your 2/23/24 deadline for public comment on the draft SEIS/SEIR. Links for these tree surveys are below. The one page graphic does not tell reviewer what trees are to be removed and what will be kept (it simply states not all trees will be removed) in either one.

- [LAR C3B trees upstream 20240216](https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20upstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=g77S56NJfmSgxT4fSmikkQ%3d%3d)
https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20upstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=g77S56NJfmSgxT4fSmikkQ%3d%3d
- [LAR C3B trees downstream 20240216](https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20downstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=TEZUt9K9zHjOiXVcV-fdXw%3d%3d)
https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Portals/12/documents/civil_works/CommonFeatures/ARCF%20Images/LAR%20C3B%20trees%20downstream%2020240216.pdf?ver=TEZUt9K9zHjOiXVcV-fdXw%3d%3d

Comment 4:

No vegetation variance study was conducted for the lower American River sites in contract 3B, 4A, & 4B. This habitat is some of the most sensitive and critical portion of the lower American River fisheries and recreational areas recognized by the National Wild & Scenic Rivers act and must be studied for vegetation variance before any final ruling or acceptance of the draft SEIS/SEIR. Adequate alternatives cannot be assessed without this.

In contrast, USACE conduct a study to support a vegetation variance for the **Sacramento River levee and a vegetation variance will be sought for the Sacramento River** (as shown in the following USACE report citations below). Per the SEIS/SEIR –“Because a vegetation variance would be obtained approximately 930 large trees would be left in place on the lower one-half waterside slope, and rock would be placed around the base of the trees. The trees that would remain in place are scattered over approximately 50,000 linear feet and 50 acres.”

The habitat on the American River is no less important and must be more adequately studied to determine the actual importance and benefit of vegetation to the levee integrity and redirection of flows away from the levee, as well as to the fisheries of federally listed and endangered fish and recreational value of these fisheries directly at these sites and overall recreational value.

The Lower American River’s National Wild & Scenic River Designation recognizes and protects the lower American River for its extraordinary Outstandingly remarkable values for recreational values and fishery. USACE has not studied, nor developed adequate alternatives for lower American River erosion sites Shaded Riverine Aquatic (SRA) habitat

The public wants USACE to develop options which preserve trees on the lower American River sites in contract 3B, 4A, & 4B. The public wants USACE to develop better options that work with nature, vs against nature as we consider what work is needed in this section of the river must be done. The stakes are too high and the public and congress have been deprived of this information and alternative.

Please conduct a specific study of the trees located in contract 3B, 4A, & 4B for their value and benefit to erosion and flood protection. This is one of the most scenic and productive areas of essential habitat left in the heart of the American River

Per the American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report December 2015, Revised May 2016:

“ ES.7 Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

The effects to the human and natural environment have been considered throughout the planning phase of the study and opportunities have been evaluated to reduce effects to resources within the project area. A vegetation variance will be sought for the Sacramento River reach of the project which will allow vegetation to remain on the lower one third of the waterside levee slope. The waterside vegetation on the Sacramento River is valuable Shaded Riverine Aquatic (SRA) habitat for many State- and Federally listed fish species and State-listed Swainson’s hawk. Because the ARCF GRR alternatives would affect Federally listed fish species, consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is required with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Additionally, during the next phase of the project, design refinements will minimize effects to the American River Parkway where feasible.” **(Source: American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report December 2015, Revised May 2016, p ES-7)**

Per the: American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report, Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report December 2015, Revised May 2016)

“ Vegetation Variance

A vegetation variance will be sought by the Sacramento District to comply with ETL 1110-2-583 on the waterside of the levee. The vegetation variance request requires the Corps to show that the safety, structural integrity, and functionality of the levee would be retained if the vegetation were to remain in place. An evaluation of under seepage and waterside embankment slope stability was completed for this study by Corps geotechnical engineers.

This analysis was completed for the section/index point at levee mile (LM) 5.92 on the

Sacramento River. This index point was chosen for the variance analyses because it was considered to be representative of the most critical channel and levee geometry, underseepage and slope stability conditions, and vegetation conditions. The cross-section geometry of the index point incorporated tree fall and scour by using maximum potential diameter at breast height (dbh) of cottonwoods (12.0 feet) projected horizontally at a depth of 11.0 feet below the existing ground profile. **The results show that the tree fall and scour did not significantly affect levee performance and that the levee meets Corps seepage and slope stability criteria considering the seepage and stability improvement measures are in place (“with project” conditions).** Therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that by allowing vegetation to remain as stated above, the safety, structural integrity, and functionality of the Sacramento River levee would be retained.”

Additionally – you can see the Sacramento River site Vegetation Variance is listed in Table ES.3 - Summary of Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures, p ES-14 in Fisheries section).

Comment 5: USACE Public Outreach has failed.

In Chapter 7. Public Involvement Coordination and Review of the Draft Supplemental EIS/EIR – page 7.1 USACE states the public would be properly notified by USACE. This did not occur.

USACE own public outreach has failed. Not one person or business I spoke to personally on the North side of the lower American River who will be directly impacted by contract 3B and possibly 4B knew of these projects, nor recalls ever receiving a postcard or any other communication from USACE as stated page 7-1 (or from any other government entity) regarding the project or notice of the release of the draft SEIS/SEIR, or earlier versions of the original environmental study.

- This includes individuals that literally will have their homes and lives completely disrupted by the work effort occurring in their backyards, front yards, who live on the haul routes and trucks that will impact their lives and homes for years. They will also lose use, value, and access of the river and parkway they know and love (and will be returned a river they will not recognize). Only two people I spoke with on the south received a postcard about the draft SEIS/SEIR.
- USACE also failed to bring forward any leadership or technical expertise needed by public to address questions on either Jan 10th and Jan 16th, 2024 virtual meetings. The meetings had technical problems and promises to post both meetings were not kept.
- Questions raised in order to properly participate in public comment have also not been answered.
- USACE failed to honor the request for in-person meetings that have been requested by countless individuals who expressed the need for such meeting.
- A number of leaders of parks listed for staging areas in USACE documents, had no knowledge of the project or draft SEIS/SEIR either (until people who live in community started sharing).
- Neighbors and others have been trying to help each other, so they would not be blindsided by USACE, CVFPB, other state and local stakeholders.
- USACE website is also jumble of data and topics that is extremely difficult to navigate and mixes up information from different projects in numerous places on the site, making it difficult for public to find and align documents they need by contract.
- In addition, combining several contracts into the draft SEIS/SEIR is a mess as well.
- Signing up for alerts on USACE website has also not worked.

All of these failures and poor execution unfairly disadvantages the public to adequately find and review what is needed. It is also an extra burden to public who do not have computers, internet access, or other limitations (which includes a number of homeowners adjacent to proposed work sites in contract 3B, 4A, & 4B).

Please extend your public comment period, define and execute a much a better outreach plan, and share the list of addresses, criteria of who USACE is sending notices to, radius from site who will be notified and how, include copies and alerts to televised media and written letters with significant advance notice to homeowners, businesses, and property owners and residents impacted – especially those immediately adjacent proposed sites, haul routes, staging areas, constructions zones, etc.

Please conduct in-person meetings that include technical experts working on these contracts qualified and able to answer questions to aid the understanding, address the public's questions, and assist the public in evaluating impacts of the proposed work and actions, discuss and exchange ideas, as well as discuss and answer questions regarding the environmental review for contract 3B, 4A, & 4B.

Please also provide a list of all addresses USACE sent postcard notice of the draft SEIS/SEIR release, copy of postcard materials sent, dates, and proof of delivery.

Comment 6:

Please conduct more in-depth studies and address continued gaps in data for sites listed in contract 3B, 4A, and 4B, and for work needed work to develop more adequate alternatives that work with nature and preserve first, that also deliver restoration and mitigation onsite, not buying of green credits and land elsewhere.

General Comments:

USACE must not approve and advance the SEIS/SEIR to final accepted study. The data is inadequate to properly assess the environment and environmental consequences as required.

USACE has not properly and fully studied, nor presented adequate alternatives needed for the Lower American River sites identified in Contract 3B, 4A, and 4B and must extend their study further to more adequately study and gather data to both validate site selection and develop much better alternatives to erosion work and must develop onsite restoration and onsite mitigation for all sites Contract 3B, 4A, and 4B (offsite mitigation or use of green credits are not acceptable for destroying the heart of the lower American River and sensitive habitat and recreational corridor this work will impact)

The options for restoration and mitigation for Contract 3B, 4A, and 4B fail to accurately account for and reflect the wildlife, ecosystems, and value of the river for recreational values and the impact of the proposed actions for the species, as well as the surrounding community and region at large for sites listed in contract 3B, 4A, & 4B.

In addition, the study and proposed options are not considering viable options that are crucial for this portion of the Lower American River, especially in light of the sensitivity of this area and long term permanent impacts the report fails to assess or dismisses.

There is a concerning lack of alternatives presented and those options must be expanded.

Thank you,

Julie Gabele
Sacramento, CA

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Elaine Baden <elaine.baden@att.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:25 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A | The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. Although I live in the SF Bay Area, I come up to the River many times each year to enjoy paddling and hiking.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns

that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Elaine Baden

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: David Solomon <rhythmtime@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:03 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

A I grew up hiking and riding my bike with my friends along the river just behind Rio Americano High School. I still frequently hike and ride in the same vicinity even though I now live closer to downtown

B Sacramento. I think it would be a travesty to tear all the trees and plants out of this area to create no more than an ugly channel. Indeed trees and plants provide substantial barrier to erosion. I first moved to the area in 1966 and while I have witnessed several extreme high water years I have never seen the water rise high enough to cover the plateau between the levy and the main channel behind Rio Americano High School. I support making the levies strong enough to contain extremely high water flow i.e. flow much greater than any since 1966.. The most important safeguard against flood in this area is the levy that abuts Rio Americano High School. Whatever is required to maintain this levy, which runs for several miles up and down stream should not require stripping all the vegetation between the levy and the river. There is between 150 ft to .25 miles between the levy and the main river channel. Any buttressing work in this area would be of no use if the river rises above those areas as it will then require the levy to control the flow. Therefore, I believe examining the levy to ensure its strength and fixing any weak points should be the focus of the present project. This should not require the removal of all the vegetation between the levy and the river.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the

environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

[YOU CAN ENTER YOUR OWN LIST OF CONCERNS, OR YOU CAN COPY AND PASTE FROM OUR LIST OF KEY CONCERNS FROM OUR TEAM OF REVIEWERS]

[THEN YOU CAN END WITH YOUR OWN CLOSING REQUESTS, OR COPY AND PASTE FROM OUR LIST OF SUGGESTED REQUESTS FROM OUR TEAM OF REVIEWERS]

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

David Solomon

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:31 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Jaime Becker <jaime@jaimesells.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:28 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

1 The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I use the parkway throughout the year for recreation, running, walking, biking, respite, to soak in nature, to clear my head and don't know what I would do without it. You state the impacts are less than significant and unavoidable and I disagree. These impacts are more than significant and avoidable.

At the top of my list are recreation, mental health and wildlife which are severely impacted by this project. Below you will find a lot more detail as it pertains to the SEIS/SEIR and contract 3B.

Recreation is also critically important to public health, yet this is nowhere addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.^[1] Many people come to the 3B Project area for their physical and mental well being, and that is especially so because of the close proximity of the area to urban Sacramento. Research has shown that “green exercise” may confer mental health benefits in addition to improving physical health. For instance, it was found that exercising with views of nature led to more consistent mental health improvements.^[2] Similarly, natural park settings help decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration and tranquility.^[3] Just the simple act of viewing nature has shown to provide physiological restoration, reduce stress and provide calming effects.^[4] Maintaining a connection with nature is particularly valuable in reducing stress that accompanies urban living,^[5] and scientific studies confirm that regular engagement with green spaces is linked with better mental health and well-being.^[6] More greenery, access to nearby natural areas, and green exercise, positively correlate with less stress, less sadness, more satisfaction with life, and overall better mental health.^[7] Morita et al. found that depression decreased and liveliness increased with forest immersion.^[8] For people having high initial stress levels, exposure to forest settings produced lower measures of anxiety, depression, anger, confusion, and fatigue, and forest walking increased happiness more than walking in a gymnasium, with meditative walking in the forest being the most effective.^[9] The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children’s health is becoming more recognized and apparent.^[10]

The loss of riparian forest in the 3B area will detrimentally impact the health of the many people who use this particular area to relax, hike, run, walk, watch wildlife, swim, fish, and boat. This is especially so given how few areas nearby to Sacramento provide such opportunity for connection to nature, relaxation, and the many other ways that the area uniquely offers mental health sustenance. This is yet another important reason to protect the area’s riparian forest.

With respect to cumulative impacts to recreation, the SEIS/SEIR states that “the Proposed Action would result in a considerable contribution to the short-term significant cumulative impact on recreation,” but fails to address the long-term significant impacts in any meaningful way. This is a serious oversight given how much of the lower American River’s vegetation is being harmed.

^[1] See, e.g., Urban River Parkways, An Essential Tool for Public Health (July 2014)

^[2] Barton, J and Rogerson, M (2017) The importance of greenspace for mental health. *BJPsych International*, 14 (4). pp. 79-81. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1192/s2056474000002051>

^[3] Pretty J, Peacock J, Sellens M, Griffin M. The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise. *Int J Environ Health Res.* 2005 Oct;15(5):319-37. doi: 10.1080/09603120500155963. PMID: 16416750

^[4] Grinde B, Patil GG. Biophilia: does visual contact with nature impact on health and well-being? *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2009 Sep;6(9):2332-43. doi: 10.3390/ijerph6092332. Epub 2009 Aug 31. PMID: 19826546; PMCID: PMC2760412; Dannenberg AL, Jackson RJ, Frumkin H, Schieber RA, Pratt M, Kochtitzky C, Tilson HH. The impact of community design and land-use choices on public health: a scientific research agenda. *Am J Public Health.* 2003 Sep;93(9):1500-8. doi: 10.2105/ajph.93.9.1500. PMID: 12948970; PMCID: PMC1448000

- [5] Vining, J. (2003). The Connection to Other Animals and Caring for Nature. *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2), 87–99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24706957>
- [6] Maller, C., Townsend, M., St Leger, L., Henderson Wilson, C., Pryor, A., Prosser, L. and Moore, M. (2009). Healthy Parks, Healthy People: The Health Benefits of Contact with Nature in a Park Context.
- [7] World Health Organization. (2011). Investing in Mental Health; Kuo, M. (2011). Parks and Other Green Environments: 'Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat'. *Australasian Parks and Leisure*, 14(1); Barton, S. (2008). Human Benefits of Green Spaces.
- [8] Morita, E.; Fukuda, S.; Nagano, J.; Hamajima, N.; Yamamoto, H.; Iwai, Y.; Nakashima, T.; Ohira, H.; Shirakawa, T. Psychological effects of forest environments on healthy adults: Shinrin-yoku (forest-air bathing, walking) as a possible method of stress reduction. *Public Health* 2007, 121, 54–63
- [9] Park, B.-J.; Furuya, K.; Kasetani, T.; Takayama, N.; Kagawa, T.; Miyazaki, Y. Relationship between psychological responses and physical environments in forest settings. *Landsc. Urban Plan.* 2011, 102, 24–32; Shin, Y.-K.; Kim, D.J.; Jung-Choi, K.; Son, Y.; Koo, J.-W.; Min, J.-A.; Chae, J.-H. Differences of psychological effects between meditative and athletic walking in a forest and gymnasium. *Scand. J. For. Res.* 2013, 28, 64–72
- [10] Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity. The United States Conference of Mayors; Preventing childhood obesity: the need to create healthy places. (2007). A Cities and Communities Health Report; Space oriented Children's Policy: Creating Child friendly Communities to Improve Children's Well being

Why else is nature so important and keeping our river from being bulldozed? Remember the pandemic? Why isn't any of this taken into consideration as an impact? Nature played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic for several reasons:

1. **Physical Health:** Outdoor activities in nature provided a safe way for people to engage in physical exercise. Exercise is essential for maintaining overall health, including boosting the immune system and reducing the risk of chronic diseases.
2. **Mental Well-being:** Nature has been shown to have positive effects on mental health. Spending time in natural environments can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. The calming and rejuvenating aspects of nature helped people cope with the challenges and uncertainties of the pandemic.
3. **Social Connection:** Outdoor spaces allowed for safe socialization. People could meet friends and family in parks or natural settings while maintaining physical distance. Social connections are vital for emotional well-being, and nature provided a conducive environment for these interactions.
4. **Escape and Relaxation:** With lockdowns and restrictions in place, nature offered an escape from the confines of indoor spaces. Being in green spaces provided a sense of tranquility and relaxation, helping individuals take a break from the stressors associated with the pandemic.

5. **Coping Mechanism:** Nature served as a coping mechanism for many individuals dealing with isolation, grief, and other emotional challenges brought about by the pandemic. The beauty and serenity of natural settings offered a positive outlet for emotional expression and reflection.
6. **Mindfulness and Reflection:** Nature encourages mindfulness and a connection to the present moment. During a time of heightened uncertainty, people turned to nature as a source of solace, allowing them to reflect on their thoughts and find a sense of grounding.
7. **Economic Impact:** Outdoor activities related to nature, such as hiking, camping, and local tourism, became popular during the pandemic. This contributed positively to local economies and businesses that were heavily affected by lockdowns.

What about the wildlife? As if we haven't built enough in our region moving the wildlife out. The American River Parkway is the one place they should be safe from being pushed out or destroyed. Has any of this been taken into consideration? And what will be done to avoid it?

Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

- The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife
- Clear-cutting and rip rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon.
- Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.
- Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost.
- The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.
- The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.
- High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are "necessary" for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of

hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

6

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

7

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutants on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

8

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

9 Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by

many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

10

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

11

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the

12

wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

12

13 I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

14

15 The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

17 The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED

and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

18

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Jaime Becker

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:30 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comment on ARCF draft SEIS/SEIR Dec. 2023 -- Parkway_Serenity Photo near LarchmontPark_2_23_2024
Attachments: AmerRiv_Fri_Eve_Serenity_on_Parkway_Near_LarchmontPark_2_23_2024_b.png

From: Beth S <m.beth.s@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:41 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: jonah.knapp@CVFlood.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on ARCF draft SEIS/SEIR Dec. 2023 -- Parkway_Serenity Photo near LarchmontPark_2_23_2024

February 23, 2024

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown,

Subject: Comment on ARCF draft SEIS/SEIR Dec. 2023 -- Parkway Serenity Photo near Larchmont Park 2-23-2024

Please find the attached photo moment I noticed while walking along the American River Parkway near Larchmont Park just before sunset today. The peacefulness of it caused me to pause and smile.

Caption: Friday evening serenity on the Parkway.
Feb. 23, 2024 Near Larchmont Park.

(A place of great value, within proposed Contract 3B).

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend.

Mary Beth Schwehr
Local Resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:24 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

From: Fisher, Jacob L <jlfisher@csus.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 8:05 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

To Whom It May Concern:

1 I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed impacts on the lower American River based on the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. My concerns relate to the inadequate mitigation of potential damage to cultural resources, the local ecology hosted by the riparian corridor within an urbanized landscape, and the underlying arguments for erosion control.

I am currently a faculty member at Sacramento State with a research specialization on past human interactions with their local environments, and in doing so, my expertise bridges archaeology and historical ecology. Further, I have served as the NAGPRA Director for the campus since 2010 and can speak specifically of USACE's history of compliance with repatriation law alongside their commitments to curation of archaeological collections that are generated by actions of the Corps. Prior to joining the Department of Anthropology in 2010, I worked in cultural resources management beginning in 2000.

2 It is through this lens that I share the sentiment in the EIS that here is a high probability of undiscovered, buried cultural resources that are eligible for inclusion onto the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of potential effect. While the programmatic agreement outlines how the project will be monitored and such sites may be evaluated and mitigated, USACE recent history relating to cultural resources suggests that the existing plans are inadequate. For instance, the Feather River levee repair (during which several archaeology faculty and numerous students at Sacramento State were involved in), the inadequate subsurface surveying conducted ahead of earth-moving activities resulted in the discovery of archaeological sites, disrupting sacred localities, and disturbing ancestral remains. Doing so again will not only cause deep damage to the local Nisenan and Miwok communities, but will undoubtedly extend the project timeline and increase project costs footed by taxpayers significantly.

3 Further, the argument that USACE is not responsible for NAGPRA, including the most recent (December 2023) regulations, is questionable at best. Regardless of land ownership, activities funded by federal monies are supposed to activate this incredibly important repatriation law that provides human rights to ancestors and civil rights to the descendent communities. No matter who the landowner is, NAGPRA must be followed and this is inadequately addressed in the plan. If USACE is not responsible for meeting the requirements under current NAGPRA regulations, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and the landowner will be held responsible. This plan needs to be made transparent to the public to ensure that the Corps is doing right with the local indigenous communities.

4 I have personally experienced USACE's skirting of NAGPRA for existing collections housed in museums, including the Archaeological Curation Facility at Sacramento State, that were generated by their actions. Time and again, lawyers from USACE have communicated that they hold no responsibility for collections generated by their actions *simply because they didn't own the land at the time of excavation*. This supposed loophole effectively allows USACE to place full responsibility upon the University and creates unnecessary delays for the repatriation of ancestors, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that would not have been disturbed if it were not for the actions of the Corps. Further, it places a significant financial burden on the University, forcing it to allocate funds that should be directed to the advancement of student education. The public, local agencies, and local landowners should be aware that the USACE will undoubtedly continue this trend with the proposed American River project.

5 I also question the underlying reasoning for this project, which appears to be a boondoggle in the name of erosion control. While I am not a geologist, I received formal graduate-level training in sedimentology and geoarchaeology. Simply stated, the project is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective modeling that fails to recognize the role that local floras play in erosion control. The plan to clearcut miles of intact trees and vegetation that provides natural erosion control needs clearer justification and a demonstration that it will not counterproductively increase erosion along this section of the river. USACE has failed to explain why a more surgical approach is inadequate. More clearcutting of the nature witnessed recently west of Howe Bridge will have an enormous impact on individuals residing along the river (alongside diminished reality values) and I expect it will have significant negative impacts on the broader region's attraction to individuals and businesses looked to relocate out of more expansive locations like the Bay Area.

7 These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, beavers, predatory birds including the prospect of further expansion of the bald eagle, countless waterfowl, deer, foxes, bobcats, and coyotes, to name just some representative faunas) highly valued by recreational Parkway users, and this is part of the cultural environment that likewise is not being adequately mitigated. I further question the replanting plans: as a historical ecologist who can speak on the thousands of years of ecological change in the Sacramento area, what benchmark is guiding what ecosystem should be recreated? The 20th century landscape? The landscape at contact as described by inadequate and biased historical records? The landscape of the Medieval Climatic Anomaly? The *goals* of vegetation and wildlife rehabilitation in the affected area need to be made clearer.

9 This broader project has personally impacted me. I cycle from my residence in Carmichael to Sacramento State year-round, four to five days a week, regardless of freezing temperatures, extreme heat, poor air quality, and rain. I do so for the personal financial benefits, exercise, mental health, and reduced carbon emissions—but I also do so because it's my fortune to take the opportunity to witness Sacramento's crown jewel, the American River and adjacent parkway. I have the opportunity to see the seasonal changes as migratory wildlife come and go, the brilliant greening every spring followed by the golden fields of summer, and the rare glimpses of otters, beavers, foxes, bobcats (not to discount the numerous deer, cottontail and jackrabbits, ground and tree squirrels, and even the lowly moles). When work was being conducted west of Howe Bridge, it brought great pain to me knowing the direct impacts on animal populations, such as annual locations of deer nesting sites, coyote dens, and cormorant hangouts (to name a few) that undoubtedly went unnoticed by biology monitors who are "helicoptered" into the project who do not hold such intimate knowledge that the locals—those who will be most directly impacted (outside the faunas and floras) cherish.

