



Jones & Stokes

Addendum to Certified Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency: Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority
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Project Title: Bear River and Western Pacific Interceptor Canal Levee Improvements Project

Project Location (nearest town): Olivehurst, Yuba County

Project Background: The Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority (TRLIA) is a joint powers authority with the mission of advancing the flood safety of Yuba County, California. TRLIA's member agencies include Reclamation District 784 (RD 784) and the County of Yuba (County). The county is subject to seasonal flood threat from many rivers and creeks, including the Yuba River, Feather River, Bear River, Western Pacific Interceptor Canal (WPIC) and tributary drainages. Because of this flood risk, many local rivers have been confined by constructed levees.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has established criteria for levees that specify the height, width, permeability standards, and other factors needed to provide adequate protection for a given hydrologic event (stage and discharge) based on geotechnical, hydraulic, and hydrologic conditions. Most of the levee systems in Yuba County were built during the 1920's using construction practices of that era. Recent studies conducted by USACE (January 1990) and Kleinfelder (November 2003) have concluded that substantial segments of area levees do not meet current USACE protection standards for a 100-year event. Insufficient height, susceptibility to through-seepage and under-seepage, and susceptibility to erosion need to be remedied to meet the USACE criteria.

Deficiencies in area levee segments have been recently demonstrated by the floods of 1986 and 1997. In 1986, approximately 10,700 acres were inundated, more than 4,000 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, and one human life was lost. In 1997, approximately 16,000 acres were inundated, more than 850 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, and three human lives were lost.

TRLIA is seeking approval for the Feather-Bear-WPIC Levee Project (project) to modify the levee system in southern Yuba County to address the deficiencies described above, as well as the backwater effects and rise in river stages from the lack of floodway capacity near the confluence of the Bear and Feather Rivers. The ultimate goal is to maintain and increase flood protection to a level greater than the calculated 200-year event, consistent with goals of The Reclamation Board of the State of California (Rec Board), which oversees modifications to federal project levees. The objectives of the project are to:

- provide increased flood protection greater than the calculated 100-year flood event in the overall RD 784 area, and meet 200-year standards where improvements are implemented

(i.e., where levee work is endeavored, it will meet or exceed criteria for the calculated 200-year flood event);

- avoid increasing downstream flow and stage during peak-flow conditions; and
- enhance and restore fish, wildlife, and riparian habitat.

Original Project Description: The Upper Bear River and WPIC Levee Improvements Project is needed to bring deficient levee sections up to standards to achieve the project objectives. Specifically, most of the northern levee of the Bear River and several reaches of the WPIC have insufficient height to provide the desired level of flood protection. Additionally, some levee reaches have problems associated with levee stability and susceptibility to erosion. The flood control improvements would include seepage protection, reconstruction of levee reaches that failed as a result of 1997 overtopping, erosion protection, and raising the height of the levee. The levee improvements include segments of the Bear River north levee and WPIC west levee, including filling land-side depressional areas, installing slurry cutoff walls, raising and widening levees, and installing erosion.

Previously Certified EIR: An environmental impact report (EIR) was prepared to evaluate potential project effects and was circulated for public review (SCH number 2004032118). TRLIA certified the final EIR in August 2004 and TRLIA adopted the project in March 2005.

Refinements to the Project: Since certification of the final EIR, minor project refinements have occurred based on development of the design from the 30%-to 100%-level, and based on requirements to meet U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' geotechnical criteria and conditions imposed by The Reclamation Board of the State of California. Specific design refinements are listed below:

- addition of a water-side impervious zone on Bear River north levee;
- adjustment to the relocation of Pump Station No. 6;
- extending the fill area of the land-side borrow ditch adjacent to the WPIC west levee;
- extending the fill on the water-side of the WPIC levee to accommodate additional levee height; and
- an additional slurry cutoff wall on the WPIC levee.

Figure 1 depicts the location of each project element. Table 1 provides a summary of the project refinements. The impacts associated with the design refinements would not result in new significant impacts (construction- or operation-related). Table 2 shows a comparison of project impacts. The refinements in the project description are minor and mainly consist of adjustments in the location of the treatments on the levee and additional water-side levee treatments on the WPIC. The impacts of these new treatments would be the same as those analyzed in the previously certified EIR.

Specific compensatory habitat restoration and mitigation plans are presently under development, in coordination with state and federal resource and regulatory agencies. Mitigation will occur on-site to the greatest extent feasible; however, it should be understood that not all habitat types may be replaceable on-site in accordance with flood management standards and conditions (such as seasonally wetted depressional areas on the land-side of levees). Where habitat types are not replaceable on-site, TRLIA

will purchase credits from a mitigation bank approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Findings: The refinements to the project are considered minor technical changes. Pursuant to Section 15164 (e) of the State CEQA Guidelines, in considering the record as a whole, there is no substantial evidence that the refinements to the project design will cause significant new environmental effects or a substantial increase in previously identified significant effects of the project. As such, an Addendum to the EIR is the appropriate environmental evaluation.