

# RECLAMATION

## *Managing Water in the West*

### Categorical Exclusion Checklist

## DMC/Aqueduct Intertie Berm Project


CEC 13-27-MP

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# Categorical Exclusion Checklist

**Project: DMC/Aqueduct Intertie Berm Project**

**Date: November 29, 2013**

## **Nature of Action**

An existing earthen berm at the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC)/California Aqueduct (Aqueduct) Intertie Pumping Plant has multiple breach locations and needs to be corrected (Refer to Attachment 1). The San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) proposes to replace the earthen berm with a sheet pile wall to prevent seasonal flooding from an adjacent intermittent drainage and seasonal wetland area from entering the pumping plant. The project is located in Alameda County, California within the NW ¼ Section 20, Township 2 South, and Range 4 East MDB&M. Refer to Attachment 2 for a project location and overview map of the project area.

The work would require a trench approximately 3' wide by 3' deep by 250' long. Roughly 2' to 4' of the sheet pile wall would be exposed above ground level to an elevation of 201.7' (see Attachment 2 for design drawing). Construction could take up to 4 weeks and equipment would consist of an excavator and bobcat, in addition to hand held tools. The footprint of the project would be entirely within the area of disturbance from when the pumping plant was originally built.

## **Environmental Protection Measures**

As part of the Proposed Action, SLDMWA will implement the following Environmental Protection Measures to avoid, minimize, and/or reduce potential environmental impacts associated with the project:

- Construction activities will only occur during the dry season between April 15 and October 15. The dry season window may depend on rainfall and/or site conditions.
- All open trenches 1-foot deep or deeper will be covered at the end of each workday or escape ramps provided to prevent entrapment of California red-legged frogs and Central California tiger salamanders.
- The seasonal wetland and intermittent drainage area will be entirely avoided (as shown in Attachment 3).
- No more than 12 square feet of vegetated upland habitat will be disturbed.
- No small mammal burrows will be disturbed.
- California red-legged frog and Central California tiger salamander-proof exclusion fencing will be installed around all work and staging areas.
- All disturbed areas will be reseeded with native plants (see Attachment 4).
- Water quality best management practices and a Hazardous Material Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan will be implemented.
- Erosion control measures will be installed to prevent soil or other materials from entering aquatic habitat. Natural/biodegradable erosion control measures (i.e., coir rolls, straw wattles, or hay bales) will be used. Plastic monofilament netting (erosion control matting) will not be used because California red-legged frogs and Central California tiger salamanders can become caught in this type of erosion control material.

- A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologist will monitor the work. The Service-approved biologist will train all construction personnel in identifying California red-legged frogs and Central California tiger salamanders and their habitats and the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures.

**Exclusion Category**

516 DM 14.5 B (3) Minor construction activities associated with authorized projects which correct unsatisfactory environmental conditions or which merely augment or supplement, or are enclosed within existing facilities.

## Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

Below is an evaluation of potential extraordinary circumstances as required in 43 CFR 46.215

1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
2. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102(2)(E) and 43 CFR 46.215(c)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
4. This action would have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographical characteristics as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (43 CFR 46.215 (b)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
5. This action would have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks (43 CFR 46.215(d)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
6. This action would establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (e)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)). No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐
8. This action would have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by Reclamation (LND 02-01) No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

(43 CFR 46.215 (g)).

9. This action would have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)).

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

10. This action would violate a Federal, tribal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment (43 CFR 46.215 (i)).

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). (*See attachment*)

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)).

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

13. This action would limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007, 43 CFR 46.215 (k), and 512 DM 3)).

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

14. This action would contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act, EO 13112, and 43 CFR 46.215 (l)).

No ☒ Uncertain ☐ Yes ☐

### NEPA Review Recommended

☒ CEC – This action is covered by the exclusion category and no extraordinary circumstances exist. The action is excluded from further documentation in an EA or EIS.

☐ Further environmental review is required, and the following document should be prepared.

