

Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 3.1: 2022-2024 Geotechnical
Investigations, Release of Draft EA/IS and Permit
Applications

February 23, 2022

2022-2024 Geotechnical Investigations

- Necessary to refine engineering designs and cost estimates
- Activities:
 - Geologic mapping
 - Surface mapping, noninvasive
 - Geotechnical investigations
 - Subsurface drilling, invasive
 - Surface geophysical surveys
 - Surface mapping, non or minimally invasive
- Summer 2022 through 2024



Roles and Responsibilities

- Authority
 - Undertake all field activities
 - Obtain all land access
 - CEQA Lead Agency
 - Obtain all permits (except 2 obtained by Reclamation)
- Reclamation
 - Funding partner, no field activities anticipated
 - NEPA Lead Agency
 - Complete Federal ESA and National Historic Preservation Act compliance

Project Development

- Activity locations coordinated with engineering, environmental, and realty teams
 - Avoided and minimized impacts to biological, cultural and Tribal resources
 - Avoided and minimized activities in areas where landowners are less likely to be willing
- Activities only undertaken on willing landowner parcels and in public right of way (with permission)

Impact Avoidance and Minimization

- To avoid and minimize potential environmental impacts, Authority will implement:
 - Standard geotechnical protocols and procedures
 - Similar to prior geotechnical activities
 - Mitigation measures in Draft EA/IS
 - Permit requirements
- Pre-activity surveys for biological, cultural and Tribal resources
 - Do not drill at any site:
 - With known cultural or Tribal resources based on previous survey information and pre-activity surveys
 - Where we can not adhere to biological mitigation measures or measures in the anticipated permits
- On-site biological, cultural and Tribal monitoring

CEQA/NEPA Compliance Approach

- Initial Study under CEQA
 - Authority Lead Agency
 - Will determine whether Authority adopts a mitigated negative declaration
- Environmental Assessment under NEPA
 - Reclamation Lead Agency
 - Will determine whether Reclamation adopts a Finding of No Significant Impact
- Joint Draft EA/IS
 - 30-day public review period
- Currently reviewing/finalizing the document with Reclamation

Mitigation Measures Anticipated in Draft EA/IS

Resource Area	Summary of Mitigation Measures
Biological Resources	Conduct mandatory biological resources awareness training; general measures to avoid and minimize effects on sensitive biological resources; measures to avoid and minimize effects on waters of the U.S./State; species specific measures for state and federally-listed plant and animal species along with migratory birds and eagles; and decontamination of equipment for aquatic invasive species
Paleontological Resources	Consult with qualified paleontologist if paleontological resources are discovered
Cultural Resources	Avoid impacts on cultural resources; conduct pre-activity pedestrian survey; prepare a post-review Discovery Plan; conduct archaeological sensitivity training; conduct archaeological monitoring; and immediately halt ground-disturbing activities if cultural resources or human remains are found and implement appropriate plans
Tribal Cultural Resources	Avoid or preserve in place; treat resources with culturally appropriate dignity; and implement permanent conservation easements for any resources found

Preliminary mitigation measures. These measures may change as staff and Reclamation continue review of the EA/IS.

Federal Permits/Authorizations

- USFWS Supplemental Biological Assessment
 - Amending prior geotechnical Biological Assessment and associated Biological Opinion
 - Reclamation submitted amended BA to USFWS on February 15, 2022
- National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106
 - Finalized cultural sensitivity report
 - Tribal consultation by Reclamation will be initiated shortly
 - SHPO consultation will be initiated by Reclamation following tribal consultation

Other Permits/Authorizations

- With the careful selection of locations to avoid impacts, only a few locations trigger the need to obtain additional permits
- Four locations will need permits under:
 - Clean Water Act Section 404
 - Clean Water Act Section 401
- Three locations will need a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
- Two locations will need permit from Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Action This Month

- Authorize:
 1. Release of the Draft Environmental Assessment/Initial Study
 - Authorize the Executive Director to file a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse and complete other noticing requirements to initiate the public review process
 2. Executive Director to sign and submit the necessary permit applications including associated application fees, if any