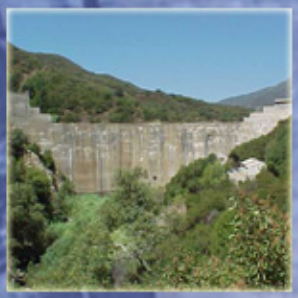
Matilija Dam

Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study



FINAL

Environmental Impact Statement/
Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR)
Changes to Draft EIS/EIR
Responses To Comments on Draft EIS/EIR

December 2004

Final

Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report

For The

MATILIJA DAM ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT

Prepared by

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District

December 2004

FINAL
Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report for the MATILIJA DAM ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT

Prepared by:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District

With Technical Assistance from:
Aspen Environmental Group
(Contract No. DACW09-02-D-0022)

and the
Ventura County Watershed Protection District

The Environmental Report Review Committee recommends that the Ventura County Watershed Protection District Board of Supervisors find that this document has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

_____
Bruce Smith, Chair
Environmental Report Review Committee

_____
Date

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APPENDIX A – MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN

APPENDIX B – VENTURA COUNTY INITIAL STUDY ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), as lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared this Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to analyze potential environmental impacts of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project options at Matilija Dam in Ventura County, California. This document analyzes the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, which aims to remove both Matilija Dam and accumulated sediment. Removal of Matilija Dam would eliminate a barrier to fish passage on Matilija Creek and facilitate the migration, spawning, and rearing of endangered southern steelhead. Accumulated sediment would be removed or re-configured to improve the Matilija Creek flow regime and ultimately restore Matilija Creek to a more natural pre-dam streambed configuration. This EIS/EIR examines seven project alternatives, including sub-alternatives, for dam and sediment removal plus the No Action Alternative. This document is written in compliance with NEPA, CEQA, and applicable federal, State and local environmental regulations.

PROJECT LOCATION

Matilija Dam is a concrete arch dam located about 16 miles from the Pacific Ocean and just over half a mile from the Matilija Creek confluence with the Ventura River in western Ventura County. Matilija Creek and North Fork Matilija Creek join approximately 15.5 miles from the coast to create the Ventura River, which has a drainage area of approximately 226 square miles (BOR, 2001). Matilija Creek exits the Los Padres National Forest about seven miles north of Matilija Dam, and then flows through a sliver of private land, surrounded on all sides by the Los Padres National Forest, until it reaches the northern areas of the City of Ojai. South of the confluence of Matilija Creek and North Fork Matilija Creek, the Ventura River flows south past the western edge of the City of Ojai, through the unincorporated areas of Oak View and Casitas Springs. In its lower reaches, the Ventura River flows through the City of San Buenaventura until it reaches its estuary.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The Ventura County Flood Control District (now the VCWPD) completed Matilija Dam in 1948 to provide water and flood control for adjacent areas. Over time sediment accumulated behind the dam, diminishing reservoir and flood control capacity. The dam also blocks the federally listed endangered steelhead trout's access to prime spawning habitat above the dam and inhibits sediment transport, a fundamental mechanism for beach replenishment. Downstream beaches have narrowed measurably since construction of Matilija Dam (BOR, 2002). Since its construction, the dam has blocked approximately 6,000,000 cubic yards of sediment (BOR, 2002). With a diminished supply of river-based sand replenishment, beaches in the region are becoming increasingly eroded, causing habitat reduction and a loss of beach sand for recreational use (BEACON, 1989).

Pollution and waterway alterations have also become major impediments to natural functions within the Ventura River watershed. Agricultural, industrial, and urban development of the watershed has degraded the natural environment by adding system-wide stresses, such as increased point and non-point pollution, loss of habitat, groundwater depletion, increased water use, over-harvesting of wildlife, invasion of exotic plants and wildlife, and structural alterations of waterways (Chubb, 1997; Moore,

1980; CRWQCB-LA, 2002; Capelli, 1999). Additionally, flood control structures contribute to reduced riparian habitat, altered stream flows, limited access of species (such as the steelhead) to critical habitat, and altered sediment transport.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The action proposed and analyzed in this EIS/EIR is the restoration of the Matilija Creek and Ventura River ecosystem with particular attention focused on restoring anadromous fish populations in Matilija Creek and returning natural sand replenishment to Ventura and other southern California beaches (USACE, 2001). The flood control and water supply functions of Matilija dam have diminished markedly since construction, and would be functionally obsolete within the next fifty years. The dam currently obstructs the natural watershed system of the Ventura River, resulting in decline of the steelhead trout population and alteration of sediment transport and downstream coastline erosion. Dam and sediment removal would restore the natural watershed system of the Ventura River.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

From many options initially considered, the following options were carried forward for analysis in this EIS/EIR.

No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, neither the Corps nor the VCWPD would initiate any action to restore the Matilija Creek riverine ecosystem, including removal of Matilija Dam. At an unspecified future date, Matilija Dam would need to be demolished due to age and structural deterioration. At that time, methods for removal of the sediment behind the dam would need to be investigated.

Alternative 1: Full Dam Removal/Mechanical Sediment Transport – Dispose of Fines, Sell Aggregate. For Alternative 1, the majority of the sediment behind the dam would be removed mechanically with the majority of fines slurried or trucked to a disposal area off site. Commercially marketable material would be sold as aggregate. Alternative 1 is designed to fully remove the dam in one continuous process.

Steps to complete the one-notch dam removal process would include: (1) constructing downstream flood protection measures; (2) removing fine material against the dam by sluicing material through low-level outlets during high flows (greater than 400 cfs), which generally occur in the winter months when the river flows, and/or dredging by either mechanical or hydraulic means; (3) constructing a temporary diversion for low flows; (4) removing the entire dam; (5) regrading sediments and constructing a low flow channel through the sediments; (6) waiting for a significant flow; and (7) monitoring downstream impacts during and after a significant flow.

Graded areas, including the slurry disposal area, would be re-vegetated with local native stock or sterile annual grasses to control erosion. Dam removal and slurry operations would require approximately two years to complete, but sale of the aggregate material is assumed to take approximately ten years.

Alternatives 2a and 2b: Full Dam Removal/Slurry and Natural Sediment Transport. Alternative 2 is designed to fully remove the dam in one continuous process and allow sediment removal by river hydraulic forces. This would move trapped sediment to locations more suitable for natural river

functions, thereby reducing cost and impacts associated with mechanical means of relocating sediment. Downstream sediment concentrations would be controlled only by river flow. The advantage of the single-notch scheme would be speed of removal and overall cost. Potentially, the dam could be deconstructed in a single season.

Steps to complete the one-notch dam removal process would include: (1) constructing downstream flood protection measures; (2) removing fine material against the dam by sluicing material through low-level outlets during high flows (greater than 400 cfs), which generally occur in the winter months when the river flows, and/or dredging by either mechanical or hydraulic means; (3) constructing a temporary diversion for low flows; (4) removing the entire dam; (5) regrading sediments and constructing a low flow channel through the sediments; (6) waiting for a significant flow; and (7) monitoring downstream impacts during and after a significant flow.

Within Alternative 2, there are two sub-alternatives, which differ in how fine sediments are transported. In Alternative 2a (Slurry "Reservoir Area" Fines Off Site), the 2.1 million cubic yards of fine sediment in the reservoir area would be excavated and slurried to an off-site disposal area. In Alternative 2b (Natural Transport of "Reservoir Fines"), approximately 0.5 million cubic yards of material immediately behind the dam sufficient to allow safe removal of the dam would be excavated and stockpiled upstream. All sediment would then erode by storms and naturally transport downstream.

Alternatives 3a and 3b: Incremental Dam Removal/Slurry and Natural Sediment Transport. Dam and sediment removal techniques for this alternative would be similar to Alternative 2a, but the Incremental Dam Removal Alternative interrupts the dam demolition process. This interval of interruption is assumed to be two years, although may require more time to allow erosion of a sufficient quantity of impounded sediments. Interruption of demolition would allow eroded reservoir sediments to stabilize downstream of the dam and provide the river with an opportunity to adjust to sediment inflows.

Steps to complete a two-notch dam removal process include: (1) constructing downstream flood protection measures; (2) removing fine material against the dam (to the elevation of 1,000 feet in the first phase and to the base of the dam in the second) by sluicing material through low-level outlets during high flows (greater than 400 cfs), which generally occur in the winter months when the river flows, and/or dredging by either mechanical or hydraulic means; (3) constructing a temporary diversion for low flows; (4) regrading sediments and constructing a low flow channel through sediments as necessary; (5) notching the dam; (6) waiting for a flow that moves a significant amount of sediment; (7) monitoring downstream impacts during and after a significant flow; (8) revising modeling estimates based on monitoring results; and (9) repeating Steps 2 through 7 to remove the remainder of the dam.

Within Alternative 3, there are two major sub-alternatives, which differ in how fine sediments are transported. In Alternative 3a (Slurry "Reservoir Area" Fines Off Site), the fine sediment in the reservoir area would be excavated and slurried to an off site disposal area. In Alternative 3b (Natural Transport of "Reservoir Fines"), a quantity of material immediately behind the dam sufficient to allow safe removal of the dam would be excavated and stockpiled upstream. All sediment would then erode by storms and naturally transport downstream.

Alternatives 4a and 4b: Full Dam Removal/On-Site Sediment Stabilization: Long-Term Transport Period and Short-Term Transport Period. In this alternative, a channel would be excavated through the sediments upstream of the dam. The fine sediment in the reservoir area would be excavated and slurried to an offsite disposal area. There are two options under consideration for this alternative: long- and short-term transportation periods for the sediments (Alternatives 4a and 4b). Both Alternatives 4a and 4b are designed to fully remove the dam in one continuous process. For Alternative 4a (Long-Term Transport Period), remaining sediments would be stabilized and erode by storm events over a 50- to 100-year time period. In Alternative 4b (Short-Term Transport Period), the remaining sediments would be stabilized in a manner that would allow sediments to erode naturally, but at a rate controlled in order to minimize downstream impacts. For Alternative 4, the entire concrete dam structure above the original streambed would be removed. This alternative is estimated to take three years to complete, including slurry of the Reservoir Area sediment, dam removal, channel excavation, placement of riprap stone protection, and re-vegetation.

THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

The Corps evaluated the alternatives using a variety of methodologies and over a range of variables, examining hydrologic input, downstream sediment and turbidity, flooding, flood protection improvements, beach nourishment and ocean sediment yield, environmental resources, topography, groundwater impacts, completeness, effectiveness, efficiency, acceptability, costs, benefits, and contributions to National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) goals. The results of these comparative analyses led the Corps to choose Alternative 4b as the Recommended Plan for the Proposed Action.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This EIS/EIR analyzes all environmental issue areas deemed necessary by NEPA and CEQA guidelines, and presents mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant impacts. The environmental issue areas considered for the alternatives analyzed, including the No Action Alternative, are:

- Earth Resources
- Hydrology and Water Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Socioeconomics
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Recreation

The resource areas are addressed in detail in Section 5. The level of significance is also included for each impact based on the following classification system: significant unavoidable impact (Class I); significant but mitigable impact (Class II), less-than-significant impact (Class III); and beneficial impact (Class IV). Table ES-1 (at the end of this section) summarizes the impacts and mitigation measures by resource area for each project alternative. Section 5.12 summarizes compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders.

IMPACT SUMMARY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 4b is the environmentally superior alternative. Alternative 4b would result in the largest overall increase in habitat value when measuring benefits to steelhead habitat, riparian habitat, and

natural hydrologic and sedimentation processes. Alternative 4b would also return a greater amount of sediment to the Ventura River and Ventura County beaches than the other alternatives. While Alternative 4b does not have the least impacts across all issue areas, it also does not have substantially greater impacts than the other action alternatives and most of its adverse impacts, particularly air quality and noise impacts related to construction, are short term in nature. A comparison of the alternatives is provided in Table ES-1.

PUBLIC CONCERNS/AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

The Corps and VCWPD have worked with local, State, and federal agencies and involved the public during the EIS/EIR process. The Draft EIS/EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review beginning on July 16, 2004 and closing on August 30, 2004. The Draft EIS/EIR was made available on the project website at http://www.matilija.org. A public meeting was held on July 28, 2004 at the Ventura County Administration Building. The project and the Draft EIS/EIR were widely advertised by the local media. The public involvement process up to release of the Draft EIS/EIR is summarized in Section 1.5.4 of the Draft EIS/EIR.

Areas of controversy identified during the public scoping process include: potential impacts of the project on downstream water supply infrastructure; impacts to groundwater percolation from silt disposal; impacts to downstream residential areas and the potential for relocation of several residences; impacts related to air quality and noise caused by construction activities and construction traffic; and impacts to native steelhead.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The application of existing regulations and permitting requirements and the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in this EIS/EIR would resolve nearly all environmental issues associated with the implementation of the alternatives discussed in this document. Impacts that would remain significant despite application of existing regulations and proposed mitigation measures are summarized in Section 6, Unavoidable Significant Impacts.

Table ES-1: Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Impact Classification								Mitigation Measures for Proposed Action
	NA	1	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	4b	
EARTH RESOURCES									
Temporary erosion impacts during construction.	III	III	II	II	II	II	III	II	**ER-1**: Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). **ER-2**: Reduce off-site erosion.
Restoration of the more natural topography in Matilija Canyon and replenishment of sediment to the Ventura River.	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	None
Potential for encountering unknown soil and/or groundwater contamination during grading or excavation.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**ER-3**: Observe exposed soil.
Spills of hazardous materials during construction (vehicle fuels, oils, and other maintenance fluids) could cause soil or groundwater contamination.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**ER-4**: Hazardous substance control.
HYDROLOGY AND WATER RESOURCES									
Violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade water quality.	III	III	III	II	III	II	III	III	None
Cause lateral erosion, streambed scour, or long-term channel aggradation/degradation resulting in damage to private property, utility lines, or structures.	III	III, IV	III, IV	III, IV	III, IV	III, IV	III, IV	III, IV	None
Increase flood hazards.	I	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Deplete groundwater or surface water supplies or interfere with groundwater flow or recharge.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES									
Short-term disruption of wildlife movement during project construction	III	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	None
Temporary and permanent loss of lacustrine, riverine, and palustrine habitats at Matilija Dam.	III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	**B-1**: Pre-Construction biological surveys. **B-2**: Pre-Construction plant surveys. **B-3**: Capture and relocate. **B-4**: Agency coordination. **B-5**: Restricted initial clearing. **B-6**: Fueling. **B-7**: Construction monitoring. **B-8**: Downstream monitoring. **B-9**: Worker training and Best Management Practices. **B-10**: Trash removal. **B-11**: BMPs for Giant Reed Control. **B-12**: Predator control plan. **B-13**: Restoration plan. **B-15**: Pre-Construction bat surveys. **B-16**: Development of an Operations and Maintenance Program.
Temporary loss of sensitive vegetation communities associated with the 94-acre slurry disposal site.	III	II	II	III	II	III	III	II	**B-1**, **B-2**, **B-3**, **B-4**, **B-5**, **B-6**, **B-7**, **B-8**, **B-9**, **B-10** **B-14**: Oak and walnut replanting.

Table ES-1: Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (cont.)

Degradation of riparian habitats and sensitive species impacts associated with downstream flood control improvements.	III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	II, III	**B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, B-7, B-9, B-12, B-13, B-15, B-16**
Short-term impacts from downstream sedimentation and temporary or localized loss of sensitive species or habitats.	III	III	I	I	I	I	III	III	**B-1, B-2, B-3, B-5, B-7, B-8, B-9**
Long-term restoration of ecosystem functions, development of wildlife corridors, and establishment of connectivity for steelhead and other wildlife species.	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	**IV**	**IV**	**B-8, B-11, B-13, B-16**
CULTURAL RESOURCES									
Project construction could affect sites or structures listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**CR-1**: Survey for historic or prehistoric resources.
Erosion after removal of sediment may undermine the stability of sites COE#1 and COE#2, and damage any cultural deposits present.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**CR-2**: National Register of Historic Places Evaluation.
Removal of sediment by natural and mechanical means would have an adverse effect on any undiscovered buried historic and prehistoric resources that may be present beneath sediment behind Matilija Dam.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	**II**	**CR-3**: Develop discovery plan for previously unknown resources. **CR-4**: Consultation with Native American Tribes.
AESTHETICS									
Improvement of the scenic value of Matilija Canyon by returning it to a more natural state.	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	None
Obstruction or degradation of views of ridgelines from the Ojai Valley Trail due to construction of levees and floodwalls.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Obstruction or degradation of views of the Ventura River due to construction of levees and floodwalls.	III	I, II, III	I, II, III	I, II, III	I, II, III	I, II, III	I, II, III	I, II, III	**AE-1**: Adjust alignment of levees and floodwalls to allow vegetative screening of flood control improvements. **AE-2**: Screen levees and floodwalls with vegetation planting. **AE-3**: Create trails over the Rice Road slurry disposal site following re-vegetation of site.
Enhancement of unique and historically significant landmarks, such as Hanging Rock in Matilija Canyon.	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	None
Temporarily obstruct views to the Ventura River and temporarily deteriorate the aesthetic value of the project area during project construction.	III	I	II	II	II	II	II	**II**	**AE-4**: Reduce visibility of project activities and equipment.
AIR QUALITY									
Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the VCAPCD Air Quality Management Plan.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None

Table ES-1: Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (cont.)

Result in direct violation or substantially contribute to existing NAAQS/CAAQS violation.	III	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	**A-1**: Limit engine idling. **A-2**: Low emission diesel engines. **A-3**: Limit use of internal combustion engines. **A-4**: Low-emission vehicles. **A-6**: Watering areas to reduce dust. **A-7**: Controlling fugitive dust. **A-8**: Dust stabilization. **A-9**: Traffic speed limit signs. **A-10**: Excessive winds. **A-11**: Street sweeping.
Result in NOx/ROC emissions above 5 lbs/day in the Ojai Planning Area or 25 lbs/day elsewhere.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**A-1**, **A-2**, **A-3**, **A-4**
Expose sensitive receptors or project workers to substantial pollutant concentrations, or expose a substantial number of people to objectionable odors.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**A-1**, **A-2**, **A-3**, **A-4, A-6, A-7, A-8, A-9, A-10, A-11**. **A-12**: Respiratory protection. **A-13:** Valley Fever mitigation
Result in non-conformance with the federal General Conformity Rule.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**A-1**, **A-2**, **A-3**, **A-4** **A-5**: NOx emission offsets.
NOISE									
Noise generated from construction and operation and maintenance activities.	III	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	**N-1**: Limit hours of hand-held equipment use. **N-2**: Limit hours of heavy-duty equipment use. **N-3**: Use of muffler equipment. **N-4**: Locate haul routes away from sensitive receptors. **N-5**: Use of electric motors. **N-6**: Controlled blasts. **N-7**: Use of hearing protection. **N-8**: Public notice of construction. **N-9**: Noise monitoring.
SOCIOECONOMICS									
Construction could require a labor force greater than is available locally, spurring unintended growth.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Construction could require production of additional housing to accommodate workers.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Benefit the local economy by employing local workers and using local nurseries for restoration.	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	None
Displace businesses, such as Matilija Hot Springs.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Construction and/or operation could unduly burden a disadvantaged economic or social group.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	**III**	None
TRANSPORTATION									
Construction commuter work trips would affect roadway level of service levels in the project area.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	

Table ES-1: Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (cont.)

