

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*


## Categorical Exclusion Checklist

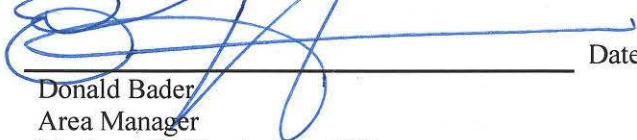
### CalTrans Access – Sacramento River, Red Bluff, CA

NCAO-CEC-17-22

Prepared by: Attachment 3 Date: August 28, 2017  
Megan Simon  
Northern California Area Office Designee for  
Tribal Trust Assets

Concurrence by: Attachment 4 Date: August 29, 2017  
Amy Barnes  
Archaeologist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Concurrence by:  Date: 8/29/17  
Paul Zedonis  
Environmental and Natural Resources  
Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist/  
Division Manager  
Northern California Area Office

Approved by:  Date: 8/29/17  
Donald Bader  
Area Manager  
Northern California Area Office



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid Pacific Region

August 2017

## Proposed Action

Reclamation will sign a letter of permission to approve the California Department of Transportation's (CalTrans) use of Reclamation's existing access path to gain access to the bank of the Sacramento River for the purpose of removing a large Cottonwood tree snag from an abutment to Caltrans's I-5 bridge. For the purposes of Reclamation's environmental review, the action area is limited to the Reclamation's property along the Sacramento River near the intersection of I-5 and Adobe Road in Red Bluff, CA (Figure1).

CalTran's work will be completed by September 10, 2017, as a maintenance action to prevent shoring and erosion near the abutment and preserve the structural integrity of the bridge. The tree snag will be dragged to shore by a Caterpillar model D3 (or similar) small crawler dozer. The D3 will not enter the water. The chaining of the tree to the D3 will be conducted remotely from a boat. The action, for the purposes of Reclamation's review, will include travel of the D3 and other equipment and machinery along Reclamation's access path and minor trimming of oak tree branches to allow equipment and machinery clearance and access. In addition, CalTrans will place a log along the bank at the end of Reclamation's access path to prevent future unauthorized access to the river bank via the access path. The access path consists of unpaved dirt covered with dead grass. No grading or path widening, or grubbing, is necessary to facilitate the work.

The project location is in Section 17, Township 27 North, Range 3 West, Mount Diablo Meridian and on the Red Bluff East USGS Topographic quadrangle in Red Bluff, Tehama County, CA. A topographic map and aerial photograph with overlay indicating the location of the access path are included as Attachment 1: Project Location Figures. Photographs are included as Attachment 2.

## Exclusion Categories

Bureau of Reclamation Categorical Exclusion - D(10): Issuance of permits, licenses, easements and crossing agreements which provide right-of-way over Bureau of Reclamation lands where the action does not allow or lead to larger public or private action.

## Extraordinary Circumstances

Below is an evaluation of the 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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; and 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; and 43 CFR 46.215 (j)).  | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 ☐

Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8 (email attached).

ITA Designee concurred with Item 11 (email attached).

***NEPA Action 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

**Environmental commitments, explanations, and/or remarks:**

On August 28, 2017, Reclamation reviewed the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (Service's) Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) database, via the Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) application, to determine the potential for species Federally-listed as Threatened or Endangered, or Candidate species for listing, under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), or their habitats, to occur at the site. The Official Species List/IPaC report generated for the site returned a list of 10 Federally-listed species, none of which were reported as having Critical Habitat in the project area: the California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU; *Coccyzus americanus*), conservancy fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), Delta smelt (*Hypomesus transpacificus*), Central Valley steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB; *Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*) and slender orcutt grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*). None of the aforementioned species have Critical Habitat in the project area.

In addition to the Federally-listed species reported in the IPaC report, Central Valley spring and Sacramento River winter-run salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) are known to occur in the Sacramento River in the vicinity of the project.

Reclamation supplemented and refined the IPaC report by researching the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), maintained by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and its Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) mapping complement, for species and habitat which may occur in the project area. The CNDDB BIOS output confirmed the presence of VELB, steelhead, and Central Valley spring run and Sacramento River winter-run salmon in the vicinity of the site, as well as that of least bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). The least bell's vireo occurrence was noted as "possibly extirpated". The northern extent of the current range for this species along the I-5 corridor, is Sacramento, according to the ECOS database. Likewise, the site is near the northern extent of the current range for GGS. There is no suitable upland habitat to support GGS at the site.

The California red-legged frog is widely accepted to have been extirpated from the Valley floor and is not anticipated to be present in the site area. Vernal pool species (vernal fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, conservancy fairy shrimp and slender orcutt grass) are not anticipated to be present, due to the lack of vernal pool habitat on-site. The site is also located near the western extent of the current species range for slender orcutt grass, according to ECOS.

