

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Categorical Exclusion Checklist

Hilton Creek USGS Gage Relocation

CEC-16-040

Prepared by:

for Jennifer L. Lewis

Date:

9/12/2016

Rain L. Emerson

Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist

South-Central California Area Office

ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Concurred by:

See Attachment A

Date: See Attachment A

Scott Williams

Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Concurred by:

Lisa Carlson

Lisa Carlson

Wildlife Biologist

South-Central California Area Office

Date:

09/12/2016

Approved by:

Michael P. Jackson

Michael P. Jackson

Area Manager

South-Central California Area Office

Date:

09/12/2016



Background

Hilton Creek is an ephemeral creek that joins the Santa Ynez River approximately 1,000 feet downstream from the bottom of the Bradbury Dam spillway structure. In 1997, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) agreed to permanently supply water to Hilton Creek via a water line from Lake Cachuma as mitigation for impacts to the Santa Ynez River occasioned by the construction of a seismic upgrade to Bradbury Dam. Since 2000, operation of this water supply system has been subject to a Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to support a population of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) listed under the Endangered Species Act. The current Hilton Creek water supply system is shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 identifies the following features of the existing Hilton Creek watering system: Intake, Pumps, Chute Release Point (CRP), Lower Release Point (LRP), Lower Bifurcation (LB), Upper Bifurcation (UB), and Upper Release Points (URP).



Figure 1 Hilton Creek's Current Water Supply System

The 2000 Biological Opinion for the Cachuma Project requires Reclamation to consult with NMFS in critically dry years to determine what, if any, actions should be taken to support steelhead on Reclamation property. Reclamation has been in consultation with NMFS on critical drought operations since March 9, 2015 and has kept NMFS informed of the water supply issues in Hilton Creek and the lower Santa Ynez River. The Hilton Creek watering system can no

longer deliver water to the creek due to the low water level in the lake, so a small amount of water is currently being delivered to Hilton Creek through the LRP via a pump in the stilling basin below Bradbury Dam. On August 9, 2016 NMFS sent a letter recommending that Reclamation “include coordination with the USGS to operate a stream gage downstream of the water-system lower release point that would document and then transmit instantaneous discharge recordings to the USGS website” as a measure to “guard against a potential lapse in continuous water releases to the creek”.

Nature of the Action

Reclamation will authorize the U.S. Geological Society (USGS) and/or its designee to relocate the existing USGS stream gage (11125600) in Hilton Creek. The requested modifications would consist of the following:

- USGS stream gage station No. 11125600 would be replaced with a smaller monitoring station at its current location (Figure 2).
- A new stream gage station would be installed at a new site just downstream of the LRP (Figure 2). The gauge, instrument shed and telemetry system from USGS stream gage station No. 11125600 would be relocated to the new site near the LRP on a new approximately 4 feet by 4 feet concrete pad placed on the surface. All other equipment would be either laid on the ground surface or bolted to large rocks in the stream as has been done at the current location.
- No ground disturbance is needed or authorized for completion of this Project.