I have already embedded the Corps' recent actions along the north bank of the American River into my main course ("The Anthropocene: Human Impacts on the Environment") at Sacramento State to demonstrate to students how

misguided public works can be in the guise of science. I hope that I don't have to add another section of the river to my lectures.

Sincerely,

Jacob L. Fisher, PhD

Professor, Department of Anthropology

NAGPRA Director, Native American Graves Protection, Repatriation and Healing

Director, Archaeological Curation Facility

Sacramento State Zooarchaeology Lab

California State University, Sacramento

Office: (916) 278-4555

<http://www.csus.edu/faculty/F/jlfisher/index.html>

[Questioning Rebound: People and Environmental Change in the Protohistoric and Early Historic Americas](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF)

From: diane fowler <jstoll.dfowler@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 4:08 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; richdesmond@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Public Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF)

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I oppose the project.

1 It is very unfortunate that this project has been allowed to move forward without significant public outreach by USACE to inform the affected community regarding this project. The removal of over 700 trees along the scenic American River impacts a wide range of the community like me, that has had no knowledge of the project. It was not until the Sacramento Bee wrote an informative article this week that I became aware of the project. The US Army Corp of Engineers should extend the public comment period and do the appropriate public outreach to inform the community of the project. This is required by CEQA.

2 Also under CEQA, all environmental concerns need to be addressed and mitigated. This project proposes removal of 700 or more trees leaving

behind bare banks that will cause significant harm. It is impossible to mitigate the loss of heritage trees by planting new seedlings. Mature trees provide habitat for animals and improve air quality. This has not been sufficiently addressed nor mitigated. This project should be denied.

3 I also request that you revise the proposal to a less destructive one that can be presented to the public for review if it is still deemed necessary for flood control. The current proposed project is too destructive and harmful.

We are a city and county of trees. We also have the beautiful wild and scenic American River parkway. This project if allowed to proceed would harm and destroy both.

Thank you,

Diane Fowler

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:16 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Sherrie Dodson <dodson.sherrie7@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:20 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

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Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis

overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency”

with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:13 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Melanie <nguboce@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:40 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees.

Advanced

modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

James Nguyen

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:07 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on ARCF SEIS/SEIR 2013

From: Nancy Kniskern <knancy2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:23 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment on ARCF SEIS/SEIR 2013

Public Engagement:

1 The Army Corps of Engineers has not engaged with the Public via meetings or workshops to explain the various methods of bank protection measures that they expect to install. It is up to the public to figure out such terms as, “launchable rock toes, tiebacks, launchable rock trenches, and riprap armoring. The USACE told us when we requested a meeting to discuss these terms, he said that there would be presentations offered in January that will explain the details. The presentations did not explain these terms, nor did they allow any questions. They promised to record our comments. That meant that we could not get simple questions answered to better understand the document. Recently, in a **US Army Corps of Engineer presentation, the presenting Colonel stated that they are, “engineering with nature,” and dedicated to” communicate, communicate and communicate as soon as possible.”**

The Corps held two presentations, supposedly recording comments. That was the extent of "public interaction."

2 Chapter 4 of the Appendix A states “Future Public Involvement, “USACE also plans on opportunities for public awareness, involvement, and participation including website updates and formal and informal meetings with interested members of the public, community groups, and individuals as requested. We asked for a meeting multiple times including during the Corps two presentations, and were not able to get one.

I made phone calls that were frequently answered by “sorry this number is not available.” When I left a message, it was often not returned.

One letter written attached to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement EIR and Draft GRR stated that the best outcome will occur if the USACE works with stakeholder groups at the local level. Agreed! Another letter written by our Assembly member encouraged the Corps to work with two local agencies.

Nancy Kniskern

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments primarily focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. However, as an Environmental Scientist with a hydrogeological background, whose worked for DFW in the Instream Flow Program and currently working for the CA SWRCB Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (combined 13 years employment), **I am concerned with the overall approach of these types of projects—this one and future projects.**

❖ My Community

I wanted to begin by offering **my appreciation for your time in reviewing my community's many very important comments.** Having discussed the details of this proposal with so many, I can feel their hearts breaking at the thought of this project (implemented as-is) taking place. In addition to our love for this precious, protected Wild & Scenic area, I wanted to let you know that **most of my community involved in this effort have also become well educated on the elements of the project—both good and bad.**

Our community includes people from all walks of life and backgrounds coming together for this cause, **including engineers and scientists (like myself) who possess in-depth knowledge on the subject matter.** However, **I do not believe it takes a scientific background to recognize the areas of this project that are unquestionably in need of improvement, postponement, and/or reassessment.**

I ASK YOU KINDLY TO PLEASE ALLOW ALL OUR VOICES TO BE HEARD. THANK YOU.

❖ We Share a Common Goal!

We all want healthy waterways that safely convey water! Let's make sure we're using the best methods available that **both alleviate erosion issues AND best utilize the built-in, natural erosion control benefits that the many trees and riparian vegetation already offer.**

"Restoration" (over many years) will not sufficiently reestablish the healthy habitat that had already been stabilizing the banks for hundreds of years, prior to human interference of natural flow characteristics. **Projects that address fixes/improvements to upstream causes of unnatural flow, such as dams, should always be prioritized over destructive, downstream methods, such as this project proposes.**

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND REEVALUATE THE EROSION-CONTROL BENEFITS OF PRESERVING EVEN MORE TREES THAN CURRENTLY PLANNED.

❖ Nature-based Solutions

I understand and appreciate that USACE's project was designed to "spare as much habitat as possible", however, **I don't believe that the project (as it currently stands) preserves all that is possible to preserve.** I have researched several alternative "nature-based", less destructive

methods that could assuredly be implemented here and elsewhere on the American River but are being disregarded.

Please review the attached document, *SACRAMENTO RIVER BANK PROTECTION PROJECT PHASE II SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORIZATION, EIS/EIR, VOLUME II: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS (March 2020)*, as evidence of **several alternative methods that were recommended by various agencies/organizations/governmental departments to USACE as a result of numerous environmental impact concerns identified in a similar project proposal.**

I'd like to point out one of these responses from the CA SWRCB, for which I'm employed and fully back their below statements (page 2-50 of attached document):

"State Water Board staff has reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR to determine if the proposed project will have significant adverse impacts to water quality and, ultimately, the beneficial use of waters of the state. We recognize the great importance of flood protection for the communities and farms of the Sacramento River valley. We understand the enormous economic risk and the risk to human life that exists without a safe, functional levee system. However, significant ecological impacts are possible as a result of the proposed project.

In general, we encourage the Corps and the CVFPB to implement alternatives which conserve to the greatest extent the existing riparian vegetation, especially large mature trees. Alternatives that maximize meander zones should be selected. Setback levees should be used when feasible. State Water Board staff has prepared the attached comments on the Draft EIS/EIR (see Enclosure 1, Table 1)."

To reiterate, I understand that USACE believes their project already avoids unnecessary deforestation, however, I disagree given their selected method among a plethora of alternative techniques and approaches that would not only better preserve the environment, but also add to the potential overall success of the project's effort to address erosion issues.

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE, NATURE-BASED, LESS DESTRUCTIVE APPROACHES, SUCH AS THOSE ALREADY RECOMMENDED TO USACE.

❖ **Public Notification Insufficiencies**

Although USACE may have abided by outdated and minimal public notification requirements, I'm **incredibly disappointed with the lack of public informing that a project—with this significant of an impact on the local environment, residential communities, and businesses, such as this one—has involved.** USACE is not required to publicly inform only at the minimal requirement. It would be fair to assume that **a trustworthy, guilt-free, good-willed agency, confident of their chosen method would want to sufficiently inform, even involve, the communities that would be directly and indirectly affected.**

Instead, our community worked tirelessly to inform **hundreds of residents, businesses, and Parkway users who were NOT INFORMED OF THE PROJECT IN ANY RESPECT.** This is unacceptable. So many, including myself, were appalled by the project proposal and felt deceived

by USACE at the lack of public notice and involvement. I don't want to accuse USACE of being "sneaky", but unfortunately, this is the only impression I've received from their actions, or lack thereof, regarding this project thus far.

PLEASE CONSIDER BETTER INFORMING AND INVOLVING COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY USACE PROJECTS.

❖ **California Waterways Unique to the County**

California waterways are UNIQUE, SENSITIVE, AND UNCOMPARABLE to most other waterways throughout the country. The American River does not, for example, function primarily as a conveyance system for commercial boat transportation, and possesses a wide spectrum of differing characteristics, and as such, requires specifically tailored, and equally unique treatments to achieve the best results.

Any USACE projects executed elsewhere, such as on the Missouri or Mississippi Rivers, should undergo massive adaptation, involving extensive targeted research of California's unique waterway uses and needs (including California species protection), before being applied in California rivers. The currently proposed project requires even more adaptation and targeted assessment.

I do not believe this project (as-is) sufficiently encapsulates all the many special components that would be required to effectively mitigate erosion issues without inadvertently inflicting other, equally serious issues (such as the loss of vital species and large-scale, natural erosion control provided by riparian vegetation).

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND PERFORM MORE TAILORED RESEARCH.

PLEASE WORK WITH MORE CALIFORNIA RESOURCE ENTITIES TO INCORPORATE RELEVANT AND LESS DESTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS.

❖ **Wild and Scenic Protected**

The Lower American River is fully protected under the Wild and Scenic Act, which classifies it as a water system that "**possess extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values [that] shall be preserved in their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environments**, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the state." —*California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 1972.*

[National Wild and Scenic River System | Rivers.gov](#) describes the American River's unparalleled recreational importance as it exists in its current state, "*This short stretch of river, flowing through the city of Sacramento, **is the most heavily used recreation river in California.** It provides an urban greenway for trail and boating activities and is also known for its runs of steelhead trout and salmon.*"

The methods proposed by USACE's project (as-is) DO NOT COMPLY with the protections granted under the Wild and Scenic Act. **This project would significantly and negatively impact the river's "free-flowing state, together with [its] immediate environment".**

Furthermore, Section 6.3 of the *USACE Erosion Protection Report of the American River Common Features GRR Report* states, "The rock trench design concept (depicted below in Figure 6-1) comes from the Windrow trenching method of erosion protection widely used along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers". This was referenced as if it represented what USACE has implemented in both the Wild and Scenic portion of the Missouri River, and the long, navigable sections in need of their continued monitoring and structural maintenance. However, **USACE DOES NOT IMPLEMENT THEIR "LAUNCHABLE ROCK TRENCH" METHOD IN THE WILD AND SCENIC PROTECTED PORTION OF THE MISSOURI RIVER, which is more characteristically more comparable to the lower American River.**

How was it then justified as a viable method used to be in the Wild and Scenic portion of the American River? **USACE had already set a precedent for non-use of this method in Wild and Scenic portions but are unjustifiably applying it here.** This is a very consequential inconsistency that must be further investigated.

PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND REEVALUATE METHODS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE IMPACTS TO PROTECTED ELEMENTS OF THIS WILD AND SCENIC AREA.

PLEASE BE FAIR AND CONSISTENT IN COMPLYING WITH THE WILD AND SCENIC ACT.

❖ **Other Urgent Concerns**

Again, I appreciate your time and understand there are many lengthy comments to review, but I'd like to ask for your continued attention as I outline **the equally serious concerns** I have with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

➤ **Erosion is actually minimal in USACE's Contract 3B**

- Advanced, modern modeling more accurately predicts low water velocities at the levees.
- Modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrate the protective effect of trees when included in the models.
- While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, the data presented for Contract 3B show no seepage risk for this zone and there is inadequate evidence for urgent erosion issues.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND USE MORE MODERN, UP-TO-DATE MODELS TO MORE ACCURATLY DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF EROSION FIXES NECESSARY.**

➤ **Upcoming Folsom Dam Improvements Not Considered**

- According to the USACE website, "*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District is moving forward with the Folsom Dam Raise Project to help further reduce flood risk in the Greater Sacramento area. The Dam Raise Project has prioritized completion of the*

*remaining flood risk reduction elements of the overall project, which include raising the existing crest elevation of Dikes 1 through 8, MIAD, LWD, and RWD by approximately 3.5 feet. **This work is expected to enhance utilization of Folsom Lake's existing surcharge flood storage space and increase the temporary water storage space that can be used during flood events.***—<https://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Folsom-Dam-Raise/>

- The project modeling was designed under the premise of 160,000cfs releases from the current, pre-improved Folsom Dam. When the dam improvements are in place, the maximum release **will significantly decrease to 115,000cfs.**
- According to the USACE website, preparation and construction for the *Folsom Dam Raise Project* have already begun and is scheduled for completion in 2027.
- Improvements and resulting changes in flow volumes, especially “during flood events”, must be incorporated into USACE project models to effectively evaluate the degree of erosion fixes necessary.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT UNTIL FLOW-ALTERING FOLSOM DAM IMPROVEMENTS ARE COMPLETED**
- **USE MODELING THAT INCORPORATES THE SOON-TO-BE LOWER FLOW VOLUME.**

➤ **Riprapped Riverbanks Present Significant Negative Consequences**

- Significant Impacts to American River Recreational Beneficial Uses: The proposed installment of riprap will make river access, and very popular recreational activities (e.g., swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, etc.), difficult and potentially dangerous, if not completely impossible, for miles of the project area.
- The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features, except the bike trail.
- Non-compliance with Wild and Scenic Act: The riprap revetment element of this project would significantly and negatively impact the river's “*free-flowing state, together with [its] immediate environment*”, a protection offered by the Act.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE METHODS THAT PRIORITIZE THE PRESERVATION OF RECREATIONAL BENEFICIAL USES.**
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE USING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT EROSION.**

➤ **Significant Impacts on Wildlife and Critical Habitats**

- Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth.
- Major loss of habitat for many important species. **The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife.**
- Major loss of 200+ old “heritage” trees, precious to this area's human and creature inhabitants alike.
- Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.

- Substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.
- The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.
- High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning, and feeding activities
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO EVALUATE USING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS THAT ARE MORE PROTECTIVE OF INVALUABLE WILDLIFE AND CRITICAL HABITATS.**

➤ **Significant Impacts to Mental Health and Green Spaces**

- Trees and vegetation are important elements of green spaces, which have been scientifically linked to improved mental health, stress level reduction, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees proposed by this project will lead to great loss of these beneficial green environments.
- According to the California Department of Public Health, *"As communities become increasingly more urban, parks and the protection of green and open spaces within cities increase in importance. Parks and natural areas buffer pollutants and contribute to the quality of life by providing communities with social and psychological benefits such as leisure, play, sports, and contact with nature. **Parks are critical to human health by providing spaces for health and wellness activities.**"*
<https://data.chhs.ca.gov/dataset/park-beach-open-space-or-coastline-access>
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO CONSIDER METHODS THAT AVOID SERIOUS IMPACTS TO GREEN SPACES AND HUMAN HEALTH.**

➤ **Significant Air Quality Impacts on Human Health**

- As the proposed USACE project currently stands, each construction site would have an estimated 100+ daily truck trips that travel through residential communities over the span of 2+ years. USACE claims less than significant impacts of air pollution on sensitive receptors. **However, the OEHHA guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months** (OEHHA, page 8-18).
<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/crn/2015guidancemanual.pdf>
- The use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Transportation of 100+ truckloads of such rocks per day, and the associated dust, within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT AND PREPARE A CONSTRUCTION HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT (HRA) TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT THE PROJECT**

WOULD NOT EXPOSE RESIDENCES TO DIESEL PM EMISSIONS, NOR ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION, AT LEVELS RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT HUMAN HEALTH IMPACTS.

➤ **Significant Impacts to Environmental Justice**

- The American River Parkway sees more than 5 million visitors annually, which is more than Yosemite! Both locals and travelers from far and wide come to enjoy the one-of-a-kind “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”.
- It provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little to no cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics and events on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area.
- **PLEASE POSTPONE THE PROJECT TO CONSIDER METHODS THAT AVOID SERIOUS IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RIGHTS.**

➤ **My Personal Connection and Final Pleas**

The American River’s Wild and Scenic river designation was based on “recreation” and “anadromous fish”, wherein the definition of “recreation” includes intrinsic values that include a person’s enjoyment and value of nature and wildlife and woods in all forms.

For this reason, I wanted to briefly share with you my personal connection to this one-of-a-kind, precious area with the hope that you’ll hear my heart as the last item of evidence among the many extremely important and valid points I’ve presented in this letter, requesting the postponement and reevaluation of the destructive and unnecessary elements of this proposed project.

I moved over a year ago to, and still reside in, an apartment complex adjacent to the proposed USACE Contract 3B project portion of the American River. My father had just passed unexpectedly, and I’d just escaped an emotionally abusive husband of ten years. However, this is not a sob-story because I now have the mental stability and quality of life that I’d been seeking my entire existence.

I owe this to the Parkway. To the heritage trees whose souls connect to mine, and whose branches on which the happy, fat squirrels chase each other about; and whose trunks so generously house the busy, little woodpeckers and so many others. To the wise Great Blue Herons and the snow-white Great Egrets who so stealthily fish at the water’s edge. To the turkey vultures that take to the skies and glide about the breeze with ease and majesty.

I owe this to the salmonids whom I love to watch wiggle up the shallow riffles with sheer tenacity; and to the sea lions who occasionally follow them up in higher flows. To the many wonderful, good-willed, nature-loving people I’ve met along the Parkway. To the irreplaceable summer raft-floating adventures with friends and loved ones. To the peace and love that emanates from every piece of this Wild and Scenic area, so rightfully designated.

Please allow my voice, and those of my community’s, to be heard and taken seriously. I’m not asking USACE to stop providing erosion fixes, where necessary, or discontinue projects altogether. I’m simply asking that they postpone and reevaluate their proposed project to better address and

incorporate all the many valid points I've presented in this letter, and those of my community's letters as well.

Please support my request for re-evaluation of the overall necessity for this proposed project taking place in this beautiful Wild and Scenic protected area. Please evaluate and seriously consider alternative methods and solutions that are more targeted, less destructive, more ecosystem-conscious and wildlife-protective, that also utilize the natural erosion protection benefits that the existing trees and riparian vegetation already provide; and those that are less negatively impactful to human health, mental health, recreation, and all those who currently thrive and depend on this one-of-kind, easy-to-access and easy-to-appreciate area.

Please heed our requests and desperate pleas.

Thank you for your time. You are appreciated!

Candice Heinz

Environmental Scientist

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: K. I. <kimler515@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:00 PM
To: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov; BellasE@saccounty.net; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me, my family, and friends. I live at 2237 Rogue River Dr, Sacramento, CA 95826, about 50 feet from the Parkway and my family and I recreate on the parkway daily. This includes running, walking, picnicking, kayaking, fishing, and biking. This is an irreplaceable section of habitat. We personally regularly witness bald eagles, owls, seals, beavers, river otters, turtles, coyotes, deer, possum, racoons, and every duck and bird species in the region on the American River Parkway that this plan proposes to destroy. The trees along this section of the river support all of these animals, provide for enjoyable recreation to all of Sacramento, and the mature oak forests that lines this section of the river are some of the only remaining such forests in the region. This section of riparian habitat is irreplaceable and its destruction can not be mitigated by building wetlands ext. elsewhere. These are 200+ year old trees that create a corridor from Folsom to the Sacramento River.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to

consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor **considers** all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

Environmental Justice (EJ):

Portions of the American River Parkway near wealthy neighborhoods, such as the 'Estates' neighborhood, have been declared protected habitat. The section of riparian habitat that this project proposes to destroy is just as valuable and worthy of protection as the 'Estates' Section of the Parkway. This project will disproportionately the lower income families that live and recreate on this side of the river. The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations and reduce property values of the people that live on the lower income side of the river this project proposed to destroy. This environmental justice issue has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife. Clear-cutting and rip-rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon. Clear cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations. Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost. The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids. The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation. High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities.

Recreational Access

This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Why should we think that the Corps will do anything different than at River Park, where all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed? Sac State is used as a restoration example, but we know of no beaches, footpaths, fishing access points there, either. Why should we trust that 3B will be different when even the SEIS/SEIR does not address these issues? Installation of miles of angular rock (riprap) will make river access dangerous along large stretches of river, and will greatly impede swimming, fishing, and deployment of watercraft such as kayaks. This will be a permanent and significant loss of irreplaceable recreational amenities to the community that is not accounted for in the SEIS/SEIR, despite promises by the Corps in 2016 to address these significant issues.

The permanent loss of mature trees, beaches, river access points, footpaths, and other recreational amenities is not “less than significant” as stated in the SEIS/SEIR. The Corps needs to document these losses and redo the SEIS/SEIR to account for them, including proposals to modify the project where possible to minimize losses. The public has a right to know how specific recreational amenities will be affected by this project. The level of detail in the SEIS/SEIR makes it impossible for the public to see what will be done, and all we can assume is everything in 3B upstream of Watt Avenue on the south side will be ripped out like at River Park. The public has a right to know the details at this stage of review and should not be required to “trust” the Corps. We want the Corps to document and justify specifically which of our trails, trees, beaches, fishing access, and riparian forest must be destroyed to keep us safe from floods, and how much of that destruction will be replaced, versus what will be lost permanently given current design. What mitigation for lost beaches, trails, forests, etc. will there be? The SEIS/SEIR does not discuss the loss of these features, so it also inappropriately fails to discuss mitigation for permanent impacts to features that the Corps cannot replace onsite. If beaches or trails are lost forever onsite, will other beaches or trails be installed? 6. Mental Health and Vegetation Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to

reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion ContrProjects 3B and 4 is presented. Preventing flooding should be focused on hardening the levees not destroying the riparian habitat that abuts them.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,

Keith Imler and Alyx Shigenaga

Property owners adjacent to the Parkway -

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:00 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS; Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA); Schleeter, Nicole Marie CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA); Duey, Keleigh L CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA); Saucier, Melanie; Martin, Nathaniel J CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA)
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] 2023 draft SEIS/SEIR NMFS comment letter
Attachments: 2024-02-23 ARCF reinitiation and 2023 SEIS - SIGNED 508.pdf

From: Lyla Pirkola - NOAA Federal <lyla.pirkola@noaa.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 2:09 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Romine, Guy K CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA) <Guy.K.Romine@usace.army.mil>; Ellen McBride - NOAA Federal <ellen.mcbride@noaa.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] 2023 draft SEIS/SEIR NMFS comment letter

Hey Guy,

Please see attached comment letter from NMFS on the 2023 draft SEIS/SEIR. None of the content related to reinitiation of consultation should be a surprise as it's just a reiteration of the conversations we've been having over the past year regarding the need for reinitiation. I also recommend that the results of recent studies published related to hydrology modelling on the Lower American be taken into consideration by USACE. These studies focused on the same watershed and flood flow conditions being considered for LAR contracts, as such the results would be particularly relevant as best available science to inform potential avoidance and minimization at LAR contracts in the upcoming reinitiation.

I would also like to request that we start a discussion between USACE and the resource agencies regarding these hydrology modelling studies. It would be helpful to hear your team's interpretation of relevance and get us all on the same page regarding how this new information may affect future contracts.

Lyla Pirkola
Natural Resource Management Specialist
National Marine Fisheries Service
[California Central Valley Office](#)
Office: (916) 930-5615
Telework/Mobile: (916) 591-4030
lyla.pirkola@noaa.gov

February 23, 2024

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Attn: Mr. Guy Romine
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814-2922
ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

California Department of Water Resources
Attn: ARCF SEIR
3464 El Camino Avenue, Room 200, Sacramento CA 95821
PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Subject: Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR)

1 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SEIS/SEIR for the proposed levee work along the American River. I am fortunate to live near two crown jewels for the Sacramento area, the American River, and the Parkway. I and many, many others use the trails and levees daily. I was shocked to see what was done at the River Park, Paradise Beach, H Street Bridge section and I do not want to see the same denuding of the trees and vegetative habitat further upstream.