Because Reclamation's action is limited to providing CalTrans with landside access, responsibility for the assessment of the potential for project-related impacts to fish species is retained by CalTrans. (It is noted that CalTrans provided Reclamation with electronic mail documentation of requests for technical assistance on effects to protected fish species in the project area. Responses provided from CDFW and the Service support CalTrans's finding of No Effect to these species, due to the timing in relation to spawning and migration periods, and minor nature of the action.)

CalTrans biologists conducted site visits on August 21 and 23, 2017 to survey the site for VELB. There were no elderberry shrubs observed within 50 feet of the access path. Work will occur outside the flight period (March to July) for VELB, as recommended in avoidance and minimization measures in the latest Service guidance (Framework for Assessing Impacts to VELB, May 2017). No trimming or removal of elderberry shrubs is required to complete the work. One elderberry shrub was observed adjacent to the access gate on Adobe Road. CalTrans will remain on the access path while on Reclamation property, maintaining a clearance of 20 feet or greater from the elderberry with its equipment and machinery, also as recommended in the 2017 Service guidance.

Although the YBCU is found in riparian woodlands along the Sacramento River, it requires a minimum 1.5 liner mile corridor of contiguous forest and minimum patch size of 20 ha and is therefore not anticipated to be present at the site or adjacent properties. The action is occurring in the post-breeding period (August 16 through September 30) and beginning of the out-migration season for the YBCU, as indicated in the Service's survey protocol (April 2015). In addition, no Cottonwood trees or willows that can be suitable foraging and nesting habitat, respectively, for the YBCU will be trimmed as part of the action. Although protocol surveys

were not warranted or conducted, CalTrans biologists did not observe or hear YBCU during their site visits.

Migratory birds are anticipated to be unaffected by the project due to its timing, the minor nature of the trimming and the lack of active or inactive nests observed within vegetation to be trimmed as part of the action during the site visits. CalTrans has a standing protection plan for migratory bird species, which includes pre-action nest surveys and spatial and/or temporal restrictions for any active nests incidentally discovered during any action.

Reclamation concluded that there would be no effects to Federally-protected species from its action.



