

RECLAMATION


Managing Water in the West

Finding Of No Significant Impact

Recovery Actions for California Red-legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander in Contra Costa County

FONSI 15-27-MP

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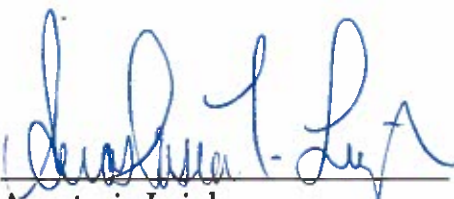
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Background

The California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) (CRLF) and California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) (CTS) are listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in part due to impacts to their habitats from operations of the Central Valley Project by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). In Contra Costa County, California, livestock ponds on private lands and lands owned by regional parks and nonprofit organizations provide important breeding and upland habitats for these species. However, many of the ponds were built decades ago and have since lost much of their function and benefits because their impoundment structures have eroded away and no longer hold as much water, the ponds have filled with sediment from eroding uplands and roads, or both. Populations of CRLF and CTS inhabiting those and nearby ponds would benefit greatly if the ponds were returned to their original condition to restore or enhance breeding habitat for the species. To provide that benefit, Reclamation would provide \$186,167 from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program (HRP) to the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRDC) to rehabilitate three existing livestock ponds, and to stabilize an adjacent eroding road and inflow channel. The livestock ponds are located at the Morgan Territory Regional Preserve which is owned by East Bay Regional Park District.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action

Reclamation would not provide \$186,167 from the HRP to CCRCD to rehabilitate livestock ponds and stabilize an eroding road and inflow channel. If the project is not implemented, the livestock ponds could continue to fill with sediment, hold a reduced amount of water, and no longer support cattle ranching operations or provide habitat for CTS and CRLF. In addition, erosion from uplands and an adjacent road and inflow channel would continue.

Proposed Action

Reclamation would provide \$186,167 from the HRP to CCRCD to rehabilitate existing livestock ponds, repair a section of an existing earthen access road, and stabilize an eroding inflow channel created from excessive runoff from an access road. Livestock pond rehabilitation activities include removing silt from the ponds, reconstruction of an embankment, and repair of spillways including placement of rock. Road improvement activities include the installation of rolling dips, grading to direct road runoff to a roadside ditch, relocation of a road segment and replacement of a failed culvert crossing. Work in the eroding inflow channel is aimed at stabilizing the drainage by redirecting road runoff and adding rock check dams at locations within the channel to trap sediment and buttress the steep bank.

Findings

Based on the attached environmental assessment (EA) which is hereby incorporated by reference, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an

Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
2. The proposed action will not significantly impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such 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 (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
3. The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
4. The proposed action will not affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)). The proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the California red-legged frog, Central California tiger salamander, and Alameda whipsnake. USFWS issued an appended biological opinion August 17, 2017 which includes incidental take coverage.
5. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
6. The proposed action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Pursuant to 54 USC § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, Reclamation determined that no historic properties will be affected by this undertaking. Therefore, the proposed action will result in no significant impacts to cultural resources.
7. The proposed action will not affect Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
8. The proposed action will not 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 and 512 DM 3).
9. The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

10. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
11. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
12. The proposed action will not violate federal, state, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).