Heavy construction haul truck trips would affect roadway level of service levels in the project area.	III	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	**T-1**: Transportation Management Plan.
Construction activities could physically damage public roads, sidewalks, mediums, etc.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**T-2**: Road repair from construction activities.
LAND USE									
Purchase of the Matilija Hot Springs retreat center and 11 residences along Camino Cielo and the relocation of the occupants.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Divisions or disruptions to communities caused by project construction or improvements of the levees and floodwalls.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	None
Conversion of farmland (orchard) at one of the possible desilting basin sites to a non-agricultural use.	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	**III**	None
RECREATION									
Increase recreation opportunities and value at Matilija Canyon and coastal beaches	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	None
Degrade or displace existing recreational facilities.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**R-2**: Parks agency coordination, notification, and signage. **AE-2**: Screen levees and floodwalls with vegetation planting. **AE-3**: Create trails over the Rice Road slurry disposal site following re-vegetation of site.
Impair the safety of recreational users.	III	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	**R-2**: Parks agency coordination, notification, and signage.
Close a public recreational facility for an extended period of time. Class I for periods over 1 year.	III	I, II	I, II	I, II	I, II	I, II	I, II	**I, II**	**R-1**: Construct a ramp to provide access over the Meiners Oaks flood protection. **R-2** **R-3:** Casitas Municipal Water District Recreation Agreement.
Reduce recreation use within the Lake Casitas Recreation Area from slurry intake installation	III	II	II	III	II	III	II	**II**	**R-3**

Notes:
Class I: significant unavoidable impact
Class II: significant but mitigable impact
Class III: less-than-significant impact
Class IV: beneficial impact

1. INTRODUCTION

This document, in combination with the Draft EIS/EIR (dated July 2004), constitutes the Final EIS/EIR for the proposed Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project. This Final EIS/EIR includes the following items:

- Section 2: Changes to the Draft EIS/EIR
- Section 3: Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR
- Section 4: Responses to comments on the Draft EIS/EIR.
- Section 5: Comments and Responses per Ventura County's Environmental Report Review Committee (ERRC) Process

The selection of Alternative 4b (Full Dam Removal/On-Site Sediment Stabilization: Short-Term Transport Period) as the Recommended and Environmentally Preferable Alternative under NEPA and the Environmentally Superior Alternative under CEQA, as discussed in the Draft EIS/EIR, is confirmed in this document.

2. Changes to the Draft EIS/EIR

INTRODUCTION

The following pages provide specific changes made to the Draft EIS/EIR to correct errors or to clarify issues of concern brought forward in the Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. [All comments are provided in Section 3 of this document and Responses to the Comments are provided in Section 4.] The changes are referenced to the specific sections and subsections of the Draft EIS/EIR being changed, with additional reference to the page number in the Draft EIS/EIR also provided. In instances where text is being added or deleted from the Draft EIS/EIR, these changes are shown with new text being underlined and deleted text crossed out. Changes to the Executive Summary have been incorporated in the Executive Summary included as part of this Final EIS/EIR.

Global Changes to EIS/EIR

The following changes to the EIS/EIR shall apply globally throughout the document:

- Alternative 4a: Full Dam Removal/Long-Term Sediment Transport – Long-Term Transport Period shall be revised to read: "Alternative 4a: Full Dam Removal/On-Site Sediment Stabilization: Long-Term Transport Period."
- Alternative 4b (Recommended Plan): Full Dam Removal/Long-Term Sediment Transport – Short-Term Transport Period shall be revised to read: "Alternative 4b: Full Dam Removal/On-Site Sediment Stabilization: Short-Term Transport Period."
- Mitigation B-11 (Giant Reed Eradication) shall be revised to read: "Mitigation B-11 (BMPs for Giant Reed Control)."
- Mitigation B-12 (Predator removal plan) shall be revised to read: "Mitigation B-12 (Predator Control Plan)."
- Pages 1-6, 1-15, and 5-12: All areas where it indicates that the EIS/R "will be revised" should be replaced with "has been revised".

Specific Changes to the EIS/EIR

Section 1: Introduction

Page 1-3, second paragraph (after bulleted list), fourth sentence, revise as follows:

> Current members include: the National Park Service, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), United States Geologic Survey (USGS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), United States Forest Service - Los Padres National Forest, United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Congressman Gallegly, State Senator Jack O'Connell, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Cities of San Buenaventura (Ventura),

Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Ojai, Casitas Municipal Water District, Matilija Coalition, Friends of Ventura River, Surfrider Foundation, American Rivers, California Trout, Fixing Stream Habitats Technical Assistance Program (FISHTAP), Ventura County Wetlands Task Force, Institute for Fisheries Resources, and Ventura County Supervisors Flynn, Long, and Bennett.

Page 1-5, Figure 1-3, box titled Environmental Working Group, insert following under "Other Agencies":

National Marine Fisheries Service;

California Department of Fish and Game;

Matilija Coalition;

Steelhead Coalition;

Casitas Municipal Water District;

University of California's Cooperative Extension.

Page 1-6, after second paragraph, insert the following:

The feasibility study phase ends with the completion of the Chief of Engineer's Report (see Figure 1-4). The next planning phase, the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase involves the more detailed design of the proposed project. The Corps and District intends to fully utilize the expertise of the stakeholders that participated in the feasibility study during the PED phase.

Section 2: Need for and Objectives of the Proposed Action

Page 2-2, second full paragraph, insert following after last sentence:

(For a more detailed discussion of the status of steelhead in the feasibility study area, see the Biological Assessment I Appendix C1.)

Section 3: Alternatives

Page 3-8, first partial paragraph, insert following sentence after last sentence:

An improved bridge will be constructed and will provide an all-weather crossing, in accordance with County of Ventura Road Standards.

Page 3-29, first paragraph, revise as follows:

As described for Alternatives 1, 2a, and 3a, the site would be stripped of all vegetation and reservoir-area sediments would be slurried to one of the three potential disposal sites downstream. A channel would be excavated through the remaining sediments. Sediment excavated from the channel would be temporarily placed in storage locations within the original reservoir limits. Erosion of trapped sediment by natural fluvial processes would be allowed to occur in areas along the active channel, except in areas in the vicinity of the storage areas. A soil cement revetment seven feet above channel invert and five feet below would protect storage areas.

Page 3-29, second paragraph, first two sentences, revise as follows:

The upper portion of the reach comprised of coarse sediment (sand, gravel, and cobble) would also not have to be protected with any revetment to allow for selected areas to be eroded under the smallest flow events. Revetment would be placed to offer protection within portions of the reservoir basin where the remaining trapped sediments contain higher proportions of fines (i.e., the Delta area).

Page 3-30, first full paragraph, revise as follows:

After a large percentage of the sediments have eroded and the soil cement removed, the site would be re-vegetated as in Alternative 1. Alternative 4b would require the high level flood control protection described above in Section 3.1. For this alternative it is assumed that the re-vegetation activities would occur approximately ten years after notice to proceed.

Page 3-30, third full paragraph, third sentence, revise as follows:

Figures 3.6-2a and 3.6-2b show the components associated with Alternative 4b.

Page 3-31, footnote 1, revise as follows:

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a subcommittee of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Team. The subcommittee is co-chaired by the Corps and the VCWPD. Other members of the subcommittee include NMFS, USFWS, CDFG, BOR, Casitas MWD, Matilija Coalition, Institute for Fisheries Resources, and others.

Page 3-37, footnote 2, revise as follows:

The Plan Formulation Group is a subcommittee of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Team. The subcommittee is co-chaired by the Corps and the VCWPD. Other members of the subcommittee include Ventura County Board of Supervisors, NMFS, BOR, Casitas MWD, Institute for Fisheries Resources, and Matilija Coalition among others.

Page 3-38, second full paragraph, last sentence, revise as follows:

A brief comparison of the impacts of the alternatives is provided below by issue area that is considered important in the feasibility study area. A summary is provided in Table 3-9 at the end of this section.

Section 4: Affected Environment

Section 4.2: Hydrology and Water Resources

Page 4.2-8, third and fourth paragraphs, revise as follows:

The California Water Code (Water Code) establishes policy for water quality control for State (Section 13100-13198) and regional (Section 13200-13286) water resources. California is divided into nine water quality control regions, each of which has developed regional water quality control plans to address water quality issues specific to the region. The Ventura River watershed is under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) (Region 4). Region 4 adopted the *Water Quality Control Plan: Los Angeles Region* (Basin Plan) in June of

1994. The Basin Plan was designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of waters located within the Los Angeles Region (CRWQCB-LA, 1994). The Basin Plan also identifies beneficial uses for specific water bodies located within the region and establishes water quality standards for the water bodies. The beneficial uses designated for the watershed are many and varied with municipal and domestic supply; groundwater recharge; wildlife habitat; warmwater habitat; coldwater habitat; freshwater replenishment; agricultural supply; wetland habitat; migration of aquatic organisms; spawning, production, and/or early life development; rare, threatened, or endangered species; and contact recreation being the most sensitive in either the Ventura River main stem, Matilija Creek, or Lake Casitas. Other beneficial uses include non-contact water recreation, industrial service supply, and industrial process supply.

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA, 33 USC 1250, *et seq*., at 1313(d)) requires States to identify waters that do not meet water quality standards after applying certain required technology-based effluent limits and to classify them by category. States are required to list such waters and submit the list to the EPA for review and approval. The State-developed and submitted list is known as the Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. According to the 2002 303(d) list (approved by USEPA in July 2003), the impaired waters within the project area include the following:

- Ventura River Estuary – algae, eutrophic, fecal and total coliforms, trash
- Ventura River Reaches 1 and 2 (estuary to Weldon Canyon) – algae
- Ventura River Reach 3 (Weldon Canyon to confluence with Coyote Creek) – pumping, water diversions
- Ventura River Reach 4 (Coyote Creek to Camino Cielo Road) – pumping, water diversions
- Matilija Creek Reach 1 (junction with North Fork to Reservoir) – fish barriers
- Matilija Creek Reach 2 (above reservoir) – fish barriers
- Matilija Reservoir – fish barriers
- San Antonio Creek – nitrogen
- Canada Larga – fecal coliform, low dissolved oxygen

Additionally, states are required to prioritize waters/watersheds for future development of total maximum daily load (TMDL), or assessment of water quality problems, contributors, and actions for restoring and protecting bodies of water. The Clean Water Action Plan (USEPA and USDA, 1998) establishes four assessment categories of watersheds. Categories I thru IV are described as follows:

- Category I - Watersheds that are candidates for increased restoration activities due to impaired water quality or other impaired natural resource goals (emphasis on aquatic systems)

- Category II - Watersheds with good water quality that, through regular program activities, can be sustained and improved
- Category III - Watersheds with pristine or sensitive areas on federal, State or tribal lands that need protection
- Category IV - Watersheds where more information is needed in order to categorize them.

Page 4.2-9, third full paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

The RWQCB, Region 4 classifies the Ventura River and its tributaries as a Category I (impaired) non-priority watershed.

Section 4.4: Cultural Resources

Page 4.4-4, insert following after fourth paragraph:

The site of Matilija Hot Springs has been designated County Landmark No. 25. As such, it would be considered a significant resource under CEQA. It may also be NRHP eligible. Additional studies are required to evaluate this site.

Page 4.4-5, Section 4.4.1.5, insert following to end of fourth paragraph:

The site at Matilija Hot Springs may also be NRHP eligible and a formal evaluation is required.

Section 4.11: Recreation

Page 4.11-1, first paragraph, revise as follows:

This section presents information on recreational facilities, activities and opportunities within the project study area, which ranges from the coastal regions near the Ventura River Estuary to the Matilija Canyon. The study area traverses the County of Ventura, City of San Buenaventura, City of Ojai, and Los Padres National Forest (LPNF). Nearby Lake Casitas, provides a variety of water-related recreational opportunities.

Page 4.11-1, Section 4.11.1, revise as follows:

Seven public agencies and a non-profit community group maintain recreational facilities in the study area, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture - National Forest Service (USFS), California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks), California Department of Agriculture, County of Ventura, City of San Buenaventura, City of Ojai, Casitas Municipal Water District, and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. A description of the recreational facilities maintained by each public agency is given below.

Page 4.11-1, Section 4.11.1.1, first paragraph, last sentence, revise as follows:

As shown in Figure 1-1, the LPNF-ORD and the Matilija Wilderness surround Matilija Creek and the Matilija Dam, although much of the creek and the dam itself are not in USFS lands.

Page 4.11-4, Section 4.11.1.2, first paragraph, revise as follows:

California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks) operates six parks in Ventura County, five of which are coastal parks in the general vicinity of the Ventura River Estuary. Two of the parks are located within a mile of the Ventura River estuary: Emma Wood State Beach to the northwest and San Buenaventura State Beach to the southeast. California State Parks also maintains the Omer Rains Trail, which runs west of Emma Wood State Beach Park to five miles east of the Ventura Pier. A more detailed description of the facilities available at the parks is given in Table 4.11-3.

Page 4.11-6, after second paragraph, insert new Section 4.11.1.8, as follows:

4.11.1.8 Lake Casitas

The 6,200-acre Lake Casitas Recreation Area is located several miles southwest of Matilija Dam on Coyote Creek, a tributary of the Ventura River. The lake is operated as a drinking water source by the Casitas Municipal Water District, which limits recreation activities to those that do not involve body contact with the lake water. Although swimming and water skiing on the lake are prohibited, many other recreation opportunities are offered. Fees are charged to use the recreation area. Most of the recreation facilities are located along the northern edge of the lake. Camping for tents, tent trailers, campers, and other recreation vehicles are available in 12 campgrounds, supported by camp stores, bathrooms and showers. Picnicking is available in many lake and mountain-view sites. Boating and fishing allow exploration of the 32 miles of shoreline supported by: floating restrooms; a bait and tackle shop that sell equipment and fishing licenses; slip rentals; and gasoline. A new east shoreline trail provides two miles of hiking, bicycling, and nature viewing. Swimming is available at the Water Adventure park which includes aquatic playground and "river rafting." Many organized events are offered throughout the year, such as the Ojai Wine Festival and the Native American Indian Pow-Wow.

Section 5: Environmental Consequences

Section 5.2: Hydrology and Water Resources

Page 5.2-3, fourth paragraph, revise as follows:

Alternative 4b requires that a temporarily stable channel be constructed through the trapped sediments behind Matilija Dam. The lower portion of this narrow channel would be stabilized, but the upper part would be allowed to erode. The channel design would allow the low flows to pass through the area of the trapped sediments without picking up any additional sediment. The erosion would only be allowed to take place during the high flow events. The reservoir material would be removed by hydraulic dredge and transported by slurry line to a downstream disposal site. The deposition impacts in the downstream river channel associated with this alternative would be less severe than Alternative 2a.

Page 5.2-4, first full paragraph, revise as follows:

In the short term, removal of the dam following completion of the slurrying operation would make available to the river system remnant fine sediment remaining from the dredged reservoir area. The fine sediment concentrations are estimated to be between two and ten times higher than No Action conditions during the period preceding a first average storm event passing through the reservoir area. It would be conservatively assumed that concentrations and turbidity would increase by a factor of ten until the first storm passes.

Page 5.2-4, second full paragraph, revise as follows:

Under Alternative 4b, the long-term increase in turbidity after construction is completed should only occur during high flow events. The modeling studies for the alternatives show an increase in turbidity levels by up to a factor of two to three times baseline conditions for the first few higher flow events (greater than ten-year recurrence). The sediment concentration during these events is already high and it is expected that the increase in turbidity may be within natural variability. For storms less than ten-year events, the flows would not contain any fine sediment eroded from the trapped materials due to the protection offered by the soil cement revetment in the channel.

Page 5.2-4, insert following after second full paragraph:

During the staged removal of soil cement revetment (starting from the downstream end) to allow for the eventual complete erosion of the remaining protected sediment, it is estimated that turbidity levels could temporarily increase by a factor of 2 to 10 above No Action conditions. The duration and level of turbidity would depend on how much fine sediment is exposed to a given magnitude of flow event. During lower flow conditions, flows would remain in the active channel thereby limiting any access to the finer sediment (hence increased turbidity effects) along the unprotected portion of the bank. Following the final staged removal of the revetment, turbidity levels would be expected to stabilize to levels similar to the No Action Alternative after one or two average storm flow events pass through the reservoir basin.

Page 5.2-5, first paragraph, revise as follows:

Arsenic has been detected in discrete samples of the trapped sediment obtained in field investigations (July through September 2001), and the Corps and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District assessed the potential threat to Lake Casitas and Mira Monte well. Concentrations levels detected were considered within normal background levels and therefore would be considered less than significant **(Class III)**. Concerns have been raised by water users and purveyors regarding potential water quality impacts resulting from release of trapped sediment into the riverine system or placement of these materials into disposal sites. Results of field investigations conducted in 2001 indicate detection of regulated substances including Copper, Nickel, Arsenic and DDT. Preliminary consultation with another water agency indicated that the concentration levels detected were considered within normal background levels and would not usually be associated with adversely impacting water quality. Initial consultation by the Corps has occurred with the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Health Services. Future consultation with the California Department of Health Services and the California

Regional Water Quality Control Board will continue during the next more detailed phase of work (Preconstruction, Engineering and Design phase).

Lateral Erosion, Streambed Scour, Long-Term Channel Aggradation /Degradation

Another concern related to water quality is the potential to cause lateral erosion, streambed scour, or long-term channel aggradation/degradation that could result in damage to private property, utility lines, or other structures. The removal of the dam would re-supply sediment to Matilija Creek and the Ventura River downstream of the dam and would change the trend from erosion to deposition in the upper reaches. Deposition would change the channel plan characteristics, channel geometry, and riverbed material. Deposition would continue until the sediment supply equilibrates with the transport capacity. The equilibrium condition would be approximately that of the pre-dam condition that existed prior to 1947.

Page 5.2-5, third paragraph, revise as follows:

Within the reservoir and delta area, a 100-foot wide channel would be constructed through the reservoir sediments and the banks of the channel would be temporarily stabilized with seven feet of revetment extending above the channel invert (bottom) and five feet below the invert to prevent undermining of the structure. Erosion would occur when the water elevations exceed the revetment height and erode the banks of the channel. The channel slopes are 3H:1V and therefore erosion would initially occur as surface erosion. After the banks near the channel have been eroded, steeper slopes may result and mass failure of banks may then occur. This erosion would be considered beneficial **(Class IV)**, as the canyon would be returned to a more natural hydrologic condition.

Page 5.2-7, last paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Reach 6b, RM 16.5-15.0**,** begins immediately downstream of Matilija Dam and extends downstream to the canyon mouth.

Page 5.2-8, first full paragraph, after 3rd sentence, add the following sentence:

A new bridge would be constructed in the vicinity that would safely pass storm flows and sediment.

Page 5.2-8, second full paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Reach 6a, RM 15.0-14.2, begins at the canyon mouth and extends downstream to immediately upstream of Robles Diversion Dam.

Page 5.2-8, last paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

While some deposition does occur between RM 13.4 and 10.4, in Reaches 4 and 5, no damageable property is located in close proximity to the channel.

Page 5.2-9, first partial paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Robles Diversion is located at the head of Reach 5.

Page 5.2-9, after first paragraph, insert following:

> Ojai Valley Sanitary District has sanitary sewer pipelines located along the edge of the Ventura River in the vicinity of Baldwin Road. The slurry sites proposed for the project may cause changes in channel flows resulting in potential flood and/or erosion damage to the infrastructure just upstream (east side) and downstream (west side) of the bridge.

Page 5.2-9, fifth paragraph, third sentence, revise as follows:

> The Cañada Larga area includes residences, a school, the City of Ventura Water Filtration Plant, Ojai Valley Sanitary District Treatment Plant, and a gasoline refinery located on the south side of the channel. Alternative 4b includes raising the existing 10,102-foot long levee.

Page 5.2.9, **Groundwater and Surface Water Supplies**, this section of the September 2004 version of the Final EIS/EIR was significantly modified to clarify the discussion relative to impacts to Groundwater and Surface Water supplies. The September 2004 version had black text (from the DEIS/EIR), red text (additions to the DEIS/EIR) and strikeout (deletions from the DEIS/EIR). The black and red text are presented below. New text for this version (December 2004) are in blue; deleted text has strikeout through it.

This section is revise as follows:

Groundwater and surface water supplies are affected by amount and duration of rainfall, the turbidity and sediment loads in the runoff, and the composition of the riverbed and watershed. Potential impacts to water supply caused by t~~T~~he removal of Matilija Dam are considered adverse but less than significant (under CEQA), as described in the following text. ~~ could potentially deplete groundwater or surface water supplies or interfere with groundwater flow or recharge due to increases in turbidity and sedimentation~~n.