I am providing the following comments:

- 2 1) 3.5.2.1.2 Temporary Bike Trail Reroute: American River Erosion Contract 3B North Erosion protection work would impact the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail for both Site 3-1 and Site 4-2. It is anticipated that safe detour options can be provided either within the project footprint or outside the project footprint without requiring additional major work. In addition, there is an equestrian trail that would be impacted by work in the area. Where/how will the trail(s) be rerouted? This needs to be provided in the document.
- 3 2) Trees Surveyed – Who decides which trees will be removed and which will remain? The public needs to understand the process for tree removal.
- 4 3) Page 2-8 – What permits or leases are required from the California State Lands Commission? Have applications been submitted for necessary entitlements from the Commission?
- 5 4) Page 3-49 – Figure 3.5.28 Stockpiling – What is the size of this proposed stockpiling site? It appears that field surveys have been conducted, but there are Elderberry bushes located near the site.
- 6 5) Page 3-29 – The American River is actively used for water recreation. There are areas along the American River that are used by boaters to haul-in or out from the river and transport their

kayaks, canoes, rafts, etc., ashore. This takes place along the existing public access points (such as Estates, Ashton Drive, Rio Americano High School, etc.) Placing revetment and other bank protection will affect this public use. Has this potential significant effect been analyzed? If so, where?

7 6) Page 3-43 – States that Contract 3B North and 3B South would start in 2024 with tree clearing, etc. Construction of erosion protection is anticipated to take two years to complete and is anticipated to begin in 2025 and finish in 2026, with revegetation in 2026/2027. Will public access be impacted during the entire duration? If so, this needs to be described and fully analyzed.

8 7) Page 3-44 – Describes the number of loads, trucks, days, etc. The estimates provided will have a substantial negative effect on the neighborhood and streets needs to be fully mitigated.

9 8) American River Erosion Contract 3B South – As stated in the document, there is not a paved bike trail within Site 4-1. The top of the levee is used by recreationalists. Signs with top of levee trail closure locations will be posted prior to work starting. If needed, detours would be coordinated with the Sacramento County Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure they are safe and minimize potentially significant recreational impacts for both 3B North and South. However, regarding Contract 3B North the top of the levee is extensively used by recreationalists. Signs also need to be placed along 3B North. When and who decides if a detour is required? Needs to be included in the document.

10 I am deeply saddened about the sheer number of significant and unavoidable impacts from the proposed project. Recreational activity is important in the maintenance of healthy lives and residents in the Sacramento region are particularly fortunate in having easy access to the recreational opportunities that the Parkway provides. It is vital that the importance of recreational opportunities is recognized, and preserving the natural qualities of the Parkway resource is essential. I urge all decision makers to consider the impacts to this remarkable treasure we call the American River Parkway. Thank you for the consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Barbara Dugal

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:55 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns, American River Tree Removal

From: Smills7112 <smills7112@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:15 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Concerns, American River Tree Removal

I am against the removal of trees for the next project of Army Core of Engineers along the American River Parkway.

Thank you,

Steve Mills

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:53 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Marlyce Myers <marmyers@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:15 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect

of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Marlyce Myers

Sent from my iPad

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To: United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); Department of Water Resources (DWR); Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB)

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A *The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I have lived nearly 50 years within a mile or two of the American River. I have canoed, kayaked, swam, in the river and hiked, biked, bird watched and ridden my horse along the Parkway. I have been an attorney for over 45 years focusing on public rights and protection of California's rivers. I also serve on public interest boards connected with protecting the Parkway.*

I understand the concerns for flood protection and do not question the goals. It is the method to reach those goals and the environmental and recreational impacts of the methods and proposed mitigation. I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work as proposed is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers and SVFPB should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much more targeted and less destructive alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

Please schedule an onsite public meeting with the professionals of the responsible agencies presenting data and fostering a collaborative environment to address these important issues. Sacramento County Supervisor Rich Desmond has promised to assist in the organizing of public meetings to discuss this major impact to our region and our lives.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". Your decisions will affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Sincerely,

Curtis L. Fossum

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:49 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: lucy haworthfamily.name <lucy@haworthfamily.name>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:34 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. I moved to the area at the beginning of 2024, and my house directly abuts the levee. Access to the river and parkway was one of the things that sold me on this house, as I love nature and going outdoors. I had no idea prior to purchase that this project would be occurring, and learning so quickly that access to our beautiful backdoors might soon be affected is extremely disheartening.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. Trees in riparian corridors work to slow water velocities, and if trees in large sections are cleared I can only imagine that this would result in higher velocities and higher erosion potential. It will likely be decades before a functioning riparian forest establishes itself.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

A

- Long-term noise, air quality, aesthetic, and recreation disturbance to community
- Impacts to fish and wildlife species due to removal of habitat, including to special status species.

B

C

- Loss of heritage oaks, which is unmitigated. At a minimum key trees should be retained.

D

- Rip rap and bank hardening have long term impacts to rivers and can cause their own issues. There has been a move toward nature based

solutions, including the Corps own “engineering with nature” initiative. Why nature based solutions alternatives were not considered has not been analyzed.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Lucy Haworth

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:48 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Tree removal by the American river

-----Original Message-----

From: Evigna <evigna@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:42 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Tree removal by the American river

1 | I am appalled at the plans to destroy so much of the local environment. There has to be a better way than the total destruction of that area. House values will go down, and to me the more important thing is the total destruction of that habitat. Please go back to the drawing board and come up w a different plan.

Sincerely,
Ellen Vigna
Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:48 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Kelly Ramsay <kellymarieramsay@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:41 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; bellase@saccounty.net; Susan_Rosebrough@nps.gov; SorgenKC@saccounty.gov; Barbara_Rice@nps.gov; hbwillia44@gmail.com; RichDesmond@saccounty.gov; PatHume@saccounty.gov; SupervisorKennedy@saccounty.gov; SupervisorSerna@saccounty.gov; SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov; Matthew.Ceccato@mail.house.gov; repamibera@mail.house.gov; Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. They are the primary reason I bought the house I now own on American River Drive. They are my escape to nature, and are pivotal to my physical and mental health.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River. The fact that we are even debating whole sale destruction of a wildlife area and natural oasis (versus a careful and targeted approach) in the year 2024 is sickening to me. Have we not learned better?

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee

conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings -- could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of

what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you,

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:47 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Glen Korengold <gkorengold@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:39 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I use section of the American River regularly for recreation, hiking, bird watching and the mental health advantages of being in nature.

1 I have already experienced the devastating effects of the years long USACE project recently completed west of Howe Ave. in the River Park neighborhood. The area was reduced to a moonscape, noisy, unprotected by trees, and now, though replanted will not be returned to a mature natural environment for decades.

The area of covered by Contracts 3B and 4A and 4B is part of the American River Parkway, considered the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. This particular section, I consider the most scenic, with the 200+ Heritage Oak Trees. This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features.

My main concerns are:

- 2
- The clearcutting of trees and plants could actually make this area less stable. Trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural armoring of the banks. During and after construction, Lack of mature root systems could result in erosion.

- 3 • The clear cutting of trees and the high levels of noise and vibrations will disturb nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations. The construction will also likely chase away other wildlife from the area.
- 4 • There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. At River Park, where USACE just completed a similar project, all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed.
- 5 • The project, with over 100 daily truck trips at each site and staging areas adjacent to residences and schools, exposing students and neighbors to noise, and traffic pollution.
- 6 • Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.
- 7 • The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. The proposed methods would eliminate many locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice issue has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

8 In conclusion, I have already experienced the impact of this type of clear cutting for levee reconstruction at the USACE project done at River Park and mourn the loss of one of our wild areas. I therefore strongly object to the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns including the clearing of trees. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am demanding that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

Thank you.

Glen Korengold

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:47 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project, Sacramento CA

From: Marsha S Erickson <mserickson@ucdavis.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:38 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River Watershed Common Features Project, Sacramento CA

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers,

1 I am writing regarding the lower American River projects outlined in the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR), specifically Contracts 3B, 4A, and 4B. My main concerns revolve around the potential environmental impacts of these projects on the American River Parkway, which plays a crucial role in my community and family life. While erosion control is essential, I am wary of the consequences of beach modification on the recreational and beneficial uses of the waterway. The disruption to the ecosystem and the long-term loss of beneficial uses, identified as 'significant and unavoidable' by the project, cast doubt on the viability of proceeding. It is my understanding these **beneficial uses are protected under the Clean Water Act.**

2 Additionally, the anticipated increase in water temperature due to tree removal is likely to escalate the risk of harmful algae blooms, posing a threat to waterway users, pets, and wildlife. I recommend a thorough assessment of pollutant levels in the water body and propose the implementation of additional measures to prevent sediment and temperature impacts from construction activities. According to the California Water Boards Integrated Map tool, the segment of the American River under discussion is contaminated with various pollutants of concern, such as Bifenthrin, Indicator Bacteria (total coliform, fecal coliform, E. coli, enterococci), Mercury, and Temperature, among others. Many of these pollutants already exceed levels necessary to protect beneficial uses, such as the preservation of freshwater habitats for spawning and migration. The introduction of the listed pollutants of concern will be unavoidable during the project. Construction next to or at times in the water body will undoubtedly result in more sediment entering the water body and sediment is the primary carrier of these pollutants due to its tendency to bind with contaminants.

3 Moreover, I am troubled by the proximity of the laydown yard to an elementary school, raising concerns about the potential exposure of children to diesel particulate matter from construction equipment and dust. I inquire about mitigation measures and enforcement of regulations to protect the health of students especially when considering the length of the proposed project. Will equipment that emits emissions be under a stationary air permit? Portable permits for construction equipment are only allowed to be on site for 1 year and equipment will be stationed by the school for twice that long. What will stop contractors from circumventing these rules by swapping out equipment so the emissions

remain the same but it is not technically the same equipment? What health risk modeling has been conducted on the impact of the project on the kids? Thank you

Marsha Erickson QSP/QSD, CPESC, QISP

she/her/hers

Environmental Specialist

Environmental Health and Safety

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:46 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Brian Schmid <BSchmid@formationenv.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:26 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

Our comments focus on the Lower American River components of the Draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to the region and our community. In fact, the American River Parkway is called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento” and was designated a “Regional Treasure” in 2012. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B would negatively affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come. The proposed actions must be reconsidered to reflect the great care the Parkway requires and deserves.

The USACE Contract 3B extends east from Howe Ave to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to destroy over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for bank erosion protection. We have serious concerns with the proposed project and the Draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis. The extent of impacts to trees and vegetation are not fully disclosed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Although there is a description of unavoidable impacts to trees and habitat, there is no identification of which trees will be necessary for removal, nor a description of the criteria and decision-making process to determine which trees need to be removed. In addition, the Draft SEIS/SEIR describes potential measures to protect trees from scour instead of removal, which should be the first line of consideration, not a secondary approach. This is especially important for heritage oaks and other mature trees in the corridor.

We do not support the destructive and devastating methods being proposed to address bank erosion concerns. We do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts. Specifically, there is no consideration of fine-grained methods to identify trees necessary for removal. Under

the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Codes 21081; 14 CCRS 15126.2 (b)). The Draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented, even though this is feasible and would reduce the significance of impacts. We insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of the Contracts 3B and 4, until a much more targeted approach is identified and selected.

Furthermore, the proposed project is inconsistent with the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, VOL.46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). The Lower American River is designated as a Wild and Scenic River from the confluence with the Sacramento River to Nimbus Dam. In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the National Park Service (formerly the Heritage Conservation Service) noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood, and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes the “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected.” The US Department of Interior noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of scenic rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the intrinsic conditions which make the Lower American River a Wild and Scenic River.

Further, the American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities with little cost of travel for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

A In addition, the vacant lot on Crondall Drive should not be used for construction staging. This residential neighborhood is used by hundreds of high school drivers each morning and each afternoon. Use of Crondall Drive for staging and construction equipment is a significant safety hazard to these young drivers and their families. We are aware the property owner of the vacant lot does not support use of his property for staging and we adamantly oppose use of the property by force.

B Lastly, in a February 15, 2024, email from the SEIS/SEIR team, they note that Contracts 3B and 4 have undergone significant changes from what is described in the SEIS/SEIR and continues to be refined from a design standpoint. However, no information is provided regarding these changes and how they influence the analysis of impacts in the SEIS/SEIR. Therefore, it is imperative that significant changes in the approach be transparent and made available for further comment and input from the public.

Sincerely,

Brian Schmid

Formation Environmental, LLC

Managing Partner – Principal Scientist
1631 Alhambra Boulevard, Suite 220
Sacramento, CA 95816

CELL: 916.517.2480

WEB: www.formationenvironmental.com

EMAIL: bschmid@formationenv.com

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:09 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comment ARCF draft SEIS/SEIR (Dec 2023) - Proposed and Prior American River Parkway Work - photo slides
Attachments: 1_AmerRiv_Proposed_and_Prior_ParkwayWork_photo_slides.png; 2_AmerRiv_Proposed_and_Prior_ParkwayWork_photo_slides.png; 3_AmerRiv_Proposed_and_Prior_ParkwayWork_photo_slides.png; 4_AmerRiv_Proposed_and_Prior_ParkwayWork_photo_slides.png

From: Beth S <m.beth.s@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 5:35 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: AveryW <averyw@csus.edu>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comment ARCF draft SEIS/SEIR (Dec 2023) - Proposed and Prior American River Parkway Work - photo slides

Dear USACE and DWR Comment Recipients,

1 Attached please find a series of 4 photo slides regarding proposed and prior American River Parkway work projects. The slides show methods and status in the vicinity of Howe Ave/Sacramento State University under recent prior USACE erosion contracts.

Sincerely,
Mary Beth Schwehr
William Avery

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:07 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Millie Baird <milliebaird@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 9:43 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

A | I moved to an apartment along the levee this past year with my new baby and we enjoy frequent walks along the American River.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach

of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

B Basically I understand that Sacramento is a high flood risk and I agree with implementing protections as soon as possible because we never know what year it may happen. I am not an engineer and I want to be assured that this is the best course of action. Some say that the destruction of all the trees is not necessary. I can see how it is necessary for what you are planning on doing. I am sad and grieving the loss of these trees and want to make sure it's worth it to make the city safer from being flooded and be confident that these actions will be effective.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Millie Baird

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:06 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway

-----Original Message-----

From: Amy Gusman <thegusmanfamily@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 3:50 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway

To Whom it May concern,

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE do not take away our BEAUTIFUL River parkway and scenic levee by bulldozing it for your 3B project. Thousands of people, locals, residents, and college students use this area as a recreational, peaceful, scenic area EVERYDAY. Residents and locals alike, walk, run, ride and walk their animals amongst these beautiful landscapes. HUNDREDS of wildlife animals live amongst the MANY different types of trees and foliage. You will be killing our beautiful trees, (including our oaks- that have specific laws and rights), vast foliage and so many wild life animals will perish. Please reconsider and AT LEAST think through your approach when fixing our levees!! There MUST be a more HUMANE way of preserving our beautiful river parkway and still follow through with your project. The rivers are the CROWNED JEWEL of the Sacramento Area (which used to be referred to the city of 2 rivers). Please understand what it will also do to our property values, as well. The completed project near CSUS looks bleak, lifeless and no one can enjoy beautiful walks there any longer.

Please consider all the beauty you will be destroying.

Sincerely,

Shawn and Amy Trice

Local Sacramento River Residents

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Gmail <g.passanante10@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 11:10 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

We value functional and safety upgrades to the system including encampment clearing, trail upgrades and general changes to improve Law enforcement.

We do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone

(neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Giovanni James Passanante

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: T Jamison <t_jamison40@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 9:28 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Teri Jamison

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:05 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project (Howe Avenue to Watt Avenue)

From: facebook <carolynwilliam@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 7:27 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] USACE Proposal for American River 3B Project (Howe Avenue to Watt Avenue)

Dear President Dolan and Members of the Board and Staff:

I am writing to ask that you and the Board work with the US Army Corp of Engineers to revise the proposal and not proceed with those components until there is a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

Please hold a workshop and public meeting specifically addressing this proposal prior to the close of the comment period and prior to a vote on the project.

Work with USACE to extend the public comment period to ensure the above occur.

1 I am a regular walker on the parkway between Howe Avenue and Watt Avenue. I enjoy walking in nature, this walk is my "stress buster" from living in the city. If these trees are taken down it will be too hot to walk in the summer. In the winter the vistas provided by the trees will be gone. Wildlife will suffer. The trees provide homes and food to owls, bald eagles, deer, beavers, otters, snakes, etc.) I have observed groups of quail hiding in the trees on my nature walks. The trees not only provide shade but clean the smoggy air in the summer. We will lose 200-300 year oak trees and the landscape will look like the moon. Just look at the work done to the levee by Sacramento State University next to the bridge! It is a desert landscape. All forms of recreation will be affected. Biking, walking, fishing, dog walking, access for kayaking and paddle boarding. This area is so beautiful when I walk there I forget I am close to the city. It feels like country, it is so pristine. There will be no place for me to go for shaded nature walks and I cannot afford to drive miles away to the foothills. Please consider the citizens of Sacramento!

2
Thank you
Carolyn Jensen

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:04 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] AMERICAN RIVER Trees

-----Original Message-----

From: glenn olson <golson84@icloud.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 4:41 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Glenn Olson <golson@audubon.org>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] AMERICAN RIVER Trees

I am writing to ask that you and other Sacramento County officials persuade the US Army Corp of Engineers to perform a MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the American River Parkway for "bank erosion protection". The USACE claim that this protection is "needed" is based on minimal, overgeneralized "data". I strongly question whether this work is necessary along this section of the American River.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to leave denuded, bare dirt banks for a minimum of 2 years during construction (and immature, isolated plantings for many more years to come) is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. I strongly oppose the "brute force" bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows.

This new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River Banks damaged by the USACE erosion control projects to 11 miles. Almost half of the lower 26 miles of Parkway! I object to the extreme destruction of trees (including potentially 200-300 year-old heritage oaks); loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, biking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, and many other uses) for miles along the river's edge, including the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved access trails, equestrian and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing urban wildlife (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, and more) valued by recreational Parkway users. If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used (such as in-place use of stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service), and the use of smaller equipment.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

As you know, the American River is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. Please do not let our “jewel” be stolen from us!

Sacramento Regional Parks officially manages the American River Parkway Wild and Scenic River status, and in turn answers to YOU in your role as county supervisors, as well as members of the SAFCA Board. I do not support the USACE claim that this extension and the methods planned are “needed” for flood safety in this zone; and it would destroy a vital stretch of the Parkway. I urge you to stand up for this special stretch of the American River Parkway, and to urge Sacramento Regional Parks to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

Thank you.

Glenn and Devon Olson

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:04 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Request to save the American River trees

From: Christine Weinstein <christineweinstein@icloud.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 4:46 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Request to save the American River trees

1 | I urge you to reconsider the plan to cut down hundreds of trees along the American River. Sacramento is supposed to be the city of trees. Trees provide habitat for animals and birds. The trees produce oxygen and beautify our American River Parkway. PLEASE consider other alternatives.
Christine Weinstein, a Sacramento resident and homeowner.
Thank you for your consideration.
christineweinstein@sbcglobal.net

hone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:04 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Flood Project near Watt Avenue/Sacramento

From: seviml@aol.com <seviml@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 4:30 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Flood Project near Watt Avenue/Sacramento

Since 1979 I have owned a home on Crondall Drive. My home backs up to the American River Parkway. I have sent by USPS my long personal letter stating my relationship with the Parkway (physical and mental health!) and my concerns/thoughts regarding the present plan for changes to the Parkway for improved flood control.

1 I am strongly against the present plans.....and request the respect for ordinary citizens such as me by scheduling periodic public hearings to provide us with detailed descriptions/updates as to the exact plans for the Parkway in a non-technical understandable format. Please have all parties administering the project available for as long as it takes to answer ALL the questions that the community has regarding every aspect of the project.

2 The removal of all (or a significant number of) living things along the proposed stretch of Parkway eliminates the benefit of hundreds of trees for cleansing the air, providing natural habitat and the essential shade for those using the Parkway during hot summer months.

3 It is essential to safeguard a great proportion of the natural verdant habitat that thrives along the Parkway and provides health and safety to everyone using the Parkway. The injuries to users trying to scramble along the new rocky surfaces to access the river will be serious and common....and the reflective impact of the hardscape with little or no shade will impact the health of eyes as well as elevated body temperatures causing countless negative

heat/heart/pulmonary health challenges. For those moving between Sac State to the river crossing at Goethe Park, passing through your proposed barren stretch would be unavoidable. It is used as 'transportation' for many bikers & runners, saving countless miles of auto trips that contribute to our already polluted air and clogged streets. The impact of replacing soft scape with hardscape affects more than just a mile or two of the dozens of miles of river bank. It affects our entire region.

My comments below were drafted by others & focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

4

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

5

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project

and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

- 6 Thank you from deep in my heart for considering my comments in hopes that recommendations from the community will allow you to revise the project to take into account the value of the verdant riparian riverside we all love and cherish. Protect us from flooding but also please consider conserving the majority of well established trees plus adding green breathing living coverage along the subject section to also protect us from the downsides of a barren stretch of Parkway.

Respectfully,

sevim larsen

SEVIML@aol.com

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Fwd: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Susan Siragusa <susanksiragusa@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 6:33 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Fwd: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Siragusa <susanksiragusa@sbcglobal.net>
Date: February 21, 2024 at 6:25:33 PM PST
To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me.

1

I walk my dogs and ride my bike many times a week and judging from the state of the sections you've completed earlier, the devastation and defoliation is horrendous.

Show us that you can replant before you tear up any more of our most valuable Sacramento resource!

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:03 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Stop the Destruction!

From: Kerry Glamsch <kglamsch@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 9:40 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Stop the Destruction!

1 Please listen to the citizens of Sacramento. The destruction already caused by the Army Corps of Engineers is horrific. Replacing deep-rooted old trees that hold soil with rocks and shrubs makes absolutely no sense. I grew up in South Florida and witnessed the state spending millions of dollars to try and right the wrongs perpetrated by the Army Corps of Engineers in the Everglades. Already, a once-shaded enjoyable bike path along the American River has been turned into a blighted, treeless eyesore. Eventually, if the destruction continues, the American River will resemble the L.A. River: a cement drainage canal. Whomever approved this awful vision for Sacramento's future needs to be voted out of office. The Sacramento and American Rivers are treasures to be cherished; nurtured and treated with respect, they could help make Sacramento a world class city like Austin and Tampa are becoming. Instead, we're slowly becoming another L.A. Please reconsider this awful plan.

Sincerely,
Kerry Glamsch
Sacramento State Faculty

February 22, 2024

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil
 From: Dr. Michelle Stevens, Emeritus Professor, CSUS Environmental Studies
 Department and Project Manager Bushy Lake Restoration Project, Alexandra von
 Ehrenkrook, CSUS Masters Graduate Student and Senior Research Assistant Bushy
 Lake Project. Emily Turner, Research Assistant
 Contact: stevensm@csus.edu
 Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
 Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com
 Subject: Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact
 Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 American River
 Watershed Common Features Project, Sacramento CA

Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft
 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact
 Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices - Urrutia Site/ ARMS
 mitigation project and American River Erosion Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B draft EIR/EIS
 and Turtle 1 Mitigation measures for the northwestern pond turtle (NWPT)
 (*Actinemys marmorata*).

Our comments focus on providing detailed information on the northwestern pond turtle (NWPT) (*Actinemys marmorata*) and are based on a thorough literature review and data collected at the Bushy Lake Restoration Site (BushyLake.com).

