

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Categorical Exclusion Checklist

Sycamore Canyon Slope Stabilization Project

CEC-18-030

Prepared by:



Rain L. Emerson
Environmental Compliance Branch Chief
South-Central California Area Office
ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Date: 12/19/2018

Concurred by:

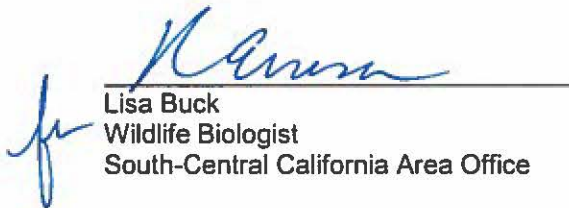
See Attachment A

Mark Carper
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

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

Date: See Attachment A

Concurred by:



Lisa Buck
Wildlife Biologist
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 12/20/2018

Approved by:



Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 12/20/2018



Background

The South Coast Conduit (SCC) is a large diameter (27 to 48-inches) high pressure concrete pipeline that conveys Cachuma Project and State Project water from the Tecolote Tunnel to 250,000 residents on the South Coast. The SCC extends 24-miles from the Tecolote Tunnel outlet across steep canyons, rolling hills, and highly developed residential and estate areas along the South Coast. The Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) operates and maintains the SCC and its associated right-of-way on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) pursuant to operating agreement Contract No. 14-06-2000-5222R.

During a facility inspection following severe winter storms in February 2017, Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) staff discovered a slope failure on a hillside in the Sycamore Canyon area north of Montecito that exposed a portion of the SCC. The portion of the SCC at this location is trenched into a steep 150-foot high slope and is located about 30-feet above Westmont Creek, a tributary to Sycamore Creek. The slope failure appeared to be the result of a concentrated flow of run-off which scoured away the topsoil and exposed the conduit. COMB declared a disaster for the February 2017 storm event and applied for public assistance from FEMA under disaster DR-4308. COMB implemented temporary protection measures including placement of sandbags to support the exposed portion of the SCC, a plastic protective cover during the winter season, and redirection of the concentrated flow away from the exposed conduit.

COMB has requested authorization from Reclamation to restore and maintain the slope in this area to prevent additional failure of the slope and a potential break in the pipeline. A break in the pipeline in this area would be complicated to repair and would create a major disruption in water supply deliveries to the South Coast of Santa Barbara County.

Nature of the Action

COMB, pursuant to operating agreement Contract No. 14-06-2000-5222R, proposes to restore the failed slope, stabilize the slope, and improve slope drainage to protect the SCC and maintain the existing SCC right-of-way.

The access route along the SCC right-of-way would be re-graded to create a platform that can be used by equipment to stabilize the slope where the conduit is exposed. A drilling rig would be used to install alternating slurry caissons (up to 20-feet deep) and reinforced concrete caissons (up to 40-feet deep) on the downslope side of the conduit for a length of approximately 70-feet. A reinforced silt fence would be installed downslope of the grading and drilling to prevent any material from sliding down the slope and reaching the creek.

Near the exposed pipeline, a 5-foot high wall constructed of H-beams and lagging (steel, pre-treated wood, or concrete) would be installed at the top of the caissons to support the slope. The reinforced caisson wall would stabilize the slope and would secure the pipeline from future

failure without impacting the creek below. Two additional reinforced caisson walls (35-feet long and approximately 20-feet deep and 30-feet long and 15-feet deep) would be installed east of the

70-foot long caisson wall in areas where streambank erosion has the potential for future damage to the conduit (Figure 1). These additional reinforced caisson walls would maintain the pipeline alignment and mitigate future risk. All of the proposed caisson walls would be installed upslope of, and outside of, the creek; erosion and sediment control measures (i.e. silt fencing, tarps, and fiber rolls) would be implemented to prevent erosion into the creek. Rock-slope lining would be used to further stabilize the slopes. No fill or equipment would be placed in the creek.

The concentrated flow path from above that caused the slope failure would be conveyed to Westmont Creek in a controlled and protected manner using a swale along the middle of the access route. The access road would be in-sloped to convey runoff during storm events and would be lined with crushed rock aggregate (Class II base). Storm runoff would be directed to an existing drainage channel that crosses the SCC. The crossing of the drainage channel over the conduit and access route would be hardened (rock-lined, concrete, or grouted rock).

