

American River Watershed Common Features, Water Resources Development Act of 2016, Sacramento River Erosion Contract 4

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is planning to construct erosion protection measures along approximately 1,700 ft of the Sacramento River East Levee, south of The Westin Sacramento and upstream from Chicory Bend. This FAQ should answer many common questions about the project, but more detail on the project can be found in the supplemental environmental document posted at www.sacleveeupgrades.com.

The American River Watershed Common Features project is a collaborative effort between USACE, Central Valley Flood Protection Board, California Department of Water Resources, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency to modernize Sacramento's aging flood infrastructure and reduce the flood risk to more than 530,000 people in the greater Sacramento region.

Purpose of Draft Supplemental EA/EIR

A draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) for the American River Watershed Common Features Water Resources Development Act of 2016, Sacramento River Erosion Contract 4 is being released for a 45-day public review period starting on March 1, 2023. The Supplemental EA/EIR supplements the American River Watershed Common Features General Reevaluation Report Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (ARCF GRR EIS/EIR) issued in 2016.

The Supplemental EA/EIR addresses the proposal to construct levee improvements along an approximately 1,700 foot long segment of the Sacramento River's left bank (when facing downstream) just upstream from Chicory Bend in the Little Pocket neighborhood, commonly referred to as Contract 4. The Supplemental EA/EIR analyzes details specific to construction, staging areas, haul routes, and mitigation that were not analyzed in the ARCF GRR EIS/EIR. These documents consider the potential environmental effects of the project and provide measures to avoid, reduce, minimize, and mitigate those environmental effects to a less than significant level. Although the draft Supplemental EA/EIR identifies some significant and unavoidable effects, those effects are temporary and no greater than the effects described in the GRR EIS/EIR.

Supplemental EA/EIR Public Review Period (March 1, 2023 – April 14, 2023)

This is your opportunity to learn about the Project and submit comments. Responses to comments will be published in the Final Supplemental EA/EIR. **The 45-day public review period for the draft SEA/EIR will end on April 14, 2023.**

An online public meeting will be held on March 22 2023, from 4:30PM to 5:30PM to present details of the project. Instructions to access the online meeting, sign up to receive

email updates, and view a copy of the draft document can be found at sacleveeupgrades.com.
You may submit *comments* on the document using the following methods:

Flood Projects Branch
Department of Water Resources
3464 El Camino Avenue Room 200
Sacramento, CA 95821
Email: PublicCommentARCF16@water.ca.gov

--OR--

Public Affairs Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1325 J Street Room 1513
Sacramento, CA 95814
Email: ARCF_SREroC4@usace.army.mil



Figure 1: Project location in the Little Pocket neighborhood

Proposed Project Description & Justification

The Sacramento River levees constrict flow and greatly reduce acceptable natural flooding. The result is a channelized system with faster water speeds during high flows. High winter flows can erode, stress, and weaken levees causing them to fail in certain locations. The Contract 4 project site does not currently meet USACE criteria for erosion stability. The ARCF GRR EIS/EIR analyzed the options to reduce the risk of levee failure due to erosion and increase slope stability in this area, concluding waterside rock berm protection would be constructed to prevent bank erosion. The proposed action identified in the draft Supplemental EA/EIR is looking at refined, or new, elements for that bank protection, including three main construction features: (1) the refined location and design of the underwater rock bank protection, (2) different alternatives for the shoreline erosion protection, (3) installation of in-stream woody material, and (4) differing construction methods. The completed site would be planted with native vegetation to mitigate habitat lost through the construction process.

Project Elements

The proposed rock bank protection is designed to address erosion along approximately 1,700 feet of riverbank. This would increase the roughness of the bank, ultimately protecting against future erosion caused by wind-wave action and boat wake. In preparation for construction, vegetation would be removed from mid-slope below the existing riparian bench and the mean, late summer water surface elevation. During construction, river barges equipped with a crane and an excavator would be used to place rock and shape the bank protection measures. The bank protection includes self-launching rock big enough to provide protection at the base of the levee. The design would incorporate either rock protection along the river's shoreline or a biotechnical alternative. In addition, in-stream woody material, consisting of full trees with root balls and canopies, would be embedded into the rock slope protection to provide habitat for fish.

Anticipated Construction Timeline

Pre-construction (November 2023 - March 2024) Construction site preparation, cut and trim trees/vegetation only in the construction footprint.

Levee Construction (Summer 2024 - Fall 2024) Install waterside erosion bank protection measures, including construction of self-launching rock and installation of in-stream woody material.

Post-Construction Planting (Begin as early as Fall 2024) Install a mixture of native vegetation.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the Project necessary?

The Sacramento metropolitan area is one of the most at-risk areas for flooding in the United States due to its location at the confluence and within the floodplain of two major rivers, the

Sacramento and American Rivers. The consequences of flooding in the region would be catastrophic. Both rivers have large watersheds with very high potential runoff, which in the past has overwhelmed the existing outdated flood management system designed and built many years before modern construction methods were employed. The Sacramento River is confined by levees, and the energy of the water flow tends to erode riverbanks and levees over time. This channel erosion could damage levees by undercutting their foundation. The erosion of the riverbank next to the levee embankments may also increase under-seepage through the foundation soil and reduce the overall stability of the levee.

