

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

2019049033

Project Title: Dry Meadow Restoration Project

Lead Agency: Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Contact Person: Debra Mahnke
Mailing Address: 1685 E Street Phone: (559) 445-6281
City: Fresno Zip: 93706 County: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa

Project Location: County: Tulare City/Nearest Community: Sequoia National Forest, Western Divide
Cross Streets: Forest Route 23S16 and Forest Route 24S35 Zip Code: 93265
Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): 35 50 42 N / 118 32 46 W Total Acres: 65
Assessor's Parcel No.: Section: 8 & 17 Twp.: 24S Range: 32E Base: Tobias P
Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: Waterways: Bull Run Creek
Airports: Railways: Schools:

Document Type:

CEQA: [] NOP [] Draft EIR NEPA: [] NOI Other: [] Joint Document
[] Early Cons [] Supplement/Subsequent EIR [] EA [] Final Document
[] Neg Dec (Prior SCH No.) [] Draft EIS Other:
[] Mit Neg Dec Other:

Gov. Office of Planning & Research

APR 08 2019

Local Action Type:

[] General Plan Update [] Specific Plan [] Rezone [] Annexation
[] General Plan Amendment [] Master Plan [] Redevelopment
[] General Plan Element [] Planned Unit Development [] Use Permit [] Coastal Permit
[] Community Plan [] Site Plan [] Land Division (Subdivision, etc.) [] Other:

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Development Type:

[] Residential: Units Acres
[] Office: Sq.ft. Acres Employees
[] Commercial: Sq.ft. Acres Employees
[] Industrial: Sq.ft. Acres Employees
[] Educational:
[] Recreational:
[] Water Facilities: Type MGD
[] Transportation: Type
[] Mining: Mineral
[] Power: Type MW
[] Waste Treatment: Type MGD
[] Hazardous Waste: Type
[] Other: Meadow Restoration

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

[x] Aesthetic/Visual [] Fiscal [] Recreation/Parks [x] Vegetation
[] Agricultural Land [x] Flood Plain/Flooding [] Schools/Universities [x] Water Quality
[x] Air Quality [x] Forest Land/Fire Hazard [] Septic Systems [x] Water Supply/Groundwater
[x] Archeological/Historical [x] Geologic/Seismic [] Sewer Capacity [x] Wetland/Riparian
[x] Biological Resources [] Minerals [x] Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading [] Growth Inducement
[] Coastal Zone [] Noise [] Solid Waste [] Land Use
[] Drainage/Absorption [] Population/Housing Balance [x] Toxic/Hazardous [x] Cumulative Effects
[] Economic/Jobs [] Public Services/Facilities [] Traffic/Circulation [x] Other: GHG Emissions

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

Ag Preserve; A-1

Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)

The Dry Meadow project encompasses a 65-acre complex of meadows in the headwaters of Bull Run Creek, tributary to the North Fork Kern River located approximately 8 air miles northwest of Kernville, CA. The goal of the project is to improve the hydrologic connectivity and processes in the meadow complex in order to restore the physical and biological functions of the meadow, including flood flow access to the meadow floodplain, and restoration of the drainage regime, including sheet flow. The proposed project design would restore channel flow to existing remnant channels on the surface of the meadow floodplain by partially plugging the existing incised channels. 26,000 cubic yards of native soil material, cut from slopes on the meadow edge, and within the meadow itself, would be used to construct 19 gully plugs (4.84 acres). The base elevation of the restored channels would be anchored with a 0.17-acre grade control at the bottom of the meadow, using 1,000 cubic yards of imported rock. The design would result in 8.34 acres of ponded water in the 17 meadow borrow sites, which would seasonally rise and fall with groundwater elevations. Plug surfaces are ripped to a depth of 12 inches, and topped with stockpiled topsoil, and then seeded with natives and mulched. All native vegetation recovered from the fill and borrow sites is transplanted to plug edges, surfaces, and key locations on the remnant channel. A temporary fence would be installed around the restoration site to allow vegetation to recover and exclude livestock for two to three years. Alternative 1 includes hand-thinning of conifers (less than 10 inches in diameter) along meadow margins in designated upland areas.

State Clearinghouse Contact:

(916) 445-0613

State Review Began: 4 - 8 - 2019

SCH COMPLIANCE 5 - 7 - 2019

Project Sent to the following State Agencies

[x] Resources
Boating & Waterways
[x] Central Valley Flood Prot.
Coastal Comm
Colorado Rvr Bd
[x] Conservation
[x] CDFW # 4
[x] Cal Fire
[x] Historic Preservation
[x] Parks & Rec
Bay Cons & Dev Comm.
DWR
CalSTA
Aeronautics
CHP
[x] Caltrans # 0
Trans Planning
Other
Education
Food & Agriculture
HCD
[x] OES
State/Consumer Svcs
General Services
Cal EPA
ARB: Airport & Freight
ARB: Transportation Projects
ARB: Major Industrial/Energy Resources, Recycl. & Recovery
[x] SWRCB: Div. of Drinking Water
SWRCB: Div. Drinking Wtr #
[x] SWRCB: Div. Financial Assist.
SWRCB: Wtr Quality
SWRCB: Wtr Rights
[x] Reg. WQCB # 5F
[x] Toxic Sub Ctrl-CTC
Yth/Adlt Corrections
Corrections
Independent Comm
Delta Protection Comm
Delta Stewardship Council
Energy Commission
[x] NAHC
Public Utilities Comm
Santa Monica Bay Restoration
State Lands Comm
Tahoe Rgl Plan Agency
Conservancy
Other:

