



ISABELLA DAM SAFETY MODIFICATION PROJECT – ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG.

Overall Environmental Compliance Process

August 10, 2012

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was one of the first laws ever written establishing the broad national framework for protecting our environment. NEPA's basic policy is to assure that all branches of government give proper consideration to the environment prior to undertaking any major federal action that significantly affects the environment. NEPA requirements are invoked when airports, buildings, military complexes, highways, parkland purchases, and other federal activities are proposed. NEPA is the overarching regulation used to inform the public about the project and its potential impacts. Environmental assessments (EAs) and environmental impact statements (EISs), which are assessments of the likelihood of impacts from alternative courses of action, are required from all federal agencies and are the most visible NEPA requirements. A programmatic EIS may be prepared for a broad federal action in the following situations: when a proposed action has common geographic locations, such as a body of water, region, or metropolitan area; has common project elements; or has common stages of development. The project will comply with all applicable laws and regulations (e.g., NEPA, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, etc.)

Tiered Process for Environmental Compliance

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Isabella Dam Safety Modification Project on March 16, 2012. The DEIS was open for public comments until May 22, with the Corps holding a series of public meetings April 17-19. The Corps is currently working on the final EIS, scheduled for release in November 2012. Once the EIS is approved, the Corps will prepare environmental documents on actions outlined in the EIS (see below), including real estate, recreation/fisheries management, and the operation deviation for the construction pool. The Corps understands there are concerns, and we are dedicated to working through the issues and minimizing the impacts.

Federal undertaking must comply with applicable federal laws and regulations

Real Estate Plan: Real estate actions are outlined in the draft EIS but not analyzed in detail, as the Corps is endeavoring to minimize impacts from construction. Once project approval and appropriations are received, the land acquisition process can begin. A real estate plan and accompanying NEPA analysis will be initiated by the Corps and is anticipated to be completed in late 2013. An opportunity for formal public input is anticipated for July 2013, and coordination and consultation with impacted property owners (public or private) will be ongoing.

Recreation/Fisheries Plan: A recreation plan will be prepared in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Kern County Parks and the local community. Additionally, a fisheries plan will be developed and the locals will be encouraged to provide input regarding management of fisheries and fishing during and after construction. Official public comment periods with public meetings for both plans are anticipated for April 2013, before any construction.

Points of Contact Carlos Lazo (916-557-5158), carlos.j.lazo@usace.army.mil
Project Website - <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/IsabellaDam.aspx>

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – SACRAMENTO DISTRICT

1325 J ST. – SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

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