FOSTER PARK

It is estimated that project-related turbidity increases would cause surface diversions from existing facilities at Foster Park to be reduced by approximately 90 to 460 acre feet the first year after construction of the dam, diminishing to no reduction in diversions after 15 years. The first year reduction amounts to approximately 2 to 8 percent of total yearly diversion. Total reduction in diversions over the 15-year period is estimated to between 1,400 and 5,000 acre-feet, which represents approximately 4 to 19 percent of the six-year diversion total. The proposed project alternative includes the construction of two groundwater wells at Foster Park to offset the possible reduction. ~~**It is estimated that project-related turbidity increases would cause surface diversions from existing facilities at Foster Park to be reduced by approximately 470 acre feet the first year after construction of the dam, diminishing to no reduction in diversions after six years. The first year reduction amounts to approximately seven percent of total**~~

~~yearly diversion. Total reduction in diversions over the six-year period is estimated at 1,600 acre-feet, which represents approximately four percent of the six-year diversion total.~~ **The proposed project ~~alternative~~ includes the construction of two groundwater wells at Foster Park to offset the possible reduction. With the inclusion of these wells as part of the project, impacts to City of Ventura water supply facilities are considered adverse, but less than significant** (Class III) **at Foster Park.**

The groundwater extracted from the Foster Park wells is expected to be no more than the amount of surface water the City would divert from the Ventura River to offset ~~if not for~~ the loss of diversion resulting from Project ~~Matilija~~ sediment-generated turbidity. As such, no net increase of water is expected to be lost from the Foster Park area. No overall impact to aquatic or riparian resources are expected as the total groundwater and surface water amount the City extracts is expected to be unaffected. (Class III)

The wells are proposed to be located on opposite sides of the river in the vicinity of Foster Park. The east well will be located in an open space area of the Foster Park recreation.area and out of the active river area. The area has a few large trees and an understory of non-native grasses that appear to be mowed annually. The second well will be located on a low flood terrace at the west riverbank edge approximately 1,500 feet upstream of the park. The area may be categorized as passive agriculture with patches of small trees. Access to both wells would be via existing roads.

LAKE CASITAS

Potential impacts to diversion operations at Lake Casitas are addressed above, and are prevented by the proposed sediment bypass structure. Impacts would be adverse, but less than significant **(Class III)**.

WATER LOST DUE TO LAKE REMOVAL

Casitas MWD has a lease with Ventura County Watershed Protection District ~~to~~ allowing the use of stored water at Matilija Dam until 2009, when the current lease expires. ~~Matilija Dam provides an average of 590 acre-feet/yearyear of water for Robles diversions under current operating criteria.~~ The construction timeframe for the project is not anticipated to begin until 2008 at the earliest. The first year of construction will include downstream features such as bridge modifications, levee construction and slurry pipeline and disposal site construction. The slurry of fines and dam deconstruction will not begin until the second year of construction, in 2009. Therefore, the CMWD lease with the VCWPD will expire prior to any construction activities that may impact the Matilija Dam water supply. Regardless of the lease or any water rights agreements, the loss of water supply caused directly by the removal of Matilija Dam is considered adverse, but less than significant, as explained below. ~~The safe yield water supply that is estimated to be lost when the Dam is removed in year 2007 is 1,180 acre-feet. Obtaining a similar amount of water from alternative source would offset this loss. At this time,~~

~~Alternative 4b assumes this would involve purchasing water from the California State Water Project. During Preconstruction Engineering and Design other alternatives, such as obtaining water from groundwater or other less costly sources, would be considered for mitigation. Because the water could be obtained from other sources, the loss of Matilija Dam storag water is considered adverse, but less than significant (Class III).~~

Water supply currently available due to the Matilija Dam reservoir will be lost both with the proposed project and under the No Action alternative. With implementation of the project, the reservoir will be lost 11 years sooner than the No Action alternative. The loss of water refers to the storage capacity of the lake currently managed by Casitas MWD to maximize diversion opportunities.

Casitas MWD currently (2003) diverts an average of 590 ac-ft of water per year by controlling releases of water trapped behind Matilija Dam. Today, this represents about 5% of the average amount (12,500 ac-ft) diverted by Casitas from the Robles facility per year, although water diversions vary from 0 to 45,000 ac-ft depending on the rainfall. The Robles facility provides approximately one-half of the total Casitas MWD water supply.

Deconstruction of Matilija Dam is expected to begin in 2009, therefore the potential water losses are calculated beginning with this date. Over the course of 11 years following 2009, the water supply will diminish substantially under the No Action alternative from 2% (estimated for 2009) of the annual diversion to near zero in 2020. Matilija Dam will continue to fill with sediment and the effective storage of the dam will be 230 ac-ft in 2009 and less than 50 ac-ft in by 2020 (Table 5.23, p. 169 of Appendix D of the Main Report, Hydrologic, Hydraulic and Sediment Transport Studies). This assumes that the current trap efficiency is 45% and the trap efficiency decreases with storage capacity and that extreme variability in annual hydrology conditions does not occur during this period.

The total estimated loss of water is 2,200 ac-ft for the time period between 2009 and 2020. The current benefit of Matilija Dam to the diversion capacity at Robles will be unavailable after 2020. The projection of the cumulative benefit, starting in 2003, of Matilija Dam is shown in Figure 2.19 on p. 99 of Main Report Appendix D. To generate this graph, it was assumed that the benefit in 2003 was 590 ac-ft/yr and the benefit was assumed to decrease linearly with the storage capacity of Matilija Reservoir. The storage capacity was taken from Table 5.23. Based on this analysis, the total benefit of Matilija Dam under the Without-Project Conditions is approximately 5,000 ac-ft from 2003 until the reservoir capacity is completely gone, which occurs effectively in 2020. If the total benefit is calculated from 2009, the benefit is approximately 2,200 ac-ft.

The loss of water is considered an adverse, but less than significant impact (Class III) because it represents a very small portion of the overall water supply of the Ventura River Basin, compared to the No Action alternative. In 2009, this lost water represents only 2% of the Casitas MWD annual water supply and diminishes to zero in the

following 11 years. When compared to the overall water budget of the Ventura River, this water loss constitutes a less than significant impact to regional water supply. Further, the Ventura River Basin is not currently overdrafted according to the Ventura County Water Resources Division of the Public Works Agency. Per the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (CEQA), a significant impact is defined as causing the overdrafting of surface water in a basin or further withdrawing water from an already overdrafted basin. Once the dam is removed or the lake fills completely with sediment (under No Action), water previously trapped by the dam would flow downstream and under many circumstances would be available for diversion and aquifer recharge, thereby retaining at least a portion of the current beneficial uses and availability.

Although the loss of water from dam removal, estimated to total 2,200 ac-ft over the period of 11 years from 2009 to 2020, is considered a less than significant impact, the Ventura County Watershed Protection District investigated opportunities that would replace the benefits of this water without incurring new and substantial impacts to regional water supplies. Currently, the City of Ventura, in conjunction with United Water Conservation District, is exploring ways to reduce reliance on water from Lake Casitas (personal communication with Don Davis, City of Ventura, 12/2/04). The following options are considered feasible and could be utilized to offset the 2,200 ac-ft of water lost as part of the project. These include:

- Delivery of State water could occur via the Santa Clara River without the need for constructing new facilities. The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (GMA) has allowed pumping credits in the Oxnard Plain Basin for State Water delivered in this way by United, depending on stream flow conditions at the time of delivery. The City of Ventura has a significant bank of GMA pumping credits and could pump the water represented by the earned credits from the Fox Canyon and thereby proportionally reduce the City's water required from Casitas.
- Delivery could occur by wheeling State water through Metropolitan Water District facilities to the point of connection planned between the City of Oxnard and the City of Ventura water systems. This would require facilities and institutional arrangements for wheeling water through Metropolitan, Calleguas, and Oxnard, which are currently not in place, but could feasibly occur. Delivery of State water in this manner would reduce quantities of water taken from Casitas.
- Build the Santa Clara River pipeline to allow direct delivery of State water to the City of Ventura, Lake Casitas, and others. This option involves the design and construction of significant facilities but water would be delivered with minimal losses to the City and potentially Casitas MWD.
- The City could increase groundwater production from the Mound, Santa Paula and Oxnard Plain groundwater basins at any time. The current infrastructure and allocations would allow for the production of 1,000 ac-

ft per year without agreements with other agencies. This option is available over the short-term to reduce the allocation from Lake Casitas because City development or drought protection would not be offset by new water brought to the system.

- Reclamation of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District (OVSD) wastewater could be routed to users currently served by Casitas customers that do not require potable water, such as oilfield injection and irrigation. Approximately 1,000 ac-ft per year could be replaced with reclaimed water if some new facilities are constructed. Upgrades at the OVSD facility would also be required. The City of Ventura owns the property where the OVSD treatment facility is located and has ownership of the effluent from the plant. A portion of the reclaimed water would likely be retained for releases into the lower Ventura River to maintain ecological benefits.

Adoption of the following project condition with the approval of the proposed project and certification of the CEQA portion of this EIS/EIR, would direct the Watershed Protection District to pursue options to replace the 2,200 ac-ft of water lost as part of the project.

PROJECT CONDITION A:

As a condition of the proposed project, the replacement of the 2,200 ac-ft of water supply will be replaced by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District by negotiating with the City of Ventura to provide water to offset the potential loss. Feasible alternatives, including but not limited to those described above, will be explored and at least one will be executed to ensure water delivery.

WATER LOST DUE TO LAKE SEDIMENT REMOVAL

The water trapped in the sediments behind Matilija Dam is not currently utilized as a water supply, but represents a potential water supply. Due to the small amount of water available and the high costs to extract it, this loss of potential water supply comprises an adverse, but not significant, water supply impact caused by the proposed project (Class III). No mitigation is required.

The original water capacity of Matilija Reservoir was 7,018 ac-ft following construction of the dam in 1947. The original dam crest was at an elevation of 1125 ft. The dam was notched to an elevation of 1,095 ft in 1965 due to safety concerns and the reservoir capacity was reduced to 3,856 ac-ft. Since that time, sediment has filled in the reservoir and reduced its “open water” capacity to 500 ac-ft. The amount of sediment that would

store water could be approximated by subtracting the 500 ac-ft from the 3,856 ac-ft of storage after notching, approximately 3,356 ac-ft.

Tests conducted for the Feasibility Study measured the bulk density of the sediment in the reservoir area to be 72 lb/ft^3. Approximately half of the sediment available to store water can be classified as "reservoir sediment" and half as "delta sediment." The reservoir sediment is 18% sand, 52% silt, and 30% clay. The sediment in the delta area comprises 13 % gravel, 54 % sand, 28 % silt, and 5 % clay. Therefore, of the sediments available to store water, approximately 17.5% is clay, 40 % is silt, 36 % is sand, and 6.5 % is gravel. Based upon the data from Morris and Johnson (1967) the average specific yields of gravel, sand, silt and clay are approximately 25%, 25%, 8%, and 3%. This results in a weighted average specific yield of 15%. There is some uncertainty in this estimate, but it is likely that the specific yield would be between 7 % and 25%. Using this range of estimates, the amount of water that could be obtained from the trapped sediments is between 230 and 840 ac-ft.

Lake water, including that trapped in some sediments, was available at one time by a 48-inch diameter outlet structure located in the middle of the dam. This outlet has been inoperable since the 1969 flood events. Casitas Municipal Water District operates the currently serviceable outlet closer to the top of the dam. Today, to access the water within the reservoir sediments, either sediment would have to be excavated from behind the dam to allow water out of the lower outlet, or groundwater wells would have to be installed in the reservoir area. Restoring function to the outlet structure and installing wells would not be cost efficient for the resultant water yield as estimated above. Neither of these operations to utilize stored water has been conducted by Casitas MWD and therefore, this water was not considered as a current source of water supply.

Further, extracting water from the sediments above Matilja Dam would diminish available supply at existing downstream wells and diversions. Because water stored in the sediments has not been and is not currently drained via an outlet structure, this aquifer remains full, losing small amounts to evaporation and transpiration near the surface and through cracks in the bedrock below. Water flowing in from Matilija Creek cannot be trapped in the full aquifer and remains available as a water source as impounded lake water or flows over the crest of the dam during storm events. Therefore, the water currently trapped in the lake sediments is not considered an annual renewable source without some water loss to downstream reaches. After implementation of the project, water will not become trapped behind the dam, resulting in a beneficial impact, as water will flow downstream.

Most of the water currently trapped in the sediments will be utilized during grading and slurry activities in Reach 7. Currently saturated fines will be mixed with additional water during slurry activities. If water draining from the non-slurried sediments is captured during dewatering activities (sump pumps and coffer dams) it will likely be used for on site dust control and compaction. Much of the water will adhere to the sediment particles and not be available for extraction, and will simply be moved with the material during construction.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater in the Upper Ventura Basin is primarily recharged via rainfall and runoff which percolates through the soil into the shallow basin. Thus, water supply could be affected if infiltration rates were diminished due to increased fine deposition in the river bed materials. Wells that access and draw water from this aquifer could potentially be affected if physical damage occurs, such as by river channel meandering, flood-borne sediments leaking into the wells, or if flood-borne or other sediment deposition buries the wells. These potential impacts are discussed in the following text.

There are numerous groundwater wells that access the water in the Upper Ventura Groundwater Basin ~~Aquifer~~ that could potentially be affected by the proposed project. Wells are located primarily ~~and includes floodplains~~ along the mainstem of the Ventura River fromCasitas Springs upstream through Meiners Oaks to Camino Cielo Road. Meiners Oaks County Water District (MOCWD) operates 2 wells located approximately 1 mile downstream of Matilija Dam and 2 wells further south near Meiners Oaks adjacent to Rice Road. Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD) operates three wells located between Meiners Oaks and the Highway 150 crossing. Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company also operates several groundwater wells along the west side of the Ventura River, serving agricultural water to approximately 400 acres. This analysis and proposed conditions pertains to other wells that occur in the project vicinity. ~~The City of Ventura diversion structure is located at Foster Memorial Park.~~

Infiltration

The infiltration to the Upper Ventura Basin~~Aquifer~~ occurs ~~primarily~~ through the active channel bed of the Ventura River as well as through percolation in the 75 square mile watershed. The river bottom carries runoff flows and also allows percolation to occur readily due to the bed composition of gravel and cobbles,with some sand and very few fines. ~~The floodplain terraces are less important foraquifer recharge because they are subject only to rainwater and generally have soils with more fines and are therefore less conducive to percolation.~~ The median particlediameter in the bed of the Upper Ventura River is over 4 inches. There is almost no silt or clay in the river bed because storm flow velocities carry most of the fines in suspension for long distances, usually out to the ocean. The Upper Ventura River Basin ~~Aquifer~~ is recharged during the wet season as rainfall and river flows percolate into the aquifer. The floodplain terraces contribute less per unit area to aquifer recharge because they generally have soils with more fines and are therefore less conducive to percolation. However, cumulatively, the terraces and watershed area do substantially contribute to the overall groundwater supply via percolation and subsurface flows because of the large surface area.

There is approximately 6 million yd3 of sediment behind Matilija Dam.

Approximately 2.1 million yd3 of fine sediment will be transported by slurry line to disposal sites downstream. The remaining 3.9 million yd3 of sediment stored in the reservoir will be allowed to erode with storm flows and transported downstream carried by natural stream flows. The proposed soil cement revetment in the reservoir will allowgraduated erosion of the 3.9 million yd3.

Of the 3.9 million yd3 of sediment, approximately 800,000 yd3 is silt and clay, 1.7 million yd3 is sand, and 1.4 million yd3 is gravel and cobble. The silt and clays are mixed in with the coarser material. All sediment transport modeling to date shows that the ~~gradual release~~ erosion of this material will not substantially change the composition of the Ventura River Bed. The model indicates that most silts and clays remain ~~are~~ primarily suspended in the water column and are discharged to the ocean, and therefore will not deposit onto the river bed. The majority of material that does and will continue to deposit on the river bed under the with project condition comprises ~~is~~ cobble, gravel and some sand sized sediment. Minor amounts of fines will settle on sand bars and the edges of flood terraces as storm flows recede. Therefore, no substantial impact to groundwater supply caused by project released fines during storm flows is expected. Even where aggradation is expected, the deposited bed material composition will not include large quantities of fines for these same reasons. As a result of intermittent and temporary aggradational level changes in the river bed, the impact to groundwater percolation is considered adverse, but less than significant (Class III). The recharge to the Upper Ventura River Basin is and will continue to be limited by the supply of rainwater.

~~The Ventura River by nature has a large capacity to transport sediment because of its steep slope (over 1%) and high flows. In fact, the Ventura River transported over 4,000,000 yd3 of sediment in less than 1 month in 1969. Ventura River regularly transports large amounts of sediment during large storms and after fires, with the same result of fines transported to the ocean and coarse materials settling in the bed. The infiltration of water from the Ventura River into the Upper Ventura River Aquifer will continue to occur at present rates after dam removal because neither the amount of water allowed to percolate nor the percolation rates will change with implementation of the project. The recharge to the Upper Ventura River Aquifer is and will continue to be limited by the supply of rainwater.~~

To further avoid and minimize potential percolation impacts, t~~T~~he 2.1 million yd3 of slurried reservoir sediment (mostly silts) placed at disposal sites~~,~~ located just upstream and downstream of the Baldwin Road Bridge (Highway 150), will be stabilized and protected as part of the proposed project so that this sediment is not accessed by flows smaller than the 10-yr flood. Sediment will be placed at or above the 10-yr flood elevations on the river terraces. In addition, the upper layers of the deposited material will be mixed with and covered with topsoil suitable for planting vegetation. This will reduce the potential for runoff to erode and carry fines into the river. Flows larger than the 10-yr flood may contact and mobilize some of the sediment, while smaller flows will not. These high flows typically transport very large amounts of sediment and have a large sediment supply.Therefore, sediments eroded from the disposal sites will constitute a small incremental increase in sediment concentrations during these events.

When the high flows event captures this slurry sediment, it will not substantially change the overall character of the flow or result in substantial changes to the riverbed composition or configuration. As described previously, the majority of the fines will be carried out to the ocean, and the minor amounts deposited in the river will not affect percolation.

Slurry Disposal

Disposal of the slurried reservoir fine material would have no measurable impact to the overall percolation capacity of the watershed. Therefore, the disposal of sediments at the proposed sites will not substantially reduce the percolation of water into the Upper Ventura Basin Aquifer. The disposal sites have been designed to block water passage through the fine material to protect the aquifer below. The potential for fines to migrate into the pore spaces below the slurry site will be limited due to the low permeability of the fine sediment. In addition, the sites will be lined with sand or other filter that will prevent the potential downward movement of fines through soil pores carried by water. Compaction of the lower layers of the deposited fines would actually form a hard pan that would further be another barrier to water passage. As a result, the disposal areas will be removed from the watershed percolation area that contributes to overall groundwater supply. However, removal of approximately 100 to 150 acres of upland percolation area in the total watershed area is not considered to result in a significant loss of water supply because the majority of recharge occurs in the river bottom. Further, the placement of the material on the disposal sites will not affect transmissivity of water in the aquifer beneath the sites, and therefore not affect water movement within the aquifer or the ability to extract water. Therefore, the loss of percolation area by disposing of slurry sediments and creating an impermeable area within the watershed will not result in a substantial loss or interruption in groundwater supply. This impact is classified as adverse, but not significant. No mitigation is required. In addition, the upper layers of the deposited material will be mixed with and covered with topsoil suitable for planting vegetation. This will reduce the potential for runoff to erode and carry fines into the river.

Physical Well Damage

Disposal of the slurried reservoir fine material could potentially bury water wells or otherwise render them operable at less than optimal capacity due to physical access impairment or the potential for fines to enter the well casings through openings at the wellhead. Further refinement of the slurry disposal locations will be conducted during the Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design phase of the project. During this phase, the disposal locations will be adjusted to avoid wells and other facilities or infrastructure to the extent feasible. If wells are located within the disposal areas, additional casings can be added as part of the project to ensure the wells remain operable under the changed surface elevation conditions. Each water purveyor is responsible for maintaining wells in standard operating conditions, including sealing to keep out surface water contaminants. Properly sealed wells will not be impacted by the placement of sediments around them. To minimize potential impacts to wells located near or within the disposal site areas, the

~~wells will be inspected prior to project implementation. Inspection will result in the repair of leaking casings to minimize the potential for fines to infiltrate and damage the wells.~~

~~If large sediment concentrations exist at low flows, it is possible that the riverbed may become clogged with sediment. This could only occur until the next high flows mobilize the sediment, but during this period the yield from subsurface wells may be reduced. For this to occur, the infiltration throughout the entire Ventura River would have to be reduced. Because such an occurrence would be temporary until sediment discharges stabilize, and intermittent as a result of sediments being transported by high flows, this impact is considered adverse, but less than significant **(Class III)**.~~

Many water wells are located in the current floodplain of the Ventura River and are currently subject to flood flows and erosion/migration of the active channels. These processes will continue with or without project implementation. There is minimal risk of increased damage to existing wells due to added turbidity, channel bed erosion and flood damage related to the Project. Therefore, potential physical impacts to wells directly resulting in the reduced capacity to produce groundwater are considered potentially adverse, but not significant **(Class III)**.

