



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SACRAMENTO DISTRICT
1325 J STREET
SACRAMENTO CA 95814-2922

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
YUBA RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT
YUBA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. I determined that implementing the proposed Yuba River Ecosystem Restoration Project would have no significant effects on the quality of the human environment.

The Proposed Action, as described in the Interim Feasibility Report/Environmental Assessment (FR/EA), incorporated herein by reference, includes 179 acres of habitat restoration along the lower Yuba River consisting of: (1) restoration of 43 acres of aquatic habitat, including side channels, backwater areas, bank scallops; and (2) restoration of 136 acres of riparian habitat, including floodplain lowering and grading and riparian vegetation plantings. The possible consequences of the work described in the FR/EA have been studied with consideration given to environmental, cultural, social, and engineering feasibility. The views of other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals have also been considered.

In evaluating the effects of the proposed action, specific attention has been given to any environmental conditions that could potentially be affected. The FR/EA evaluated in detail effects to Air Quality, Climate Change, Aesthetics, Hydrology and Hydraulics, Vegetation and Wildlife, Special Status Species, Water Quality, Transportation, Recreation, Cultural Resources, and Noise. The potential effects to these resources are summarized below. All construction would be implemented in compliance with applicable Federal laws, regulations and executive orders. Best management practices (BMPs) and avoidance and minimization measures identified within the FR/EA would be implemented. The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse effects to the environment.

Air Quality – The Proposed Action would result in short-term construction-related emissions due to construction activities. Construction criteria pollutant emissions would be substantially less than, and would not exceed *de minimis* conformity thresholds. Potential effects to air quality would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.1.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to air quality.

Climate Change – The Proposed Action would result in short-term construction-related emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) due to construction activities. Construction GHG emissions would be substantially less than the Federal reporting threshold. Potential effects to climate change would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.2.3). The Proposed Action would result in long term net sequestration of carbon through the planting and establishment of riparian vegetation. The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to climate change.

Aesthetics – The Proposed Action would result in short-term and localized impacts to visual resources due to construction activities. Construction related impacts to visual resources would be restricted to periods of construction and would be consistent with typical active mining activities in the project area. Potential effects to visual resources would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.3.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to visual resources.

Hydrology and Hydraulics – The Proposed Action would result in localized changes to hydrology and hydraulics due to modification of the near bank and floodplain to create proposed habitat features. These changes would not result in changes to the macro-scale hydrologic and hydraulic processes in the project area, such as watershed level inflow of water, upstream or downstream movement of surface water, or movement of groundwater. The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the hydrology and hydraulics of the project area.

Vegetation and Wildlife – The Proposed Action would result in short-term impacts to vegetation and wildlife due to construction activities. Potential effects to vegetation and wildlife include the short term construction related disturbance or removal of habitat; however, project actions would result in a significant, long-term improvement to the quantity, quality, and connectivity between riverine and riparian habitats upon which the vegetation and wildlife communities in the Yuba River watershed depend. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the proposed action was conducted under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Environmental Appendix D – Attachment 4). The Proposed Project would incorporate all recommendations in the Coordination Act Report to the greatest extent possible (Section 6.1). Potential impacts to vegetation and wildlife would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.5.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to vegetation and wildlife resources.

Special Status Species – The Proposed Action would result in short-term impacts to special status species due to construction activities. Informal coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was conducted under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act evaluating the project’s potential effects on the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, California Red-legged Frog, and Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. In a letter dated 2 August 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that implementation of the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, species protected under the Endangered Species Act or their critical habitat (Environmental Appendix D – Attachment 2). Coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was conducted under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, evaluating the project’s potential effects on the Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, and southern distinct population segment green sturgeon; and under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) evaluating the project’s potential effects to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Pacific coast salmon. NMFS issued a Biological Opinion, dated 18 October 2018, including recommendations under the MSA, concurring that implementation of the proposed action would not jeopardize species protected under the Endangered Species Act or adversely modify their critical habitat (Environmental Appendix D – Attachment 1). Potential impacts to special status species would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.6.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to special status species.

Water Quality – The Proposed Action would result in short-term construction-related impacts to water quality due to construction activities. Construction related increases in sedimentation and turbidity would be temporary and localized. Potential effects to water quality would be reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.7.3). In a letter dated 2 October 2018, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) indicated its support for the project and acknowledges the need for the project to obtain a Water Quality Certification 401 permit prior to construction during the preconstruction engineering and design phase of the project (Environmental Appendix D – Attachment 5). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to water quality.

Transportation – The Proposed Action would result in short-term impacts to transportation resources due to construction activities. Construction related increases to traffic from the Proposed Action would not exceed level of service thresholds for roadways in the project area. Potential effects to transportation resources would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.8.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to transportation resources.

Recreation – The Proposed Action would not result in short-term impacts to recreation due to construction activities. Potential effects to recreational resources would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.9.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to recreational resources.

Cultural Resources – The full extent of culturally significant and historic resources in the project area is unknown. Most of the known sites in the project area have not been assessed for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Potential effects to cultural and historic resources would be reduced to a less than significant level through execution of a Programmatic Agreement (Cultural Resources Appendix B). The Programmatic Agreement has been coordinated with the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, tribes, and other interested parties and includes the processes for addressing potential effects to known and unknown historic properties. Through the execution of the Programmatic Agreement and adherence to processes described therein, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to cultural or historic resources.

Noise – The Proposed Action would result in short-term construction-related noise related primarily to the use of heavy equipment during the grading, excavation, hauling, and placement of features. However, the noise associated with the construction activities is permissible under Yuba County's Ordinance Code. Potential effects to the acoustic environment would be further reduced through implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures (Section 4.3.11.3). The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the acoustic environment.

Based upon my review of the FR/EA, it is my determination that the proposed project would have no significant effects on environmental, social, or cultural resources. Based on these considerations, it is my determination that the proposed project does not significantly affect the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

DAVID G. RAY, P.E.
COL, EN
COMMANDING