Please note State Clearinghouse Number (SCH#) on all Comments

2019049033

SCH#:
Please forward late comments directly to the Lead Agency

AQMD/APCD 37

(Resources: 4 / 13)

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with an "X".
 If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Resources Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating & Waterways, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Public School Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Emergency Management Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks & Recreation, Department of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Highway Patrol | <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide Regulation, Department of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans District # _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utilities Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Division of Aeronautics | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional WQCB # _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Valley Flood Protection Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy | <input type="checkbox"/> S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado River Board | <input type="checkbox"/> San Joaquin River Conservancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corrections, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> State Lands Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delta Protection Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Clean Water Grants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish & Game Region # _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Tahoe Regional Planning Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Agriculture, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Substances Control, Department of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Resources, Department of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Services, Department of | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services, Department of | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Community Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American Heritage Commission | |

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date April 3, 2019 Ending Date May 3, 2019

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: <u>Trout Unlimited</u>	Applicant: <u>Sequoia National Forest</u>
Address: <u>10035 Church St., Unit 1</u>	Address: <u>1839 South Newcomb Street</u>
City/State/Zip: <u>Truckee, CA 96161</u>	City/State/Zip: <u>Porterville, CA 93257</u>
Contact: <u>Jessica Strickland</u>	Phone: <u>559-784-1500 x1340</u>
Phone: <u>830-515-9917</u>	

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: /s/ Debra Mahnke **Date:** 04/05/2019

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

NOC - Dry Meadow Restoration Project Description

The Dry Meadow Restoration Project Area encompasses a 65-acre complex of meadows in the headwaters of Bull Run Creek, tributary to the North Fork Kern River above Lake Isabella. The project area is located in the Greenhorn Mountains approximately 8 air miles northwest of Kernville CA in Tulare County. Dry Meadow is a relatively flat, open montane meadow within a mixed conifer forest, at 6,400 feet elevation. The project area is within the Tobias Ecosystem Restoration Project Area that had been identified by the Sequoia National Forest as needing ecological restoration, due to dense, second-growth forest. The meadow is used for cattle grazing and infrequent dispersed recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, etc.). The meadow was also used as a sawmill site circa 1941-54. It is surmised that the network of oversized channels throughout the meadow were excavated to dry the area out for sawmill operations. The meadow was purchased circa 1959 as part of the Sequoia National Forest. Surrounding land uses in the vicinity of the meadow include timber harvest, fuels reduction, plantation management, and dispersed summer and winter recreational activities.

The goal of the project is to improve the hydrologic connectivity and processes in the meadow complex in order to restore the physical and biological functions of the meadow, including flood flow access to the meadow floodplain, and restoration of the pre-degradational drainage regime, which included sheet flow. Given the goal of the project and the severity of the gullied channel incisions, restoration alternatives are limited. The proposed project design would restore channel flow to existing remnant channels on the surface of the meadow floodplain. This would be achieved by partially plugging the existing incised channels. 26,000 cubic yards of native soil material, cut from slopes on the meadow edge, and within the meadow itself, would be used to construct 19 gully plugs (4.84 acres). The base elevation of the restored channels would be anchored with a 0.17-acre grade control at the bottom of the meadow, using 1,000 cubic yards of imported rock. See Plan View Map in EA (Figure 2, pg 12).

The design would result in 8.34 acres of ponded water in the 17 meadow borrow sites. Terrace locations for the borrow areas were limited, due to resource constraints. Water elevations in the meadow borrow sites (ponds) would seasonally rise and fall with groundwater elevations. Because of the existing intermittent nature of stream flows within Dry Meadow, it is difficult to predict whether or not the floodplain borrow sites would maintain perennially ponded water, or would seasonally dry out. However, since wildlife are known to be attracted to ponded water in these types of restoration projects, habitat features such as varied water depths, islands, peninsulas, basking logs, etc. would be incorporated while the borrow material is excavated.

The designed placement of plugs and borrow ponds are configured to accommodate natural meadow and hillslope surface and subsurface through-flow. The interval between plugs is set by elevation with a maximum 0.75-foot head differential from the downstream plug edge to the downstream pond water surface elevation to reduce the risk of cutting through the plug during infrequent, short duration flood events. The downstream edges of the plugs are also heavily planted with sedge sod mats recovered from the gully bottom prior to plug

construction. Schematic details of typical gully plugs and borrow sites with seasonally ponded water can be found in the EA (Figures 3a and 3b, pg 13). Plug surfaces are ripped to a depth of 12 inches (to facilitate rainfall infiltration), and topped with stockpiled topsoil, and then seeded and mulched (using native seed). All native vegetation recovered from the fill and borrow sites is transplanted to plug edges, surfaces, and key locations on the remnant channel.

Once the project is completed, a temporary fence would be installed around the restoration site to allow vegetation to recover. The fence would exclude livestock grazing for two to three years, or until stabilizing vegetation becomes established. Fence installation would present only small localized disturbance to the area where posts are installed. There is no erosion potential associated with installing a temporary fence. The fence would be aligned so that cattle trailing would not be encouraged in sensitive areas. Once the fence is removed, grazing impacts to the restored meadow would be monitored. Where necessary to protect re-vegetation and sensitive areas, grazing management options would be considered by the Forest Service, in consultation with the permittee. Options may include: a change in numbers or the season of use, longer-term fencing, off-site watering, or mineral supplement placement.

Alternative 1 would include hand-thinning of conifers (less than 10 inches in diameter) along meadow margins in designated upland areas on Dry Meadow including all its feeder areas. Thinning would be done using hand tools or chainsaws. Riparian associates would be retained, and conifers 10 inches or less would be targeted. No vehicles would be allowed in these areas to minimize ground disturbance.