In summary, no significant impacts to well water productivity or yield is expected to be caused by implementation of the proposed project based on the analyses of available data. Nevertheless, the Project description includes a substantial post-project adaptive management program to address and mitigate unforeseen impacts. Any significant lost of water well productivity or yield that can be substantiated to have been caused by the project will be mitigated through this adaptive management program. Further, the following condition, if adopted as a part of the project approval, would provide for mitigation of potential impacts.

PROJECT CONDITION B:

While loss of well-water production is not an expected impact, if Project related significant reductions in water production are verified and validated, mitigation measures shall be implemented under the Project's Adaptive Management Program. Further, the Project shall provide additional well casings to currently serviceable water wells if they would be impacted by the direct disposal of sediment from the slurry. The Project shall provide protection from the increment of flood inundation that would occur as a result of the Project to the same degree, and consistent with the same criteria, as provided by the Project to other affected facilities, if warranted.

Page 5.2-11, last paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

This alternative would have a similar effect with regard to lateral erosion, streambed scour, or long-term channel aggradation/degradation as Alternative 4a.

Section 5.3: Biological Resources

Page 5.3-4, after Table 5.3-1, insert following:

Table 5.3-1A Habitat Types Impacted by Slurry Disposal Sites (note the exact configurations have changed slightly from EIS/R)

Habitat Type	Rice Road Site	U/S Hwy 150	County Site	Burnham Rd Site	Santa Ana Road Site
Palustrine Forest (Willow Riparian)	5	.5	0	0	0.5
Palustrine Scrub (Scrub/Chaparral)	29	19	11.8	10	0
Oak Woodland	2	8	2	0	5.25
Walnut Woodland	27	0	0	0	0
Grassland	31	6	7	2	23
Riverine	0	11	0.2	0	0
Upland Scrub (Scrub/Chaparral)	0	0	0	0	0.25
Total Acres (rounded)	94	48	21	12	29

Page 5.3-8, Section 5.3.3, first full paragraph, 10th sentence, revise as follows:

Aquatic habitats downstream of the dam would be improved through the reduction of exotic predators such as bullfrogs, crayfish, and largemouth bass.

Page 5.3-8, Section 5.3.3, second paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Another important ecological benefit of Alternative 4b would be the control of giant reed from the Matilija Reservoir, Matilija Creek, and the Ventura River.

Page 5.3-9, Mitigation Measure B-1, revise as follows:

B-1 Pre-Construction biological surveys. The Corps of Engineers shall conduct pre-construction protocol-level surveys for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. In addition, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted for sensitive birds, active nests or roosts in riparian areas that would be subject to project disturbance. If active nests are located, birds shall be flushed prior to construction activities or nests shall be avoided until the young have fledged. In addition, surveys shall be conducted for any State Protected and State Fully Protected species.

Qualified biologists familiar with species known to inhabit the Ventura River shall be utilized to conduct the surveys. [Note: Monitoring to document the beneficial impacts to fish and wildlife are addressed in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan (M&AMP) included in the EIS/EIR as Appendix K, Section VI.]

Page 5.3-10, Mitigation Measure B-3, revise as follows:

B-3 Capture and relocate. The Corps of Engineers shall design and implement a capture and relocation program for California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle, two-striped garter snake, and native fish prior to construction activities in Matilija Lake, Matilija Creek, and the Ventura River.

Page 5.3-10, Mitigation Measure B-5, revise as follows:

B-5 Restricted initial clearing. The Corps of Engineers shall conduct initial clearing of open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitats in Reach 7 outside of the breeding season (September 15 through March 1). If breeding birds, including white-tailed kites, are detected by September 15, the riparian clearing within 1,000 feet of the nest shall be postponed until November 1. Clearing of riparian vegetation for levee construction shall be conducted between September 15 and March 15.

Page 5.3-10, Mitigation Measure B-8, revise as follows:

B-8 Downstream monitoring. Monitoring of biological resources downstream of the dam shall occur as identified in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.

Page 5.3-14, first partial paragraph, first full sentence, revise as follows:

The Corps regulates wetlands, while riparian habitat found throughout the area is an important resource regulated by the CDFG.

Page 5.3-14, second full paragraph, revise as follows:

Riparian Habitat. Implementation of Alternative 4b would result in the temporary removal of approximately 90 acres of Arundo-infested willow riparian woodland associated with removal of all existing vegetation and sediment from the reservoir, construction of sediment storage areas, construction of the levees, and desiltation basin. Restoration of riparian habitat may not occur in the reservoir for approximately ten years after the initiation of the project. However, giant reed removal in Reaches 7, 8, and 9 would occur prior to project initiation and continue in downstream reaches immediately afterwards. Giant reed removal would increase the habitat value and function of the existing riparian habitat; including its ability to support sensitive wildlife during the time frame that riparian habitat is absent in Reach 7. Under Alternative 4b, restored riparian habitat is expected to total approximately 88 acres by the year 20 (VCWPD, 2004a). After which time, and assuming that there is adequate evacuation of trapped sediment, the soil revetment within Reach 7 would be removed and riparian habitat would increase by approximately 38 acres (VCWPD, 2004a). Therefore, the temporary loss of 90 acres of riparian habitat would be considered significant without mitigation (**Class II**). With the implementation of Mitigation Measures B-11 and B-12, impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels as restoration and giant reed eradication would eventually enhance the existing conditions and improve riparian habitat throughout the Ventura River. Temporary

disturbances to riparian habitat impacted during expansion of the levees would be restored at the completion of levee construction. Vegetation disturbed as a result of the proposed slurry and water pipelines would be restored after the transfer of sediment is complete. However, VCWPD removes or limits the recruitment of vegetation within 15 feet of the levee toe by the routine application of herbicides. This activity occurs approximately once every six weeks during rainy years and is less frequently applied during periods of drought. Replanting of riparian vegetation after the installation of the levees would occur outside of the 15-foot buffer area and no vegetation would be allowed to occur in the buffer area maintained by the VCWPD (VCWPD2004b). Because of the regularity of the proposed maintenance activities, it is unlikely that native riparian vegetation would be adversely affected during routine maintenance activities.

Page 5.3-16, Mitigation Measures, revise as follows:

B-11 BMPs for Giant Reed Control. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and execute a giant reed control program that includes monitoring during post deconstruction restoration activities. Control efforts shall begin prior to the dam removal in Reach 7, 8, and 9, continuing throughout the downstream reaches immediately afterwards. The Giant Reed Control Plan shall be submitted to the CDFG and USFWS for review and comment prior to implementation. The plan shall include measures to prevent permanent or temporary impacts to wetlands and associated sensitive vegetation and wildlife during herbicide treatments of giant reed. The plan shall ensure that all activities requiring herbicide treatment would:

- Ensure that herbicides are not applied aquatically during the wet season (November 1st to April 15th) to avoid potential impacts to downstream vegetation where feasible, and to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife species.
- Ensure that only water-safe herbicides with approved surfactants are used. Treatments shall use a glyphosate-based herbicide including Rodeo® and/or Aquamaster®, both of which are labeled for use within water.
- Ensure that herbicides are applied at concentrations that are considered safe for biological resources within and adjacent to the project area.
- Ensure that herbicides are mixed with a non-toxic, water soluble dye of low toxicity that highlights treated areas.
- Minimize overspray of herbicides onto non-target species by restricting herbicide spraying when wind velocities exceed six mph.
- Minimize trampling of native vegetation by establishing marked trails prior to project implementation.
- Remove dead giant reed material that was foliar treated and left in place to avoid fire hazard potential prior to the beginning of the fire season. Material shall be removed when spring access is permitted and before the ensuing fire season begins (between April 15 and the beginning of the fire season).
- Have a licensed professional conduct or oversee herbicides applications.

B-12 Predator control plan. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and implement a predator control plan in consultation with the CDFG and USFWS. The plan shall include specific measures to reduce the number of aquatic predators in Matilija Reservoir and minimize the potential for release of these species downstream during dam removal.

B-13 Restoration plan. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and implement a Habitat Restoration Program for all areas disturbed by project construction including giant reed removal. This mitigation measure shall include methods to restore habitats on all temporary impact areas, such as preserving and respreading topsoil, specific grading techniques including soil ripping to alleviate compaction, and choosing appropriate plant palettes. Appropriate maintenance and monitoring methods for the revegetated sites to ensure habitat restoration success shall be included. These methods shall be developed and defined during the project design phase.

B-14 Oak and walnut replanting. The construction contractor shall replace any native oaks or California black walnut trees removed during project construction. These species shall be integrated into the Restoration Plan described in Mitigation Measure B-13 to maximize habitat restoration success.

Page 5.3-21, last paragraph, sixth sentence, revise as follows:

These impacts may be adverse but not significant (Class III).

Page 5.3-28, third full paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Because the Proposed Action includes an intensive giant reed control program and subsequent restoration and creation of approximately 38 acres of willow and cottonwood riparian habitat in Reach 7 (VCWPD, 2004a), habitat would likely be more suitable to the species under post-project conditions than under the no project alternative.

Section 5.4: Cultural Resources

Page 5.4-3, Mitigation Measure CR-2, revise as follows:

CR-2 A test excavation and National Register of Historic Places evaluation shall be conducted of historic/prehistoric site COE#1, COE#2, and others that may be identified by additional survey. If any are evaluated, and determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, mitigation measures shall be developed and agreed to in a memorandum of agreement. This document would be developed between the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the Corps and local sponsors. Federally Recognized Tribes and interested Native American groups would be invited to participate as concurring parties to the agreement. These procedures shall follow the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic preservation Act, as implemented by 36 CFR 800. A historical architectural and NRHP evaluation shall be completed for Matilija Dam, Camino Cielo (Ojala) and Soper's Ranch.

Section 5.9: Transportation

Page 5.9-4, Mitigation Measure T-2, revise as follows:

T-2 Road repair from construction activities. If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians occurs, the construction contractor shall coordinate repairs with the affected public agencies to ensure that any impacts are adequately repaired per the applicable agency standards. Roads and/or driveways disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces. Care shall be taken to prevent damage to roadside drainage structures. Roadside drainage structures and road drainage features (e.g., rolling dips) shall be protected by regrading and reconstructing roads to drain properly. The construction contractor shall work with the applicable agencies to document pre-construction conditions of roads features prior to the commencement of construction.

Section 5.10: Land Use

Page 5.10-2, 3rd sentence, revise as follows:

Alternative 4b would not only be consistent with local plans, but could also contribute to the long-term achievement of beach replenishment goals set in the Ventura County General Plan, Ventura County Coastal Area Plan, California Coastal Sediment Management Plan, and the City of San Buenaventura Comprehensive Plan Update to the Year 2010.

Page 5.10-3, second full paragraph, last sentence, revise as follows:

Similarly, impacts due to the conversion of farmland are largely the same, but less because Alternative 1 does not warrant a locally preferred desilting basin that could be sited on agricultural land.

Section 5.11: Recreation

Page 5.11-2, first full paragraph, second sentence, revise as follows:

The levees and floodwalls at Camino Cielo, Live Oak, Casitas Springs, and Cañada Larga would not conflict with any existing recreational facilities, although, as described below, construction could potentially result in temporary restrictions to recreation facilities.

Page 5.11-2, last paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

Although the placement of the slurry disposal site at the north end of Baldwin Road or Highway 150 locations would not interfere with any recreation areas, use of the Rice Road slurry disposal site would bury OVLC trails on the east side of the Ventura River.

Page 5.11-3, second full paragraph, revise as follows:

Although the return of sediment from Matilija Creek and materials stored behind Matilija Dam to the Ventura River would assist in beach nourishment, according to Appendices D and E of the Feasibility Study this increased sediment to Ventura County beaches would be a beneficial impact (**Class IV**) resulting from this project, but it is difficult to estimate the degree to which this would occur.

Page 5.11-4, after first paragraph, insert the following:

Direct impacts from construction of facilities and indirect impacts to water quality may affect recreation at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area. Project components, such as the desilting basin, that minimize water quality impacts will also reduce impacts to recreational fishing at the lake to a less than significant. Without the desilting basin, water quality degradation by increased suspended sediment could impair lake ecological health or fish foraging behavior. Direct impacts to recreation (reduced recreation use) could potentially occur if pipelines (slurry intake) or other ancillary facility components are installed, routed, or otherwise changed within the Lake Casitas Recreation Area as a result of the construction of components proposed by the Proposed Action and mitigation measures (**Class II**). Siting of the construction activities have not been designed, but may occur in the high density recreation use area at the north end of the lake, as it is closest to Matilija Dam. Temporary or permanent displacement of recreation facilities or use of facilities are anticipated, and would be minimized to the maximum extent feasible by careful design in consultation with recreation area personnel. The construction of the desilting basin in any of the currently proposed locations will not directly affect recreation activities, as these sites are well outside the Lake Casitas Recreation Area (Main Report Figure 4-12 Potential Desilting Basin Sites, page 4-28).

Implementation of Mitigation Measure R-2 would ensure safety of recreationists in the vicinity of the work area. Mitigation Measure R-3 would ensure coordination and compensation to the Casitas Municipal Water District for loss of recreation use.

R-3 Casitas Municipal Water District Recreation Agreement. During design of the slurry intake or any project component in the vicinity of the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, Casitas will be consulted to determine the best placement and design of the component that feasibly minimizes impacts to recreation. An agreement with Casitas and the Corps/District will be executed that fairly compensates Casitas with restoration of recreation facilities and potentially fees for lost recreation revenues, if project components cannot be placed such that impacts to recreation are avoided.

Page 5.11-4, second full paragraph, second sentence, revise as follows:

Dam demolition activities and reservoir material excavation and stabilization activities could occasionally necessitate that access to Matilija Road, and with it Murietta and Matilija Canyon Trails, be closed.

Page 5.11-6, first partial paragraph, first full sentence, revise as follows:

This increased sediment to Ventura County beaches would be a beneficial impact (**Class IV**) resulting from this project.

Section 6: Unavoidable Significant Impacts

Page 6-1, second bulleted item, revise as follows:

- Wildlife movement in Matilija Canyon and along Matilija Creek would be temporarily disrupted by dam and sediment removal activities for a period of up to ten years. Vegetation, including giant reed, would be removed during

the early stages of construction. Wildlife movement in through the active construction area would be disrupted during the periods of construction. Impacts to wildlife movement in the local construction area would be significant.

Section 8: Mitigation Measures/Environmental Commitments

Page 8-1, Mitigation Measure B-1, revise as follows:

B-1 Pre-Construction biological surveys. The Corps of Engineers shall conduct pre-construction protocol-level surveys for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. In addition, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted for sensitive birds, active nests or roosts in riparian areas that would be subject to project disturbance. If active nests are located, birds shall be flushed prior to construction activities or nests shall be avoided until the young have fledged. In addition, surveys shall be conducted for any State Protected and State Fully Protected species. Qualified biologists familiar with species known to inhabit the Ventura River shall be utilized to conduct the surveys. [Note: Monitoring to document the beneficial impacts to fish and wildlife are addressed in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan (M&AMP) included in the EIS/EIR as Appendix K, Section VI.]

Page 8-2, Mitigation Measure B-3, revise as follows:

B-3 Capture and relocate. The Corps of Engineers shall design and implement a capture and relocation program for California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle, two-striped garter snake, and native fish prior to construction activities in Matilija Lake, Matilija Creek, and the Ventura River.

Page 8-2, Mitigation Measure B-5, revise as follows:

B-5 Restricted initial clearing. The Corps of Engineers shall conduct initial clearing of open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitats in Reach 7 outside of the breeding season (September 15 through March 1). If breeding birds, including white-tailed kites, are detected by September 15, the riparian clearing within 1,000 feet of the nest shall be postponed until November 1. Clearing of riparian vegetation for levee construction shall be conducted between September 15 and March 15.

Page 8-2, Mitigation Measure B-8, revise as follows:

B-8 Downstream monitoring. Monitoring of biological resources downstream of the dam shall occur as identified in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.

Page 8-2, Mitigation Measure B-11, revise as follows:

B-11 BMPs for Giant Reed Control. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and execute a giant reed control program that includes monitoring during post deconstruction restoration activities. Control efforts shall begin prior to the dam removal in Reach 7, 8, and 9, continuing throughout the downstream reaches immediately afterwards. The Giant Reed Control Plan shall be submitted to the CDFG and USFWS for review and comment prior to implementation. The plan shall include measures to prevent permanent or temporary impacts to wetlands and

associated sensitive vegetation and wildlife during herbicide treatments of giant reed. The plan shall ensure that all activities requiring herbicide treatment would:

- Ensure that herbicides are not applied aquatically during the wet season (November 1st to April 15th) to avoid potential impacts to downstream vegetation where feasible, and to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife species.
- Ensure that only water-safe herbicides with approved surfactants are used. Treatments shall use a glyphosate-based herbicide including Rodeo® and/or Aquamaster®, both of which are labeled for use within water.
- Ensure that herbicides are applied at concentrations that are considered safe for biological resources within and adjacent to the project area.
- Ensure that herbicides are mixed with a non-toxic, water soluble dye of low toxicity that highlights treated areas.
- Minimize overspray of herbicides onto non-target species by restricting herbicide spraying when wind velocities exceed six mph.
- Minimize trampling of native vegetation by establishing marked trails prior to project implementation.
- Remove dead giant reed material that was foliar treated and left in place to avoid fire hazard potential prior to the beginning of the fire season. Material shall be removed when spring access is permitted and before the ensuing fire season begins (between April 15 and the beginning of the fire season).
- Have a licensed professional conduct or oversee herbicides applications.

Page 8-3, Mitigation Measure B-12, revise as follows:

B-12 Predator control plan. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and implement a predator control plan in consultation with the CDFG and USFWS. The plan shall include specific measures to reduce the number of aquatic predators in Matilija Reservoir and minimize the potential for release of these species downstream during dam removal.

Page 8-3, Mitigation Measure B-13, revise as follows:

B-13 Restoration plan. The Corps of Engineers shall develop and implement a Habitat Restoration Program for all areas disturbed by project construction including giant reed removal. This mitigation measure shall include methods to restore habitats on all temporary impact areas, such as preserving and respreading topsoil, specific grading techniques including soil ripping to alleviate compaction, and choosing appropriate plant palettes. Appropriate maintenance and monitoring methods for the revegetated sites to ensure habitat restoration success shall be included. These methods shall be developed and defined during the project design phase.

Page 8-3, Mitigation Measure B-14, revise as follows:

B-14 Oak and walnut replanting. The construction contractor shall replace any native oaks or California black walnut trees removed during project construction.

These species shall be integrated into the Restoration Plan described in Mitigation Measure B-13 to maximize habitat restoration success.

Page 8-9, Mitigation Measure T-2, revise as follows:

T-2 Road repair from construction activities. If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians occurs, the construction contractor shall coordinate repairs with the affected public agencies to ensure that any impacts are adequately repaired per the applicable agency standards. Roads and/or driveways disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces. Care shall be taken to prevent damage to roadside drainage structures. Roadside drainage structures and road drainage features (e.g., rolling dips) shall be protected by regrading and reconstructing roads to drain properly. The construction contractor shall work with the applicable agencies to document pre-construction conditions of roads features prior to the commencement of construction.

Page 8-9, after last paragraph, insert following mitigation measure:

R-3 Casitas Municipal Water District Recreation Agreement. During design of the slurry intake or any project component in the vicinity of the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, Casitas will be consulted to determine the best placement and design of the component that feasibly minimizes impacts to recreation. An agreement with Casitas and the Corps/District will be executed that fairly compensates Casitas with restoration of recreation facilities and potentially fees for lost recreation revenues, if project components cannot be placed such that impacts to recreation are avoided.

Section 13: References

Page 13-5, Hydrology and Water Resources, 7th item, revise as follows:

CRWQCB-LA (California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, Region 4). 2002. Final Ventura River State of the Watershed Report.

Appendix C2: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT of species under the jurisdiction of the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Change all the "XX" in the page numbers to "C2".

Appendix E: Habitat Valuation Analysis

Page E-6, first partial paragraph, last sentence, revise as follows:

(Note for this analysis, the 1-5 scores were later converted to 0.0 to 1.0 values as required by HEP).