1 The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to the public. The Bushy Lake Eco-Cultural Restoration Project (Project) has been spearheaded by Dr. Michelle Stevens since 2015, with stakeholders along the lower American River, multiple faculty members of California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) (Dr. Jamie Kneitel, Biology; Dr. Tim Davidson, Biology Department; Dr. Kevin Cornwell, Geology Department; Christine Flowers, Environmental Studies Department), and the support of hundreds of CSUS students. We are funded by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, among other sources, and have collected three years of detailed data on culturally important native plants, NWPT, birds, and mammals. Our data can be viewed on the Bushy Lake website (BushyLake.com) in our 2023 Conceptual Restoration Plan; and letters in support of listing the NWPT as a federally threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We have been provided with the guidance and training of Jeff Alvarez, a turtle specialist, and the founder of The Wildlife Project.

2 We are writing with information specific to the Urrutia Site/ ARMS mitigation project and American River Erosion Contracts 3B, 4A, and 4B draft EIR/EIS and Turtle 1 Mitigation measures for the NWPT. The NWPT is petitioned for listing as federally threatened under the ESA. The final

SEIS/ SEIR should discuss and address the implications of the USFWS petition to list the NWPT as threatened under the ESA on project design, implementation, and mitigation measures, including Mitigation Measure TURTLE-1. The listing of the NWPT immediately mandates consideration of the species in federally funded projects, which may include increased regulatory requirements, increased permitting requirements, and guidelines for protocol-level surveys. The SEIS/ SEIR should include a plan for the scenario of the NWPT being listed as threatened during the project's construction period.

3 Based on our research and expertise, we find the information on the NWPT in your environmental documentation and Mitigation Measure TURTLE-1: Implement Measures to Protect Northwestern Pond Turtle to have errors that will need to be corrected in the final document. An addendum will be required to include the NWPT as a proposed federally listed species rather than only a California State Species of Special Concern. The sampling methodology proposed is inadequate and insufficient to detect turtles and/or turtle nests.

4 In this letter, we will provide information from our research on the NWPT at Bushy Lake and a thorough literature review, as well as make recommendations for conservation and management practices (BushyLake.com). Our recommendations are consistent with the Department of Defense Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (DOD PARC 2020). Our turtle research was initiated in 2020 as a component of the Bushy Lake Eco-Cultural Restoration Project which is located near Cal Expo on the lower American River in Sacramento, California (38.588839, -121.434479). Our first goal designated in the Bushy Lake Conceptual Restoration Plan is to "protect, enhance, and restore a sustainable habitat refuge for northwestern pond turtles (*Actinemys marmorata*).\" A complete report of the research methods, results, and inferences of the NWPT surveys can be found on the Bushy Lake website (BushyLake.com).

Primary Recommendations for NWPT Conservation Strategies and Best Mitigation Management Practices:

- 5
- 1) Develop consistent and comparable monitoring standards for NWPT population assessments. Revise your sampling methodology in ARCF Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR Appendix B 4.3-36 to detect the presence of turtles and nesting site surveys. Use the USGS protocol, as protocol-level surveys are not yet available. We have conducted 4 years of detailed turtle surveys following USGS guidelines (2006a, 2006b) under the guidance of Jeff Alvarez, the founder of The Wildlife Project. These detailed surveys highlight the need for increased protection of the NWPT populations and their habitat. Visual surveys are highly inadequate. NWPTs are notably sensitive to human disturbance, so are not likely to be seen or identified in visual encounter surveys.
 - 2) We find that catch-and-release net surveys are far more informative and accurate than visual encounter surveys. However, the catch-and-release methodology is very time-consuming. Trapping and mark-recapture studies/surveys are typically not feasible for construction projects. We recommend you assume NWPT presence if their habitat is present and recommend implementing seasonal avoidance and other measures to lessen/avoid impacts.

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- 3) To identify turtles and avoid conflicts with heavy equipment, we recommend having an on-site monitor during construction activities, and seasonal closure during turtle brumation and nesting season. The biologist should be deemed “qualified” by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
 - a. Nesting surveys and visual basking surveys are beneficial for identifying and assessing habitat quality. We have not found basking turtle surveys to provide reliable data, except for the identification of high-quality habitat.
 - b. We offered to visit the Urrutia Site/ ARMS mitigation site to trap and identify NWPT (We have a NWPT Scientific Collecting Permit, and we have expertise and experience) to determine their presence at the site on July 15, 2023. We were told that we did not have permission to visit the Urrutia Site/ ARMS site. The Urrutia property has been purchased by the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA). Neither SAFCA nor the Corps would allow us access to the Urrutia property. Therefore, there is no baseline data for NWPT presence, habitat quality, or nesting activity in any of the project areas.
- 4) Seasonal closure for construction – Injury or mortality to NWPT is likely if construction occurs during brumation as turtles are typically difficult to detect (December through March) and b) during nesting season (April through July). We also request the SEIS/ SEIR include the discussion and mitigation for pond turtle hatchlings. Hatchlings emerge from nests in February/March to traverse to standing water. At just the size of a quarter with malleable shells, hatchlings are extremely sensitive to disturbances, including falling into construction excavations, being stopped by minor and major barriers, being crushed by moving equipment, and other factors.
 - a. Note: The term “brumation” is not used in the draft SEIS/SEIR. Brumation is a winter cool-down when food is scarce, and temperatures are lower. Turtles enter into a period of sluggishness, inactivity, and torpor. They live off stored fat and their metabolism slows, making them vulnerable to construction activities. The fact that this term is not present in the document draws attention to the need for critical species-specific knowledge.
- 5) Nesting turtles move in the ecotonal area between aquatic sites and the terrestrial upland areas. The distance that turtles travel into uplands, from the aquatic refuge sites to construct nests, is highly variable and can be as far as 500 m to nest (Bushy Lake CRP WC-1943CA January 2022 Summary Report 2, Davidson and Alvarez 2020, Lovich and Meyer 2002, Holte 1998, Reese and Welsh 1997, Holland 1994, Storer 1930). Recent analysis of data from the Bushy Lake Project indicates NWPT nesting an average of 77m (253ft) from water, with a maximum distance of 154 m (505ft). To protect turtles during nesting season, we recommend season closure of construction and monitoring of 505ft from the water’s edge.
- 6) Prevent road mortality and bike strikes. We highly recommend that the project site be monitored to reduce or eliminate injury or mortality to NWPT. Collect monitoring data on the potential impacts of recreational activities on nesting turtles and consider implementing seasonal-use guidelines. At Bushy Lake, female turtles (both native and non-native turtles) exhibited indications of shell pitting consistent with turtle-bicycle

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cont'd

collisions. Vehicles and lawnmowers can be fatal to nesting turtles, especially if the lawnmower is not raised to at least 6 inches (Alvarez, et al. 2017).

- a. Recommended Mitigation Measures to avoid mortality due to turtle strikes include: a) Avoid construction during brumation and nesting season: b) Determine the potential for construction and/or recreational impact or other human impacts on turtles that are basking or moving through uplands; c) Place signs around roads and bike paths; d) Provide education to construction crews and public to spot turtles, support a biological monitor on site that may be able to protect turtles moving through the upland. If a NWPT is observed, a qualified biological monitor should be required to assess the situation and provide protective measures.
- 7) Nesting Surveys – Turtle nests are notoriously difficult to detect. We conducted daily nesting surveys every day during nesting season from April through July in 2022 and 2023. Most nests that trained biologists observed were predated. “Turtle nests are very hard to see. The cryptic nature of pond turtle nests makes them extremely difficult to locate, even for highly skilled biologists. Until more thorough, and consistently comparable research can be conducted, we recommend that all upland areas, irrespective of slope aspect, slope incline, soil type, vegetation type, etc., be protected if it lay within 50 m of occupied or presumed occupied aquatic habitat” (Davidson & Alvarez 2020).
- 8) Recommended Mitigation Measures for Urrutia Site/ ARMS Project and Mitigation Measure TURTLE-1 to optimize turtle basking and nesting habitat:
 - a. Provide high-quality basking habitat by adding large woody debris and artificial basking platforms in areas where there are high concentrations of turtles.
 - b. Manage accessible nesting habitat by continuing to implement managed seasonal mowing and grazing practices. Implement continued oversight to ensure that mowing equipment is set at least 6 inches above the ground to avoid adverse impact on nesting turtles (Alvarez et al. 2017).
 - c. Mowing and grazing activities at Bushy Lake have been followed by immediate use by nesting turtles, likely due to the increased accessibility for traveling and nest construction.
 - d. Remove non-native vegetation, particularly those with dense foliage or rhizomatous root systems that impede turtle movement and obstruct nest-building activities.
 - e. Plant native, fire-resilient, and culturally significant vegetation (for erosion control especially use *Carex barbarae*, *Elymus triticoides*, and *Artemisia douglasiana*). Native, fire-resilient, and culturally significant vegetation will support nesting turtles by providing a traversable habitat for nesting turtles and access for hatchlings to water.
 - f. Implement Traditional Fire Management to maintain native, fire-resilient, and culturally significant vegetation as well as support indigenous communities’ tending, gathering, and ceremonial practices. Traditional Fire Management stimulates native plants and reduces invasive species, builds the soil, and increases water holding capacity and permeability.
- 9) Emergence of Neonate Turtles: “However, observations of nests—even direct observation of nesting females, with no indication of nest-site predation at the surface—

5
cont'd

cannot be correlated with emergence of neonate turtles. Despite indications in the field of nesting, determination of “successful” nesting of Northwestern Pond Turtles should be confined to observations of post-emergent hatchlings” (Alvarez 2018). We conclude from this work that reproductive success cannot be assumed but must be observed in the form of neonate turtles in aquatic refuge habitat.

10) When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

11) The USACE needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what is deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if a justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

6

We have focused our attention on the analysis of impacts on NWPTs, their habitats, and information provided in the ARCF Comprehensive SEIR/SEIR Appendix B and Mitigation Measure TURTLE-1: Implement Measures to Protect Northwestern Pond Turtles. We endorse the concerns expressed by other entities including the letters submitted by the Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks, California Native Plant Society, Central Valley Bird Club, Save the American River Association, Preserve the American River, Sierra Club, and Environmental Council of Sacramento regarding the environmental process, conflicts with adopted plans, legal compliance, and impacts on other resource values, including other wildlife (especially the NWPT), vegetation communities, rare plants, general dispersed recreation, and visual quality impacts.

7

We also note the inconsistency with the County’s Natural Resource Management Plan Regarding the American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices - Urrutia Site/ ARMS mitigation project and American River Erosion Contracts 3B, 4A and 4B draft EIR/EIS. These projects, as described, conflict with the American River Parkway Plan Integrated Area Plan Concept for the Reaches of Discovery Park, Woodlake, and Bushy Lake (February 2006).

8

The ecological and cultural significance of the Urrutia Project, Woodlake, Bushy Lake, and Arden Pond is clear from the environmental assessments in combined Corps documents, and the public and agency responses to this documentation. The three lacustrine features on the lower American River provide vital habitat corridors, biodiversity, and cultural and ecological value for the lower American River.

Speaking as citizens and residents of this area, and as dedicated restoration ecologists, scientists, and ethnobotanists, the Urrutia, Woodlake, and Bushy Lake areas are deeply loved

and valued by the community, and my Bushy Lake Team which includes CSUS faculty, CSUS students, and stakeholders on the lower American River.

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From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:01 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Kerry O'keefe <kokeefe@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 7:20 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

[YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE HERE WITH YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PARKWAY AND THE WILD AND SCENIC AMERICAN RIVER].

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§

21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis

overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:00 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on Draft SEIS/SEIR

From: Larry Carr <carr66@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:57 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on Draft SEIS/SEIR

Hi,

Upon review of the draft SEIS/SEIR report, I have a few comments.

1 As a 20+ year resident of the neighborhood immediately adjacent to Site 4-1, and I am also a geologist (who works as a subcontractor to USACE, etc.). The erosion control methods proposed for this site seem to be excessive and destructive.
2 I can't help but wonder if anyone from USACE actually walked these areas. So my question is, how was it determined that this area needed this particular type of erosion protection? Will the USACE please consider looking into alternatives to mitigate toe erosion? Perhaps a more focused, fine-tune approach would better suit this area, perhaps with long term monitoring of the area. I do not see how these proposed engineering controls will be better than the natural dense vegetation that is present at the site, especially since the models show low velocity near the banks. With over 20 years of walking this site, especially after high water events, I have not seen evidence of scouring that would compel such a destructive remedy. Perhaps the USACE would be willing to do a site walk with a select number of citizens to point out some of the specific areas that are of concern and why a launchable trench/toe was selected as the preferred method. There are about 3 specific areas where minor scouring has occurred, so wouldn't it be better to remedy these specific areas rather than the whole site? This will almost permanently destroy this habitat, and
3 restoration success is not guaranteed. (I have seen a number of USACE restoration sites fail) How about all of the woody material that will be lost? The dead trees that many species rely on? This area is not like the stretch along H St, this area contains more species and is also used by people more.

4 This proposed work has already caused a lot of emotional stress to people who live here and enjoy this area. This site is an integral part of our lives and therefore moving forward with this work will have not only dire consequences to the wildlife, but also to the people. Please reconsider the proposed approach.

Thanks

Larry Carr

PS - sorry for the long comment!

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:59 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Trees

-----Original Message-----

From: Lahre Shiflet <lahreandbitze@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:50 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Trees

Please just reconsider this.

1 | You can try to find a better area to have this. Preserve nature, people's lives and sanity. You have so much land to choose from why here. Please.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:59 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway proposed tree removal-Contract3B site

From: A Richmond <withuney@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:43 PM
To: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway proposed tree removal-Contract3B site

I strongly oppose the removal of trees along the 6 miles of American River Parkway in your proposed levee upgrade project (Contract 3B site).

1 The removal of heritage oaks and other important elements of this riparian habitat will devastate a peaceful, natural environment that is important habitat for wildlife, creating long lasting negative environmental impacts while damaging a popular regional recreation area. This damage is irreversible and will take generations to recover.

To turn this area into something looking like other places where this has been done—such as the J street Bridge area—will be one of those things looked back on in the future as short-sighted and foolish. In this day and age, there have to be better, less destructive solutions. In trying to solve one problem, please don't destroy our natural environments, thereby creating new problems for the future.

Thank you,

Anne Richmond
Long time American River Parkway user and supporter

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:58 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: M <medina019m@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:40 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

My name is Monique Medina. I am a soon to be graduate from Sacramento State University majoring in Environmental Studies. I am also an intern for a local restoration project at Bushy Lake adjacent to Cal Expo.

A My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. I have concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis pertaining, though not limited to, the removal of heritage oak trees, the use of riprap, and the impact upon wildlife and surrounding critical habitats.

B There are many consequences to this project that I believe are avoidable if better care and effort was taken into the projects attempt at erosion control. To my understanding this project is inconsistent with the Sacramento County Tree ordinance. Also, the damage expected to be done to these oaks is incomplete. The use of riprap is known to be detrimental to the growth and survival riverbank vegetation and tree growth. Furthermore, the clear-cutting approach will obviously disrupt seasonal nesting, mating, and feeding of important local and migratory bird populations. To repeat, these are just a few of my concerns with the project.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I've witnessed a similar project done next to my campus at Sacramento State. It was horrible to see all the vegetation removed with the woodchips coating the entire area where it occurred. The location near Guy West Bridge was a beautiful pathway prior where many would visit. I would hate to see this repeated anywhere else along the Sacramento River. I believe there is a better solution if the appropriate measures are taken.

Thank you.

Monique Medina

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:57 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

From: Cass Mowatt <mowattc@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:09 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I live off of Woodman way, and have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

1 The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. It is THE reason why my wife and I chose to buy our house. I was just there this morning, fishing off the shore, appreciating how beautiful it is and how lucky I am to live so close to so much wildlife.

Besides the noise, dust, and other pollution the destruction of the landscape will cause, I can't even imagine the impact to habitat. Not to mention of course, the eye sore the area will be for years to come.

I urge you to find another way to achieve your goals.

Cass Mowatt

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:56 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Avery Kunstler <averykunstler@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:55 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me and I visit the American River Parkway constantly.

A Last year, while planning my move to Sacramento, I knew that I wanted to be close to the American River. I purchased a house that was 0.2 miles, easy walking distance, from the Parkway access point by Waterton Way/ Twin Falls Dr. When I first toured the house, we also toured the access point, and it was a primary selling point for me. There were stunning trees, a beautiful river, birds, coyotes, greenery, and I fell in love instantly. Since settling into the house in mid-November 2023, I've taken countless walks along the American River Parkway with my dog, with the river, trees, and wildlife being one of my favorite parts of living in Sacramento.

The American River is one of the factors that led to me moving to Sacramento last year. After visiting a few times over the years, it was in October 2022 that I realized just how happy I was during an exploratory morning walk. I spent several hours walking around and it was one of the first times I felt peaceful in longer than I could remember. Within a few months, I moved to Sacramento from Los Angeles, after living there for my entire life. Whenever I'm asked about the move or living in Sacramento, the American River Parkway is one of the first things I mention. It's my dog's favorite walk as well and I try to go daily.

I was absolutely devastated when I learned about the proposed demolition of the portion of the American River Parkway I use nearly daily. I had just returned from a walk on the exact route of the planned erosion work and could not believe that in a few short months I would lose access to this walk and the river, and all the trees, wildlife, and valuable recreation access would be destroyed. It was why I purchased my house. It was why I moved to the La Riviera area.

B I understand the importance of flood prevention and levee upgrades, but there is a better way. Simply bulldozing nature away isn't the answer. It will take generations for the area to recover in a meaningful way and my reason for purchasing this house can never return.

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

1. Limited Evidence for Unnecessary Removal of Trees and Vegetation:

- Trees are not a significant risk to levee stability. In fact, trees and vegetation provide self-renewing natural armoring of the banks that would be eliminated. Removing trees may make us less safe.
- Historically, levee failures were more associated with areas where riparian forests had been thinned or clear-cut.
- Inadequate environmental analysis of the removal of 200+ years old heritage oaks would constitute an “unmitigable” impact on the visual and aesthetic resources of the Parkway
- Destruction of vegetation worsens the heat island effect.
- “Access ramps” will destroy additional trees but were not accounted for in the draft SEIS/SEIR.

2. Rip Rapped streambanks present significant negative consequences:

- Shorelines composed of large, angular rock make access by people for swimming, fishing, birdwatching, watercraft deployment, and other uses dangerous at worst and highly unpleasant at best.
- The river’s Wild and Scenic designation is compromised by a rigid, artificial shoreline. Riprapped shorelines are ugly and detract from the natural feel of the Lower American River that makes it such a special place and refuge in our city and area.
- Riprap hinders natural riverbank vegetation growth, and stifles tree growth. Heritage trees would be forever lost.
- The planting benches being proposed on top of the launchable rock toes and trenches will likely collapse (“launch”) when the launchable rock toes and trenches eventually launch. No provisions or commitments have been made to replace lost planting benches.

3. Erosion is minimal in USACE’s Contract 3B:

- Experts disagree about the erosion risk along this stretch of the river. More empirical data was recommended, but generally concluded that erosion resistant material was present and significant scour below it was not anticipated. Seepage data show no issue for seepage, especially after the deep slurry walls were added inside the levees.
- Modern, advanced modeling for peak 160,000 cubic feet per second flow predicts that water velocities are low at the levees. The older models used did not account for the protective effect of trees slowing the velocities at the edges.
- The improvements to weirs and bypasses, and the new spillway at Folsom dam and new operating protocols allow for better managing of flows, including earlier release of water when storms are forecast.

4. Impact on Wildlife and Critical Habitats:

- The biodiversity of this ecosystem is complex and interconnected and is heavily used by wildlife
- Clear-cutting and rip rapped streambanks pose a threat to critical habitats for various fish species, including Chinook Salmon, Central Valley Steelhead, and North American Green Sturgeon.
- Clear-cutting disrupts the nesting, mating, and feeding habits of local and migratory bird populations.
- Large, mature trees provide essential nest cavities that would be lost.
- The substantial loss of shade from the mature canopies along the river's edge may lower the survival rate of various species of salmonids.
- The petition for listing the western pond turtle imposes additional requirements on the environmental analysis and mitigation.
- High levels of noise and vibrations will disturb natural animal behaviors such as nesting, spawning and feeding activities

5. Recreational Access:

- This part of the river is heavily used by the public for walking, swimming, fishing, kayaking, bird and wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of natural features. There are many footpaths in the forest and beaches along the shore that are extremely important to the public. The Corps has not provided any detail as to what, if any, of our mature trees, footpaths, beaches, fishing access points, and other natural features will be preserved. Why should we think that the Corps will do anything different than at River Park, where all of these features such as mature trees, beaches, footpaths, etc., appear to have been destroyed? Sac State is used as a restoration example, but we know of no beaches, footpaths, fishing access points there, either. Why should we trust that 3B will be different when even the SEIS/SEIR does not address these issues?
- Installation of miles of angular rock (riprap) will make river access dangerous along large stretches of river, and will greatly impede swimming, fishing, and deployment of watercraft such as kayaks. This will be a permanent and significant loss of irreplaceable recreational amenities to the community that is not accounted for in the SEIS/SEIR, despite promises by the Corps in 2016 to address these significant issues.
- The permanent loss of mature trees, beaches, river access points, footpaths, and other recreational amenities is not "less than significant" as stated in the SEIS/SEIR. The Corps needs to document these losses and redo the SEIS/SEIR to account for them, including proposals to modify the project where possible to minimize losses.
- The public has a right to know how specific recreational amenities will be affected by this project. The level of detail in the SEIS/SEIR makes it impossible for the public to see what will be done, and all we can assume is everything in 3B upstream of Watt Avenue on the south side will be ripped out like at River Park. The public has a right to know the details at this stage of review and should not be required to "trust" the Corps. We want the Corps to document and justify specifically which of our trails, trees, beaches, fishing access, and riparian forest must be destroyed to keep us safe from floods, and how much of that destruction will be replaced, versus what will be lost permanently given current design.
- What mitigation for lost beaches, trails, forests, etc. will there be? The SEIS/SEIR does not discuss the loss of these features, so it also inappropriately fails to discuss mitigation for permanent impacts to

features that the Corps cannot replace onsite. If beaches or trails are lost forever onsite, will other beaches or trails be installed?

6. Mental Health and Vegetation

- Trees contribute to the creation of green spaces, which have been associated with improved mental health. The presence of greenery has been linked to reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The removal of trees can lead to a loss of these beneficial green environments.
- Research has shown that “green exercise” may confer mental health benefits in addition to improving physical health.
- Natural park settings decrease anger, anxiety, and depression; and increase restoration and tranquility.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that the lack of green space is one of the most important causes of childhood obesity, and the need for green places to protect children's health is becoming more recognized and apparent.
- Trees play a role in filtering air pollutants and absorbing noise. Their removal can contribute to increased levels of air pollution and noise, both of which have been associated with negative effects on mental health. Poor air quality and excessive noise can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
- Trees often serve as gathering places and contribute to the sense of community. The removal of trees can alter the social dynamics of an area, potentially reducing opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. Social connections are important for mental health, and changes in community dynamics can have psychological implications.

6. Cultural Restoration and Inclusion:

- Culturally significant plant species must be included in restoration and mitigation efforts, allowing for tribal ceremonies.

7. Air Quality:

- For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is a carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), and OEHHA reports that between the ages of 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive).
- The project is large, with over 100 daily truck trips at each site and staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under CARB's Truck and Bus Regulation. The USACE mitigation measures should require much cleaner trucks -- 2014 or newer or, better yet, electrics.
- Even where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).
- Although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site would have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that travel through residential communities. USACE claims less than significant impacts of air pollution on sensitive receptors. However, the OEHHA guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months ([OEHHA, page 8-18](#)). USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA), to provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact.
- Using quarry rocks from unspecified quarry sources has not been adequately addressed for concerns that the rocks may contain asbestos content (given the prevalence of serpentine rocks in surrounding foothill sources). Dust from hauling and dumping asbestos-containing rocks within a quarter mile of a school requires further environmental impact analysis.