☐ EA

☐ EIS

## Attachment 1 – Project Site Photos

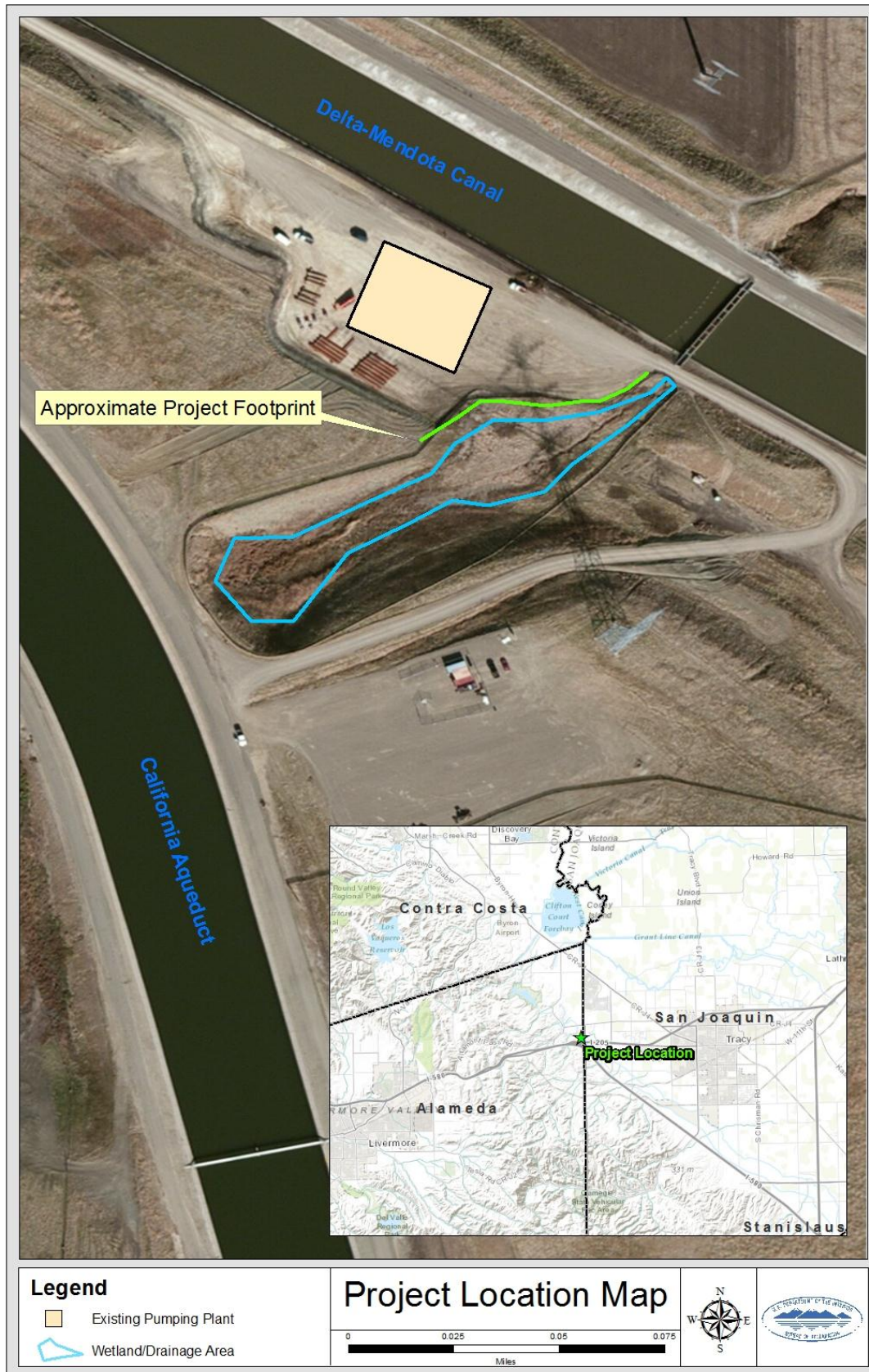




## Attachment 1 – Project Site Photos



## Attachment 2 – Project Location and Overview Maps/Drawing

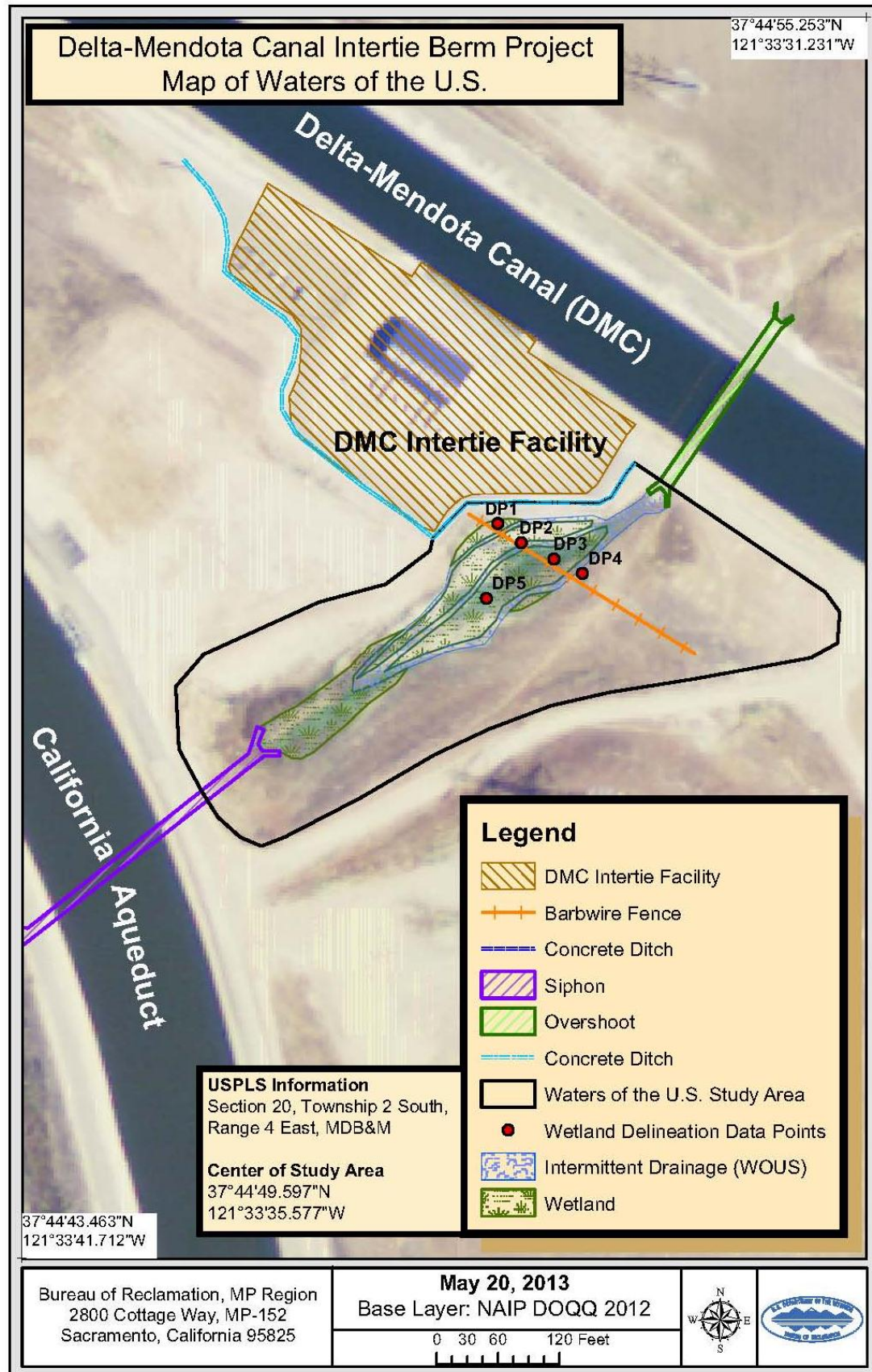




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# Attachment 3 – Intermittent Drainage/Wetland Area Delineation



## Attachment 4 – Reseeding Recommendation

### Recommended Herbaceous Plants for Reseeding the DMC/Aqueduct Intertie Berm Project

The DMC Intertie project site fits within the broad classification of the valley grassland vegetative community (Ornduff, Faber & Wolf, 2003) or Great Valley Ecoregion (Buck-Diaz, Batiuk & Evens, 2012) of California. In accordance with Reclamation's policies and directives ENV PO2, DM 661, and ENV 01-01, and best practices, the seed list to stabilize soils on the reconstructed berm after installation of the sheet piles for the project should be native to California, found in similar habitat types, and preferably adapted to local conditions. Acceptable plant species that can be broadcast or hydroseeded that meet these conditions include:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Seeding Rate
California buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	9 pounds per acre drilled and 14 pounds per acre broadcast
Fiddleneck	<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i>	Not determined
Little quaking grass	<i>Briza minor</i>	Not determined
Valley tassels	<i>Castilleja attenuata</i>	Not determined
Salt grass	<i>Distichlis spicata</i>	1.5 pounds per acre drilled and 3 pounds per acre broadcast
California poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	4 pounds per acre broadcast
Bicolored lupine	<i>Lupinus bicolor</i>	Not determined
Small fescue	<i>Vulpia microstachys</i>	1 pound per acre broadcast
Tomcat clover	<i>Trifolium willdenovii</i>	Not determined
California brome	<i>Bromus carinatus</i>	1 pound per acre broadcast

Most of these native seeds establish on bare mineral soils so use of thick mulch and organic amendments are not recommended. However, the use of tackifiers to hold seeds in place or spreading of rice straw is recommended.

Some vendors, like S&S Seeds, already offer pre-mixed erosion control seed that may also serve the purpose of stabilizing soil on the berm. Below are several links to vendors who provide information on seed availability online:

S&S Seeds: <http://www.ssseeds.com/>

Larner Seeds: [http://www.larnerseeds.com/pages/native\\_grass\\_seed.html](http://www.larnerseeds.com/pages/native_grass_seed.html)

Pacific Coast Seed: <http://www.pcseed.com/techInfo.asp>

Hedgerow Farms: <http://www.hedgerowfarms.com/index.html>

Additional information such as planting guides and establishment procedures recommended by the USDA and NRCS may be available online.

#### References

- Buck-Diaz, J., Batiuk, S., & Evens, J.M. (2012). Vegetation Alliances and Associations of the Great Valley Ecoregion, California. Sacramento: California Native Plant Society.
- Ornduff, R., Faber, P., & Keeler-Wolf, T. (2003). Introduction to California Plant Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- State of California Department of Transportation. (2009). *Interstate 580 Eastbound Truck Climbing Lane Project*. Oakland: Caltrans District 4.