Page E-17, third paragraph, fourth sentence, revise as follows:

By TY 20, most of the sediment stockpiles and soil cement have been removed and the stream processes and floodplain interactions have been restored to near pre-dam conditions of an alluvial valley.

Appendix J: Mitigation Monitoring Plan

Replace Appendix J with revised Mitigation Monitoring Plan included in this Final EIS/EIR as Appendix A.

Appendix K: Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan

Page 3, last paragraph, first sentence, revise as follows:

> Consultation with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) will continue and the Corps will request Section 401 State Water Quality Certification. This will insure that Lake Casitas is not adversely impacted by the introduction of any regulated substances above levels considered to be within the existing background levels pursuant to, and directly attributed to, the removal of Matilija Dam.

Page 4, after first paragraph, insert following:

> Specific transect locations along the Ventura River will also be identified so that monitoring of changes in channel morphology (once more detailed sedimentation analyses are performed in PED) can be made. In those areas where the channel morphology changes would most likely occur that might adversely affect steelhead (e.g., a temporary blockage), protocols will be established to rectify the situation.

3. Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR

Introduction

The comment letters presented in this section were received by the Corps during the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIS/EIR which ended on August 30, 2004. The comment letters are presented in alphabetical order by the last name of the first signature. In addition, comments were received at the Public Meeting held on July 28, 2004 at the Ventura County Administration Building. A transcript of the meeting and comment cards submitted during the meeting are provided in this section following the Comment Letters.

Individual comments within each comment letter and in the public meeting transcript are numbered for response in Section 4 of this Final EIS/EIR. Some individual comments are also assigned a code letter indicating the applicable general response for that comment, as provided in Section 4.

Commenters

The following individuals submitted written comments during the public review period:

1. Arthur, Beverly and Dawson, Shelly
2. Auric, Robert
3. Baggerly, Russ
4. Birosik, Shirley
5. Britt, Butch
6. Brokaw, John
7. Brubaker, Don
8. Bryant, Matthew
9. Conrow, Jerry
10. Correa, John
11. Davis, Don
12. de Silva, Yolanda
13. Dilks, Eric
14. Edmondson, Jim
15. Goad, Mathew
16. Grader, Zeke
17. Gramckow, Jurgen
18. Greene-Barton, Brooks
19. Gutierrez, David
20. Handley, Richard
21. Hanf, Lisa
22. Hauser, Don
23. Hebenstreit, Lyn and Maria Blasco
24. Hillen, Jack
25. Hocking, Kim
26. Howell, F.A.
27. Hysore, John
28. Jackson, Hannah-Beth
29. Jenkin, Paul
30. Kehoe, Barry
31. Kehoe, Dorothy
32. Knuth, Al
33. Kruse, Suzanne
34. Lalani, Nazir
35. Lanning, Rex and Heidi
36. Light, Robert
37. McGlothlin, Russell
38. McInnis, Rodney
39. Mower, Bernard
40. Murray, Patricia and Ann Gist Levin
41. O'Brien, William
42. Packard, Monte
43. Pearson, Larry
44. Port, Patricia Sanderson
45. Powell, Cheryl
46. Prichett, David
47. Raysbrook, C.F.
48. Reid, Rich and Gloria
49. Roberts, K.L.
50. Rose, Peggy
51. Sylvester, Stephen and Christina
52. Thacher, Anson and Anne
53. Thacher, Emily
54. Wald, Edwin
55. Walker, Frank
56. Word, James
57. Wydzga, Aleksandra

In addition, the following individuals spoke or submitted comment cards during the public hearing:

1. Nielson, Lindsay
2. Hanstad, Rae
3. Baggerly, Russ
4. Ruch, Jim
5. Brown, Robert
6. Engel, Jim
7. Bryant, Matthew
8. O'Brien, Marlene
9. Bennett, Chuck
10. Pritchett, David
11. Brennan, Brian
12. Jenkin, Paul
13. Sutton, Hils
14. Olson, Valerie
15. Capelli, Mark

16. Auric, Robert
17. Tolbert, Nan
18. McGlothlin, Russell
19. Thacher, Tony
20. Dupric, John
21. Rolston, Andrea
22. Hernandez, Carolyn
23. Curtis, Jack
24. Wallevik, Lars
25. Johnson, Sara
26. Phillips, Guy
27. Johnson, John
28. Haygood, Elizabeth
29. Layson, Leticia
30. Reid, Richard
31. Thacher, Emily
32. Sawyer, Robert
33. Brown, Robert

ARTHUR

August 29, 2004

Jonathon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

We recently learned of the possible removal of Matilija Dam. A family member heard a Ventura radio report stating that an injunction to block removal was filed by an "environmental group" fearing downstream damage to historical sites. Although we lack details of the injunction, we do have historical information.

First, we support removing Matilija Dam and restoring the area to its natural beauty and habitat. Our support assumes a process that minimizes downstream damage.

We are the daughter and granddaughter of Irma Myers. Irma was a daughter of Sim and Jane Myers. Sim Myers owned Matilija Hot Springs resort for several years following 1904 to 1918 before the dam was constructed. Sim lost the resort because of bankruptcy following flood damage. Irma shared many stories of her youth at Matilija with us.

1

We have inherited original pictures, many in the form of resort postcards that show resort buildings, grounds, springs, water falls, native fish, flood damage, the Matilija Stagecoach (including the original glass negative), etc. The pictures show what the area was like 100 years ago.

In summary, we do not think removal of Matilija Dam would harm historical sites because they would have been washed away many years ago. Matilija Creek flooded many times over the years, and any surviving buildings of historical value would be above the floodplain. We believe the Matilija area was a sacred site of the Chumash People who would not have had a burial ground in the floodplain. Any surviving archeological sites or artifacts are either on high ground or were looted long ago.

The Matilija Hot Springs resort area is listed for sale by Re/Max Gold Coast Realtors of Ventura. Could this be the reason for the injunction?

Please let us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Beverly Arthur
Shelly Dawson

Shelly Dawson
p. 530-343-6904
c. 530-518-2954
f. 530-343-8188
e. jgdawson@earthlink.net

AURIC

OJALA
15477 MARICOPA HIGHWAY
OJAI, CALIFORNIA

MAILING ADDRESS:
1304 E. MAIN #D
VENTURA, CA 93001

August 26, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

I am writing to you regarding the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Report, EIS/EIR.

I have always wanted the Matilija Dam removed. I have supported this project in the past and still support this project, however, I have several concerns. Below is an outline of my concerns followed by my comments.

I. Description and location of Ojala property.
II. Flood Risk
  1) History - no flooding in area of current structures
  2) Mitigation of possible increased risk to cabins 3 & 4 - slope embankment reinforcement
III. Access to property
  1) Camino Cielo Bridge and Road relocation
  2) Cable suspension foot bridge
  3) Utilitie line relocations

AURIC

IV. Water Supply to property
1) Spring
2) Casitas, Matilija conduit
3) Riparian
V. Use of property
1) Temporary inability to use property during construction of and removal of slurry pipeline
2) Temporary and permanent easements
3) Mitigations of noise, dust and traffic i.e. Jake Brakes
VI. Matilija Recreational Trail
1) Public access avoiding private property
2) Impact on fragile ecosystem
3) Routing trail away from high-flood risk areas and connection to Camino Cielo Trail
VII. The cost of "taking" Ojala compared to the costs of mitigations to preserve the property
1) Economic
2) Cultural and Historical

I. DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF OJALA PROPERTY

My wife Anna and I are owners of Ojala, the property located at 15477 Maricopa Highway in Ojai, California, Ventura County assessors parcel # 010-0-180-150, 010-0-180-180, 010-0-180-190. This area is referred to in the report as part of the Camino Cielo tract.

Ojala is situated on approximately 22 acres located down stream a half a mile from the Matilija Dam. The Matilija Creek and the North Fork of the Matilija Creek join together at our property to form the Ventura River. This property was a favorite Chumash site. It was homesteaded before the formation of the Los Padres National Forest. Pop Soper ran it as a boxers training camp. It was a well-loved resort and then a RV Park and camp ground until the flood of 1969. Since 1978 we have restored it as our own private retreat. There are a total of 10 residences at Ojala now including 5 cabins, a duplex, a main house with a studio and a caretaker's trailer. All structures are legal and

AURIC

preexist the RA 20 zoning in this area. They are occuppied by long term residents except for one cabin which we keep for our use and for short term guests. The property generates income and has a positive cash flow.

II. FLOOD RISK

The report states our property may be "taken" due to increased flood risk because of the project. It is my understanding that this is a preliminary finding and further studies need to be done to determine if the property is indeed at higher risk. Because of the two streams coming together on our property, the hydrology is very complex.

The parts of the property that routinely flood are upstream on the Matilija Creek across from the Matilija Hot Springs Road and down stream on the Ventura River near Camino Cielo bridge. There are no structures in those areas now.

The area where the current structures are located has never been flooded to my knowledge. I have spoken to Pete Rowe who is over 65 years old. He was born and raised at Ojala and witnessed the 1969 flood. He confirms that there is no history of flooding where the current structures are located and no cabins were lost during the 1969 or during other floods he knows of. He says that the water level never rose close to the top of the present stream embankment near the present structures. Structures have been demolished and lost to fire in the past but not to flooding.

1
Q1

There are two cabins, #4 and #5, that are very close to the Ventura River embankment. I request that you consider flood control measures to protect these 2 cabins such as re-enforcement of the slope of the embankment and/or a possible rip-rap area be constricted just upstream from these two cabins to provide additional flood protection. Also perhaps an unindation easement is possible.

AURIC

III. ACCESS TO PROPERTY

I am also concerned regarding access to our property during and after the project. Once Camino Cielo bridge is removed and a new bridge is constructed downstream, how will access to our property be maintained? It will be necessary to elevate and protect Camino Cielo road from high waters. I believe the improving of Camino Cielo Road is the best option to maintain access to our property. However, could other ways of access be studied, such as a bridge from Matilija Hot Springs Road to our property or perhaps access from the top of Camino Cielo Road by a newly constructed road down the hillside to our property?

2
U

I hope the intersection of Camino Cielo Road and Highway 33 can be relocated south of its present location. The present location of that intersection is dangerously close to a blind curve on Highway 33 making left turns from Highway 33 onto Camino Cielo Road very hazardous.

There is currently a 100 yard long cable suspension foot bridge spanning the Ventura River from our property to Highway 33. Could you please study if this bridge is at any increased risk of flooding and if this can be mitigated. We, of course, would like the bridge to remain after the project is completed and to continue to provide pedestrian access to our property. Is a liability easement for the cable suspension bridge possible?

There are utility lines serving our property and that of our neighbors that run over our suspension bridge and over Camino Cielo Bridge. When these lines are relocated I request that their visual impact on our property be considered. The lines were moved to their present locations on an emergency and temporary basis after a wild fire damaged their old route from Matilija Hot Springs Road.

3
Y

AURIC

IV. WATER SUPPLY TO PROPERTY

We have three sources of water at Ojala. A mountain spring is our main supply. Back up and fire hydrants are supplied by Casitas Water via the Matilija conduit. We also have "4 Miners inches" riparian rights from the Ventura River. Will the project affect any of these sources?

4
P1, P2

V. USE OF PROPERTY

I do not believe our property needs to be "taken" in order to provide a launching site for this project. I am willing to consider any easement temporary or permanent that may be required for the construction of the project. Will there be any temporary inability to use our property during the construction of the project? What mitigation will there be to minimize noise and dust and air pollution from the project and from the traffic increase on Highway 33, Matilija Hot Springs Road and Camino Cielo Road? Is it possible to prohibit the use of Jake brakes or downshifting by trucks, on Highway 33, perhaps from Wheeler Gorge to the Ojai City limits?

5
Q1

6
C

VI. MATILIJA RECREATIONAL TRAIL

I have some concerns regarding the proposed Matilija Recreational Trail. I hope the Ventura River water shed will be mostly "a wilderness area." Clearly delineated public access is needed, i.e., trail heads and parking areas. The public needs to be directed away from private property, and the natural habitat protected from random use trails. Picnic areas and car camping areas require continual maintenance and should in my opinion not be part of this project.

7
F2

At present, people park all along Highway 33 and Matilija Canyon road to access the stream bed. (They do not park any longer on Matilija Hot Springs Road since it is posted that there is no parking along this road.) Oftentimes people are actually trespassing on private property knowingly or not. For example, a swimming hole is located on our property in the North Forth of the Matilija Creek just upstream from the Matilija Hot Springs Road bridge.

AURIC

People park their cars on Highway 33 across from the quarry entrance and go down a steep embankment to the stream. In this area there is never ending accumulation of trash, cans, broken glass, and "human refuse" along the creek's edge fouling the stream as well. Many make shift camp areas with fire pits are located near the swimming hole. This could be prevented at this spot and in other similar places by not permitting parking along Highway 33, Matilija Canyon Road and Camino Cielo Road except at designated sites such as the trail heads. 7 (cont.)

I also want to request that you considered routing the Matilija Trail out of the floodplain at Camino Cielo Road. The trail could ascend to the crest of the ridge at the top of Camino Cielo Road and then descend back to the canyon upstream from the Matilija Dam's present site, i.e., at the MESA project area. This route has two advantages. First, it can be an all weather, low maintenance trail that would not be affected by the floods that fill the narrow gorge where the Matilija Dam is located presently and where the two streams join together on our property. Second, it would connect the Matilija Trail to the old Camino Cielo Trail that could be rehabilitated and connect through to the Carpenteria and Santa Barbara back country trails as it did in the past.

VII. THE COST OF "TAKING" OJALA COMPARED TO THE COSTS OF MITIGATIONS TO PRESERVE THE PROPERTY

Strickly in economic terms, it may be less costly to mitigate the effects of the project in order to protect and preserve the property and more costly to purchase the property, relocate the residence, and demolish the structures and other improvements. 8

Ojala has historical and cultural value to Ventura County. Just ask anyone who grew up in this area about their memories of Ojala. Ojala is unique and irreplaceable and I believe it should be preserved.

AURIC

I hope once the project is completed that we and others will still be able to enjoy the use of Ojala. The dam will be gone, the sediment will wash to the beaches, the ecosystem will be restored, a new recreational trail will connect Ojai to the back country, and hopefully the Steelhead Trout will return.

8 (cont.)

Thank you for your consideration of my suggestions and for addressing my concerns.

Very truly yours,

Robert Auric

Robert Auric

BAGGERLY

ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

August 25, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report for the Decommissioning of Matilija Dam and the Ecosystem Restoration Project for the Ventura River

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

The Environmental Coalition of Ventura County (EC) has reviewed the above- mentioned document. We have the following comments and suggested changes.

Overview

The decommissioning of Matilija Dam is one of the first attempts in the nation to remove a tall dam. Because of the degree of uncertainty regarding a number of aspects of the project (particularly erosion and sediment transportation processes), the project team must be able to adjust project features in response to new information and experience. To accomplish this, a strong Adaptive Management Program, with continuing oversight meetings every six months to track changes and adapt to new information, we believe is critically important.

For example, the best science for flooding is based on large rivers like the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers. These rivers are very different from our western flashy rivers. Erosion and sedimentation may not occur as modeled. In fact some evidence exists that when prehistoric natural earthen dams, are actually breached by seismic or other catastrophic processes, all of the sediment stored behind the dam does not find its way downstream. Therefore, soil cement stabilization may not be needed to the

extent proposed, and levees and floodwalls may not be needed to the extent modeled.

If it becomes apparent that some of the mitigation measures, which themselves have significant adverse impacts, are not needed, the project sponsors should have the ability to change the project and perhaps soften the hard structural footprint of the project. This could enable monies to be shifted to other areas that will enhance the project, such as an even more comprehensive arundo donax removal program.

Water Resources

Preamble

The water resource use/loss for the Matilija Dam Decommissioning Project should be viewed in its entirety. What may be one agency "loss" of water may actually be seen as another agencies "water gain". This difference between "water loss" and "water gain" is generally found between groundwater users and surface water users. The alleged loss of surface water supply to the Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) through the removal of Matilija Dam before it is completely filled with sediment, should be balanced against the potential increase in downstream groundwater supplies to the City of Ventura (as well as other downstream well-users) resulting from any reduction of diversions at the Robles Diversion facility.

For purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, water resources should not be viewed as an agency driven resource or simply within the confines of distinct agency boundaries. The entire water resource must be viewed as a whole, within the scope of the evidence and science presented in the document.

DEIR/EIR Review

The Draft EIR/EIS provides no review of the beneficial impact of the automation of the Robles Fish Passage Facility, the high-flow sediment bypass structure and the desilting basin added to the CMWD system as they relate to enhanced ability of CMWD to divert water to Lake Casitas at flows over 30 or 50 CFS. The potential for additional water diversion should be reviewed in the document to more accurately reflect any potential short term and long term water loss for CMWD.

The Draft EIR/EIS provides no review of the surface and groundwater generating capability from the removal of Arundo Donax. Arundo is known to use up to 10 times the amount of groundwater as native riverine flora. Reduced evapotranspiration resulting from the removal of non-native

1 P5

Arundo should be viewed as new water which off-sets the potential water loss claimed by CMWD.

The removal of the dense stands of arundo from Matilija Canyon above the Dam should produce some additional surface water flow, particularly during seasonal low flow periods. All surface water flows above the Robles Fish Passage Facility have the ability to be diverted to Casitas reservoir if they are over the cubic feet per second rates necessary for fish releases, and below the capacity of the Robles Diversion Facility. This additional water should be calculated and subtracted from the water loss to CMWD noted in the EIR/EIS.

1 (cont.)

The removal of arundo from the numerous reaches of the Ventura River below the Dam will also provide additional surface flows for groundwater recharge for groundwater users along the Ventura River. The amount of water not purchased from CMWD should be subtracted from the water demands attribute to the CMWD in the EIR/EIS.

The water used for slurry transport will also be released to groundwater. Groundwater users will eventually utilize that water. This water should be subtracted from the water demands attributed to CMWD in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Finally, water that is **purchased** from CMWD by the City of Ventura, and eventually used for the slurry pipeline, should not be viewed as a water loss by CMWD for this project. Any water that the City has purchased is surplus, and made available for the project is not a loss of water. The CMWD has been paid for the water the City normally takes as part of their annual allotment. Its use for slurry operations is merely a short-term water use for another purpose, a portion of which will be returned to the groundwater for potential re-use.

Potential Impacts to Steelhead Trout

The Draft EIR/EIS does not assess the impacts of the proposed operation of the high-flow sediment bypass on the operation of the Robles Fish Passage Facility. The operation of the Robles Fish Passage Facility extends between flows ranging from 50 cfs and approximately 1,500 cfs, and requires that a pool be maintained in the stilling basin to raise the water surface to a point where water can be diverted into the combined diversion/fish passage intake on the upstream side of the facility. The operation of the high-flow sediment bypass would extend from 1,000 cfs up to the maximum capacity of the high-flow sediment bypass facilities and require the raising of the bypass gates, lowering the water surface area below the elevation needed to divert water into the combined diversion/fish passage intake. Because of the design of the high-flow sediment bypass, upstream migrating fish

2 D1

would not be able to pass through the raised bypass gates, resulting in the elimination of all fish passage opportunities during operation of the high-flow sediment bypass facility. Both the operation and design of the high-flow bypass should be modified to address this issue if the steelhead benefits of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project are to be achieved.

2 (cont.)

The draft EIR/EIS does not establish a clear basis for the need for the two water wells for the City of Ventura. Percolation is largely a function of the permeability of the sediments overlying the groundwater aquifer, and is affected primarily by fine sediments. The project however, proposes to remove a majority of the fines stored behind Matilija Dam through a slurry line operation. The remaining fine sediments are the most likely to be transported through the system to the ocean, even under moderate sized storm events. Even assuming some residual fine sediments above natural background levels remaining in the channel which effect percolation, this would only be a temporary short term condition which would not require or justify the installation of permanent wells as mitigation. Any proposal for the installation of new wells for the City of Ventura at Foster Park must be reviewed for their potential significant adverse impact on steelhead trout. Steelhead can become stranded in pools that have been drawn down by groundwater extraction causing the eventual "take" of endangered species.

3 P4

4 D2

Project Footprint

Because the proposed new or enlarged flood control levees along the River are themselves orders of magnitude larger that the actual footprint of Matilija Dam, and significantly impact both riparian habitats, and lateral migration of terrestrial and amphibians species within the riparian corridor, the construction of levees for flood control should be re-evaluated annually under the Adaptive Management Program suggested above.