8. Environmental Justice (EJ):

- The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice issue has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

List of Requests:

1. Demand Spot-by-Spot Evaluation:

- Insist on a thorough demonstration of the spot-by-spot need and benefit analysis.
- Encourage the evaluation of alternative methods that are targeted and less destructive to habitat and wildlife.

2. Highlight Unjustified Damage:

- Draw attention to the unjustified massive damage proposed for a straight stretch of the river.
- Reference modeling data showing low bank velocities in this specific area.

3. Advocate for Environmentally Friendly Approaches:

- Promote the consideration of "spot fixes," small equipment, and maintenance.
- Support the use of stabilizing vegetation, aligning with the National Park Service's recommendation.

4. Insist on Balanced Solutions:

- Emphasize the importance of finding ways to achieve both tree preservation and any erosion work (if needed) for flood protection.
- Encourage a balanced approach that addresses environmental concerns.

5. Demand Greater Detail about Work to be Done

- The current environmental documentation does not show in adequate detail what specific work will be done.

6. Insist on a Peer Review

7. Do not proceed with subcomponents until justification and alternatives are provided.

- The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

8. Lasting care of Sacramento's Crown Jewel:

- The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Best regards,
Avery

Avery Kunstler

averykunstler@gmail.com

Pronouns: [he/him/his](#)

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:56 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

-----Original Message-----

From: Deirdre Wilson <wilsondk@me.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:02 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B. The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to our community.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees.

Advanced

modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data. Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction – followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not "less than significant" nor are they "mitigated to less than significant". When there are "significant unavoidable" impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion "spot fixes" are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed "significant unavoidable" environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the "Crown Jewel of Sacramento". In 2012 it was designated a "Regional Treasure". The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a "Protected Area" under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Deirdre Wilson,
Frequent user of the American River Parkway

Sent from my iPhone

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on Tree Removal Along Lower American River, USACE Contract 3B Site

From: T.R. <teririe@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:41 PM
To: susan_rosebrough@nps.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: rahumada@sacbee.com; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments on Tree Removal Along Lower American River, USACE Contract 3B Site

1 On July 20, 2021, the National Park Service provided a letter to Colonel James Handura, at the Army Corps of Engineers, stating that if the American River Common Feature project scope and effects change, a Wild and Scenic River consultation with the National Park Service must be reinitiated. Before the USACE Contract 3B Site project moves forward, a new consultation with the National Park Service must occur first because the project scope has changed. The 3B Site includes specific heritage oak tree removal and riprapping on the American River that is inconsistent with the Wild and Scenic River Act. In addition, the scope and effects of the Contract 3B Site have changed since the last consultation with the National Park Service regarding consistency with the Wild and Scenic River Act for the American River. While flood control, erosion control, and levee protection are critically important, levee protection can be
2 achieved by minimizing tree removal and by maintaining the principles of the Wild and Scenic River Act. I hope that the Army Corps of Engineers will consider other alternatives that will provide levee protection while saving irreplaceable heritage oak trees.

Sincerely,

Teri Rie
former CVFPB Board Member

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:55 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Kevin Peters <kevin@imprintgroupwest.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:50 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

A I was born in Sacramento, and have lived in all of my 58 years. I have enjoyed the American River Parkway all this time, and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me. I hope to see them protected into the future, and ask that you please not move ahead with your ill-conceived and destructive bank erosion management plan for our beautiful riparian environment, which would forever damage and alter the American River Parkway, while not achieving your intended results. This is bad government planning at its worst, and repeats the mistakes of the USACE along with Sacramento River in the 1950s and 60s.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable”

impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation

Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles. The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR

comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kevin

Kevin Peters

Please accept the following comments with respect to Contract 3B North, Site 4-2.

1 The SEIR explains that the proposed work involved in Contract 3B North Site 4-2 is needed to prevent seepage, levee instability and erosion leading to flooding should a high-water event occur. Yet no details are provided concerning the characteristics of the type of water event that might lead to catastrophic flooding or serious home-side damage at location Site 4-2 if the proposed work is not done.

2

1. Please describe the water flow level, water velocity and duration that would need to occur to lead to seepage, levee instability and/or erosion that would result in catastrophic flooding or serious home-side damage at location Site 4-2.

3

2. Please describe the amount of precipitation (rain or snow) that would need to fall in a season in the American River watershed to generate the water flow level, velocity and duration described in response to question 1 above.

4

3. At location Site 4-2 what is the current level of flood protection (stated in cubic feet per second of water flow) and what will the level of flood protection be after the proposed work is completed (stated in cubic feet per second of water flow).

Thank you in advance for your anticipated responses.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Andrews

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:52 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re: American River Parkway USACE Project EIS, etc.

From: Dan Ward <dward@surewest.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:08 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Re: American River Parkway USACE Project EIS, etc.

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

1 We live very near the Parkway, and enjoy walking near the Jacob Way entrance several times a week. We regularly keep up on local issues, but were very disappointed to see a sign on the Parkway today saying that comments on the EIR were due today. It did appear that this sign was put up by citizens, not IUSACE or DWR.

2 In communicating with neighbors who have seen the plans, it seems that the aggressive approach proposed is overkill. It will take out too many trees and be devastating to this pristine environment.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Dan and Teresa Ward

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:50 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] usace project 3b american river

From: Claudine Cloudett <claudinecloudett@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 7:57 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: arcf16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] usace project 3b american river

1 | I am opposed tp USACE project 3b which greatly destroys the natural beauty, reduces wildlife habitat and hinders recreational use of the part of the American river parkway I use most often. I am strongly against the clearcutting of the riverside vegetation, but for doing spot fixes for possible erosion control spots with small equipment.

Thank you, Claudia Elsner, Sacramento city resident

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:50 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

From: Tanya Von Awe <tonvon53@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:02 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

A My husband and I have lived next to the American River Parkway near Howe Ave Access for going on 7 years. We consider the Parkway sacred and a valuable Sanctuary for all people of Sacramento and all who visit it from other places. We also know the Parkway is a Sanctuary for many species of animals, birds, River creatures, plants and trees. This Sanctuary will be severely altered and in many places destroyed by your upcoming planned projects as it has been in your past projects from Paradise Beach to the Guy West Bridge. Many animals, plants, trees and birds have lost their homes and people have lost their natural recreation spaces in the areas you have worked on so far. I beg you to reconsider your upcoming projects for the sake of the animals, plants and trees of the American River Parkway. It must be very traumatic for them as it is to us. Furthermore, this project was not voted on by the people of Sacramento. I thought our Parkway was a protected area for everyone to enjoy.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to insist that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code § 21081; 14 CCR § 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank

“erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

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Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

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and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

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The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

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If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach. The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

[NAME]

Tanya Von Awe

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:18 PM
To: Sutton, Drew; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Cc: ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] December 2024, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA
Attachments: New Document(8).(jpg).zip

From: Josh Thomas <joshjhthomas@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:42 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] December 2024, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Army Corps of Engineers Comment Recipients,

1 | I am submitting pages from Ari Kelman's book, A River and Its City, to make them part of the project record. They are the pages cited in my February 22, 2024 comment letter (Joshua Thomas).

Sincerely,
Joshua Thomas

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:14 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection (American River Parkway)

From: Greg Meyer <admin@gamlaw.org>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:10 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: RE: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection (American River Parkway)

You may disregard my usual confidentiality clause which is standard for communications from my office. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

On Mon, Feb 26, 2024 at 8:53 AM, ARCF_SEIS
<ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil> wrote:

Hello Mr. Meyer,

This email address was set up to accept public comments for the American River Common Features SEIS/SEIR. The end of your email says "This email communication may contain CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION WHICH ALSO MAY BE LEGALLY PRIVILEGED and is intended only for the use of the intended recipients identified above. If you are not the intended recipient of this communication, you are hereby notified that any unauthorized review, use, dissemination, distribution, downloading, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient and have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by reply email, delete the communication and destroy all copies."

I wanted to clarify whether or not you were wanting the text in your email considered as part of the public review process or if you were just leaving a comment to the Army Corps and DWR for our internal Administrative File. If you would like this comment to be part of the public process, we would be including the text from your email in the Final SEIS/SEIR, and it would be available for the public to see.

Thank you for your interest in the American River Common Features SEIS/SEIR.

Bailey Hunter

Environmental Manager

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From: Greg Meyer <admin@gamlaw.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 4:23 PM
To: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Corps Flood Protection (American River Parkway)

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED FLOOD CONTROL PROTECTION METHODS (American River Parkway)

To whomever this may concern:

1 It seems counterintuitive that State and Federal agencies which frequently focus on preservation of land and habitat, and have a significant history opposing development projects based on biological and ecological principles, now would even consider clear cutting the beautiful and vibrant American River Parkway. Erosion control in the proposed areas already has trees hundreds of years old with significant canopies protecting rain strikes from sloped soil and root systems which bind the soils. Some maintenance may be required, but moon scaping the American River Parkway is a misplaced and unsupported approach leaving some of Sacramento's most beautiful areas barren and irreplaceable for decades to come, not to mention loss of wildlife issues.

2 I wonder if these agencies have considered potential lawsuits against them by property owners living on the banks of the American River, supported by their property values plunging, due to such reckless decisions.

If any motivation for the agencies to clearcut the American River Parkway is being cloaked in a misplaced and deceptive need for erosion control to preserve next years budget levels, priorities need to be seriously revisited both economically and politically.

Greg A. Meyer

This email communication may contain CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION WHICH ALSO MAY BE LEGALLY PRIVILEGED and is intended only for the use of the intended recipients identified above. If you are not the intended recipient of this communication, you are hereby notified that any unauthorized review, use, dissemination, distribution, downloading, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient and have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by reply email, delete the communication and destroy all copies.

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 2:51 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS; Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] RE: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Importance: High

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:10 AM
To: Sutton, Drew <dsutton@geiconsultants.com>
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: FW: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Here is a public comment.

Bailey Hunter
Environmental Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From: Candice Heinz <candinoelle@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:19 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Hello,

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED (PDF) MY OFFICIAL SUBMISSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT TO USACE AND DWR REGARDING: American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

The additional attachment (zipped PDF) is referred to within my comment letter.

Thanks for your time! :)

Candice Heinz

candinoelle@hotmail.com

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:48 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American river project between Howe and watt on north side of river

From: Katie Bellotti Porter <kbellotti@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:35 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American river project between Howe and watt on north side of river

Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR)
Comment Recipients:

My comments focus on the lower American River projects of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

I have serious concerns with the proposed project and the draft SEIS/SEIR environmental analysis.

A The American River Parkway is extremely valuable to me. My family and I walk to levee and trails multiple times a week we take refuge in the beautiful plants, trees, growth, and animal life we see it is a special retreat from the developed areas of Sacramento

I strongly question whether this “potential bank erosion” work is necessary along this section of the American River, and have concerns that the proposed approach of clearcut, bare banks during two years of construction followed by years of isolated, immature plantings, is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential bank erosion concerns, and I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations of alternative methods on a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (see California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternatives for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach (with less environmental impacts) are not presented.

My specific concerns and comments include the following:

The US Army Corp of Engineers should perform a more adequate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE alternative approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.\

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. These proposed decisions affect this irreplaceable treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the care that this treasure deserves.

Thank you.

Katie Bellotti Porter



Butterfield-Riviera East
Community Association
P.O. Box 276274
Sacramento, CA 95827
Email: jmorgan1@ix.netcom.com

February 19, 2024

Mr. Guy Romine
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Email: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Mr. Josh Brown
California Department of Water Resources,
Central Valley Flood Protection Board
Email: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Subject: Comments on Draft American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk
Management Project, Sacramento, California
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact
Report XIV

Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown:

I. Introduction

These are the comments of the Butterfield-Riviera East Community Association (BRECA) on the Draft American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, California, Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV (DSEIS/SEIR).

The Butterfield-Riviera East Community Association (BRECA) is a membership based community organization. Our goals are to promote citizen involvement and enhance the community. The boundaries of our association are the American River on the north, Folsom Blvd. on the south, the Mayhew Drain on the west, and Paseo Rio Way (both sides of the street) on the east.

BRECA is located immediately upstream of the Contracts 3B and 4B area, in particular Site 4-1. People from our area hike, bird-watch, kayak and canoe in the

area. As such, we are greatly concerned with the work which is proposed for Contracts 3B and 4B, which evidently would result in the loss of very many trees.

We wish to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Central Valley Flood Protection Board(CVFPB)/Department of Water Resources(DWR) for extending the public comment deadline from February 5 to February 23. That extension greatly improved our ability to submit meaningful comments.

II. Contract 3B

a. Incomplete information presented and limited hydrologic modeling used to determine areas of risk and work

BRECA had and has a representative on the Lower American River Task Force (LARTF) and it's Bank Protection Working Group (BPWG), the latter of which was responsible for the initial identification of the areas of work and initial project design in Contract 3B. As such, we are aware to some extent of the process and considerations involved. Unfortunately, this information was not made available to the broader public through the DSIES/SEIR or the two public meetings provided by the Corps. This has resulted in great consternation among residents in the areas of Contract 3B as well as a proliferation of misinformation. It would benefit all concerned if the final environmental documents added the hydrology, geomorphology, and procedures that were involved in identifying the Contract 3B areas as being high risk. Also, it would be of value to compare and contrast the Contract 3B area to the Contracts 1 and 2 areas. We believe that in-person public meetings should be held wherein technical experts are made available to respond to questions and that one of those meetings should be a site visit.

On page 4-151 of the DSEIS/SEIR it states:

"The effects of the Proposed Action on water surface elevations were evaluated using the Hydrologic Engineering Center's River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) computer software. HEC-RAS performs one-dimensional steady flow, one- and two-dimensional unsteady flow calculations, sediment transport/mobile bed calculations, and water temperature/water quality modeling."

A one-dimensional hydrologic model divides the river into a series of cross-sections perpendicular to river flow, and assumes that all of the water in a given cross-section has the same velocity. A two-dimensional model takes the cross sections and divides them into columns of water, which can have different velocities from other columns of water in the same cross section. However, it still assumes that all of the water in a given column has the same velocity. A three-dimensional model divides the columns into cells which could each have different velocities from other cells in the same column or other columns (1).

The three-dimensional model should be closest to reality. The assumption in the one-dimensional model that all of the water in a given cross section has the same velocity is obviously not true, as the velocity varies both by lateral position and depth. In the two-dimensional models, the assumption that all of the water in a given column has the same velocity is more subtly false as friction from the bed, banks, berm, or levee side will slow the adjacent water, as will friction and turbulence from trees. The main justification for using a one- or two-dimensional model is that the amount of computations needed for the higher dimension models increases exponentially.

It is our understanding that when the BPWG assessed various areas of the Lower American River levee system to be of high risk of failure, it was based upon a two-dimensional hydrologic model. It is apparent from the above quote that the Corps has continued with one- and two-dimensional modeling in its work.

Recently, with the advances of available computing speed and power, three-dimensional modeling of river systems has become more common.

For example, recent research articles used a three-dimensional hydrodynamic model of a portion of the Lower American River downstream of the Contract 3B area. These articles arrived at the conclusion that the presence of trees along the banks of the river reduced the velocity and bed shear stress of the river near the banks and increased the velocity and bed shear stress in the middle of the river channel compared to the same model without trees (2, 3). These results lead to a couple of questions concerning the hydrologic modeling involved in the Contract 3B proposal.

First, were trees represented in the hydrologic models used by the Corps, and if so, how was this accomplished?

Second, would the Corps and/or its partners be willing to pause the project and rerun the assessment of risk of erosion using a three-dimensional hydrologic model with trees? If not, why not?

b. Incomplete information presented and limited hydrologic modeling used to determine project designs

As stated above, BRECA had a representative on the LARTF and BPWG. Consequently we are aware of some of the evolution of project designs of Contract 3B. However, this information was not made available to the public in the DSEIS/SEIR or either of the Corps' public meetings. As above, we believe that the Corps should hold in-person public meetings to facilitate public understanding of the designs. We encourage the Corps and CVFPB/DWR to include this information in the final environmental documents. Similar questions arise to those cited above.

First, were trees represented in the hydrologic models used by the Corps for refining designs, and if so, how was this accomplished?

Second, would the Corps and/or its partners be willing to pause the project and rerun refinement of designs using a three-dimensional hydrologic model? If not, why not?

Finally, were designs considered which did not involve the placement of large amounts of rock (see for example reference 4), and why were those designs rejected?

c. Lack of information on impact on trees of Contract 3B

One of the great shortcomings of the DSEIS/SEIR is the lack of information of the impact on trees of Contract 3B. Summary information on tree losses was presented by Corps Project Manager Amanda Barlow at the LARTF meeting on 12-12-23. The information presented indicated that the 95% designs would involve the removal of 685 trees, the majority (522) in the Site 4-1 area. While we applaud the progress of the Corps and its partners in reducing the impacts as project designs evolved, we strongly feel that further progress in this regard is needed.

Also, much more information needs to be presented in the documents. Ideally, this should include an arborist's report of all trees in the project areas, including whether they are to be removed or not, their geographic location, species and size. Also, a summary table showing species of trees, size range of trees, total numbers of trees to be left in place and total numbers of trees to be removed would be most useful. Finally, maps of the locations of trees to be left in place or removed would also be most useful. This sort of information seems to us to be required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

d. Folsom Blvd. (Pepper Oaks) Staging Area

One of the staging areas proposed for Contract 3B work is private property. It is shown on DSEIS/SEIR p. 3-30, Figure 3.5.2-3 and p. 3-37, Figure 3.5.2-10 as adjoining Folsom Blvd. It is identified in the text, p. 3-49, as being near Pepper Oaks Dr. Actually it is located at 9425 Folsom Blvd., opposite the Butterfield Light Rail Station. This property has been of considerable interest to BRECA in the past because it is within the BRECA area and has been the subject of various proposals for development. BRECA strongly supports the placement of an urban park in this area. In particular, we wish to see the large trees surrounding house and out buildings be incorporated into the park. We see no reason why this could not be accommodated, as it concerns a small area of the parcel. Some questions:

Does the Corps have a contract or other agreement with the current owners concerning using this area as a staging area? If not, what mechanism is contemplated?

Is the Corps willing to guarantee that the large trees surrounding the house on the property will not be cut down or otherwise damaged by the property's use as a staging area? If not, why not?

III. Contract 4B

The main question about contract 4B is: Why is it in the DSEIS/SEIR at all? The proposal is so incompletely described as to make it impossible to make more than generic comments. Two figures purported to portray the activities that would be undertaken, Figures 3.5.2-11 and 3.5.2-12 (text p. 3-42), are nowhere to be found. Even the Table of Contents skips from Figure 3.5.2-10 to Figure 3.5.2-13. Further, this proposal has NOT been presented at any LARTF or BPWG meeting that we are aware of. There is not even summary information on how many trees would be impacted. This proposal should be removed from the final document and recirculated when there is adequate information for people to comment on it.

That being said, consider as a generic comments and questions on Contract 4B all of the comments and questions on Contract 3B above in sections IIa, IIb, and IIc. Please respond with specifics for Contract 4B.

IV. Miscellaneous comments

a. Aesthetics and Visual Resources: Long term impact significant

On page ES-12, under the row Aesthetics and Visual Resources for American River Erosion Contract 3B North and South, Contract 4B, SRMS and ARMS, it is indicated that long term impacts under CEQA are "less than significant with Mitigation Incorporated" and under NEPA are "less than significant." The same assessments are also presented on p. 4-141 in Table 4.3.1-2, Impacts 3.1-a and 3.1-c. We disagree strongly with these assessments. Indeed, the assessments in the cited tables are inconsistent with the text of the DSEIS/SEIR. On p. 4-144, under American River Erosion Contract 4B, it states: "Even though there will be an attempt to save every native tree impacted at the American River Erosion Contract 4B site, the possible need to remove heritage oaks would create long term significant and unavoidable impacts."

Both Contracts 3B and 4B have the potential to remove large heritage trees that are more than 100 years old. While small trees may be planted near the site to replace these trees, they will not achieve the size of the large trees for decades or centuries. The aesthetics of large trees are quite different from those of small trees. Hence the

long term effect is significant under both CEQA and NEPA. This should be acknowledged in tables and text in the final environmental document.

b. Table of Vegetation Impacts out of date

On p. 4-195 of the DSEIS/SEIR, Table 4.4.1-4 sets forth the “Vegetation Impacts for ARCF GRR SEIS – Proposed Action.” If the title is accurate, these are the vegetation impacts as identified in the General Reevaluation Report from 2016 (GRR). However, the proposed actions in the DSEIS/SEIR differ substantially from the proposed actions in the GRR. Hence, the table is misleading and inaccurate. It should be replaced with a table that reflects the impacts of the proposed actions in the DSEIS/SEIR.

c. Future maintenance of launchable rock

Some of the designs of erosion protection involve launchable rock. Some questions arise: Which organization would be responsible for repair should a flood event occur which resulted in the launching of the rock? What exactly would this consist of? And, how would it be financed?

One additional point: it would be of interest to see if there is precedent for the launching of the rock and how it turned out. Pictures would be helpful.

d. Cultural and Tribal Resources

In table ES-1, p. ES-28, it indicates CEQA impacts to cultural and tribal resources to be significant and unavoidable. Further in the document, in Tables 4.5.1-1 and 4.5.1-2 (p. 4-225 and 4-226) it indicates that these effects are due to the American River Mitigation Site (ARMS) proposal. The texts of the main report and Appendix B generally do a good job of describing why there is an impact. However, they do not include any information on the required consultation of the Corps with Cultural and Tribal entities regarding this proposal. Such information should be added in the final environmental document.

e. Organization of pages inconsistent

Looking at the Table of Contents (pp. ii and iii), we find inconsistent and confusing numbering of pages. Whereas most chapters have the format chapter number-page number, beginning with page 1 (e.g. 1-1, 3-1, 5-1 etc.), two of the chapters deviate from this. Chapter 2 begins with page 2-8, proceeds to 2-9, then reverts to 2-1 followed by 2-3. The actual pages in the document are consistent with this page numbering. Very confusing. Also, Chapter 4 begins with page 4-108 instead of 4-1.

Possibly some technology has baffled the authors of the DSEIS/SEIR. This should be remedied in the final environmental document.

f. Organization of appendices confusing

In the .pdf documents made available to the public on the Corps' web site, Appendix B is found in the .pdf document labeled as "draft SIES-SEIR report." However, all other appendices are found in a .pdf document labeled as "draft SEIS-SEIR appendices." The appendices document lacks Appendix B. This has caused considerable confusion, as people have reported searching in vain in the appendices .pdf for Appendix B. Another problem this has created is that people looking in the main report .pdf have gone to the end of the .pdf document in search of Chapters 6 through 10, and found only the end of chapter 5. This is because Appendix B ends with Chapter 5. All in all, this arrangement has confused many people, and should be modified in the final environmental document.

V. Concluding remarks

We greatly appreciate the enormous efforts that have gone into the identification of areas of risk of levee failure at 160,000 cubic feet per second of flow in the Lower American River, as well as the refinements to design that reduce the impacts on habitat and vegetation, especially trees. None-the-less, the remaining impacts are quite large: some 685 trees are likely to be removed in Contract 3B and an unknown number in Contract 4B. It seems to us that the advancing technology, in particular the deployment of three-dimensional hydrodynamic models capable of including trees, call for a pause and reevaluation of the risks and designs set forth in the DSEIS/SEIR. Also, it would be desirable to re-activate the BPWG and involve it in said reevaluation. Likewise, greater efforts should be made to reach out to the general public in the reevaluation. It would be a great shame to lose so many trees along our State and Federally protected Wild and Scenic Lower American River if such losses are not, in fact, justified.