The Proposed Project would require excavation of approximately 400 cubic yards of material. All cut and fill would be balanced on-site. The Proposed Project, including the re-grading of the access road, caisson walls, and rock-lining, would disturb a total of 7,000 square feet. The disturbance area would be located entirely within Reclamation's right-of-way for the SCC. The construction crew would use the existing access road and staging area within the SCC right-of-way (Figure 1). Erosion and sediment control measures would be used during construction based on an erosion control plan developed for the Proposed Project. Following construction, the site would be restored through rock-slope lining, erosion control matting/fiber rolls, mulch, and planted erosion control seed mix. The access route/swale and slope stabilization would be inspected annually and after large storm events (1-inch of precipitation or greater) to ensure adequate function of the drainage system and safety of the SCC.

Environmental Commitments

COMB shall implement the environmental protection measures included in Attachment B to avoid environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

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.



Figure 1 Proposed Action Area

Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

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

Extraordinary Circumstance	No	Uncertain	Yes
1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐

Extraordinary Circumstance	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)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).	☒	☐	☐
12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐
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)).	☒	☐	☐

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

MP-153 Tracking Number: 18-SCAO-137

Project Name: Sycamore Canyon Slope Stabilization Project

NEPA Document: CEC-18-030

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: Mark Carper

NEPA Contact: Brian Lopez

Determination: No Historic Properties Affected

Date: October 10, 2018

Reclamation proposes to authorize the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) to make repairs to eroding slope failures along a section of the South Coast Conduit (SCC) alignment in Santa Barbara County, California. Authorization of the proposed work on Federal property constitutes an undertaking as defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(y), which is a type of activity that has the potential to cause effects on historic properties under 36 CFR § 800.3(a).

During a facility inspection following severe winter storms in February 2017, COMB staff discovered a slope failure on a hillslope in the Sycamore Canyon area of the city of Montecito along the SCC. The slope failure appears to be the result of concentrated flow which scoured away the surficial soil and exposed the conduit. Additional failure of the slope and break in the pipeline will be a complicated repair in this location and create a major disruption in water supply deliveries for the South Coast of Santa Barbara County.

Due to the sensitivity of the slope and critical main water supply infrastructure at risk, the proposed design involves re-grading the access route along the right-of-way to create a platform that can be used by equipment to stabilize the slope where the conduit is exposed. A drilling rig will be used to install alternating slurry caissons (up to 20 feet deep) and reinforced concrete caissons (up to 40 feet deep) on the downslope side of the conduit for a length of approximately 70 feet. Near the exposed pipeline, a 5-foot wall constructed of H-beams and lagging (steel, pretreated wood, or concrete) will be installed at the top of the caissons to support the slope. The reinforced caisson wall will stabilize the slope and

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secure the pipeline from future failure without impacting the creek below or working outside of the existing right-of-way for the pipeline.

Reclamation determined that the area of potential effects (APE) includes the entirety of the construction-related activities for the project. The APE is located in Section 11, Township 4 N., Range 27 W. as depicted on the Santa Barbara, California 7.5' U.S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangle map (Figures 1 and 2). The area of potential effects (APE) for the proposed project includes the project footprint and staging areas. The proposed APE is less than approximately 0.5 acre in size. The vertical APE will vary, but will have a maximum depth of approximately 40 feet to account for the concrete caissons.

In an effort to identify historic properties in the APE, Reclamation reviewed the existing documentation for cultural resource investigations for the proposed project area and conducted a site visit of the project area. The APE was found to consist entirely of severe vertical slopes, aside from the pipeline engineered access route. No cultural resources were identified.

Pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR § 800.3(f)(2), Reclamation identified the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians as an Indian tribe who might attach religious and cultural significance to historic properties within the APE. Reclamation initially contacted Mr. Freddie Romero, Cultural Resources Coordinator for, and member of, the Santa Ynez Band Elders Council, by telephone to inform him of the proposed project on August 10, 2018. In addition, Reclamation sent a letter to the tribe on August 17, 2017, inviting their participation in the Section 106 process, and requesting their assistance in the identification of sites of religious and cultural significance or historic properties that may be affected by the proposed undertaking pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(a)(4). No responses were received.

Reclamation initiated consultation with the California State Preservation Office (SHPO) by letter dated August 30, 2018 notifying the office of Reclamation's determination of no historic properties affected for the proposed project. Pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR §800.5(c), SHPO has 30 days from receipt to review an agency finding. The SHPO has yet to respond to Reclamation's finding of effect. If after 30 days the SHPO has not responded, the regulations state that "...the agency official shall then carry out the undertaking in accordance with paragraph (d)(1) of this section" [§800.5(c)(1)]. Because the SHPO has failed to comment on Reclamation's finding within the period of time provided to them

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pursuant to the Section 106 regulations, Reclamation may move on to the next step of the Section 106 process.