Unnecessary levees should be removed or down-sized when they are no longer needed to address the short-term impacts resulting from routing the coarse sediments naturally through the Matilija Creek and Ventura River channels. This is the most effective method of mitigating the significant adverse effects (both biological and visual) generated by the levee themselves.

5 N

Habitat Restoration of Slurry Storage Sites

The standard practice of the Corps of Engineers is to require compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for damage to riverine habitat. However, on page 4-5 the Corps is suggesting that the slurry deposition sites (as well as the various associated levees) be allowed to re-vegetate naturally. Because of the extensive areas which will

be disturbed by the slurry deposits and levees, and the potential for encouraging the establishment of non-native species which would degrade not only the mitigation sites, but larger areas of the Ventura River riparian corridor, the Environmental Coalition strongly recommends that a plan to revegetate these areas with native species, be prepared, along with a post-planting monitoring plant to ensure the success of the re-vegetation plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very significant environmental restoration project. The Environmental Coalition appreciates the considerable effort and commitment, which the County of Ventura and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has exhibited in pursuing the successful completion of this precedential project.

Sincerely,

Russ Baggerly

President
(805) 640-0124

Cc: Supervisor Steve Bennett
Supervisor John Flynn
Deputy Public Works Director, Jeff Pratt
City of Ventura
Casitas Municipal Water District
Matilija Coalition
NOAA Fisheries
California Department of Fish and Game
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

BIROSIK

California Regional Water Quality Control Bo

Los Angeles Region

Over 51 Years Serving Coastal Los Angeles and Ventura Counties
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Terry Tamminen
Secretary for Environmental Protection

320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200, Los Angeles, California 90013
Phone (213) 576-6600 FAX (213) 576-6640 - Internet Address: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

August 30, 2004

Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

COMMENTS ON DRAFT EIS/EIR FOR THE MATILIJA DAM ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

I've reviewed the Draft EIR/EIS for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and have a number of specific comments which are referenced by section and page numbers as noted and, in addition, some general comments.

Page 4.2-8, Section 4.2.3 Water Quality:

I would suggest the following language be inserted after the last sentence of the first paragraph:

> The beneficial uses designated for the watershed are many and varied with municipal and domestic supply; groundwater recharge; wildlife habitat; warmwater habitat; coldwater habitat; freshwater replenishment; agricultural supply; wetland habitat; migration of aquatic organisms; spawning, production and/or early life development; rare, threatened, or endangered species; and contact recreation being the most sensitive in either the Ventura River main stem, Matilija Creek, or Lake Casitas. Other beneficial uses include noncontact water recreation, industrial service supply, and industrial process supply.

1

The second paragraph of the section is somewhat confusing in that it begins with a discussion of impaired waters and ends with a discussion of the Clean Water Action Plan. It would be more logical to complete the discussion of impaired waters in that paragraph by listing the impairments as follows:

Ventura River Estuary – algae, eutrophic, fecal and total coliform, trash
Ventura River Reaches 1 and 2 (estuary to Weldon Cyn) – algae
Ventura River Reach 3 (Weldon Cyn to confluence with Coyote creek) – pumping, water diversions
Ventura River Reach 4 (Coyote Creek to Camino Cielo Rd) – pumping, water diversions
Matilija Creek Reach 1 (junction with N. Fork to Reservoir) – fish barriers

Matilija Creek Reach 2 (above reservoir) – fish barriers
Matilija Reservoir – fish barriers
San Antonio Creek – nitrogen
Canada Larga – fecal coliform, low DO

These impairments are from the current 2002 303(d) list (approved by USEPA in July 2003) and have changed somewhat from the previous, 1998, list which is cited in the Draft EIR/EIS. The Feasibility Study should also reflect that information.

The third paragraph could then go on to discuss the Clean Water Action Plan which is one means by which states can address impairments although the Plan's current status with regards to funding levels is unclear. In any case, the document describes the Ventura River as a Category I (impaired) watershed. It is more accurate to describe it as a Category I (impaired) non-priority watershed as it was listed in California's Unified Watershed Assessment. The priority versus non-priority status is only in reference to the perceived need in 1998 for federal funding to address impairments. With lesser numbers of impairments than many of our other watersheds, and knowing limited federal funds were available, we suggested a non-priority status for the Ventura River Watershed.

1 (cont.)

Page 4.2-9, Section 4.2.3.1 Ventura River Watershed Monitoring Program

There is a mix of information in the first paragraph that is somewhat confusing. The previous three paragraphs also contain information about monitoring. I would suggest a heading entitled "Watershed Monitoring" under which there is a brief history of monitoring in the watershed followed by subheadings describing the results of specific monitoring activities conducted by Ventura County and the Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper. There are other ongoing monitoring programs, some of many years duration, as described in the Regional Board's 2002 Ventura River State of the Watershed Report; it was monitoring specific to the stormwater permit which began planning activities in 1994.

Page 4.3-3, Section 4.3, Biological Resources:

It is unclear how the Slurry Fine Disposal/Habitat Restoration Site Search Committee chose the proposed slurry disposal sites. For instance, why was it necessary for one proposed site (sub-site 1 within Slurry Disposal Site 2) to be within the river channel and thus subjected more frequently to flood events?

2

BIROSIK

General Comments:

Of the alternatives proposed, Alternative 4b does appear to offer the most environmental benefits in a relatively short time period while allowing for control over release of sediments. However, we have ongoing concerns over potentially excessive turbidity levels and sedimentation that may affect beneficial uses such as local water supplies and biological resources. We look forward to being closely involved in the Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design Phase of the project, as well as in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan, to help insure protection of these sensitive beneficial uses. 3

Should you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact myself at 213-576-6679 or sbirosik@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Shirley Birosik
Staff Environmental Specialist

BRITT

Serjak, Christopher W SPL

From: Jeff Pratt [Jeff.Pratt@mail.co.ventura.ca.us]
Sent: Wednesday, August 04, 2004 11:50 AM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D SPL
Cc: Butch Britt; Sergio Vargas
Subject: Fwd: Matilija Dam Removal - Impact on Matilija Canyon Road

Jon,

Below are comments received from the Ventura County Public Works Agency (Transportation Department) for consideration during review of the draft environmental document. Please include them for response.

Thanks.

Jeff

Jeff Pratt, P.E.
Director
Watershed Protection Department
jeff.pratt@mail.co.ventura.ca.us
(O)805.654.2040
(C)805.320.6050

>>> Butch Britt 08/04/04 11:20AM >>>
Jeff, I'm sure you are aware of the precarious nature of Matilija Canyon Road (Matilija Road North), and the eclectic community of residents that live there. The road is frequently subject to closure due to landslides and washouts during storm events. We are even currently down to one lane at one location because of storm damage in 98 that we weren't able to fully restore to two lanes.

My concern is that although the dam may be useless, it does serve as a velocity retardant, particularly at the southerly end of the creek, and protects the road from more extensive erosion damage. The "old timers" tell me that previously the creek was pilot channeled every year to reduce erosion of underlying road support. If you look just beyond the first horseshoe road curve just of SR 33, there are still vestiges of sheet piling placed by transportation several decades ago, to protect the road from falling off into the creek. That location, and several others going almost all the way into the entrance to the National Forest, are literally almost hanging off into thin air. There's no room to just move the road inland in most cases, because we are jam up against the existing hillsides/mountains. 1

This road is the only link for several residences that are located near the end of the road. It is their lifeline for emergency services as well as daily commuting. If the road is cut off, the residents are literally isolated. On occasion the Sheriff has had to evacuate some homeowners from this community by helicopter.

If the dam removal causes additional potential for erosion or flood damage to Matilija Canyon Road, some mitigation measures should be considered. And frankly if the feds are going to throw millions of dollars at removing a dam, they can afford to at least make some improvements aimed at protecting the survivability of the roadway, which serves a US National Forest area in addition to the local residential community. A good portion of the roadway is also within and the property of the US Forest Service. We only have a license for it.

What I'm asking of you is to consider including provision for regular pilot channeling this fork of Matilija Creek away from the roadway side as part of the project and inclusion of some roadway slope hardening, slope stabilization, in those locations that are traditionally subject to damage from storms.

If you or any member of your staff would like to visit this to see the exact locations and

conditions that we are talking about, just let me know. Either myself and/or Ken Gordon would be more than willing to take you.

Thanks for your consideration:

butch/.

BROKAW

John Brokaw
347 Camino Cielo
Ojai, CA 93023

August 26, 2004

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles CA 90017-3401

Dear Mr Vivanti

My name is John Brokaw. I am resident at 347 Camino Cielo, Ojai, Ventura County in the area which will be affected by the Matilija Dam Removal Plan. I have recently been informed by a neighbor concerning the plan and possible repercussions to residents. I have only today located the Draft EIS/EIR document on the Matilija Dam website.

Please include as a matter of record:

1. Public Concerns / Areas of Controversy (from page ES-5)

   " The Corps and VCWPD have worked with local, State and federal agencies and involved the public during the EIS/EIR process. No significant public controversy regarding the Proposed Action has emerged to date."

   I am resident on Camino Cielo and have been unaware of this intended activity until late July of this year. I have been informed by neighbors that local property has been the object of "eminent domain". What method of fair value determination has been utilized to compensate property owners? Please note that there is extreme concern coming from affected property owners in the area.

   1
   Q1

2. As stated in recent correspondence from the Casitas Municipal Water District, "The proposed removal of Matilija Dam and reservoir will mean a significant loss of water supply and a lost opportunity to store water behind the dam for Matilija Conduit customers that currently depend on it."

   What measures have been taken to assure that water will be available to county residents who have relied upon that provided from the Matilija Dam by the Marilija Conduit?

   2
   P1, P2

3. Table ES-1 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (from page ES-6) states as a predicted impact "Deplete groundwater or surface water supplies or interfere with groundwater flow or recharge". Proposed Mitigation Measures – None.

   Does this mean that although a study has been done that indicates that water supplies will be negatively impacted no action to remedy this situation is proposed as a part of the project?

3

4. In the section addressing "Implementation of Downstream Flood Protection" (from page 3-8) it is stated: "Both the high and low levels of flood control protection would include purchase and removal of the Matilija Hot Springs retreat facility, two houses at Camino Cielo, and nine cabins at Camino Cielo. The Camino Cielo Bridge would also have to be removed.

   There are several households above the flood plain which utilize the Camino Cielo bridge for access. Is it intended to construct a new bridge for access as part of this project? If so is this currently detailed in the document?

4
U

I have been a resident of Ventura County for 20 years and lived at my Camino Cielo residence with my family for 11 years. Those of us who own homes and live in this area do certainly express our public concern. Any plan which displaces long term residents and places the availability of access and water in question to residents remaining will remain a controversial matter of concern until those issues are resolved to the satisfaction of those directly affected.

I look forward to resolution of these issues with assistance of the Army Corp of Engineers and our Ventura County Officials.

Thank you and Best Regards,

John Brokaw

John Brokaw

Property Owner and Resident

347 Camino Cielo, Ojai CA 93023

BRUBAKER

8-6-04

Dear Mr. Pratt,

With the recent publicity regarding Matilija Dam, a question has again come to mind.

Several years ago, the dam was notched, as I recall, to relieve pressure. If I am mistaken, why then could this notch be expanded and as the silt level lowers, the notch would be widened. Hopefully, this would release silt gradually reducing fears of downstream residents.

I would appreciate your thoughts on this approach

Sincerely,

Don Brubaker
Box 1923
Ventura CA
93002

1

RECEIVED
AUG 10 2004
WATERSHED PROTECTION DIST.

VENTURA RIVER
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

409 OLD BALDWIN ROAD
OJAI, CA 93023
Phone (805) 646-3403
Fax (805) 646-3860

BRYANT

August 12, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti, CESPL-PW-WW
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Subject: Comments on Draft EIS/EIR
Matilija Dam Removal Project

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Ventura River County Water District is pleased to be able to provide our comments on the draft EIS/EIR for the removal of Matilija Dam. We believe that the EIR is both inadequate and incomplete with regard to studying the issues that are of concern to this affected water district.

The Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD) had submitted a request for additional information and study by letter dated January 28, 2002 (copy attached). It appears from reading the draft EIR that many of the issues that concern this water district were not thoroughly, or indeed, even addressed in the EIS/EIR process. As a result, we believe that the potential impacts for the preferred plan (4-B) may have impacts which have not been analyzed nor studied under the current draft EIS/EIR.

1
P7

Without further study or investigation, the following issues which had been previously raised by VRCWD need to be included in this environmental document. Failure to address them would, in our judgment, mean that the EIS/EIR is, per se, inadequate on its face. Some of the concerns we have are as follows:

1) Proposed slurry disposal site.

The first and most important issue is the location of proposed silt deposit sites. Two of the sites north of the Highway 150 bridge are within 300 feet of our domestic drinking water wells. Disposal in these areas, in our opinion, will have significant impact based both on water quality and the high potential for plugging and choking the aquifer in the area surrounding these wells. Of further concern is that if the silt is allowed to build-up in the river, it would increase the height of the river causing potential inundation in areas never before affected by flood waters. VRCWD's water well facility is one of these properties which will be impacted by this new project induced flood threat.

BRYANT

Our major concern is that there has been inadequate study of the hydrological impacts of the sediment that will get into the subsurface percolating beds of the Ventura River. We believe that the fine clays and silt will eventually clog up the currently free-flowing subterranean percolating water which is the source of our water system.

As found in pages 4-17 through 4-26, we are concerned with the millions of tons of silt which are being proposed to be placed on some 97 acres across from our facilities and held in by 10 foot high concrete slurry walls. This essentially would mean the deposition of nearly 2 million cubic yards within a stone's throw of our wells.

The study does not address this issue at all. There has not been enough study of the impacts of sediment in the river, both in terms of quantities, the potential affect on the many wells that are located within the Ventura River System, and the impacts that the creation of these large silt impounds will have on the standard flooding of the Ventura River.

1 (cont.)

We are aware that the project has already assured the City of Ventura that if its wells become impacted due to the sedimentation released in the river, the project, at project expense, will drill two replacement wells for the City of Ventura. No such assurance has been given to VRCWD should the same impacts occur on its wells.

Our District believes that the extension of the slurry pipelines to an area just south of the Shell Road bridge would be a better solution. That will replenish the materials removed during the mining of the Ventura River by Southern Pacific Milling Company. It would be more beneficial and by placing materials in this area and would allow beach replenishment to occur at a quicker pace without the devastating impacts on the many wells located within the Ventura River.

2) <u>Water Quality</u>

The second issue in priority for our District is water quality issues that might occur due to discharge of silt/fine clays and other materials and the actual quality impacts from what is contained within that silt. The draft EIS/EIR at Section 3.1 indicates soil contamination would be expected to be potentially significant. With disposal sites in such close proximity to the drinking water for our 2150 customers, this potential contamination could leach into the aquifer and therefore possibly rendering our strategic source of domestic water useless.

2 I

Any contaminants within the silt would also leach into the groundwater table, adding contamination to a drinking water source, which has to date, been without contamination.

The issue of groundwater quality has not been adequately addressed in the draft EIS/EIR.

Another matter of great concern is the fact the only domestic purveyors that are addressed in the draft environmental document are Casitas Municipal Water District and the City of Ventura. Other public and private water users and/or purveyors such as VRCWD, Meiners Oaks County Water District, Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company (which has adjudicated water rights in the river) and the numerous farmers and

3 M, P7

BRYANT

landowners who have legal water wells in the river have not even been cataloged and are not even mentioned in the draft EIS/EIR.

How can a study of the impacts on the Ventura River ignore the many wells that utilize this hydrological system for the water sources not even be considered? We are puzzled why we could not find a list of the affected water wells in the Ventura River anywhere in the draft document.

3 (cont.)

3) Water For Slurry Purposes

Another issue which the draft environmental document has suggested is the use of good domestic water from Lake Casitas to create slurry for carrying the silts in a pipeline. Lake Casitas is the sole supplemental water supply for all water purveyors within the Ventura River Basin. With Casitas MWD having to release more water for the operation of the Robles Fish Ladder, this already jeopardizes the available supply without having to pump previously diverted water back to where it came from up in the mountains to Matilija Dam.

We are in the middle of a drought cycle. The hydrographs are currently paralleling 1989 which was the last drought in this area. Lake Casitas is currently down to approximately 66 percent of its capacity. To utilize good drinking water and to pump it up to Matilija Dam at great expense is not a beneficial use of the water behind the Casitas Dam in our opinion. Using the water already retained behind Matilija Dam for the slurry process along with natural gravity is a more realistic and beneficial use.

4

The draft EIS/EIR states NO IMPACTS ON WATER SUPPLY.

Use of water from Lake Casitas for this project is an impact on water supply. This District believes that the draft environmental document should have investigated the use of reclaimed water for purposes of providing the necessary water for the slurry disposition of the silt. The use of reclaimed water would eliminate any impact on the domestic supply and would bring reclaimed water back up into the valley thereby adding water available for fish migration as well as irrigation purposes.

Before this project can proceed an investigation either through a supplemental EIR or a new draft EIR will have to be performed on the effects the project will have on all water sources, including private users and public agencies who utilize the Ventura River system as their sole water source.

Another issue is that for the past six years, the County of Ventura with the cooperating of Casitas Municipal Water District, and other local water purveyors have been working on the Habit Conservation Plan (HCP). The impacts of this plan and the extensive permitting requirements for all people working in the Ventura River are not even mentioned in the draft EIR. For the last six years, all affected users who operate in the Ventura River have been cooperating and drafting the HCP. None of our recommendations or approved permitting requirements for obtaining and maintaining permits are even mentioned in this draft environmental document.

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The Ventura River County Water District is extremely discouraged to discover major water agencies, such as ours, within the jurisdiction of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District were not accounted for in an environmental study of the watershed

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M, P7

BRYANT

they were formed to protect. The removal of Matilija Dam will affect this watershed. To not include impacts on all sources of the Ojai Valley water supply is in our opinion an inadequate and incomplete study.

6 (cont.)

One of the objectives of this project was to protect and expand local water supplies. We believe the opposite may be true without further study and investigation.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew L. Bryant

Matthew L. Bryant
General Manager

cc: Ms. Pamela Lindsey, Ventura Watershed Protection District
Casitas Municipal Water District
Meiners Oak County Water District
Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company
Supervisor Steve Bennett
Congressman Elton Gallegly
Senator Diane Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Jesse Phelps, Ojai Valley News
Charles Levin, Ventura County Star
Ron Caulkins, City of Ventura
John Correa, Ojai Valley Sanitary District
Frank Bennett, Southern California Water Company
Jim Engel, Ojai Land Conservancy

BRYANT

VENTURA RIVER
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

409 OLD BALDWIN ROAD
OJAI, CA 93023
Phone (805) 646-3403
Fax (805) 646-3860

January 28, 2002

Pamela Lindsey
Ventura County Public Works Agency
Flood Control Department
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1600

RE: NOTICE OF PREPARATION.

The Ventura River CWD would like to thank the Army Corp of Engineers and the Ventura County Flood Control District for the opportunity to assist in the preparation of the Environmental impact report.

The project description states that the study will focus on addressing three objectives.

First Objective

- *Feasible alternatives for the restoration of the creek ecosystem (especially for steelhead trout), primarily by removing the Matilija Dam.*

Information for Objective

- Analyze the USGS stream flow data of the Ventura River to verify there was significant river flow before and after the construction of the dam to determine, it would be enough to sustain aquatic life. One alternative would be to introduce reclaimed water into the basin.

Second Objective

- *Feasible alternatives for the removal of sediment behind the dam.*

Information for Objective

- The District would like significant analysis done in this area of impact on how the silt if discharged into the river would affect the percolation of surface waters in the river basin. As well as its effect on ground water quality.

Third Objective

- *Beneficial use of the removed sediment for beach nourishment or other environmental restoration purposes.*

Information for Objective

- The only beneficial use we see would be to pump it via slurry pipeline to the mouth of the river, wash the sediment and transport it to areas along the beach that has washed out in past storms.

We feel that the cost to accomplish this feat has no benefit to the current water situation within the basin. With initial cost estimates between $20,000,000 to $200,000,000, the benefits are few at most. One beneficial use of this money would be to dismantle the dam over time. Study the feasibility of building a reclaimed water pipeline to a point of discharge that would help establish perennial flows within the basin to provide recharging of the basin aquifer with a year round source of water. This would benefit the passage for Steelhead, other aquatic species and the replenishment of ground water within the River Basin.

