



Topic: **Reservoir Committee Meeting Agenda Item 3.2**

2021 May 20

Subject: **Revised Draft EIR/ Supplemental Draft EIS Second Briefing -
Construction-Related Sections and Local Issues**

Requested Action:

Review and comment on the approach for Project commitments, key outcomes of the construction-related chapters of the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS (RDEIR/SDEIS) and discuss local issues and challenges.

Detailed Description/Background:

Staff is continuing to make progress on the development of the RDEIR/SDEIS. This is the second of a three-part briefing in preparation for the approval to release the RDEIR/SDEIS at the July Reservoir Committee and Authority Board meetings and the subsequent release of the document for public review in August. This briefing focuses on Project commitments included in the RDEIR/SDEIS project description, the key outcomes of the primarily construction-related chapters, and local issues and considerations, though it should be emphasized that the RDEIR/SDEIS chapters currently are under review by the Project team and are subject to revision over the next few months. There are 34 chapters anticipated to be included in the RDEIR/SDEIS. This report covers approximately 18 of these chapters.

Project Commitments

The team has included a series of key commitments in the Project description. These commitments seek to demonstrate the Authority's efforts and assurances in reducing and avoiding the effects of the Project by proactively addressing key issues. They are integral components of the Project and are adopted by the Authority at the time of the Project approval. They must be implemented and will be subject to monitoring and reporting requirements similar to those for mitigation measures in the Project's Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program.

Project commitments include Best Management Plans (BMPs), standard environmental protocols and other measures that would be implemented as part of the construction and operations and maintenance activities. The Project team, including the engineering consultant teams, have reviewed the BMPs and confirmed they are reasonable, feasible and implementable. The updated cost of meeting the project commitments will be included in the feasibility project cost estimate.

Project commitments also include the development and implementation of specific plans. These include such items as a Reservoir Management Plan that would describe the management of water resources in Sites Reservoir including monitoring water quality, in-reservoir fisheries management, and vector

management. Other plans include but are not limited to the following: Land Management Plan, Cultural Resources Management Plan, Recreation Management Plan, Operations Plan, Adaptive Management Plan and other administrative, operational and technical plans to address various aspects of Project construction and operations. The plans are described to a level of detail appropriate for the RDEIR/SDEIS and will be fully developed as a component of the Amendment 3 activities to continue to provide permitting certainty and transparency in Project activities.

Construction-Related Chapters

The RDEIR/SDEIS team continues to prepare the construction-related chapters. Table 1 provides a listing of the chapters that are sufficiently developed for this overview along with a brief summary of the impacts requiring mitigation and significant and unavoidable impacts, if any. These impact findings should be considered preliminary and are subject to change as the Authority and Reclamation teams continue to review and refine these chapters.

All remaining chapters will also have construction-related Project effects but are not covered today as these chapters are still in development. Some of these chapters are anticipated to require mitigation and/or have significant and unavoidable impacts as a result of construction. These chapters include: Air Quality, Water Quality, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. These chapters will be addressed in the June or July briefings.

Table 1. Preliminary CEQA Findings for Chapters Sufficiently Developed At This Time

Chapter (# and Title)	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	Significant and Unavoidable Impacts
7, Fluvial Geomorphology	None	None
8, Groundwater Resources	None	None
9, Vegetation and Wetlands	All Alts - Construction effects on special- status plant species, wetlands, and potential conflicts with HCP/NCCP; operational effects on various special status plant species, riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community, and federally protected wetlands	All Alts – Construction related effects to oak woodlands, primarily in the reservoir inundation area

Table 1. Preliminary CEQA Findings for Chapters Sufficiently Developed At This Time

Chapter (# and Title)	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	Significant and Unavoidable Impacts
10, Wildlife	All Alts - Construction effects on various special-status species, potential conflicts with local policies, ordinances and HCPs/NCCPs, interference with movement of species or with established wildlife corridors; operational effects due to use of pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, interference with movement of species or with established wildlife corridors	All Alts - Interference with movement of native or migratory wildlife species or with established wildlife corridors
12, Geology, Soils, Paleontology	All Alts – Construction effects on paleontological resources	Alt 1 & 3 – Paleontological resource impacts due to the deep soil mixing construction method for TRR East
13, Minerals	None	None
14, Land Use	No feasible mitigation identified	Alt 2 – South Road (no bridge) physical division of the established communities of Lodoga and Maxwell
15, Agricultural Resources	All Alts –Conversion of farmlands and Williamson Act lands	All Alts – Permanent conversion of prime, unique and farmland of statewide importance and Williamson Act Lands
16, Recreation	None	None
17, Energy	None	None
18. Navigation, Transportation and Traffic	No feasible mitigation identified	Alt 2 – South Road (no bridge) will add substantial travel time for school bus travel to Lodoga (from 30 to 50 minutes)
19, Noise	None	None
22, Cultural Resources	All Alts - Impacts to historic/archaeological resources that will be addressed through the implementation of Cultural Resources Management Plan	All Alts – Permanent loss of historic and archaeological resources due to inundation and wave action
23, Tribal Cultural Resources	All Alts – To the extent feasible, implement mitigation measures recommended in Public Resources Code Section 21084.3 to avoid damaging effects on tribal cultural resources	All Alts – Assumed presence of Tribal Cultural Resources in the inundation area and permanent loss of those resources due to inundation

Table 1. Preliminary CEQA Findings for Chapters Sufficiently Developed At This Time

Chapter (# and Title)	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	Significant and Unavoidable Impacts
24, Visual Resources	No feasible mitigation identified	All Alts – Inundation substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings Alt 2 – Sacramento River discharge structure substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings
25, Population & Housing	None	None
26, Public Services and Utilities	None	None
27, Public Health and Environmental Hazards	None	None
<p>Note: This table provides preliminary determinations and is not intended to be a final or conclusive resolution of the CEQA findings for the Project. These determinations may change as chapters undergo additional review and are revised prior to public release. This table also only focuses on those impacts that have found to be significant and thus require mitigation. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive summary of the Project’s impacts. Additional impacts will be discussed and addressed in the respective chapters.</p>		

Local Issues and Considerations

CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines focus on physical changes to the environment. The RDEIR/SDEIS captures the physical changes to the local environment that will also affect local agencies, such as changes in traffic during construction and operations (recreationists), air quality emissions, changes in local land uses, and similar issues. However, the RDEIR/SDEIS does not capture the changes in the local area that do not result in physical environmental changes or that are speculative. These changes include, but are not limited to, such things as increased demand for public services (emergency, fire and law enforcement) as a result of the Authority’s operations and recreational opportunities at Sites Reservoir along with potential increased students at local schools due to the permanent jobs created in operating the Project, although the physical environmental changes that result from these social and economic changes are part of the CEQA evaluation.

Staff has reinitiated meetings with local agencies to discuss the Project and is working to address their concerns. Some of these concerns will be addressed in revisions to the RDEIR/SDEIS project description, such as adding a helicopter landing pad accessible to fire and law enforcement for emergency response during Project construction and operations. However, some of the local agency concerns

are outside of the CEQA process. Staff will continue working with local agencies and report back to the Reservoir Committee and Authority Board after there are more specific discussions with the parties. All of Project team activities on this front will adhere to the Authority's organizational value of "Respect for local communities – the Authority recognizes the significant contributions of the local Sacramento Valley landowners, and communities and will be a respectful, supportive partner and be a good neighbor throughout the project."

Prior Action:

April 2021: Reviewed and commented on the CEQA process, the status of the RDEIR/SDEIS introductory chapters, and the status of outreach efforts to non-governmental organizations.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

None.

Staff Contact:

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Attachments:

None.