



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Peer Review Plan

Pacheco Creek Habitat Suitability Model

Date: March 18, 2021

Originating Office: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior Region 10 · California-Great Basin,
2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825

Reclamation Roles:

Director or Delegated Manager: Ernest Conant, Regional Director, Interior Region
10 · California-Great Basin, Bureau of Reclamation

Peer Review Lead: Dr. Daniel Deeds, Regional Water Quality Coordinator, Interior
Region 10 · California-Great Basin, Bureau of Reclamation

Subject and Purpose:

The Pacheco Creek Habitat Suitability Model was developed by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) to support exploration of habitat suitability for South Central California Coast Steelhead in Pacheco Creek under various reservoir operations and hydrologic conditions. The model was previously peer reviewed for a California Water Commission Proposition 1 WSIP grant to support Pacheco Reservoir expansion. Model results were supplied by Valley Water to Reclamation to assess hydrology and habitat suitability changes in Pacheco Creek resulting from the proposed Pacheco Reservoir Expansion project (Alternative #5) in the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project (SLLPIP) Draft EIS-EIR and Feasibility Report. The purpose of this Peer Review Plan is to facilitate expert review of the calibrated model and provide feedback as to its appropriateness for habitat suitability assessment in Pacheco Creek and for determining ecosystem benefits associated with the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion alternative of the SLLPIP.

Impact of Dissemination:

Consulting Reclamation Policy CMP P14 (Peer Review of Scientific Information and Assessments) in fulfillment of the Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677) and implementation of the Information Quality Act (Pub. L. 106-554) the science informing alternative #5 of the SLLPIP EIS/EIR is judged to be influential scientific information. Alternative #5 is the only SLLPIP alternative that has associated ecosystem benefits, with the value of said benefits directly tied to PCSHS model habitat suitability results. Ecosystem benefits associated with alternative #5 lead it to be the only SLLPIP alternative with a benefit-to-cost ratio over 1, significantly influencing decision making concerning the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project. However, impacts of decisions based on the PCSHSM are of regional scope, the overall Federal contribution to the project is less than \$500M per year, and methodologies used in the PCSHSM may not have wide policy impacts.

The nature of this project, the numerous assumptions, data sources and model results used to provide boundary conditions for the habitat suitability model and interpretation of model results requires a specific type and level of expertise. Reviewers will be chosen to address the biological and hydrological underpinnings of the PCSHSM assessment.

Peer Review Scope:

The scope of this peer review will include review of the model documentation, review of model files and assessment of the appropriateness of the model for assessing habitat suitability in Pacheco Creek. Peer reviewers will be asked to consider if the habitat suitability metrics and modeling within the Pacheco Creek Steelhead Habitat Suitability Model are based on the best science available and are appropriate for evaluating habitat suitability benefits associated with the proposed Pacheco Reservoir Expansion.

Reviewers are to provide comment solely on the scientific information being reviewed, and not on any agency decision or policy.

Timing of Review:

The review period is expected to be April 1st, 2021 to June 1st, 2021. The final Peer Review Report is expected to be available on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Peer Review public website before June 30th, 2021.

Methodology of Review:

The peer review will be conducted by individuals. The identities of the reviewers will be disclosed in the final Peer Review Report. Review findings/comments from reviewers will be anonymized, rather

than attributed to individual reviewers. The peer review process will not provide opportunities for public participation.

Number of Peer Reviewers:

It is anticipated that 3 – 4 peer reviewers will be utilized.

Reviewer Selection Process:

Given the diverse source of models and data used in the PCHS model framework, the peer reviewers will have significant experience in habitat suitability assessment and modeling, lake/reservoir temperature modeling, water evaluation/planning modeling, and/or river hydrology modeling. Peer reviewers will have education, professional experience, and peer recognition in their field. Peer reviewers will be selected based on their ability to meet the Peer Review Scope and the required expertise identified above. Reclamation staff will assure that peer reviewers do not have a conflict of interest. The public will not be asked to nominate peer reviewers.

Delivery of Findings:

The peer review team member(s) will individually submit a report of their findings to the Peer Review Lead by the end of the review period. At a minimum, their report will include a brief description of their findings and recommendations. The reports will be provided digitally to the Peer Review Lead.

Response to Peer Review:

At the conclusion of receiving peer review comments, the Peer Review Lead will submit a final Peer Review Report to Reclamation's peer review website (<http://www.usbr.gov/main/qoi/peeragenda.html>). This report will summarize peer reviewer responses to the question(s) posed in this plan, as well as concluding remarks by the peer review lead. Individual peer reviewer responses, documents reviewed and peer reviewer qualifications will be provided as appendices to the peer review report.

Federal Register Notice:

Federal Register notices will not be provided announcing the formation of a peer review team and completion of the final report.

Applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA):

This peer review is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because reviewers are being asked to provide individual reviews on the subject matter. Reclamation is not seeking consensus advice from the reviewers as a group.

Agency Contact:

Dr. Daniel Deeds

Regional Water Quality Coordinator

Interior Region 10 · California-Great Basin

Bureau of Reclamation

ddeeds@usbr.gov

(916) 978-4467