Please contact me if I may be of assistance with data required for the EIS/EIR at (805) 646-3403 Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. I can also be reached via e-mail at vrcwd@ojai.net.

Sincerely,

Matthew L. Bryant

Matthew L. (Matt) Bryant
General Manager

Cc: Directors
Counsel
Staff
File

MLB/mlb

BRYANT2

VENTURA RIVER
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

409 OLD BALDWIN ROAD
OJAI, CA 93023
Phone (805) 646-3403
Fax (805) 646-3860

August 25, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti, CESPL-PW-WW
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Subject: Supplemental Comments on Draft EIS/EIR
Matilija Dam Removal Project

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

The Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD) is supplying supplemental information in regards to our letter dated August 12, 2004. This supplemental information is as follows:

1) Use of Reclaimed water

The use of reclaimed water from the Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant should be thoroughly investigated as part of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project.

With the scarcity of water in the Ojai Valley and with water conservation being so important, the reuse of treated wastewater is becoming more important.

It is our opinion the use of reclaimed wastewater would benefit the project in two ways:

- Reclaimed water can supply needed water for the slurry process, without utilizing water already stored for domestic use.
- No need to purchase water for slurry process.

If reclaimed water could be introduced into the Ojai Valley as part of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project it could benefit the ecosystem by reducing over all water demand. Beneficial uses of reclaimed water are:

- Irrigating landscaping and lawns at parks and golf courses, as well as graze land, reducing demand on current sources.
- Irrigation of edible crops that will be peeled, cooked or thermally processed before consumption is allowed, additionally reducing demands on current sources.
- Use in fountains or decorative pools.
- Fire-fighting

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L

How the above uses would be beneficial to both Steelhead migration and water consumers:

- Saving millions of gallons of drinking water each day.
- Its use for non-potable (non-drinking) purposes is less expensive for the vast majority of customers.
- It delays the need for developing costly new water sources and building expensive treatment plants.
- Reducing water withdrawals, allowing surface flow to continue longer in the Ventura River, aiding in Steelhead migration.

In our opinion, in order to create a balance of necessity in the Ventura River Eco-system recycling our water should be strongly considered as part of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew L. Bryant

Matthew L. Bryant
General Manager

cc: Ms. Pamela Lindsey, Ventura Watershed Protection District
Casitas Municipal Water District
Meiners Oak County Water District
Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company
Supervisor Steve Bennett
Congressman Elton Gallegly
Senator Diane Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Jesse Phelps, Ojai Valley News
Charles Levin, Ventura County Star
Ron Caulkins, City of Ventura
John Correa, Ojai Valley Sanitary District
Frank Bennett, Southern California Water Company
Jim Engel, Ojai Land Conservancy

CONROW

Ojai Water Conservation District
A Public Agency

Post Office Box 1779 – Ojai, California 93024

August 1, 2004

Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Jeff Pratt
Ventura County Watershed Protection District
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1600

Re: De-commissioning of Casitas Water Distribution System

Gentlemen,

Our initial review of your Matilija Dam Deconstruction Project EIS/EIR documents, and your presentation at the public meeting on July 28, reveals that you have neither analyzed nor provided for the mitigation of one of the most significant impacts of the Project. The act of removing the dam can, and will unless adequately mitigated, result in the decommissioning of a water system upon which the people of the Ojai Valley depend for municipal and agricultural use. This agriculture is responsible not only for commercial crop production and the livelihood of many of the families of the valley, but for the setting and ambience that make Ojai an extraordinarily attractive place to live.

1
P1, P2

This water system includes the dam, the water it stores, conveyance facilities including the Matilija Conduit presently operated by the Casitas Water District, and, most importantly, the State vested water rights, which apparently are proposed to be taken without any analysis or discussion in the Project documents and without mitigation.

These water rights were sought and obtained for the purpose of providing water to users along the Matilija Conduit and particularly for the water users in the eastern end of the Ojai Valley. The Ojai Water Conservation District represents the interests of these users.

Matilija Dam today, despite the silt which unfortunately and inappropriately has been allowed to build up in the reservoir, still maintains a 4300 acre-foot per year storage and delivery water right.

CONROW

Water under this right was delivered by Ventura County via gravity flow through the Matilija Conduit to agricultural customers and to three specified spreading grounds in the Ojai Valley for underground storage and ultimately for use in the Ojai Basin. The State Water Rights Board also approved Ventura County's application and permit for a 35 cfs Direct Diversion right from Matilija Creek to also be delivered for the above purposes. Under an agreement with Ventura County, signed in 1959, The Casitas Water District delivers water to the Matilija Conduit customers and to the east end of the Ojai Valley by pumping the water rather than by gravity flow. That agreement has a 50 year time span, which ends in 2009, and there is great public concern among water users as to the future of that agreement and the relationship between that agreement and the Matilija Dam Deconstruction Project.

1 (cont.)

The EIS/EIR documents are wholly inadequate unless they thoroughly investigate and analyze this potential impact of the Project. Dam removal should not go forward without assuring that these impacts are resolved and fully mitigated as an integral part of the Project.

Having brought this matter to your attention in previous meetings and correspondence, we are at a loss as to why these impacts, particularly the taking of water rights, is ignored in the Project documents. However, as we stated at the July 28 public meeting, we will be happy to meet with you and the Project staff to discuss, in more detail than this space allows, the problems and complexities of these impacts, which must be considered in connection with any action to remove Matilija Dam.

We do have three other points that we would like to make as a result of reviewing your EIS/EIR.

In table 2-1 there is a disclosure of mean annual precipitation for the Ventura River Watershed. The report does not disclose that the National Weather Service has labeled this same watershed as potentially the most dangerous watershed in America. They have taken this position because of the topography of the area and the proximity to the Pacific Ocean and because of the East-West direction of the Ojai valley the Ventura River Watershed could receive a catastrophic 40-inch rainfall in one 24-hour period. If the dam is being removed at the same time as such a rainfall there should be an understanding of the consequences. Table 2-10 on page 51-2 purports to disclose costs related to the potential crop damage during a 100 and 500-year flood. These calculations do not take into account the costs if such flood occurred during the decommissioning project. It appears that the National Weather Service has not been consulted about this project.

2

There is mention of a debris basin, on page 4-2 on San Antonio Creek but the report fails to mention that the debris basin is inoperative because of the failure to maintain the basin by Ventura County Watershed Protection District.

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OWCD 2/2

CONROW

Figure 2-2 indicates that the east end of the Ojai valley is considered "Rural" when in fact it is mostly "Agricultural' with housing mixed in. The Rural designation does not give the reader of the report the proper foundation for understanding the impact of the water requirement of the east end of the valley. 4

Very truly yours,

Jerry L. Conrow
President, Ojai Water Conservation District
President, Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency

Cc: Steve Bennett, Ventura County Board of Supervisors

OWCD 3/2

CORREA

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

A Public Agency

1072 Tico Road, Ojai, California 93023
(805) 646-5548 • FAX (805) 640-0842
www.ojaisan.org

August 24, 2004

Jon Vivanti, US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

MATILIJA DAM REMOVAL PROJECT EIR, PROJECT REPORT & TECHNICAL APPENDICES

I have reviewed the Matilija Dam Removal Project EIR, Project Report and Technical Appendices. This is a very large and complex document but there are many inconsistencies and errors to be dealt with. In general the documents show a lack of concern for the Ojai Valley Sanitary District's facilities. The impacts of the project will put many of our sewer pipelines and our wastewater treatment plant at risk, which in turn puts the environment at risk. We all can understand that if a sewer line is exposed by a flood and breaks that there will be contaminated water everywhere and an environmental disaster. If our wastewater treatment plant is flooded it will be shut down with millions of gallons of sewage following through it untreated and discharged into the Ventura River causing an environmental disaster.

I request that you seriously review and reevaluate the impacts of the project on the sanitary sewer facilities along the Ventura River. My comments follow:

1. The EIR includes Canada Larga levee but it is not in Project Report. The Canada Larga levee and floodwall appear to have been included in the project earlier and then eliminated. But, the elimination was incomplete; it still appears in the EIR. This levee is a significant issue to the Sanitary District since the project will place our Wastewater Treatment plant at risk. The same criteria used in the flood protection on other areas should apply here.

   That criteria is found on page 3-47 of the project Report and can be summarized as follows: The "high level" flood protection, necessary for Alternate 4b, is established by determining the 100 year flood water surface elevation of the river channel based upon the maximum aggradation predicted during a 50 year simulation of the natural erosion, Alternate 2b - worst case downstream aggradation, and adding 8 feet of freeboard in the reaches downstream of Baldwin Road to account for uncertainties.

1

CORREA

After carefully reviewing the documents, I found that the river channel thalweg will rise by about 1.25 feet in the 50 years on the H & H report figure 19-139. If the hydraulic modeling found in Exhibit B6 of the same report uses that thalweg, then the water surface to use is 201.16 at RM 5.11. The flood protection criterion then adds 8 feet to that resulting is a levee or floodwall elevation of 209.16. The elevation of the top of the wall/curb around the wastewater treatment plant at RM 5.11 is 205.01. 1 (cont.)

The Matilija Dam Removal Project is having an impact on the wastewater treatment plant and that the flood protection criteria should be applied to it. A public health and safety facility should be more carefully evaluated in this study than it was. Flooding of the wastewater treatment plant could result in millions of gallons of raw and partially treated sewage being discharged into the river and the resulting environmental disaster.

2. Project Report and EIR used old data.

The documents refer to a 303d list which includes DDT, copper, silver, zinc, selenium, algae (eutrophication) and trash. The current 303d list includes only algae. Use the current list. 2

The references to the Draft State of the Watershed Report from the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board are a few months older than the Final State of the Watershed Report. Use the actual published report rather than a draft.

3. The result of deposition of material from the dam into the Ventura River in the manner proposed results in widening of the floodplains. There are sanitary sewers along the edge of the Ventura River. These were installed in the early 60's and were outside the 100 year floodplains. The widening of the floodplains by the project will place these lines within the floodplain and place them at risk of damage due to erosion and inflows. The deposition of material should be placed to protect banks and sewer facilities from erosion and not to widen the floodplains or the sewer lines should be relocated as elements of the Project. Flooding damage to the pipelines can cause major environmental damage to the river, the fish in it, and the beaches. It would also be a threat to the City of Ventura's water supply. 3

4. Although not the direct concern of the Sanitary District, the hydrology report seems to have been prepared in a "drive by" mode without a site visit. When evaluating our facilities, I investigate the applicable floodplain information; the hydrology study does not fit the conditions I have observed on the ground. The Ojai Burn Dump is an island in many storms, with water around all sides of it, yet the study has it not being an island in the 50, 100, or 500 year floodplains. The FEMA FIRM shows the Burn Dump as an island. Another spot of concern is along Burnham Road where the project floodplain will widen to include sewer lines and the public road. 4

CORREA

This matter is of concern because if you assume the water stays in the channel rather than spreading out, did you error in the water surface calculation down-stream or was some needed flood protection omitted?

Some areas that look as though they do not match the actual conditions are: RM 5.9, RM 7.7 to 8.1 and RM 11.3 to 11.7.

4 (cont.)

5. In this introductory section of both the project report and EIR, much material was copied from the State of the Watershed Report, but a section of the River, the Lower Ventura River, was omitted. I found myself looking for the lower Ventura River section, because that is a common designation, and could not find it and did find a paragraph in the Upper Ventura River section on Casitas Springs, which is in the Lower River section. Later in the EIR you clearly define the river into reaches and should identify what reach or reaches is identified with your terminology. I think reach 2, 2a and 2b together, is the lower river. In the Project Report Introduction the river reaches are identified in Table 1-1 and these designations should have been followed.

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   This problem appears later in the Flood Hazards section of Chapter 5 beginning on page 5-2.7. You identify Reach 6 correctly and then on page 5-2.8, identify Reach 5 incorrectly. This causes a lot of confusion. It appeared that you were setting up to run down the flooding issues on a reach by reach basis. This would have been a good idea.

   Once again on page 5-2.9, in the second to last paragraph of the Flood Hazards section, you list the items included in the Canada Larga area and omit the wastewater treatment plant. The Wastewater treatment plant and the sewer pipe-lines along the river seem to have been overlooked altogether. Flooding damage to the plant or pipelines can cause major environmental damage to the river, the animals and fish in it, and the beaches. It would also be a threat to the City of Ventura's water supply

6. In copying material from the State of the Watershed Report, you have not copied a complete section and the reader is left to draw an incorrect conclusion. The Lower Ventura River Groundwater section as copied from the State of the Water-shed Report omits the last sentence of the paragraph. This leaves the reader with the impression that the wastewater treatment plant discharge is the source of the poor quality water. This is false. The deleted sentence reads," Sources of the degradation have included oil field work, including discharges of brines into the river, unlined sumps and poor quality recharge from Canada Larga..." This leaves the reader with a very different impression.

   6

John K. Correa

John K. Correa
General Manager

DAVIS

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

August 24, 2004

CITY COUNCIL

Brian Brennan, Mayor
Carl E. Morehouse, Deputy Mayor
Neal Andrews, Councilmember
Bill Fulton, Councilmember
James L. Monahan, Councilmember
Sandy E. Smith, Councilmember
Christy Weir, Councilmember

Jon Vivanti
Army Corps of Engineers
911 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

RE: Comments to Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study – Public Draft Report - July 2004

The City of Ventura appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above referenced report that presents the findings of the alternatives analysis and the selection of a recommended plan for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The City of Ventura continues to support the dam removal process and the benefits to steelhead and water quality within Matilija Creek/Ventura River, as well as the potential beneficial uses of the accumulated sediment to nourish downstream beaches and protect development from coastal storm damage. 1

We believe the mitigation measures that would provide additional well supply at Foster Park, will adequately address the City's concerns with regards to sediment impacts to our water production facilities. However, we are relying on the adequacy of the bank protection analyses and proposed mitigation measures to alleviate risk to our facilities at Foster Park.

Finally, the City has offered to consider supplying the needed 4,500 AF of water to slurry the fines being proposed in the study. While the City could draw on accumulated groundwater reserves to offset this loss of supply, these reserves represent our buffer against future needs, particularly in times of drought. The City would prefer that any reduction in these reserves be replaced from another source. 2

This concludes our comments relating to the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study – Public Draft Report. If you disagree with our comments, or have questions please feel free to call me at 805-677-4133.

Sincerely,

Don Davis

Don Davis
Utilities Manager

cc: Ron Calkins, City of Ventura
Margaret Ide, Associate Planner
Jeff Pratt, Ventura County Watershed Protection District

DE SILVA

Mrs. Yolanda de Silva
148 La Plaza Way
Ojai, CA 93023

August 27, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401
PEOPLE FOR THE REMOVAL OF MATILIJA DAM

Dear Sir and All Interested Citizens:

As a resident of Ojai I've been shocked at the news of the plan to remove the Matilija Dam. It was the Matilija Dam that made possible the growth of the city of Ojai. Why do you want the removal of this dam ? 1

As it is, with the dam , there is not enough water for the continued growth of Ojai. Many people buy lots but they cannot build because they cannot have their water connected. Why destroy this landmark? As everyone knows, nature is cyclic and its only a matter of time that we will have flooding rains as we have had in the past. What will you do then with no dam? 2

I want Ojai to keep its water supply, its water quality and the steel head trout. I want the County of Ventura to help us. I would like Senator Barbara Boxer to help us. I want Senator Diane Feinstein to help us. I want God to help us. 3

Sincerely,

Yolanda de Silva

Yolanda de Silva
A concerned citizen.

Cc: Ms. Johanna Williams-Rep. Barbara Boxer
The Honorable Elton Gallegly, U.S. House of Representatives

Guillermo Gonzalez, Deputy State Director
The Honorable Linda Parks, Ventura County Supervisor
The Honorable Steve Bennett, Ventura County Supervisor
The Honorable Judy Mikels, Ventura County Supervisor
The Honorable Kathy Long, Ventura County Supervisor
The Honorable John Flynn, Ventura County Supervisor

DILKS

From: Vivanti, Jonathan D SPL
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2004 4:11 PM
To:
Subject: FW: Matilija Dam Removal Project - Comments on Draft Feasibility Study

-----Original Message-----
From: Eric Dilks [mailto:edilks@mail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2004 6:09 AM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D
Subject: Matilija Dam Removal Project - Comments on Draft Feasibility Study

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

August 24, 2004

Attention: Jon Vivanti, Project Manager

Subject: Matilija Dam Removal Project – Comments on Draft Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Reference is made to the Matilija Dam removal project public coordination meeting held July 28, 2004 and the Draft Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study prepared by the District dated July 2004. At the public meeting, participants were encouraged to submit comments on the project to insure all planning issues were adequately addressed. As a riparian landowner along the Ventura River, I offer the following comments for consideration:

The address of my property is 730 Santa Ana Blvd. in Oakview. This is a 36.7 acre riparian parcel on the eastern bank of the Ventura River just south of the Santa Ana Blvd. Bridge. I purchased this property in August of 2002 with the intent of constructing a single family dwelling and residing on the property. A zoning clearance has been obtained with the dwelling scheduled to be completed in 2005.

Prior to my purchase of this parcel, there was unrestricted access to this land which resulted in considerable abuse to the property. This included numerous instances of unauthorized dumping of significant quantities of refuse including cars, construction debris, numerous tires and other discarded materials. I removed approximately 200 cubic yards of unwanted materials. As such, to prevent these activities from continuing or resuming, security and controlled access to this land is of paramount importance to me.

To prevent unauthorized access to the site, I have constructed a 120 foot long concrete and river rock wall with an attendant gated structure to restrict vehicular access. Concurrent with the construction of these improvements, I also installed a 120 foot long subsurface drainage culvert with the attendant concrete headwall. The purpose of this improvement was to divert

DILKS

Santa Ana Blvd. storm water runoff under the property access drive, preventing driveway erosion, and discharging the runoff closer to the river. I have all related permits approving this work.

As you can see, I have expended considerable time and resources making access and drainage improvements in exactly the same area that the Corps proposes to locate the temporary traffic detour route when improvements and reconfigurations begin on the Santa Ana Bridge. I understand the plan being developed for the logistics of traffic flow during the bridge modification is in the preliminary stages and will probably undergo modification during the design phase.

My concern is that the current plan (see attachment) provides for the construction of the traffic detour route and relocated berm at the present location of my 120 foot long entrance wall and culvert drainage system. Specifically, I know the Corps design would include all drainage provisions – my concern is that I see no provisions in the plan for how I would gain access to my property during and after the construction phase and that the elimination of my wall leaves me with no property access security. I understand that since there is no residence currently on the property this issue was not given much importance during the preliminary planning stage. I am requesting that it be given closer attention during future planning and design activities. 1

One alternative that may deserve further consideration during the design phase is to locate the temporary detour corridor north of the existing Santa Ana Blvd. Bridge. This has a number of distinct advantages, the most attractive being that the affected property is publicly owned, not privately owned as in my case. Security issues and expenses would be lessened and my existing improvements could remain more intact, eliminating considerable restoration expense on the part of the Government. At this upstream location, there already exists an asphalt paved access road to the river level. This was constructed to facilitate county flood control access to the river.

Following the bridge extension construction activities, I would be amenable to the Corps making use of the temporary traffic diversion road construction material to extend the length of the newly constructed berm further south than the original plan. This would provide increased flood and shoreline protection for the property in addition to savings in the transportation and disposal costs of the material.