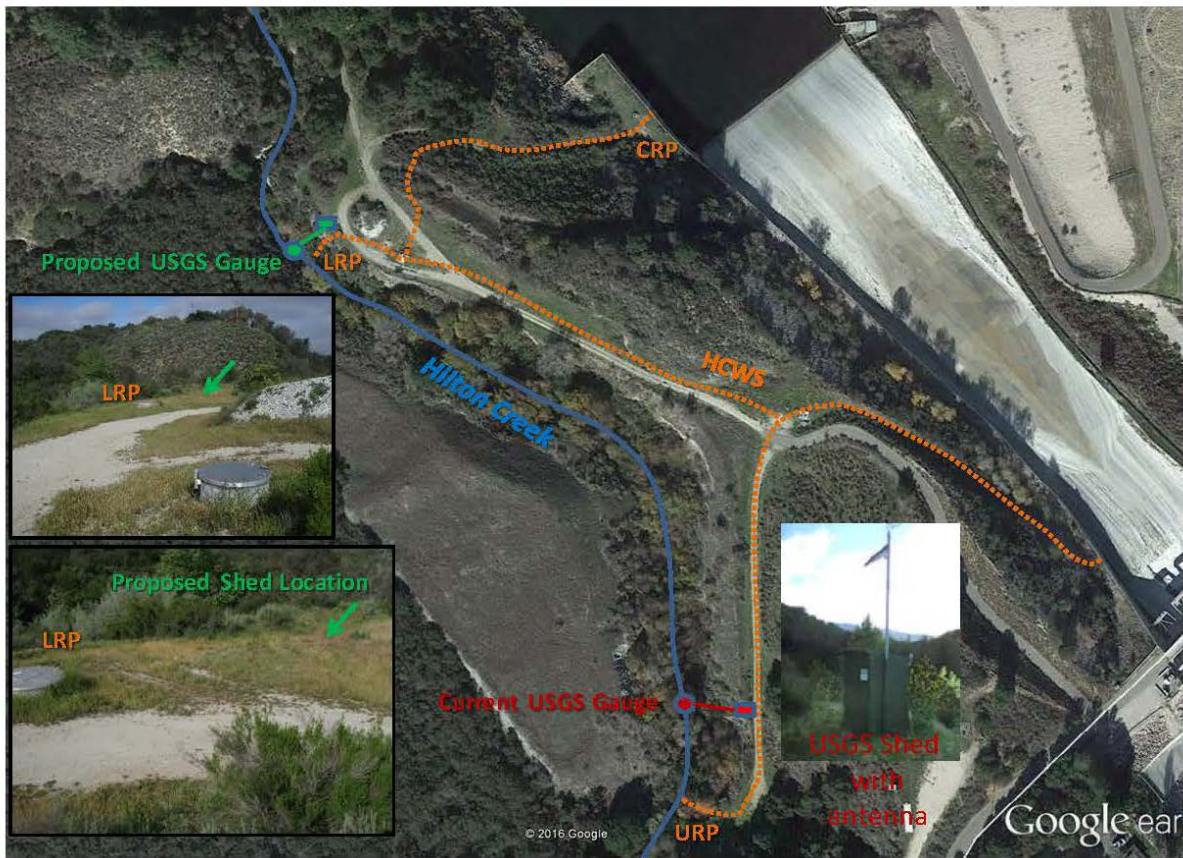


Figure 2 Proposed Action Area

Exclusion Category

516 DM 14.5 C (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

- | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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) (43 CFR 46.215 (g)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | 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)). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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)). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

NEPA Action: Categorical Exclusion

The Proposed Action is covered by the exclusion category and no extraordinary circumstances exist. The Action is excluded from further documentation in an EA or EIS.

Attachment A: Cultural Resources Determination

CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE
Division of Environmental Affairs
Cultural Resources Branch (MP-153)

MP-153 Tracking Number: 16-SCAO-237

Project Name: Hilton Creek USGS Gage Relocation

NEPA Document: CEC-16-040

NEPA Contact: Rain Emmerson, Natural Resource Specialist

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: Scott Williams, Archaeologist



Date: September 7, 2016

Reclamation will authorize the U.S. Geological Society (USGS) and/or its designee to replace a current stream gage and relocate an existing USGS stream gage (11125600) in Hilton Creek. This is the type of undertaking that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to the NHPA Section 106 regulations codified at 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

The requested modifications would consist of the following:

- USGS stream gage station No. 11125600 would be replaced with a smaller monitoring station at its current location.
- A new stream gage station would be installed at a new site just downstream of the LRP. The gauge, instrument shed and telemetry system from USGS stream gage station No. 11125600 would be relocated to the new site near the LRP on a new approximately 4 feet by 4 feet concrete pad placed on the surface. All other equipment would be either laid on the ground surface or bolted to large rocks in the stream as has been done at the current location.
- No ground disturbance is needed or authorized for completion of this Project.

This document is intended to convey the completion of the NHPA Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy in the administrative record for this action. Should changes be made to this project, additional NHPA Section 106 review, possibly including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, may be necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.