After reviewing CEC-18-030 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.

Attachment B: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Concurrence



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003



IN REPLY REFER TO:
08EVEN00-2018-I-0827

September 10, 2018

Rain Emerson
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch
Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region
1243 N Street
Fresno, California 93721-1813

Subject: Request for Concurrence on the Sycamore Canyon Slope Stabilization Project, Santa Barbara County, California (SCC-425 2.21.06 Cachuma Project)

Dear Ms. Emerson:

We have reviewed your request, dated August 28, 2018, and received by our office on September 4, 2018, for our concurrence with your determination that the Sycamore Canyon Slope Stabilization Project (Project) may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*). The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is proposing to restore and stabilize an area of failed slope in Sycamore Canyon, Santa Barbara County, California, along the right-of-way for the South Coast Conduit, and to improve drainage to prevent future slope failures in this area. The purpose of the project is to restore and maintain the slope in this area to prevent additional failure of the slope and a potential break in the pipeline, which became exposed due to severe winter storm events that occurred in February of 2017.

The closest record of a California red-legged frog is a 2002 occurrence of 3 juvenile California red-legged frogs and 10 tadpoles found in Cinquefoil Creek, a small drainage with multiple man-made pools and ponds located about 1.3 miles east of the proposed Project (California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) 2018). The next nearest CNDDDB record of this species was a 2008 observation of one juvenile red-legged frog in Arroyo Paredon Creek about 8-miles east of the proposed Project. The species has not been observed within or adjacent to the Project area. Based on the information you provided no surveys have been conducted within the Project site for the proposed Project (Reclamation 2018). The project area contains suitable dispersal, foraging, and/or dry season refuge habitat for the species. Westmont Creek is an intermittent stream and is not likely to provide suitable aquatic or breeding habitat for the species. Any California red-legged frogs within the vicinity of the project area could be affected by project activities associated with slope stabilization and restoration. To avoid effects to California red-legged frogs, you have proposed to implement the following conservation measures:

1. All Project related vehicle traffic will be restricted to established access roads and other designated areas.

2. The Work will be avoided during or after significant rainfall. Work shall not begin during rain or when the forecast probability of rain for a workday is 30 percent or greater. If rainfall greater than 0.5 inch has occurred in the 24-hour period prior to any planned work activity, work shall not begin until the Service-approved biologist has surveyed the work area to the extent possible for dispersing California red-legged frogs and has found none present. If rainfall greater than 0.5 inch occurs after work has begun, the work shall be suspended until the rain stops and until after the Service-approved biologist has resurveyed the work area to the extent possible for dispersing California red-legged frogs and has found none present.
3. Before the start of work each morning, a Service-approved biologist shall check for California red-legged frogs under all vehicles and equipment, and in any areas to be subjected to vegetation removal and/or grading. If a California red-legged frog is found, the following actions will be taken immediately: A) work on the proposed action shall be suspended and B) Reclamation and the Service will be contacted for further guidance as to any immediate action necessary to protect the species. Additionally, upon the finding of any listed species during work, consultation may be reinitiated. If re-consultation is required, work may resume only after consultation has been concluded.
4. All equipment will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's directions so there will be no leaks of fluids such as gasoline, oils, or solvents.
5. Work on the Project shall begin no earlier than a half hour before sunrise and shall cease at least a half hour before sunset.

We concur with your determination that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect California red-legged frogs. Our concurrence is based on the following:

- We do not anticipate California red-legged frogs to occur in the project area and project activities would have minimal, temporary impacts to potential habitat for the species; and
- If a California red-legged frog is observed in an area to be impacted, the Service would be immediately contacted to determine the appropriate course of action.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark A. Elvin of our staff at (805) 677-3317, or by electronic mail at mark_elvin@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Chris Dellith
Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist

LITERATURE CITED

- [CNDDB] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Diversity Database. 2018. Element Occurrence Reports for the California red-legged frog, Sacramento, California.
- [Reclamation] Bureau of Reclamation. 2018. Biological Evaluation, Sycamore Canyon Sloper Stabilization Project. CEC-18-030. 12 pp. + appendices. August, 2018.