## Attachment 1. Project Location Figures

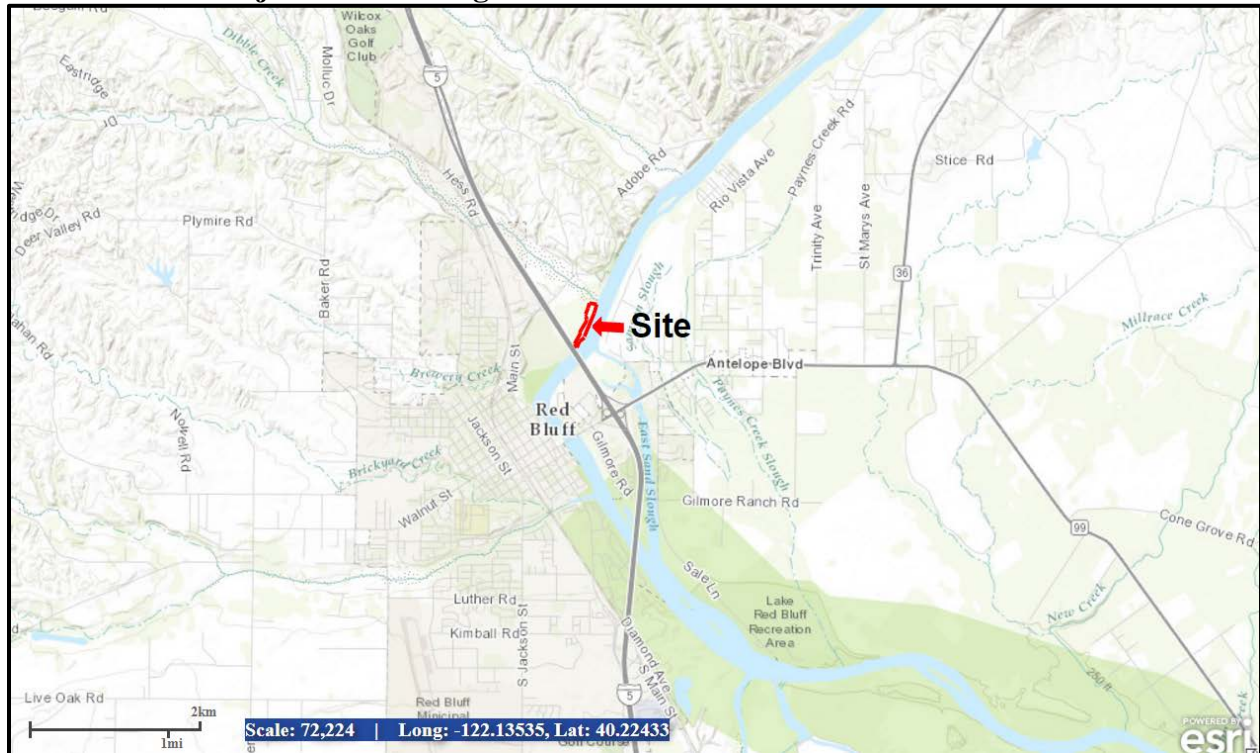


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

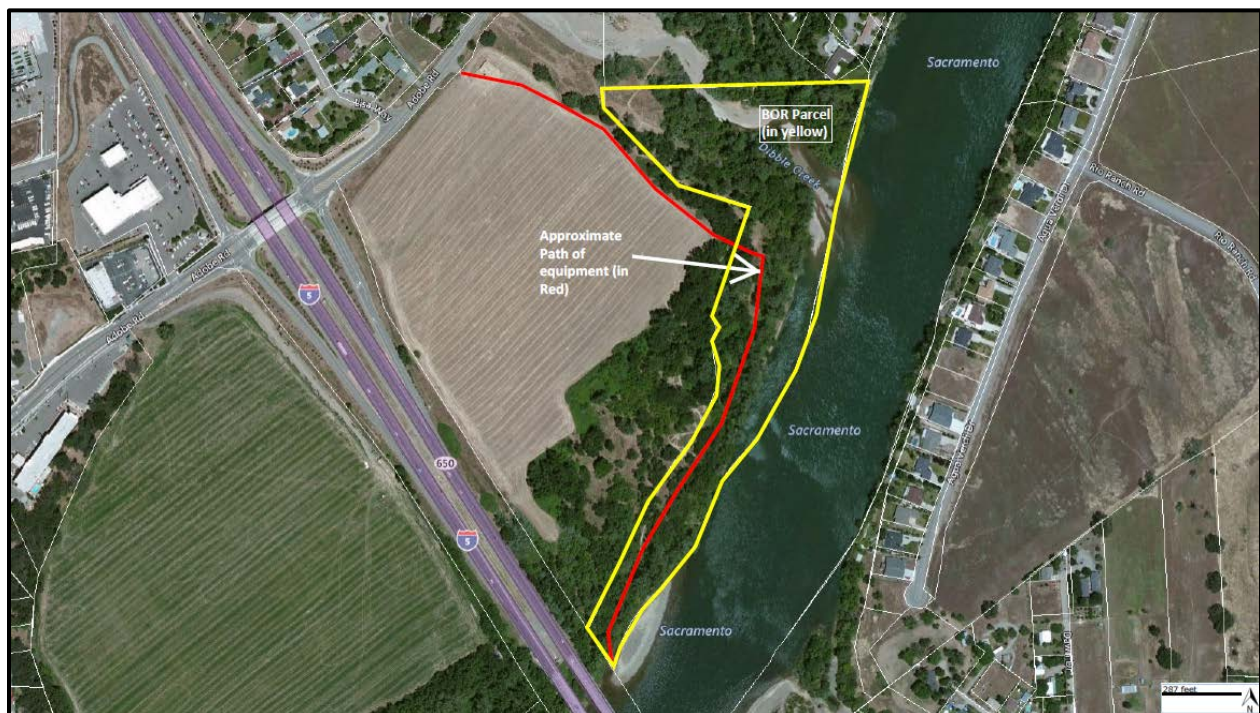


Figure 2. Site Map (courtesy CalTrans)