Thank you for your attention to these considerations.

=====

References:

1. Glock,K. et al. (2019) Comparison of Hydrodynamics Simulated by 1D, 2D and 3D Models Focusing on Bed Shear Stresses. Water 11, 226.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/w11020226>
2. Flora, K, Santoni, C & Khosronejad A (2021) Numerical Study on the Effect of Bank Vegetation on the Hydrodynamics of the American River under Flood Conditions. J. Hydraul. Eng. 147(9): 05021006.
<https://ascelibrary.org/doi/10.1061/%28asce%29hy.1943-7900.001912>

3. Flora, K & Khosronejad A (2023) Uncertainty Quantification of Bank Vegetation Impacts on the Flood Flow Field in the American River, California, Using Large Eddy Simulations. Earth Surface Processes and Landforms.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/esp.5745>

4. Federal Emergency Management Agency (date unknown) Engineering With Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization.

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/regions/regionx/engineering_with_nature_web.pdf

=====

James Morgan, BRECA Secretary

Gay Jones, BRECA Chair.



FROM THE DESK OF
ASSEMBLYMEMBER LLOYD LEVINE (RET.)

February 19, 2024

United States Army Corps of Engineers
1325 J Street, Floor 1
Sacramento, CA 95814

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today to express my grave concerns regarding the recent and future work planned and overseen by the US Army Corps of Engineers along the American River Parkway. I absolutely understand the need for levee reinforcement – I live in the flood zone – but believe there must be a way to balance the need for levee improvements and flood safety with the excising environmental sensitivity and recreational benefits the river and parkway provide.

While I am not an engineer, as a former California Legislator, I understand the need to balance competing imperatives from public safety to the environment, to community and public preference. The work completed recently between Glen Hall Park and the Guy West appears, to all reasonable observers, to have paid scant, if any, attention to the environmental impacts, habitat loss or aesthetic/recreational aspects of the river. It appears there was no balancing competing interests.

I respectfully request the Corps employ a far more nuanced, environmentally and aesthetically thought-out approach for all future work on the American River levees, specifically and most immediately American River Erosion Contracts 3B North, 3B South, and 4B.

Nearly 8 million people – including myself – use the parkway each year, from avid runners, to families, hikers, bird watchers, rafters, kayakers, cyclists and many more. The river and parkway are an oasis in the city, a nearby sanctuary where people can safely exercise and enjoy nature within just a few miles of where they live and work. The work proposed will dramatically and irrevocably damage the natural beauty of the parkway.

As I understand them, American River Erosion Contracts 3B North, 3B South, and 4B include removing hundreds, if not thousands more trees and other changes will destroy the habitat of numerous species that make their homes along the river. With the availability of computer modeling, I think it should be possible to simulate the impacts of various flow rates and river levels to identify potential vulnerabilities and create a workplan that addresses those vulnerabilities. Further, I would think there must be other construction techniques that can be performed in a way that doesn't require removing nearly every single tree for several miles along both sides of the river.

The objective should be to remove as few trees as possible and have the least impact as possible. However, it appears that rather than work around existing nature and fully mature trees the Corps simply eliminated nearly everything along the river. Continuing that approach is unacceptable to me and to the millions of people who utilize the bike trail and nature area every year.

Again, I respectfully request the Corps take a much more nuanced, balanced, and sensitive approach to the upcoming work and that you explore every option possible to achieve the flood protection necessary while protecting the wildlife, natural lands, mature trees, recreational aspects and majestic beauty of the urban wild area. If we could land a man on the moon with 1969 technology, surely, we can do far, far better than we did on the recently completed American River levee work.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lloyd Levine', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lloyd Levine

Cc:

Congresswoman Doris Matsui
Governor Gavin Newsom
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
Senator Angelique Ashby
Senator Roger Niello
Assemblymember Josh Hoover
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty
SAFCA Boardmembers
Supervisor Phil Serna
Mayor Darrell Steinberg

To: ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil

Cc: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Bcc: AmRivTrees@gmail.com

Subject: Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR):

My comments focus on the lower American River components of the draft SEIS/SEIR, particularly Contracts 3B, and 4A and 4B.

The American River Parkway and its woods and wildlife are extremely valuable to me.

I do not support the devastating methods being proposed to address potential streambank erosion concerns. In fact, I do not see adequate justification for the claim that these highly destructive actions are “necessary” for (or would even actually improve) flood safety along this section of the American River.

I am writing to **insist** that the US Army Corp of Engineers perform a more appropriate environmental analysis of the significant impacts of the proposed project and its subcomponents, and **not go forward** with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented.

I do not see that the environmental analysis adequately characterizes the significant impacts, nor provides adequate mitigation to consider them mitigated to insignificant, nor considers all feasible alternatives to supposed “unavoidable” impacts, including considerations at a much more fine-grained scale than simply the overall project.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even where impacts will remain “significant and unavoidable” after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)). The draft SEIS/SEIR has not met that requirement. The analysis of alternative methods for a much more surgical, fine-grained approach are not presented. Such alternative methods would result in far less environmental damage.

The decision to use a miles-long, continuous set of launchable rock toes and trenches – and adding this type of “revetment” EVERYWHERE there was no prior revetment – introduces a compounding set of significant adverse impacts, including the need for large earthmoving equipment, massive amounts of rocks, a hundred trucks per day, adding damage to roads and levees, putting equipment staging areas in parks and beside elementary schools, an increased need for mitigation, and the unaccounted for loss of additional trees due to “access ramps” that are known to be needed but have not been shown in the draft SEIS/SEIR, making it impossible for the public to know the full loss of trees or the exact trees that

would be saved vs. lost. This is unacceptable. A full range of other design choices have not been meaningfully presented that could have very different and less significant impacts.

Further, the use of jagged quarry rock from unspecified source(s) has not been adequately evaluated for the possibility of asbestos-containing composition, such as the serpentine rock common in the surrounding foothills. Installation of hundreds of truckloads per day of such rocks and the associated dust within a quarter mile of a school has not been addressed in the SEIS/SEIR.

Air quality impacts are not adequately addressed. The toxic air pollution impacts of diesel trucks used and staged near O.W. Erlewine Elementary School has not been adequately addressed. For California/CEQA, diesel exhaust particulate matter (Diesel PM) is an identified carcinogen, with a cancer potency value from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). In the age group 2 to 16 years old, children are three times more sensitive to a carcinogen like Diesel exhaust than adults. (Between third trimester and 2 years old, they are 10 times more sensitive). The proposed project is large with 100 daily truck trips at each restoration site with staging areas adjacent to residences and schools. Mitigation Measure AIR-3 of the SEIR requires using on-road haul trucks to be equipped with 2010 or newer engines. However, trucks are already required to be 2010 or newer under the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Truck and Bus Regulation, so the mitigation is not adding anything beyond existing law. The mitigation measures need to require these trucks to be much cleaner, and less carcinogenic for the local population, and especially children. Trucks should be 2014 or newer or, better yet, electric. Under CEQA, where impacts will remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures be incorporated (California Public Resources Code§ 21081; 14 CCR§ 15126.2(b)).

Further, although construction of the Project would occur over two years, each site may have over 100 daily truck trips at each location that would travel through residential communities. The SEIS/SEIR claims “less than significant” impacts of air pollutant on sensitive receptors. However, OEHHA’s risk guidance recommends assessing cancer risks for construction projects lasting longer than two months (OEHHA, p.8-18). As the lead agency, USACE should have prepared a construction health risk assessment (HRA) for the Project. This way, the lead agency can provide substantial evidence on the record that the Project would not expose residences to Diesel PM emissions that would result in a significant health impact. This has not been provided.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Contract 3B, extends east from Howe Ave, to the Mayhew Drain. USACE plans to bulldoze over 500 trees on the 3B-south side alone of the American River Parkway for “potential bank erosion” protection. The USACE claim that this protection is necessary is based on minimal, overgeneralized, and often highly subjective and/or out-of-date information and modeling, and very little empirical data. Subjective expert opinions were used, and were often inconsistent among different sources, and some may have been based on pre-slurry wall levee conditions. I do not see adequate support for the USACE claim that this extension and the proposed streambank “erosion” control methods are needed for flood safety in this zone.

Based on the data and modeling available with the draft SEIS/SEIR and the incorporated 2016 General Reevaluation Report (GRR), there is insufficient evidence justifying the significant impacts. While seepage is mentioned for other reaches, it is valuable to keep in mind that for Contract 3B, the data presented show no seepage risk for this zone (neither for through-seepage or under-seepage, especially after the 60 feet deep or more slurry cutoff walls were added to the levees years ago); and there is inadequate evidence for any urgent erosion issues. The USACE erosion analysis overgeneralizes the need based on limited data, and fails to account for the erosion-resistant Fair Oaks formation. The modeling of velocities at the levee during peak water flows used out-of-date models that likely did not adequately account for the protective effect of trees in slowing the flow velocities at the edges, which protects the levees. Advanced modern modeling recently conducted on other segments of the lower American River demonstrates the protective effect of trees when included in the models. I strongly question whether this Project is necessary along this section of the American River. This calls into question whether the environmental impacts can be deemed “significant unavoidable” when the need for the work has not been demonstrated by either appropriate modeling or empirical data.

Further, I believe the USACE approach to destroy miles of intact trees and vegetation (which currently provide self-renewing natural armoring of the levees and banks), and then to leave behind denuded, bare dirt banks and “planting benches”, for a minimum of 2 years during construction -- followed by many more years of immature, isolated plantings – could actually make us more vulnerable, not less. The proposed approach is just as likely to put us at risk in high water flows as no work at all. We have yet to see how the bulldozed areas around Sacramento State University and Paradise Beach (parts of prior Erosion Control Projects), will fare in high water flows. (We understand a recent revetment area under a prior contract suffered damage during the far-from-peak-design flows during the 2023 storms).

Furthermore, there is acknowledged concern that if high flows were to cause the installed launchable rocks toes and trenches to “launch” as designed, that the on-site “planting benches” may be lost as well, exposing riprap and/or leaving the banks bare of vegetation and vulnerable to erosion. Yet there has been no follow-through on prior and current requests for a commitment regarding repair and replanting in such events.

I strongly oppose the “brute force” bulldozing methods the Army Corps proposes along 4 more miles of the Wild and Scenic American River (designated for its outstandingly remarkable values, ORVs, for recreation and fish), and which would extend into a “Protected Area” of the American River Parkway Plan, so designated due to its sensitive and mature riparian habitat, vital for human recreational use, aesthetic and visual character, and for sustaining the Parkway’s wildlife. A “surgical approach”, not miles of bulldozing, is the only acceptable option, and only where data justify the need.

I object to the irreplaceable loss of rare, wild vistas and aesthetics in this pristine area of the Parkway; and the long-term loss of quality and access for recreation (hiking, dog walking, fishing, picnics, kayak and canoe access, paddle board access, bird and wildlife viewing, photography, solitude, a respite for mental health, and many other uses) for miles along the river’s edge. Riprap will make river access dangerous along long stretches of the river, and make recreation difficult, if not impossible, for miles – not to mention that it is just plain UGLY!

The SEIS/SEIR fails to recognize, let alone mitigate for, the impacts to most recreational features except the bike trail. In particular, the environmental impact analysis has not adequately addressed the loss of dozens of unofficial, but much loved small beaches, riverside access trails, and rare shaded trails. These miles of habitat destruction threaten the wildlife corridor that is vital to sustain our astonishing wildlife in an urban area (otters, owls, beavers, bald eagles, deer, migratory birds, cavity-nesting birds, and more) highly valued by recreational Parkway users. This is inconsistent with the provisions of the secretarial designation of the Lower American River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981). In classifying the Lower American River as “an outstandingly remarkable recreation waterway,” the Heritage Conservation Service noted that “the American River Parkway is one of the most unique stretches of public parkland in the country because of the close proximity of its natural and recreational features to the urban environment of Sacramento and adjoining communities.” Among the values noted was “lush riparian growth that includes walnut, oak, cottonwood and sycamore trees.” Part of what makes this “riparian hardwood strip” so valuable for recreation is that “the riparian vegetation is carefully protected”. The US Interior Department and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service noted that the protections for values such as “scenic, water quality, free-flowing condition and natural character, geologic, historic, fish and wildlife,” all “link to create an aesthetic environment intrinsic to the overall recreational value of designated rivers.” Thus, any long-term impacts to the mature riparian forests of the Lower American River would directly affect the INTRINSIC conditions which make the Lower American River a State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. In the 2016 GRR comment responses, the Corps said they would minimize impacts to vegetation, but stretches near River Park were basically clearcut. Will the Contract 3B area be clearcut too?

I believe that Sacramento Regional Parks and the National Park Service need to make a determination of “inconsistency” with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and impose strong conditions that require the Army Corps to find more targeted and less destructive alternatives, rather than the devastation that is being proposed for Contract 3B.

I object to the extreme destruction of over 500 trees in Contract 3B-south alone, including potentially heritage oaks over 200 or 300 years old -- older than California and some older than our nation -- which studies suggest will never again reestablish that longevity over the jagged, quarry riprap installed with a cover of a few feet of lifeless soil.

The cumulative effects with this new project, Contract 3B, would bring the total length of American River banks damaged by USACE erosion control projects to almost 11 miles of the Parkway, including some of the most wilderness-quality miles of the lower American River.

The American River Parkway provides wilderness-quality natural and recreational opportunities, involving little cost or travel, for people of all income levels, ethnicities, and walks of life. Family picnics on small points and beaches are extremely popular in this area. The proposed methods would eliminate these locations that are accessible to disadvantaged populations. This environmental justice (EJ) impact has not been adequately addressed in the environmental analysis.

The permanent impacts to recreation, vegetation, wildlife, shaded fish habitat, aesthetics and vistas are not “less than significant” nor are they “mitigated to less than significant”. When there are “significant unavoidable” impacts, CEQA requires that all feasible measures be used to reduce the impacts. The draft SEIS/SEIR does not meet that requirement.

If erosion “spot fixes” are needed at some locations, then less destructive alternative methods should be used, including the use of smaller equipment, and nature-based solutions (such as in-place use of existing stabilizing vegetation, and bio-technical techniques, encouraged by the National Park Service, that retain and integrate the existing trees and vegetation). These alternative methods were not adequately evaluated.

This and ALL future erosion control projects must be required to have a more targeted analysis and approach.

The US Army Corp of Engineers needs to reevaluate the design choices that result in what are deemed “significant unavoidable” environmental impacts, and develop more surgical, fine-grained alternative methods for project subcomponents; then conduct an adequate environmental analysis of the impacts of the revised project and its subcomponents; and then proceed if and only if justifiable need is found. In particular, the project should not go forward with the subcomponents of Contracts 3B and 4, until a much MORE TARGETED and LESS DESTRUCTIVE approach to Erosion Control Projects 3B and 4 is presented. In addition, all heritage oaks must be retained and protected.

The American River Parkway is often called the “Crown Jewel of Sacramento”. In 2012 it was designated a “Regional Treasure”. The Contract 3B actions move into a zone designated a “Protected Area” under the American River Parkway Plan. The proposed actions under USACE Contract 3B affect this protected and irreplaceable regional treasure for generations to come, and should reflect the far greater care that this treasure deserves.

Please consider my comments and those of the many other Sacramento Area residents who strongly oppose this project!

Thank you,

Sandra Julee Starkey

E. Sacramento, CA

From: Barbara Domek <barbjds@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 10:32 AM
To: ARCF_SEIS; publiccommentarcf16@water.ca.gov
Cc: ARCF_SEIS; PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Comments Regarding American River Common Features (ARCF) 2016 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) – December 2023 Report and Appendices

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Dept. of Water Resources (DWR),

1 The Army Corps of Engineers has itself produced publications on methods of erosion control that work with nature (Engineering With Nature, "EWN") which are proven to be viable and effective nature-based solutions that retain ecological biosystems and natural environments, yet these methods are not being used on the American River project in Sacramento. As you know, there ARE better environmental ways than using the outdated techniques of bulldozing and riprap launchable rock toes. These severe and destructive methods completely obliterate the irreplaceable mature natural riparian habitat along the riverbank, but you know there is a better way. Please modify the project plan to use methods that incorporate "Engineering With Nature" techniques which will preserve and protect our precious natural environment along this Wild and Scenic Lower American River corridor.

2 Please view the following three presentations produced by "Save the American River Parkway". The first presentation addresses the issue of engineering and hydrology impacts, the second presentation discusses proven alternative methods that are nature-based and leave precious habitat intact, and the last presentation addresses the issue of human mental health and nature's beneficial effect on our wellbeing.

The links to these three excellent presentations are attached below.

youtu.be/QcGKiu94w2g?si=LjgOjIzdAG5euODj

**Concerns with USACE's Work on the Amercian
River: Community Roundtable**

youtu.be/wV5TzghzvGE?si=iMmaZgSVAJXzKSfY

**USACE work on the American River: We Need
Nature Based Solutions!**

[Mental Health Concerns with USACE & American River Community Roundtable](#)

**Mental Health Concerns with USACE &
American River Community Roundtable**

Sincerely,

Barbara Domek

From: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 4:14 PM
To: Sutton, Drew
Cc: publiccommentARCF16@water.ca.gov; ARCF_SEIS
Subject: [EXT] FW: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway 'project'....

From: seviml@aol.com <seviml@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 4:02 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: Re: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway 'project'....

Thank you so much for your reply. I have copied and pasted my comment below....you'll see it when you scroll down. Again, thanks! sevim

On Monday, February 26, 2024 at 03:48:34 PM PST, ARCF_SEIS <arcf_seis@usace.army.mil> wrote:

From: seviml@aol.com <seviml@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 2:05 PM
To: ARCF_SEIS <ARCF_SEIS@usace.army.mil>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] American River Parkway 'project'....

Sevim Larsen

4104 Crondall Drive
Sacramento, CA 95864
916 484-0326 (Sacramento) 916 761-2177 (cell)
SEVIML@aol.com

To: Whom It DOES Concern
From: Sevim Larsen
Date: February 2024
Re: Proposal of Project along The American River Parkway East of Watt

I have lived in my home, which backs up to the American River Parkway near the Estates Dr. Access Gate, since 1979. I cherish its location and we chose this particular home because of its proximity to the Parkway. Walks along the Parkway have provided 'healing' through the years. We thrilled to the marvels of the trees bursting out in blossoms in the Spring & the brilliant falling leaves of Fall. Ah, the changing of seasons! The Parkway provides health benefits to those of us facing aging, some in wheel chairs, as well as those training for Marathon & Iron Man Competitions. It's the perfect place for 'movement' along with quiet contemplation to appreciate life's gifts as well as challenges, uninterrupted by motor traffic and the rush of city life. Hundreds of people use the Parkway behind my home daily, not just the joggers but those walking their dogs & pushing strollers. The Jesuit and Rio Americano Track Teams use the Parkway to run/practice daily. It's a case of 'One Size Fits All'!

I feel certain it would be found that there is less obesity, crime and depression/mental illness in communities where populations have access to nearby natural recreation areas.

Some years ago there was a large project to strengthen the levy behind my home. It included small and heavy equipment working adjacent to my property. Their vibrations caused cracks in my ceilings and around my cabinets. And the diesel fumes (from early morning until late in the day) were ever present in my home despite dual pane windows. At times I felt that the vibrations of the equipment working on the project would shake my home off its foundation. Damage was done and I put in a claim.... And when I asked one of the Supervisors to please come to see the damage, one of his pieces of construction equipment went by and my whole house shook. He was frightened that we were having a significant earthquake. He was shocked when I said that this type of 'movement' typically went on all day, every day. I recently called my insurance company regarding coverage should there be damage from the proposed project. Their answer was that they could not answer my questions until I filed a claim (hopefully unnecessary). So, I will take dozens of photos 'before' and then see what the 'after' will be. My contractor will be crawling under the house to take photos of the foundation and joists before the project begins and again afterward. You really do need to be cognizant of potential damage and try to mitigate where heavy equipment is operated, minimizing the time and types of vibrations that do the most damage.

I would presume that MAX flood control measures have been completed UP River to lessen water flows before they reach us?? It should be noted that the huge inundations of February 1998 (I think that was the year) brought raging waters to the top of the levy behind my home... but they did not breach it! And it also should be noted that we navigated our neighborhood in rafts and canoes due to water rising up to our front doors. However, the water did not come from the river, it came from insufficient storm sewers that could not handle that amount of water. We were in more danger from runoff from the concrete streets and driveways than from the river which had natural disrupters such as trees to slow down the waters and hold the soil. Subsequent work has been done to support the levies, provide spillways etc to lessen the danger of storm waters reaching the populated areas near Estates Drive and Watt Avenue. Perhaps, unless the storm sewers are updated to handle flow, funds would be better spent to protect our properties by addressing the storm sewers before the river areas. And the 'hard scape' back yard being proposed by this project will only exacerbate the dangers of faster moving water rather than it being slowed down by the natural habitat....and the ability of the porous river soil to absorb water. All of this should be taken into account before a project such as this is approved.

As a side note, those of us on Crondall hear much more Hwy 50 traffic noise since it was widened years ago and is now being widened further to handle increased traffic from development upstream....which equals more concrete, more air and noise pollution & more water runoff.

Projects such as the one proposed for our neighborhood will not only provide an unhealthy environment for those of us with heart or other health issues but have a major impact on the health and life expectancies of children as well. The quality of the air & stability of soil provided by trees will be lost if dozens or hundreds of trees are destroyed. And please note that trees provide natural arbors for shade/cooling in an area which continues to experience record heat in the summer. Hardscape will reflect more heat and lead to more warming in the area. And of course the natural habitats of our beloved 'animal neighbors' will be lost. (Birds feast on

mosquitos that bring disease etc) How to you intend to account for the great loss of riparian habitat?? The list of the benefits of natural habitat is long! And even if many more trees are 'saved' vs the original proposal, just the heavy equipment around the root systems of the remaining heritage trees will cause slow and painful deaths! (Slow for the trees, painful for the users of the Parkway)

Decisions on this project should not be taken lightly and only after sufficient review & discussion by ALL of the parties. The positive AND negative need to be addressed for the well being of the general population and not just for those eager to put their name on a big project in order to earn promotions or negotiate contracts to maximize profits.

5

Everyone in the decision making process must be made available to address each and every question & concern posed.

I know there are others who will be in contact regarding the technical and scientific aspects. I wish to be on record regarding the detriments to our community that outweigh the benefits of the project as it is planned now.

Let's get to work to make it more palatable for all those who use and live along the Parkway.

Nature has given us a spectacular gift for all ages that enhances the livability of the entire region, now and hopefully for generations to come. Let's protect it...please!

Respectfully,
sevim larsen

6

ps I was a licensed real estate agent for 25 years before my retirement. The project that is presently being proposed will affect the value of my property in a negative and permanent way. This neighborhood has maintained good value not only because of its proximity to services but mostly due to the beauty and proximity (and health benefits) of our verdant Parkway.

7

pps I made a sizeable contribution to have a 'bench' placed along the parkway in memory of my late husband. It is located along the bike trail where Estates Drive intersects the bike trail. I trust that the benches will remain in place. Please advise.

sevim larsen

SEVIML@aol.com

From: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 11:32 AM
To: Calles, Jennifer@CVFPB
Subject: Fw: regarding the erosion control project Contract 3B on the American River Parkway.
Attachments: erosion by CSUS.jpg; Erosion by Paradise Beach.jpg; habitat comparison.jpg; River Signage.jpg; USACE EWN Dry Creek.jpg; USACE EWN Pajaro River.jpg

From: Barbara Domek <barbjds@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 12:15 PM
To: Knapp, Jonah@CVFPB <Jonah.Knapp@cvflood.ca.gov>; Lief, Chris@CVFPB <Chris.Lief@cvflood.ca.gov>
Subject: regarding the erosion control project Contract 3B on the American River Parkway.