2. The ARCF GRR EIS/EIR was adopted in 2016, why is there a need for a Supplemental EA/EIR?

The SEA/EIR addresses the aspects of levee improvements specifically along the 1,700 ft segment of the Sacramento River left bank along the Little Pocket neighborhood. The SEA/EIR analyzes details including construction, staging areas, and haul routes that were not analyzed in the ARCF GRR EIS/EIR.

3. Where is the project located?

The project is along the east (left) bank of the Sacramento River, in the Little Pocket area of the City of Sacramento, approximately 3 miles downstream of the Pioneer Bridge. The site begins 1,150 ft downstream (south) of the Sacramento Westin property and continues to just upstream of Chicory Bend (Figure 1).

4. Once completed, will there be additional waterside erosion work required?

The work at Sacramento River Erosion Contract 4 is one component of a comprehensive plan to improve the levees along the Sacramento River, as outlined in the 2016 ARCF GRR EIS/EIR. Additional erosion protection measures will be required along other portions of the Sacramento River. Overall, we anticipate building up to 10 miles of erosion protection work to complement levee seepage and stability improvements.

5. How is this project different than the other levee seepage work that is currently taking place along the Sacramento River in the Little Pocket and Pocket areas?

We're currently installing seepage cutoff walls along various sections of the Sacramento River East Levee that will reduce the chances of water seeping through, or under, the levees. Contract 4 focuses on protection measures which will reduce the risk of levee failure caused by erosion. Unlike the levee seepage work, Contract 4 will mainly be constructed from a barge.

6. How will mitigation be addressed for the Project?

We're considering two alternatives for addressing erosion along the river's shoreline. The conventional rock alternative which would not provide mitigation and a biotechnical alternative that would. The biotechnical alternative would incorporate shrub and tree plantings along the site, which would avoid habitat impacts and provide mitigation. These plantings would incorporate planting soil mix held together by biodegradable coir blocks and

fabric, which would provide a surface that can support vegetation. In addition to erosion protection, the purpose of the vegetation would be to provide habitat for wildlife and special-status species by providing overhead cover and near-shore aquatic habitat. Where practicable, existing trees would be protected in place to avoid impacts to wildlife and special-status species habitat. We would plant as much as we could to mitigate for lost riparian and shaded riverine aquatic habitat due to construction.

The incorporation of in-stream woody materials (IWM) is also part of the project. IWM would be incorporated into rock erosion protection design to provide in-stream habitat to listed fish species. IWM consist of full trees with root balls and canopies anchored in place. The anchored tree canopies will extend into the water column just below the waterside edge of the riparian bench, and oriented in a downstream direction. The downstream orientation of the IWM would be to mimic the natural orientation of downed trees along river systems. The IWM would be placed at 5- to 10-foot spacing in alternating groups of 3 to 5 trees and would not be placed within 50 ft of boat docks. Any loss of habitat that cannot be mitigated in place will be mitigated off-site in coordination with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

7. When would work occur?

Site preparation would begin with vegetation removal including removal and/or trimming of trees where construction access and activities would occur. To the extent feasible, these pre-construction activities would occur between **November 2023 – February 2024** before the nesting season for birds. Levee construction would occur in the summer and fall. Construction hours would comply with the local noise ordinance, which allows construction from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays.

8. What should I expect during construction?

Major construction activities will occur from barges, temporarily staged in the river near the project site, with equipment occasionally leaving the barges to work along the river's shoreline. Temporary impacts to boating traffic could occur between July 1, 2024 to October 31, 2024. Construction crews completing pre-construction and post-construction activities will access the project site from Seamas Avenue and travel along the levee. We anticipate that roadway and levee traffic will mostly consist of personally-owned and light duty vehicles.

9. How will stakeholder concerns/Project impacts be addressed?

The Supplemental EA/EIR, in combination with the ARCF GRR EIS/EIR, fully discloses the potential environmental effects of the project and provides an opportunity for all stakeholders and members of the public to provide input/comment during the 45-day public review period. All comments received during the public comment period will be considered, and included, in the final Supplemental EA/EIR. In addition, the project partners are reaching out to various stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, and other interested

groups on the project. Project partners will present project status updates and informational briefings to communities impacted by the work.

10. How can I stay informed?

We are having an online public meeting on **March 22, 2023** to present details of the project. You can find instructions on how to participate in the online meeting at sacleveeupgrades.com.

You can sign up for our Monthly Project Update mailing list by sending a message to spk-pao@usace.army.mil with the subject line Sacramento Area Levees Monthly Update.

Residents can also contact USACE Public Affairs Office directly at:

Phone: (916) 557-5100

E-mail: spk-pao@usace.army.mil

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sacramentodistrict

Twitter: www.twitter.com/usacesacramento