

City of Sacramento

Legislation Text

File #: 2019-01221, Version: 1

Title:

Accept 15-Year Gravel Sites Plan and Adopt Mitigated Negative Declaration for Lower American River Anadromous Fish Habitat Restoration Project

File ID: 2019-01221

Location: Citywide

Recommendation:

1) Adopt a Resolution adopting: a) the Mitigated Negative Declaration; and b) Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Lower American River Anadromous Fish Habitat Restoration Project; and 2) the 15-year plan for Lower American River Salmonid Spawning Gravel Augmentation sites, being administered by the City-County Office of Metropolitan Water Planning (CCOMWP).

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Presenter: None

Attachments:

- 1-Description/Analysis
- 2-Response to County of Sacramento
- 3-Response to SMAQMD
- 4-Response to SMUD
- 5-Response to State Lands Commission
- 6-Resolution
- 7-Exhibit A - Mitigation Monitoring Plan
- 8-Exhibit B- 15-year Plan for Lower American River Salmonid Spawning Augmentation Sites

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: The City-County Office of Metropolitan Water Planning (CCOMWP, also known as the Water Forum) has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) on Lower American River salmonid spawning gravel augmentation

projects since 2006. The purpose of the Project is to increase the availability of spawning gravel and rearing habitat for the fall-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout in the lower American River

As outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document, CCOMWP has written a 15-year plan to construct and improve fisheries habitat in the lower American River. These activities include using the City's procurement process to rent heavy equipment and the City's Department of Utilities (DOU) staff to operate the equipment at 10 identified sites for 15 years. The purpose of this work is to create in-river salmon spawning area and side channel rearing area. This program is funded through grants from Reclamation and USFWS. All DOU cost will be reimbursed from the CCOMWP project budget.

CCOMWP has worked with a consultant to publish a CEQA document, with the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration procedures. Staff recommends acceptance of the 15-year site plan for future gravel projects along the lower American River.

As of 2015, the Lower American River Fisheries and In-Stream Habitat Working Group (FISH Group) has identified 10 restoration sites (four new future restoration sites and six previously restored sites) that are intended to maintain flexibility for providing salmonid spawning and rearing habitat enhancement through gravel placements, side channel and floodplain enhancements to meet the goals of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) 3406 (b)(13) Habitat Restoration Program. These sites are identified in the 15-year site plan.

The project area is located at various sites within restoration reaches on the Lower American River below Lake Natomas and above the confluence with the Sacramento River, from approximately River Mile 23 to River Mile 13 in Sacramento County. All project sites are located upstream of the leveed portion of the river and are located on lands held by Sacramento County.

In accordance with requirements of the CVPIA Spawning and Rearing Habitat Restoration Program, the Proposed Action would entail three primary activities in the lower American River:

- spawning gravel replenishment,
- floodplain and side channel creation/enhancement, and
- instream habitat structure placement.

These activities have been developed and refined successfully during gravel augmentation and habitat restoration activities by Reclamation and the Water Forum in previous years.

Policy Considerations: None.

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations: For compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) an initial study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Lower American River Anadromous Fish Habitat Restoration Project was prepared and circulated for public comment for a period of 30 days from June 19 through July 19, 2019. The Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared in compliance with Section 15070(b)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines. Mandatory mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project plans to avoid identified impacts or to mitigate such impacts to a point where clearly no significant impacts will occur. The Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP) has been prepared to insure implementation of the mitigation measures.

During the public review period, four comment letters were received, one each from the California State Lands Commission, County of Sacramento Regional Parks Department, SMAQMD, and SMUD. The comments and responses are included as Attachments 2 through 5 of this report. None of the comments raised questions or issues that would require additional environmental review, and no recirculation of the final MND is required. Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and attachments are available on the City's Community Development Department EIR webpage at: <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Environmental/Impact-Reports>

The Project is subject to review pursuant to both CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for NEPA review. Reclamation prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Project. The NEPA review process does not require action by the City.

Sustainability: Implementation of Projects in the lower American River that are more protective of fisheries and aquatic resources is a fundamental element of the Water Forum Agreement, which is supported by the City's General Plan Goals, specifically Natural and Open Space Protection (E.R. 2.1).

Commission/Committee Action: None.

Rationale for Recommendation: Approval of the MND is required to obtain permits for the Lower American River Anadromous Fish Habitat Restoration Project and implement the proposed 15-year site plan.

Financial Considerations: The proposed 15-year plan to construct and improve fisheries habitat includes utilization of the City's procurement process to rent heavy equipment and DOU staff to operate the equipment at 10 identified sites for 15 years. DOU costs will be reimbursed by the CCOMWP project budget.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not Applicable