You don't often get email from barbjds@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

1 As you know, the Army Corps of Engineers has a program in place called "Engineering With Nature" (EWN). I have attached images from the publication "America's Engineers" by the USACE with articles that demonstrate the USACE's ability to work with and retain nature within these types of erosion/flood control projects. I have also attached the link to the USACE's EWN website. There are engineers within the Army Corps that embrace this process, such as Army Corps Environmental Planning Chair Julie Beagle and EWN National Lead Dr. Todd Bridges.

2 But in Sacramento, the Contract 3B plan is designed NOT to protect, preserve and work with the existing natural environment. But rather, it will destroy the riparian woodland along the American River, completely obliterating the recreational value, wildlife habitat, and beneficial climate properties of this precious and priceless gem unique to the city of Sacramento, for generations to come. Please reconsider the proposed project and incorporate the USACE's "Engineering With Nature" policies on this project. Sacramento could be a proving ground for this modern approach of working with nature.

2 As you can see in the attached photos, there is already erosion occurring in the "Completed" sections near Sac State and Paradise Beach. Had some of the existing mature riparian ecosystem been left intact in these areas, this washing-away of soil that we now see happening during recent rainstorms would not have occurred. There is scientific evidence that mature trees and shrubs can reduce soil erosion such as this.

3 Also, regarding Mr. Polk's statements about periods of high river flow, he did not mention the work on Folsom Dam which will reduce the need for those extremely high releases in the future during seasons of high precipitation, thus making this Contract 3B project as it is planned, unnecessary and obsolete in the future. The dam itself will provide more protection for the Wild and Scenic American River Parkway.

My husband and I got engaged under the trees of the American River near the Guy West Bridge (that special spot is now obliterated forever by this project) nearly 40 years ago. We bought our home along the La Riviera Drive stretch of the American River specifically to be near this protected Wild and Scenic American River Parkway. We assumed that "protected" meant forever. We've seen the BIG floods, 1986 was a sight to see, but the mature riparian woodland held-up, the trees actually slowing the flow and binding the soil. Riprap will make the water's edge inaccessible and dangerous for people trying to fish or kayak. Our own children were raised exploring, respecting and loving the wild natural environment of the American River Parkway. The boys hiked 20 miles of the American River Parkway with their Boy Scout troop once on a hot Summer day, but thankfully the cool shade of the tree canopy protected them from the blazing sun. They are grown adults now, and we as a family, along with thousands of others, continue to cherish the natural ecosystem along the river, running on its shady paths, bicycling on the amazing bike trail, filming and photographing the beautiful scenery and wildlife, marveling at the salmon washed-up along the shore in the Fall, searching for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetles on the elderberry bushes, birdwatching the multitude of bird species, trying to spy a Swainson's Hawk, a Great-Horned Owl, or even an elusive Bald Eagle! We continue to use the Parkway almost daily to exercise, de-stress and

connect with nature. If this project goes through as planned, this treasure will be gone forever, at least in my lifetime and for generations to come.

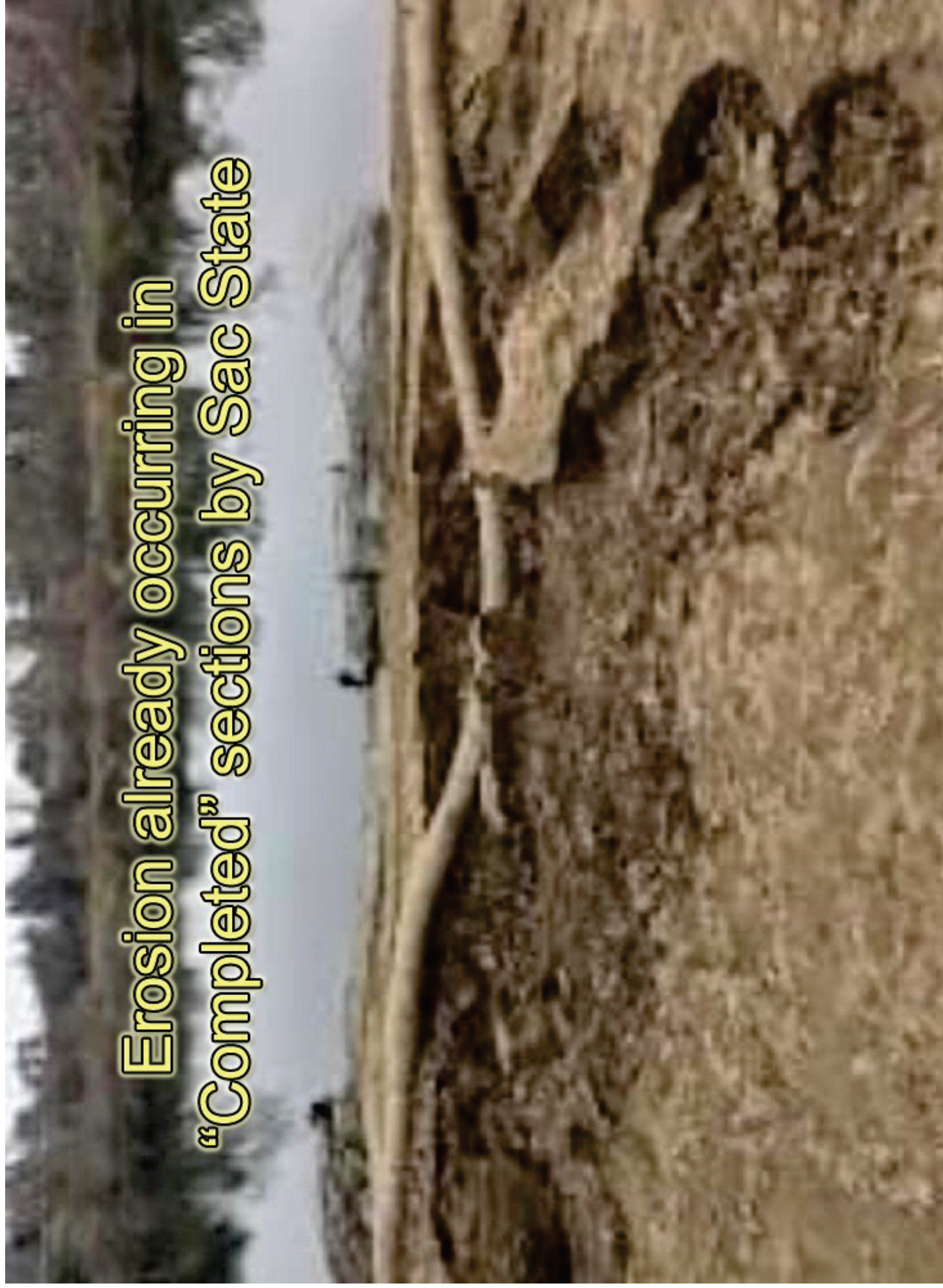
4 I implore you, rather than using severe and destructive methods such as riprap and clear-cutting, use the proven and nature-based methods endorsed by your own program of "Engineering With Nature". You know there ARE alternative and more targeted ways of stabilizing areas prone to erosion, while leaving other stable areas of woodland intact. The Wild and Scenic Lower American River Parkway must be preserved, and this CAN be done while also ensuring erosion/flood control.

Sincerely,
Barbara Domek

<https://ewn.erdcdren.mil/about/>

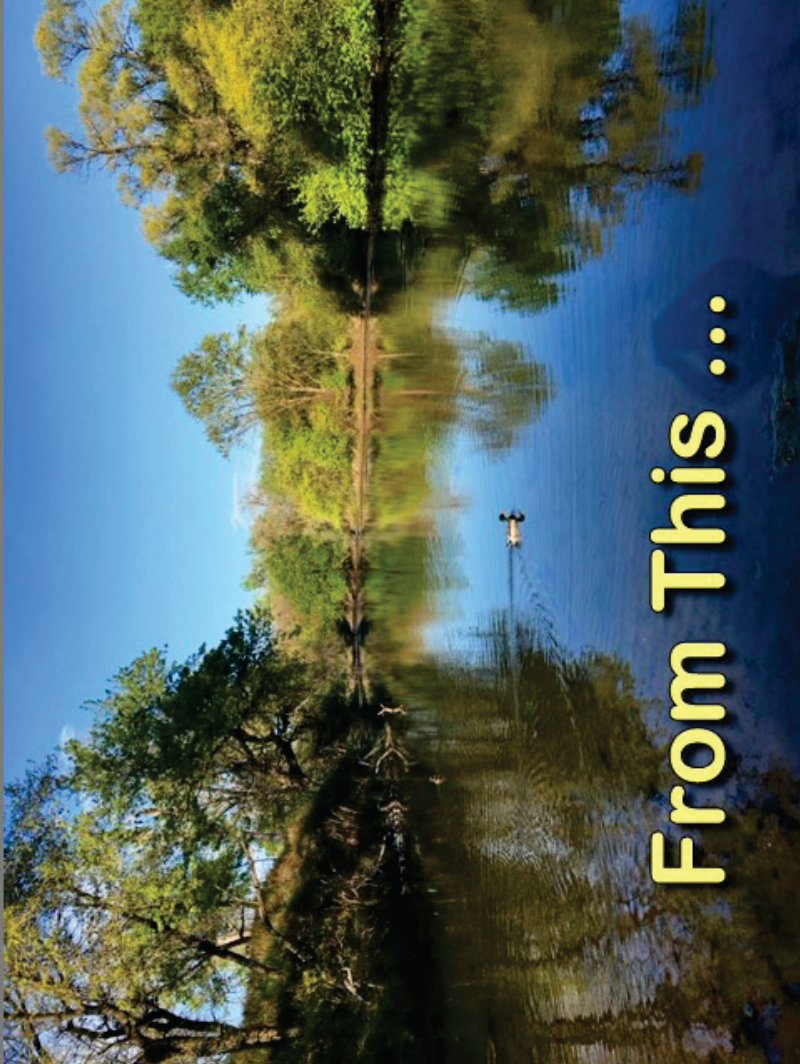
<https://www.americanrivertrees.org/>

Erosion already occurring in
“Completed” sections by Sac State

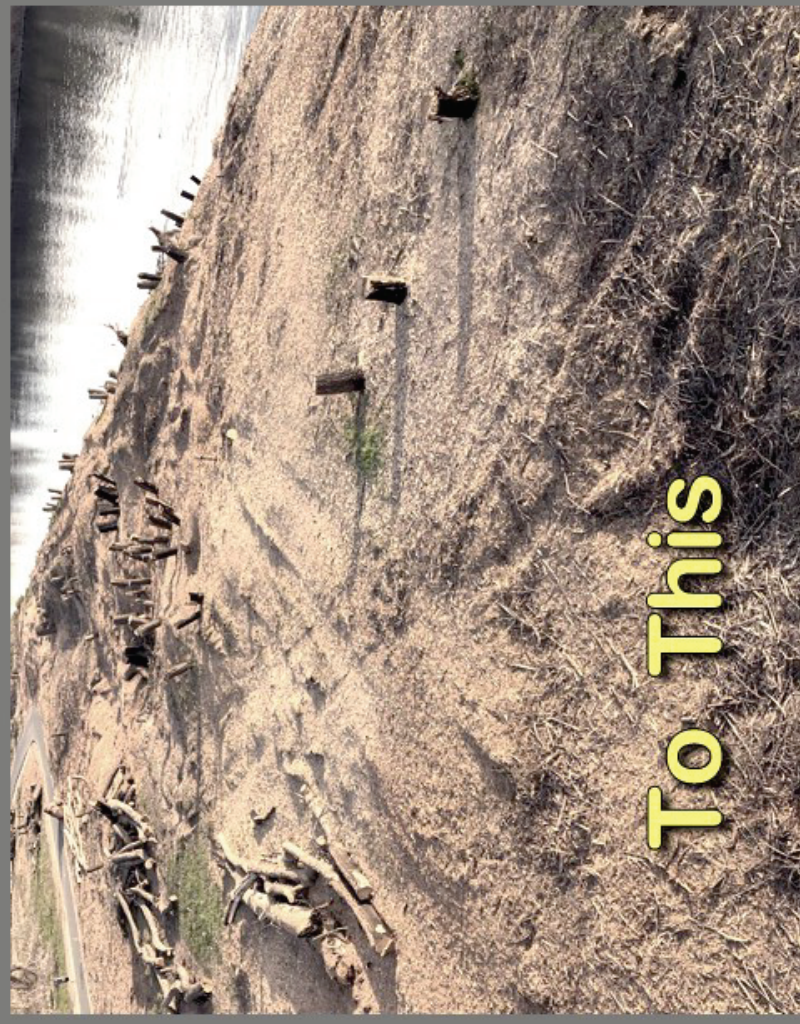


Erosion already occurring in "Completed" sections by Paradise Beach





From This ...



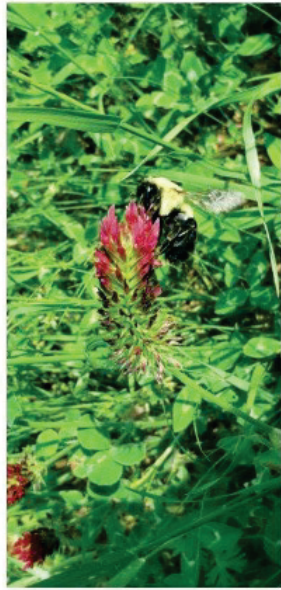
To This



Does this sign ...



Describe this?



◆ 3 acres, which included a fall food plot of crimson clover. The crimson clover serves as a food source for wildlife and blooms in the spring to create prime pollinators.

The seed mix used this year takes about two-three years to become a mature pollinator field and will be tracked yearly for progress.

Fort Gibson Lake noticed the demand for local habitat restoration and began planning for pollinator plots on its project. This plan began back in 2020 and employees have now

successfully planted more than 7 acres of pollinator fields at one of their public use areas. "These fields will not only help in supplying suitable habitat for pollinators, but they are also a great educational tool for people visiting our project," said Gregg Moydell, a natural resources specialist. Fort Gibson Lake staff is currently working on securing interpretive signage to place around these fields for visitors to learn about the importance of maintaining the natural state of wildlife habitat.

Fort Gibson Lake has also started a new project and has partnered with local Boy Scout groups to build and install bat houses around the project. "We are hoping that with installing bat houses near the new pollinator fields, we will have ... more accessibility to suitable habitat for bats," said natural resources specialist Joshua Glazebrook.

Many people hear the word pollinator and think of bees, but there are several different species of pollinators that these projects are helping. Not only will the habitat restoration help the bees, but restoring these habitats will also aid in the current decline of bat, butterfly, and bird populations in the area.

The USACE Plan goal is to restore or enhance millions of acres of land through federal actions and public and private partnerships. The Tulsa District manages more than 1 million acres of land and water with more than 90% of the land being managed for wildlife. District project staff are working diligently to achieve that goal one habitat at a time. **AE**

◆ Bumblebee in action, enjoying the flowers at one of the pollinator fields on Oologah Lake, Oklahoma.

PHOTO BY CHUCK INGAHAM

SHAPING SUSTAINABILITY San Francisco District

Sustaining a Future by Engineering with Nature

Environmental management is a primary mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Accounting for the natural environment around us is a key component of San Francisco District's (SPN) strategic objectives, and we continue to promote engineering with nature for long-term sustainability and benefits, and resilience of project solutions.

What we refer to as engineering with nature (EWN) is the "intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits efficiently and sustainably through collaboration. By combining science and engineering, USACE has been able to produce operational efficiencies that are actively reducing demands on finite

BY ISABEL NIEMAN



PHOTO BY CHUCK INGAHAM



▲ Above: Alcoves at Dry Creek near Healdsburg, California, help slow creek flows for migrating salmon. Engineers utilize logs and not wads to create areas for fish to safely spawn. ■ Right: Construction crews work to drive a log into the ground at the Dry Creek Restoration Project site near Healdsburg, California. The ecosystem restoration project will help restore habitat for endangered salmon and other fish native to the lower Dry Creek watershed, with Sonoma Water on the project.

San Francisco is one of six proving ground districts in USACE that applies EWN, along with the Mobile, St. Louis, Galveston, Buffalo and Philadelphia districts. Of these, SPN is the only one operating on the West Coast.

The U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center defines an EWN proving ground as a "district committed to broad integration of EWN principles and practices into all business lines. Proving grounds are places where innovative ideas are tested on the ground, throughout USACE processes, a [that] become proving grounds will document processes, milestones, and lessons learned in the implementation of EWN measures so others can learn from their experience."

Restoring Dry Creek's habitat in Sonoma, California, is an ongoing SPN project that is an example of how successful EWN can be when organizations build on first understanding, then collaboratively work with nature to accomplish its goals.

The overall effort entails repairing and enhancing 6 miles of Dry Creek habitat to improve living conditions for local endangered coho salmon, a keystone species, and the threatened steelhead trout. Dry Creek's habitat is a critical habitat for salmon.

USACE and its partners are combating this issue by constructing alcoves, riffles (i.e., small rapids that increase the ratio of dissolved oxygen in the water), backwaters, and side channels that slow the flow of water and provide a safe haven for young

PHOTO BY ERIC BOWELL

fish. Natural resources like logs and rocks are used to create the side channels to give fish places to escape high flows. Bank stabilization lessons excessive erosion, while anchored boulders produce riffles, and secured log jams provide refuge and slow the water. The reintroduction of native flora around the creek is also used for erosion control and shade.

One of the team's long term biologists, Ellie Covington, reported that there is distinct evidence of tracked salmon and trout returning to restored areas of Dry Creek to spawn and raise juvenile fish ever since the new features were constructed. This finding would not have been possible without baseline designs that unite science and engineering to establish stable plants to enhance the creek's ecology.

"When it comes to integrating engineering with nature into our district's projects, we must remember where we are and the massive geographic space we work in to assist the natural environment while being considerate of the adjacent communities," Covington said. "We prioritize bettering habitats and the surrounding area, and when we see success, it provides momentum to stay motivated because even seemingly small projects can be daunting but are equally meaningful."

Back in 2014, the local community and the district saw the completion of the first mile of Dry Creek rehabilitation, which included logs, boulders, and hundreds of native plants. By the end of the project, the 16-mile-long creek will have 6 miles of habitat rebuilt into it.

"Our leadership here at SPN is continually supportive of our environmental research and restoration, and I believe that is a large reason as to why we maintain the rank as one of the top proving grounds within the USACE," Covington noted. **AE**



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The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) visual information does not imply or constitute DOD endorsement.



► into Monterey Bay. As a flood-control project, it's never been particularly effective – it provides an eight-year level of flood protection, one of the lowest of California's federal flood control systems, and the region has suffered several costly – and sometimes tragic – flood events.

Beagle sees the levee structures, placed high and tight alongside the river, as an opportunity to integrate EWN principles, with a focus on **Coastal Engineering With Nature** into this project. "If we just do things the same way we've been doing them for the last 150 years," said Beagle, "and just build levees right along the river's edge – when climate changes come, in California, we'll have atmospheric rivers that create massive floods. This approach provides more space to absorb that energy, protect people, and provide critical habitat and corridors for the environment. ... It's more than an economic gain. It's economic, social, environmental – it's everything. To me, that's our responsibility as a federal agency, with big dollars currently targeted to support such approaches."

Too often, skeptics of nature-based permits and engineering designs. In the past, this project had suffered because a



◀ **Left:** The meandering course of the Pajaro River between hard – and often ineffective – levees, is shown in this aerial photo during a Lighthouse mission. Lighthouse is an organization of volunteer pilots who lend their skills and aircraft to environmental causes. A reconfigured Pajaro River project that incorporates Engineering With Nature concepts is now underway. ▶ **Above:** USACE and its contractor Barnesat Bay Dredging Company completed a dredging and marsh restoration project near Stone Harbor, New Jersey, in December 2018. Work involved dredging sediment from the channel of the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway and beneficially using the material to create habitat on marshland owned by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. USACE Commander Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon's goal is to use a majority of dredged material for beneficial uses.

either/or terms. Courtney Chambers, the research ecologist who serves as the EWN communications lead, says this is a crucial misunderstanding. "We're not trying to do away with our levees," she said, "but to get more resilient solutions whenever we nest within the landscape – and in many instances, to get better multiple-use outcomes."

Driving innovation

While funded, the Pajaro River reconstruction project hasn't yet been constructed, because USACE and its partners are still working on finalizing permits and engineering designs. In the past, this project had suffered because a

"The idea of innovative flood control is to let the river do what rivers do – which is meander, deposit, scour, move around a little bit more than it does now – it recharges groundwater in an overdrawn valley."

pure cost-benefit analysis ignored other necessary variables. "What are known as ecosystem services, such as groundwater recharge, habitat corridors, carbon sequestration – none of that had been accounted for," Beagle said. "But I think with this new funding, and with our new approach to looking at multiple benefits of projects, that's how we can get this done."

To compose a new way of calculating the long-term costs and benefits of a project will require innovation: rapidly evolving global circumstances demand new ways of thinking about problems and projects. In the San Francisco District, Beagle and her EWN colleagues are experimenting with an approach that's been tried in the Netherlands, but not yet in the San Francisco Bay: strategic shallow-water placement of dredge material. USACE has replenished

many drowning or eroding wetlands and marshes around the shores of the bay over the years using "direct placement" techniques, but the cost of direct placement and physical constraints of reaching certain areas have proven challenging. "What we're doing is taking a certain amount of sediment that's dredged from a channel in the bay," Beagle said, "and we're dropping it in the shallow subtidal waters, and then we're monitoring the ability of waves and tides, and potentially storms, to move that material and deposit it on the mudflats and marshes. So, it's essentially mimicking a natural process of a storm delivery, which feeds marshes and mudflats over time, and it's what we keep pace with sea level rise."

If the San Francisco proving ground can figure out a way to use natural processes to

reseed marshes and wetlands, it may be a significant step toward USACE Commander Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon's goal of turning the Corps of Engineers' current approach to using dredged material – using 30% for beneficial uses, and disposing of the other 70% – on its head. Ultimately, Beagle would like to see USACE use 100% of its suitable dredged material for beneficial purposes – but she'd be OK with 70%, for now.

"Nature has a huge role to play in climate adaptation," said Beagle. "And for the Corps to remain the nation's engineers, nature-based solutions are going to be a major part of how we do business moving forward, because of all the benefits it provides. Our future solutions are going to be a combination of green and gray infrastructure. If you're only thinking gray, you're missing out on a ton of the available options." **AE**

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This letter is a duplicate of INDIV-589 and INDIV-630

February 22, 2024

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Submitted via email: ARC_SEIS@usace.army.mil and PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

Re: December 2023, Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report XIV; American River Common Features, 2016 Flood Risk Management Project, Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Romine and Mr. Brown,

In this letter I critique the incomplete and insufficient environmental analysis provided by the December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR and the documents it supplements, the 2016 *General Reevaluation Report* (GRR) and the 2016 Final EIS/EIR.¹ In these documents, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) uses biased data and outdated modeling to justify one-size-fits-all riprap erosion measures to the exclusion of less environmentally destructive bioengineering alternatives, ignores and minimizes important environmental impacts, offers inadequate mitigation, and disregards public apprehension about the ecological implications of USACE's proposals. With an understanding that the most durable and effective flood control systems work with nature rather than against it, I respectfully ask that USACE and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board consider less destructive bioengineering erosion prevention measures that are better justified by more up-to-date modeling and by more complete data. The risk to the safety of the Sacramento Region, to precious resources of the American River Parkway, to our Wild and Scenic River, and to endangered species are too great for USACE to follow through with their current proposed measures for American River Erosion Contract 3B in the December 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR.