## Attachment 2. Representative Site Photographs (courtesy CalTrans)





### Attachment 3. Indian Trust Asset Review



Simon, Megan <msimon@usbr.gov>

#### CalTrans Sac River Access - Red Bluff

1 message

Simon, Megan <msimon@usbr.gov>  
To: "Zedonis, Paul" <pzedonis@usbr.gov>

Mon, Aug 28, 2017 at 2:39 PM

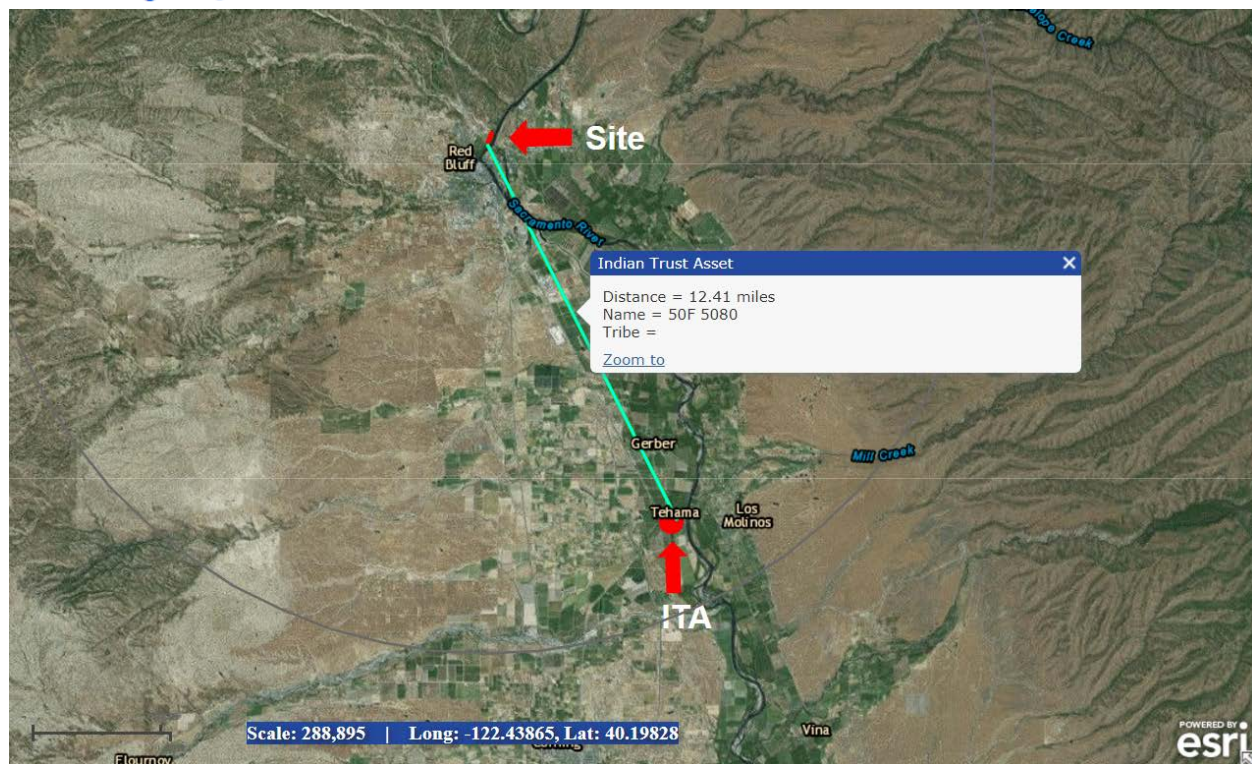
I have examined the referenced proposal and have determined that the property is located at least 12 miles from the closest Indian Trust Asset.

I have determined that there is no likelihood that this action will adversely impact Indian Trust Assets.

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*Megan K. Simon*

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**Attachment 4. Cultural Resources Review**

**CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE  
Mid-Pacific Region  
Division of Environmental Affairs  
Cultural Resources Branch**

MP-153 Tracking Number: 17-NCAO-250

Project Name: California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) Access to Sacramento River near Red Bluff, California

NEPA Document: NCAO-CEC-17-22

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: Amy J. Barnes

Date: August 29, 2017

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This proposed undertaking by Reclamation is to issue a letter of permission to CalTrans for the use of Reclamation's existing access path to the Sacramento River bank near the intersection of I-5 and Adobe Road in Red Bluff, California. The project is located in Tehama County immediately north of downtown Red Bluff.

CalTrans proposes to remove a large Cottonwood tree snag from an abutment to Caltrans's I-5 bridge. The tree snag will be dragged to shore by a D3 Caterpillar small crawler dozer (or similar equipment). The chain from the dozer will be connected to the snag from a boat. Minor trimming of oak tree branches along the access path will be necessary to allow clearance for equipment to access the river. Once the project is complete, CalTrans will place a log along the bank at the end of Reclamation's access path to prevent future unauthorized access to the river bank. No grading, widening, or grubbing will be necessary to facilitate the work. All work will be limited to the existing access path and the river bank. The project is located in Section 17, T. 27 N., R. 3 W., Mount Diablo Meridian, as depicted on the Red Bluff East 7.5 minute U.S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangle maps.

This is the type of action that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). As such, Reclamation has no further obligations under 54 U.S.C. § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

After reviewing NCAO-CEC-17-22, dated August 2017 and entitled *CalTrans Access – Sacramento River, Red Bluff, CA*, I concur with Item 8 that this action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.

This memorandum 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.