

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sacramento County Clerk
P.O. Box 839
Sacramento, CA 95812-0839

From: Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District
P.O. Box 338
14315 River Road
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

SEP 22 2020

Project Title: Lower Andrus Island Habitat Conservation Bank Project

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Project Location: The 40-acre Project site is located landside of the levee along West Brannan Island Road in the lower southeast corner of Andrus Island approximately 2.75 miles south of the City of Isleton in Sacramento County, California.

County: Sacramento

Description of Project:

The Project includes the establishment of a habitat conservation bank designed to offset or compensate for habitat losses resulting from ongoing operations and maintenance of the Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District's (District) levee system. The Project proposes to convert the 40-acre site to a mosaic of freshwater marsh, riparian forest, and scrub shrub habitat. Once these habitats are established, a conservation easement will be placed on the property to preserve/manage the lands in perpetuity for conservation purposes.

The Project requires minor grading including agricultural disking for site preparation and land grading to lower the land surface to accommodate the proposed freshwater marsh habitat. A combination of mowing and herbicide application will be needed to accommodate the removal of extensive stands of invasive plants present across the property. These invasive plant species include pepper weed (*Lepidium latifolium*), Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), fleabane (*Erigeron bonariensis*), Lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), bristly oxtongue (*Picris echinoides*), wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*) and various thistle species (yellowstar thistle, Italian thistle, sow thistle and milk thistle). Planting with appropriate species for the three habitat types will occur following the invasive plant removal activities. The District will maintain the site for three years, after which it will be transferred to a conservation entity for long-term management.

Public Agency Approving and Carrying Out Project: Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District

Exempt Status: (check one and cite)

- ☐ Ministerial -
- ☐ Declared Emergency -
- ☒ X Categorical (cite) – State CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304
- ☐ Statutory (cite)

Reason Why Project is Exempt: Pursuant to Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land, of the State CEQA Guidelines, projects that consist of minor public alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees, are Categorically Exempt from environmental review. Section 15304(a) allows for grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist.

The project does not include the removal of any healthy, mature, scenic trees and is located on relatively flat land. Although some grading will be necessary to accommodate the creation of freshwater marsh habitat, no grading will occur on land with slopes of greater than 10 percent. In addition, although the project site includes drainage canals associated with the site's historic agricultural uses, the project does not include any grading in a waterway or in any wetlands (Buck and Associates Consultants 2020).

The project site is located directly north of West Brannan Island Road, which is designed in the Sacramento County General Plan as a scenic corridor. This road is protected by scenic corridor sign controls specified in the County Zoning Code (Chapter 5: Development Standards, Section 5.10.7 - Special Sign Corridors). The purpose of the Special Sign Corridor regulations is to make provisions for signs that identify the name and type of business in an aesthetic manner that compliments the

architecture of the building and serves the needs of the traveling public (Sacramento County 2015). The project does not include any proposed buildings or signage that would be subject to these regulations. Also, although the roadway is designated a scenic corridor, the project site is not specifically designated as a scenic area.

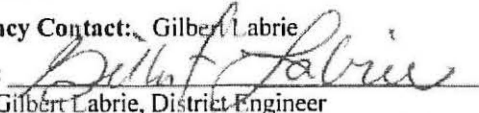
The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist (California Department of Conservation 2020). The nearest active fault to the project site is located approximately six miles to the west near Decker Island (Sacramento County 2017).

A cultural resources assessment was conducted for the project site, which indicates no cultural resources have been previously recorded within the project area or within a 0.25-mile search radius (Natural Investigations Company 2020). A Sacred Lands File search returned negative results for Native American resources in the vicinity of the project. One cultural resource was identified within the project area during an intensive pedestrian survey that was conducted on August 24, 2020. The resource consisted of a water conveyance system that included four interconnected irrigation ditches and a small conveyance canal. However, due to past impacts and the ubiquity of similar water conveyance features in the area, the cultural resources assessment concluded that the resource appeared to lack the distinctive characteristics and integrity of constituents needed to constitute a California Register of Historic Resources-eligible resource (Natural Investigations Company 2020).

The cultural resources assessment further concluded that the project area has a low potential for containing paleontological resources due to the area being underlain by Late Holocene (4,200 years ago to present) deposits (Natural Investigations Company 2020).

Lead Agency Contact: Gilbert Labrie

Signature:


Gilbert Labrie, District Engineer
Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District

Date: September 21, 2020

References:

Buck and Associates Consultants. 2020 (August 14). *Lower Andrus Island Habitat Conservation Bank Project*. Prepared for Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District.

California Department of Conservation. 2020. *California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application*. Available at: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp>.

Natural Investigations Company. 2020 (August). *Cultural Resources Assessment for Lower Andrus Island Habitat Conservation Bank Project, Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District, Sacramento County, California*. Prepared for Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District.

Sacramento County. 2017 (September 26). *General Plan Safety Element, Background to the 1993 General Plan as Amended, September 26, 2017*. Available at: <https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/General-Plan/Safety%20Element%20Background%20Amended%2009-26-2017.pdf>.

Sacramento County. 2015 (September 25). *Sacramento County Zoning Code*. Available at: https://planning.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/Zoning-Code/Chapter-5_Amended-July-16-2020.pdf.

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