¹ I understand that detailed technical analysis is meant for the appendices rather than the main EIS/EIR report. For the sake of brevity and flow, I only refer to the GRR, Final EIS/EIR, and 2023 Draft SEIS/SEIR, but statements about inadequacy, insufficiency, or incompleteness in the GRR, Final EIS/EIR, and the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR include their appendices. If, for example, I state that "heritage oaks were only mentioned 9 times in the 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR," I am referring to the total number of mentions of heritage oaks in the SEIS/SEIR and its appendices.

Before I delve into the analysis, I want to thank USACE and CVFPB for the critical work they have done keeping the Sacramento Region safe. As a PhD candidate who just finished a dissertation on the history of flood control in the Sacramento Valley, I understand that without extensive and well-maintained flood control infrastructure, the Sacramento Valley could not be home to over a million people.

From my research I also know that before flood control engineers get things right, they often get them disastrously wrong. It is an unfortunate rhyme of history that humans increasingly believe they can dominate nature until nature loses patience with their hubris. Such was the case before 1927, when USACE rejected as “chimerical” and “dangerous” the belief that humans could never control rivers but only accommodate them with multitiered systems that incorporated spillways and outlets.² USACE insisted that engineering science allowed for the use of only levees to prevent floods, despite evidence that building levees ever higher just increased flood heights.³ Then stormwaters blasted through Mississippi River levees in 1927, killing hundreds and displacing a quarter of a million people.⁴ Gifford Pinchot later deemed the levees-only policy a “complete engineering blunder and failure.”⁵ After the Great Flood of 1927, USACE pledged to work in harmony with the Mississippi in the future and started incorporating spillways and outlets in their designs.⁶

Fortunately, the Sacramento Region broke from the levees-only orthodoxy early with the Sacramento River Flood Control Project, initiated at the state level in 1911.⁷ From observing that the Sacramento Region consists of basins which naturally take in waters from overflowing rivers during storms, the designers of the Sacramento River Flood Control Project devised a system which mimics the regions natural tendency for overflow by using bypasses and weirs to allow for controlled flooding.⁸ This nature-based system has worked for over a century; however, California came close to implementing a blundering levees-only system with the Dabney Plan, which a commission of USACE engineers devised.⁹ In 1905 California tasked the newly created Sacramento Drainage District with implementing the Dabney Plan.¹⁰ But landowners derided by Dabney Plan proponents as scientific illiterates delayed the Plan’s

² Ari Kelman, *A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 163.

³ Ibid, 164-169.

⁴ Ibid, 187.

⁵ Ibid, 190.

⁶ Ibid, 192-195.

⁷ “An Act Approving the Report of the California Debris Commission,” *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Constitution Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature, 1911*, Chapter 25, (Approved December 24, 1911).

⁸ *Reports on the Control of Floods in the River Systems of the Sacramento Valley and the Adjacent San Joaquin Valley, Cal. June 29, 1911, Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors* (Washington, 1911), 7-15.

⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Public Works to the Governor of California, Together with the Report of the Commission of Engineers to the Commission of Public Works Upon the Rectification of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their Principal Tributaries, and the Reclamation of the Overflowed Lands Adjacent Thereto* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing, 1905).

¹⁰ “An Act to Create a Drainage District to be Called ‘Sacramento Drainage District,’” *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Thirty-Sixth Session of the California Legislature, 1905*, Chapter CCCLXVIII, (Approved March 20, 1905), 456.

implementation until the 600,000 cfs events of 1907 and 1909, which were twice as much as the 300,000 cfs estimates from bypass proponents that Major T.G. Dabney dismissed as impossibly high, demonstrated the infeasibility of a levees-only approach on the Sacramento River.¹¹ Had the state of California carried out the Dabney Plan, it would have expended millions on levees which the storms of 1907 and 1909 would have obliterated or overtopped.¹²

I mention this history because once again USACE engineers seem intent on brute-forcing flood control, this time by armoring the banks of the Lower American River with riprap. FEMA frequently repairs riprap facilities and has remarked that “the very nature of having to repair these facilities counters the popular engineering belief that riprap is the best solution for mitigating stream bank erosion.”¹³ Neither the *General Reevaluation Report* nor the December 2023 Draft ARCF SEIS/SEIR seriously considered less destructive, nature-based alternatives to riprap. The “no-action alternative” in the Draft SEIS/SEIR is simply the proposal of the 2016 GRR, which includes “bank protection” (i.e. riprap armoring) and launchable rock trenches.¹⁴ Moreover, despite the outdated 2016 analysis, and new information demonstrating the feasibility of less destructive alternatives for this beloved stretch of Wild and Scenic River, USACE excludes any nature-based alternative to riprap. Instead, USACE only presents minor alternatives for individual projects, while “all other projects remain the same.”¹⁵

¹¹ On the 1895 bypass plan designed for 300,000 cfs: “Report of the Commissioner of Public Works,” *Appendix to the Journals of the Senate and Assembly of the Thirty-First Session of the Legislature of the State of California, Volume IV* (Sacramento, 1895). Dabney’s critique of the 1895 plan: T.G. Dabney, *Report of the Commissioner of Public Works*, 33-35. On the 1907 and 1909 floods: Robert Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea: Floods, Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 277-278.

¹² Robert Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea*, 277-278.

¹³ FEMA, *Engineering with Nature: Alternative Techniques to Riprap Bank Stabilization*, 7.

¹⁴ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, 3-48.

¹⁵ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-7 and 3-8.

3.3.3 Alternatives Considered in Detail in the SEIS/SEIR

The following alternatives are evaluated at an equal level of detail in this SEIS/SEIR:

- **Alternative 1:** No Action Alternative (NEPA baseline project as presently constructed / to be completed through performance of contracts underway or presently authorized)
- **Alternative 2:** Proposed Action (American River Erosion Contract 3B, American River Erosion Contract 4A, American River Erosion Contract 4B, Sacramento River Erosion Contract 3, MCP, ARMS, SRMS, and the Piezometer Network)
- **Alternative 3** (Alternative Designs for American River Erosion Contract 4A all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 3a:** Landside Berm to Avoid Bike Trail Reroute
 - **Alternative 3b:** Permanent Bike Trail Reroute

ARCF Comprehensive SEIS/SEIR

3-7

Description of Project Alternatives

- **Alternative 3c:** Bike Trail Reroute and Bridge
- **Alternative 3d:** Bike Trail Reroute Along Railroad
- **Alternative 4:** (Alternatives Designs of ARMS – CEQA-Only all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 4a:** ARMS Pond Retention (CEQA-Only)
 - **Alternative 4b:** ARMS Pond Retention (CEQA-Only)
- **Alternative 5:** (Alternatives to SRMS all other contracts would remain the same as Alternative 2)
 - **Alternative 5a:** Purchase Mitigation Credits
 - **Alternative 5b:** Watermark Farms Mitigation Site
 - **Alternative 5c:** Delta Smelt Bank and Sunset Pumps Mitigation Credits
- **Alternative 6:** No Project Alternative (CEQA). This alternative assumes that none of the improvements identified in the Action Alternatives would be constructed.

Figure 1

For Contract 3B, which covers both banks between Howe Avenue and Larchmont Community Park, the 2023 proposal is just the 2016 preferred alternative with the addition of launchable rock toes and tiebacks.¹⁶ Launchable rock toes are functionally the same as launchable rock trenches except they are placed at rivers edge instead of higher up the bank.¹⁷ Tiebacks are riprap laid perpendicular instead of parallel to the river.¹⁸ USACE explores no

¹⁶ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-11, 3-25, and 3-26.

¹⁷ Ibid, 3-29.

¹⁸ Ibid.

biotechnical or bioengineering alternatives, even though the lower American River is a protected area. USACE is only offering the public a choice between riprap and more riprap. This choice, according to a USACE presentation to the Lower American River Task Force in December of 2023, could remove 685 trees.¹⁹ For American River Erosion Contract 3B South, where USACE plans to remove 522 trees, the 2023 SEIS/SEIR simply states that “one alternative was considered but rejected due to having additional environmental impacts.” USACE did not even briefly indicate what that alternative entailed.²⁰

USACE’s choice to give the public no alternative besides riprap makes a mockery of the review process. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) calls the alternatives section “the heart of the EIS.”²¹ This section, according to CEQ, is supposed to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives.²² The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an EIR provide a range of alternatives to a project that “will feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project.”²³ Note that CEQA only mandates that alternatives feasibly attain “most,” not all, of a project’s basic objectives. This indicates that CEQA intends that lead agencies offer a range of choices. Whereas a single proposal precludes public engagement, a range of choices can “foster informed decision making and public participation.”²⁴ The intention to foster public participation and informed decision making through discussion of a meaningful range of alternatives was articulated by the Third District of Appeal, whose jurisdiction includes Sacramento County. In *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou*, the Court ruled that making project objectives so narrow “as to preclude any alternative other than the Project” violated CEQA.²⁵ In particular, the Court criticized Siskiyou County for ensuring that “the results of its alternatives analysis would be a foregone conclusion.”²⁶ In making the alternatives a foregone conclusion, the County “transformed the EIR’s alternatives section—often described as part of the ‘core of the EIR’—into an empty formality.”²⁷ Here too, by limiting the public’s choice to nothing but riprap and more riprap for Contract 3B, USACE has turned the public review process for the December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR into an empty formality.

The alternatives of riprap or more riprap not only mocks the review process, but it runs afoul of both the National and State Wild and Scenic River Acts. The Lower American River from the confluence to the Nimbus Dam is designated as a protected river under both the California and the National Wild and Scenic River Acts.²⁸ These Acts require preserving

¹⁹ Lower American River Task Force, December 12, 2023. <https://waterforum.org/wp-content/uploads/LARTF-Dec-2023-Slides.pdf>

²⁰ December 2023 ARCF Draft SEIS/SEIR, 3-5.

²¹ Council on Environmental Quality, *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act Regulations*, (March 23, 1981, Amended 1986).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION 6. RESOURCES AGENCY CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AS AMENDED DECEMBER 28, 2018, 15126.6(a).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *We Advocate Through Environmental Review v. County of Siskiyou* (April 20, 2022) 78. Cal.App.5th 683.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Federal Register, Vol. 46, No. 15, January 23, 1981.

protected rivers “in free flowing condition.”²⁹ The National Wild and Scenic River Act (NWSRA) defines free flowing as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, **rip-rapping**, or other modification of the waterway.”³⁰ The NWSRA allows for the existence of riprap on the waterway at the time of a river’s inclusion, but clarifies that “this shall not be construed to authorize, intend, or encourage future construction of such structures within components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.”³¹ The California Wild and Scenic River Act (CWSRA) only permits new riprap on the Eel River, stipulating that “nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any measures for flood protection, structural or nonstructural, necessary for the protection of lives and property along the Eel River.”³² The explicit exclusion of the Eel River from the riprapping prohibition indicates that the CWSRA was meant to prohibit riprapping on all the other rivers included in the CWSRA system. This interpretation is reinforced by the legislature’s declaration that the use of these rivers in “their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environment,” is of the “highest and most beneficial use.”³³

USACE claims that river velocities ruled out less destructive alternatives, but that assertion is not justified by the technical documents they cite. As USACE explained in letters to apprehensive citizens in the 2016 Final EIS/EIR Public Involvement Appendix:

“The proposed bank protection and launchable rock trench measures are the only two possible measures that could address the significant erosion problem on the American River. **Other measures were eliminated from consideration because the river velocities render them infeasible.** More information on the erosion problem on the American River can be found in the Erosion Protection Appendix to the GRR (GRR Appendix C, Attachment E).”³⁴

The document USACE advised apprehensive citizens to read, the *Erosion Protection Report*, indicates that USACE could avoid a lot of devastation in the Contract 3B area. The experts consulted in the *Erosion Protection Report* understood that to properly prioritize work, USACE should develop “systematic and justifiable criteria for site stabilization.”³⁵ For that to be achieved, USACE would need to analyze lots of soil samples, called borings, due to a “high degree of variability in the bed materials.”³⁶ The experts believed that USACE could not “assure continuity of various layers” without analyzing more borings than they had already, and the experts warned USACE that “interpretations made of connecting the dots between borings could be erroneous.”³⁷ Analyzing more borings could further avoid needless devastation by accounting for “the horizontal and vertical location of the scour resistant clay” for project

²⁹ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 1(b). California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.50.

³⁰ Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sec. 15(b).

³¹ Ibid.

³² California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 5093.57.

³³ Ibid, 5093.50.

³⁴ ARCF Final EIS-EIR - Jan. 2016 (Updated May 2016), Appendix F-Public Involvement.

³⁵ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 15.

³⁶ Ibid, 17.

³⁷ Ibid.

designs.”³⁸ **Instead of following their expert panel recommendations to analyze borings from possible erosion resistant places along the Lower American River, USACE instead resorts to overgeneralized data to justify a one-size-fits-all approach to erosion protection.** USACE did hire consultants to map out the stratigraphic layers of the Lower American River.³⁹ Fugro Associates collected dozens of borehole samples, including 5 on the south bank between the Mayhew Drain and the Watt Bridge.⁴⁰ While this is too few borings, it is 5 more than USACE used in the *Geotechnical Report* for the area of Contract 3B South. USACE briefly summarized the Fugro Report, noting that the “study demonstrated the presence of two potentially erosion-resistant units,” including widespread “relatively erosion-resistant deposits associated with the Pleistocene-aged Fair Oaks Formation.”⁴¹ Nevertheless, USACE’s geotechnical analysis eschewed Fugro’s geologic mapping for the Contract 3B South area. Instead, its analysis only considered two index points along the entire Lower American River, none upstream of Howe Bridge.⁴²

Table 8-1: Index Point Locations

Basin	Reach	Channel	Bank	Unit	Levee Mile
ARN	A	American River	North	9	1.32
ARN	E	Arcade Creek	North	7	0.90
ARS	B	American River	South	4	3.90
ARS	F	Sacramento River	East	1	5.92
NAT	D	NCC	South	2	1.17

Figure 2: Index point locations in Geotechnical Report used to determine probability of levee failure under different high-water flows.

³⁸ Ibid, 15.

³⁹ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25.

⁴⁰ Fugro Consultants, *Lower American River Stratigraphic and Geomorphic Mapping Report* (2012), Figure 4.10.

⁴¹ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25.

⁴² *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 18.

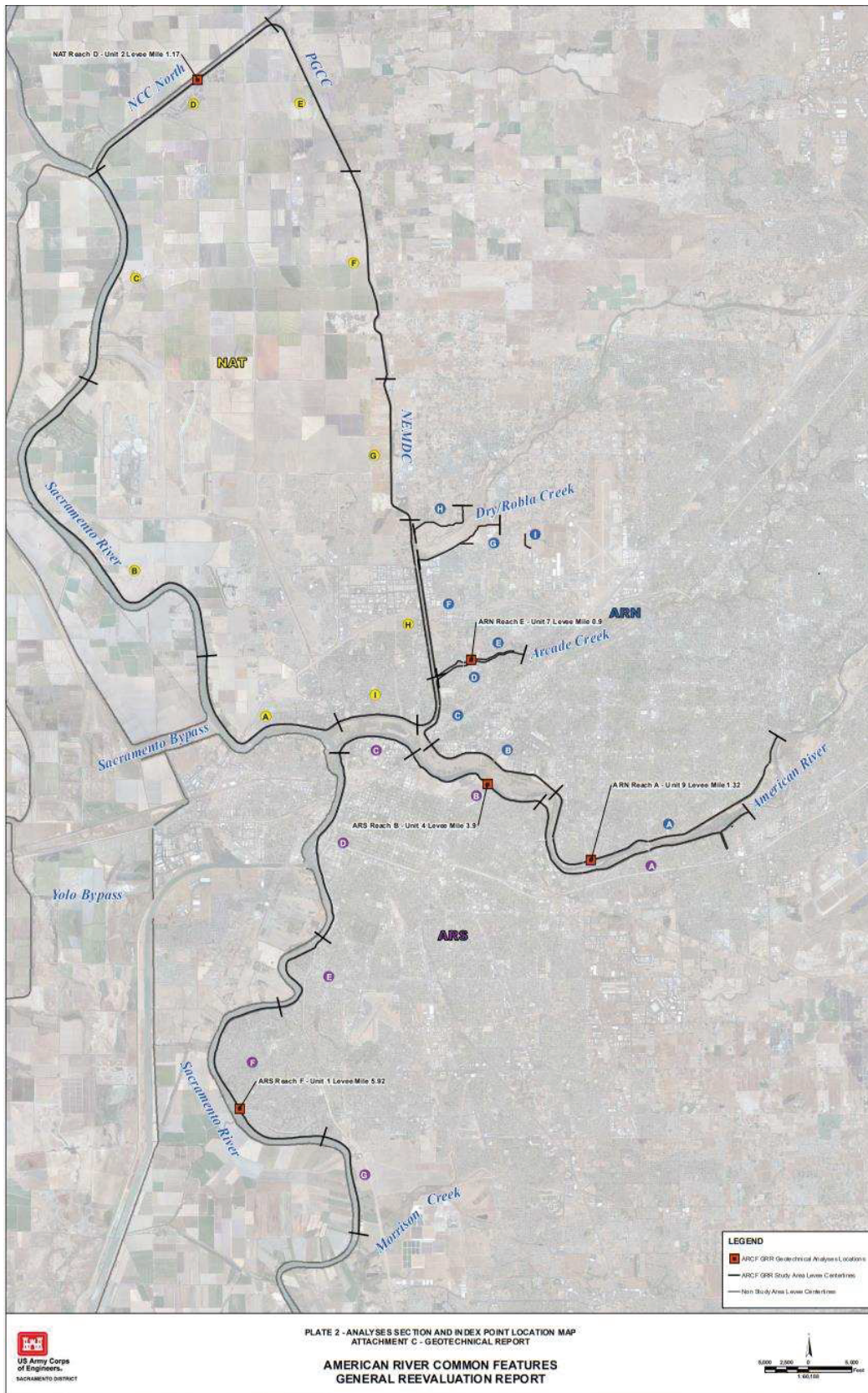


Figure 3: Map of Index Point Locations Considered in Geotechnical Report. Only 2 index points are used for the entire Lower American River

The use of a boring near Howe Avenue Bridge to justify work two miles upstream is especially egregious because the *Erosion Protection Report* indicates that the banks upstream of Howe Avenue consist of fundamentally different bed materials than the banks downstream of Howe Avenue. According to the *Erosion Protection Report*, the area between river mile 6.6-7.5 contains “broader areas of scour where the formation is likely more widely exposed in the channel bed or lies concealed beneath a thin cover of active channel only a few feet thick.”⁴³ This unit “contains no bank resistance to lateral erosion and will not contribute to levee stability.”⁴⁴ This is, in other words, an area with highly erodible bed materials. However, the area upstream of Howe Avenue, especially near the entrance of SARA Park (left bank river mile 10.0-10.3) where the Corps proposes to install a launchable rock trench and launchable rock toe, contains significant amounts of erosion-resistant clay hardpan, which the technical documents refer to as the “Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation.”⁴⁵ The only modeling results USACE provides for the area containing Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation, between river mile 7 and river mile 11, indicate that “for all the flows simulated the sheer stress in the reach with locally exposed hard material is below the critical stress for erosion of moderately resistant material (clay and cemented sand with silt). **Therefore, significant scour below this erosion resistant material/surface is not anticipated.**”⁴⁶

⁴³ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment C - Geotechnical Report, 25, 38. *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 12, 31, 32.

⁴⁶ *American River Common Features General Reevaluation Report*, Attachment E, Erosion Protection Report, 24.

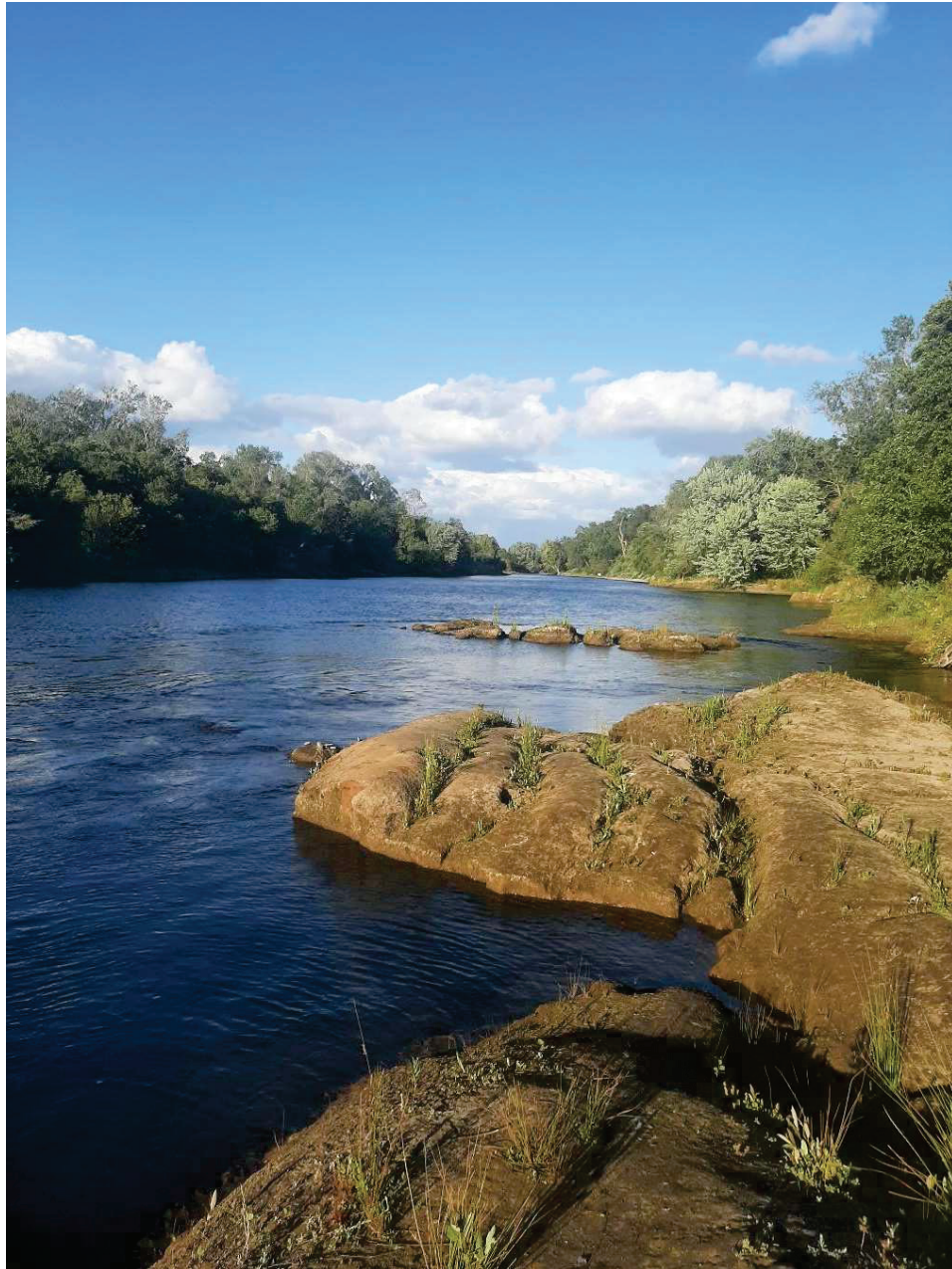


Figure 4: Erosion Resistant Pleistocene Fair Oaks Formation within the left bank river mile 10.0-10.3 area where USACE proposes 2 Launchable Rock Toes and a Launchable Rock Trench. The launchable rock trench, adjacent to this formation, cuts through a forest.



Figure 5: Forest that launchable rock trench at left bank river mile 10.0-10.3 would remove.