A second factor that I would like to see addressed during the planning phase of the project is the aspect of increasing flood protection and erosion control. The Corps has indicated their intention of mitigating the increased flood risk to several other riparian areas along the Ventura River by increasing levy heights and the construction of additional levies. In examining the referenced Feasibility Study, I didn't see any mitigation of increased flood risk for my property location. At the public meeting on July 28, this concern was expressed by an additional riparian owner down stream of my location. Increased flood risk without corresponding and appropriate mitigation measures will definitely adversely affect my property value as well as compromise the safety of my future residence. I need assurances that there will be an equitable distribution of mitigation resources and considerations for all riparian owners, not just for larger interests such as the municipalities and counties involved. 2

I want to thank the District for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Feasibility Study. Please put me on the mailing list to receive a copy of the final document when it is released. I hope the updated information I have provided on my current property improvements as well as my recommendations will be seriously considered as this undertaking evolves from the

DILKS

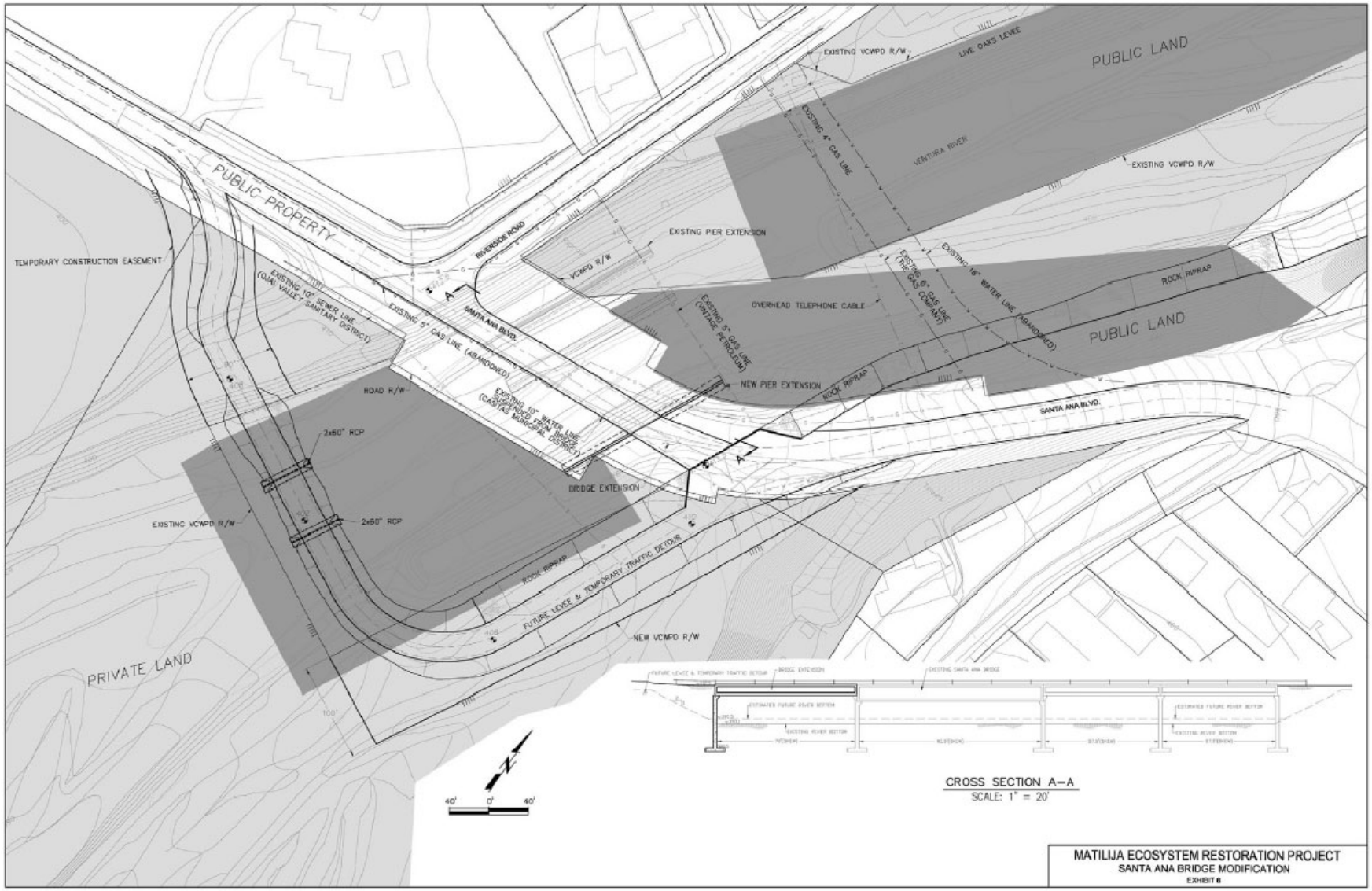
planning phase into the actual design stages.

I would appreciate it if you would acknowledge receipt of these e-mailed comments. In addition to this e-mail submittal, I will mail a “hard copy” to the District to your attention. I have also attached some recent photos of the bridge and property entrance. If you have any questions concerning the issues I have raised, or require any more specific information, please e-mail me at <edilks@mail.com> or contact me directly at 805.492.8714. I’m looking forward to working productively with the District on this important project.

Respectfully,

Eric M. Dilks

3146 Hidden Creek
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360


PUBLIC PROPERTY
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT
EXISTING 10" SEWER LINE (OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT)
EXISTING 3" GAS LINE (ABANDONED)
RIVERSIDE ROAD
SANTA ANA BLVD.
ROAD R/W
EXISTING 10" WATER LINE (CASITAS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT)
2x60" RCP
2x60" RCP
EXISTING VCWPD R/W
BRIDGE EXTENSION
ROCK RIPRAP
FUTURE LEVEE & TEMPORARY TRAFFIC DETOUR
NEW VCWPD R/W
PRIVATE LAND
EXISTING PIER EXTENSION
VCWPD R/W
OVERHEAD TELEPHONE CABLE
EXISTING 5" GAS LINE (VINTAGE PETROLEUM)
NEW PIER EXTENSION
ROCK RIPRAP
EXISTING VCWPD R/W
LIVE OAKS LEVEE
PUBLIC LAND
EXISTING 4" GAS LINE
VENTURA RIVER
EXISTING VCWPD R/W
EXISTING 6" GAS LINE (TEXAS GAS COMPANY)
EXISTING 16" WATER LINE (ABANDONED)
ROCK RIPRAP
PUBLIC LAND
SANTA ANA BLVD.
A
A
N
40'
0'
40'
CROSS SECTION A–A
SCALE: 1" = 20'
MATILIJA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT
SANTA ANA BRIDGE MODIFICATION
EXHIBIT 6

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EDMONDSON

CALIFORNIA TROUT

KEEPER OF THE STREAMS

Via Facsimile Two [2] Pages

August 30, 2004

John Vivanti, Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Re: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Draft EIR/EIS

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

According to California's leading fishery professor, Dr. Peter B. Moyle, "As the human population of California grows, native fish populations decline, reflecting a general deterioration of aquatic habitats. Protecting southern races of steelhead provides incentive to restore some of the most degraded streams in California"[1]

Southern California steelhead, those populations from Santa Barbara County south to the Mexican boarder, have a unique life history, adaptation to a semi-arid climate, and geographically located at the periphery of the species' Pacific range.

Conservation biologist have recognized that protecting genetic diversity is amongst the most important reasons for conserving them. Genetic diversity is needed to enable species to adapt to environmental change, and the adaptiveness represented by genetic diversity can be of immense value to humans. This relationship is especially easy to see in steelhead, which all have their populations throughout their entire Pacific Ocean range tied to Southern California steelhead. These populations have adapted to the often harsh conditions that naturally exist there: warm water, fluctuating flows; extended droughts; extreme seasonality of suitable habitats. They are valuable not only because they can survive in the increasingly stressed habitat of Southern California, but also because they may be needed to maintain steelhead in more northern area.[2]

Global warming is occurring so rapidly that many steelhead populations in California, Oregon and Washington will not be able to adapt through local genetic changes; they will need genes from populations already adapted to warmer conditions. Southern California steelhead are a reservoir of such valuable genetic information.

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[1] Moyle, P.B. 2002. Inland Fishes of California: Revised and Expanded. University of California Press.

[2] Ibid, #1

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For these reason recovering Southern California steelhead, in the State of California's view, "[S]outhern steelhead stocks are the most jeopardized of all of California's steelhead populations" and "South coast management focus will be on recovering these stocks from impending extinction and this will be the highest priority for DFG steelhead management." [3]

Beyond these profound biological motives, Southern California is today what much of California will becomes as a result of its continuing population growth. The region and its steelhead provides a laboratory for testing the political will at all levels, i.e. government and citizens, to strike a new paradigm in ecosystem management for California's future of healthy environments and sustainable local communities. The region has played a critical role as its voters have consistently provided the votes supporting close to $6 Billion in state bonds for ecosystem protection over the past four years. By providing some example of the benefits of these votes through local recovery investments, the political will to support future bond or other funding mechanisms is enhanced.

The Ventura River is the key watershed in Southern California to restore steelhead to the region. First, it historically supported many thousands of native steelhead. Second, the majority of its headwaters, once the Matilija Dam is removed, will become accessible to steelhead. Finally, unlike either the Santa Ynez or Santa Clara rivers (the only other two major rivers systems in Southern California where steelhead were historically more abundant then the Ventura) the mainstem migratory cooridoor for the Ventura is quite short, thus providing a greater likelihood that steelhead will gain access to their ancestral spawning and rearing grounds..

While the draft EIR/EIS does an excellent job of discussing Ventura River steelhead, we believe your final document will be enhanced by illustrating the importance of the project in a Evolutionary Significant Unit context.

1
D

We agree that Alternative 4B is the superior alternative and support the Corps' future work on this extremely important project to all of Southern California, as well as it national implications for dam removal and global warming.

Sincerely,

Jim Edmondson
Southern California Manager

[3] McEwan, D. and T. A. Jackson. 1996. Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California. Calif. Dept. Fish and Game. Sacramento, CA. 234 pp.

GOAD

Mathew Goad
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Email: jonathon.d.vivanti@usace.army.mil

8/30/2004

Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and Ventura river bank protection upgrade project

Dear Jon Vivanti,

In reference to the US Army Public Draft Report on the **Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, Ventura County, California.** Concerning the proposal to raise the level of the Casitas springs levee by 3 feet, we would like to raise the following concern.

Our property lies on both sides of the Ventura river, on the north end of Casitas Springs, however, we have two residences, several utility buildings and agricultural land located on the west side of the river across from the northern most portion of the phase 1 area. Our concern is what impact the raising of the existing levee and proposed improvements will have on the western side of the river watershed during a flood event. The river level will be effectively raised by the levee during a flood event and will force the water to seek higher ground on the western side of the river as a result. This has the potential to put our property on the western side of the river at a greater flood event risk than prior to the levee upgrade construction. I have studied the US Army Public Draft Report on the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and have found no evidence that it has taken into account what effect that the raising of the levee will have on the western side of the river. From looking at the map on page 14 in chapter 4 (Titled fig 4-9 Casitas Springs 100-year flood plain), there seems to be no change in the 100-flood plain on the western side of the river. This I find hard to believe. As an agricultural engineer, I know from my studies and experience that if water is prevented from going somewhere (Casitas Springs) then it will go elsewhere (the western side of the river). We are not opposed to the raising of the levee at Casitas Springs but feel that there has been little or no research/study as to what effect the raising of the levee will have on the western side of the river. We ask that a study be done to prove that the levee raising will not put our property into any more flood risk than is already present.

1

Please contact me to discuss the matter.
Sincerely,

Mathew Goad

Ranch manager

Cc. Masood Jilani Project Manager, Design and Construction Division, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Hugh Clabaugh, Division Engineer
Jorine Campopiano, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Jeff Pratt, Director, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Lars Wallevik, Owner, Scanstyle USA Inc.

GRADER

Institute for Fisheries Resources

Unite. Protect. Restore.

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Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401
Jonathon.d.vivanti@usace.army.mil

August 30, 2004

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Attached please find comments from the Institute for Fisheries Resources on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the **Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration project**. These comments were prepared for the Coastal Conservancy under our contract with that agency and delivered to them on August 30.

Based on our review of the DEIS and our knowledge of the process and project to date, we strongly support the proposed Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project. We support the federally and locally preferred alternative, which is Alternative 4B, full dam removal with temporary (short-term) stabilization of sediments. We remain convinced that this project is necessary and beneficial to fish, humans and the rest of the ecosystem; and that any remaining issues can be worked out by the stakeholders.

Our attached comments fall generally into the following two categories:

1. Mitigation and non-ecosystem operations: We agree that some mitigation measures, including those having to do with flood control and water supply, are necessary and appropriate parts of the project. We remain concerned, however, that efforts are being made by some stakeholders to gain benefits beyond the mitigation measures needed to advance ecosystem restoration, primarily in areas having to do with local water systems (e.g., supply, quality, quantity). We urge project sponsors to keep focused on the fact that this is an ecosystem restoration project, not a public works project.

2. Fish impacts: Much has been done in project design to remove and reduce negative impacts on the fishery it is attempting to restore, however, more detail is needed about impacts to steelhead, e.g., details about current fish numbers and locations (above or below the dam, when and how many fish are present in any given year),

how and where the fish move, and more detailed descriptions of short- and long-term impacts. It may be that more detailed description is all that is necessary; or it may be that some measures beyond habitat restoration should be included to maximize success in bringing back an imperiled species of very low numbers. We urge project sponsors to explore such options as the project proceeds.

Again, the Institute for Fisheries Resources strongly supports the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project and the proposed alternative, Alternative 4B.

We look forward to continued close involvement in the next phases of the historic project.

Sincerely,

Zeke Grader
Executive Director

Attachment: IFR comments
cc: Coastal Conservancy, Neal Fishman

GRADER

COMMENTS

Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

For The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

August 30, 2004

TO: Neal Fishman
California Coastal Conservancy

FROM: Guy Phillips
Dennis Gathard
Sara Johnson
Institute for Fisheries Resources

Introduction

The following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS") were prepared in response to an invitation for comments by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which were due on August 30, 2004. Given the short amount of time available for comments, these comments do not reflect a thorough review of the entire document and its supporting materials, and we reserve comments on those sections not reviewed. In addition, the authors understand that studies are presently underway that might alter the substance of the materials reviewed, and thereby alter the nature of our comments.

Based on this draft report and our knowledge of the process and project to date, we remain convinced that this project is necessary, that it is beneficial to humans, fish and the rest of the ecosystem, and that any remaining issues can be worked out by the stakeholders. We support Alternative 4B, full dam removal with temporary (short-term) stabilization of sediments, and look forward to continued close involvement in the next phases of the project.

Summary Comments

1. We are concerned that the DEIS/DEIR reflects a tendency of federal projects to become preoccupied with major capital works and engineering packages and lose sight of the ecosystem restoration purpose of the project. For example, much of the discussion focuses on engineering approaches and more physical structures rather than natural ecosystem restoration actions needed. The discussion of alternatives and project features focuses on new engineered structures and related measures rather than on the stream/ecosystem restoration purposes.

1

2. Similarly, we are concerned that the major engineering and capital items for the project are presented as if flood protection and water supply engineering aspects are of higher priority

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than ecosystem restoration. In this draft environmental statement, discussion of the flood protection measures and water supply measures receives much more attention than the environmental impacts and ecosystem restoration measures. 1 (cont.)

3. We find that the No Action alternative does not adequately address a range of impacts that would occur from the Matilija dam becoming less capable of controlling water and sediment. In the future, the uncontrolled and uncontrollable releases of water and sediment over the top of the dam can be expected to have adverse effects on downstream water diversion facilities (e.g., Robles diversion and other elements of the Casitas system), roads and bridges, residents along the river corridor (whether in or out of the present floodplain), agriculture, and on fish and wildlife. Similarly, the economic impact of future efforts to solve the problem when it is worse have not been discussed, including the tax and other public finance impacts of future expensive solutions to the situation. Accordingly, a future ecosystem restoration project to attempt to do the same things as this project contemplates would be much more difficult in a technical sense and much more expensive. 2

4. Cost estimates in the Draft Report may be low. Some of the cost items were omitted or underestimated. 3

5. Affects of river aggradation to groundwater resources do not appear to be addressed. Assumptions that wells can be used as mitigation should be thoroughly reviewed considering assumed changes in river conditions. For instance, increased groundwater turbidity and/or reduced yield should be investigated. 4

6. Specific amounts of sediment removal have been analyzed in the preferred alternative. Further analysis of the preferred alternative should refine the cost trade offs between constructing facilities for CMWD improvements and slurrying more material downstream. Initial installation of water and slurry lines would allow for relatively inexpensive removal of additional material. Other water sources (such as treated wastewater) may be available for increased removal operations. The advantages to this approach might be a) quicker project completion b) reduced impacts at Robles and possibly elimination of the desilting basin facility, c) possible elimination of revetment in the reservoir area, d) possibly a wider initial stream width in the reservoir, e) and more rapid beach nourishment if material were placed in areas downstream that would allow for erosion to the ocean. 5

7. The name of Alternative 4, Full Dam Removal/Long-Term Sediment Transport is confusing and inaccurate, and should be changed to reflect both alternatives A (long-term sediment transport) and B (short-term sediment transport), e.g., “Full Dam Removal/Managed Sediment Transport,” or “gradual” or “graduated.” 6

8. As this is an ecosystem restoration project, it would be appropriate that levee structures built or enhanced as part of this project be reduced or removed upon project completion. Benefits of this approach include: reduce or remove some long-term adverse impacts (e.g., aesthetic, connection between river and community) on the local community, discourage future development in the 100-year floodplain, allow riparian areas to recover. To not remove the 7

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large structures after they are needed would be in conflict with the ecosystem restoration goals of the project.

9. There is insufficient information in the document to ascertain the extent of potential negative impacts on the steelhead fishery. Pertinent sections should be more explicit about current fish numbers, how and where the fish move, and short- and long-term impacts. It may be that more detailed descriptions is all that is necessary; or it may be that mitigation of negative impacts on steelhead fish may be necessary. We urge project sponsors to explore such options that would be appropriate for helping an imperiled species of very low numbers, in addition to habitat restoration. 8

10. The Corps should explore all non-structural alternatives wherever possible, e.g., modification of downstream water supply facilities to maintain water quantity and quality. 9

11. Areas that appear to require more technical development include:

    a. Methods of channel construction in the reservoir area including the need for, soil cement its size, location, and method and timing of removal. 10

    b. Volume of fine sediment removed using slurry lines including a review of the cost analysis; water sources (use of waste water?), deposition location and size. Some trade offs could be considered. For instance, some of the fine could be introduced into the stream. 11

    c. A more comprehensive slurry evaluation is recommended. Past studies have indicated possible limitations to the depth of dredging using cutterhead dredges. Generally these dredges are limited to 20 feet of depth. It is not clear from information available how deeper areas are dredged. Methods could include booster pumps, which require additional energy, lowering reservoir elevations, and using mechanical (clamshell dredges) means to elevate the material to be slurried. 12

    d. Operation of the desilting basin needs more development to ensure it is feasible.

12. Cost for levees are presented as lump sum. The total cost for all levees and floodwalls is less than $200,000, when bridge work is removed from the total. This appears to be too small but cannot be verified without more information. 13

Detailed Comments

The following comments are provided in the order in which they appear in the text. The order of the comments therefore does not reflect their priority or significance.

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Executive Summary

a. It may provide a useful context for the reader to see a table of the alternatives that were considered and rejected for some reason (e.g., removal of sediments using dredges/trucks). For example, a table summarizing the discussion in Section 3.9 at Page 3-37 would be helpful.

b. Pages ES 6-8: Table ES-1 should include a key for Classes I-IV either on each page or at least the bottom of the last page. 14

c. Page ES-4, description of Alternatives 4a and 4b needs to mention that the fines would be slurried off site.

d. Page ES-4, Impact Summary and Environmentally Superior Alternative: Suggest deleting the first phrase ("Of the alternatives other than No Action,") and rewording to "Alternative 4b is the environmentally superior alternative." As is, it implies that No Action is or could be environmentally superior.

1. Introduction

Page 1.3, "Institute for Fisheries Resources" should be included among groups listed as members of the Steering Committee and Task Force. 15

2. Need For and Objectives of the Proposed Action

[[No comments]]

3. Alternatives

a. Section 3.1: Overview of Alternatives

1. Page 3-1: The list of objectives includes "Implementation of downstream flood protection" without qualification. It is our understanding that the only flood protection associated with this project is that protection that may be necessary to protect people and property from new flood risk associated with this project.

2. Page 3-1: We are concerned that the list of objectives places flood control higher on the list than the ecosystem restoration objectives and that fisheries restoration is not listed at all. Generally we are concerned that this list of objectives emphasizes modification and improvements to human related structures and impacts (e.g., removal of human introduced non-native species) and gives only one phrase to "revegetation and restoration". 16

3. Page 3-4: "Improvements were based on offering a 100-year level of protection even though there is currently not a 100-year level of protection within the existing levees." We are concerned that this sentence reflects an engineered, capital-intensive, 17

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project direction that would "solve" human encroachment into the 100-year floodplain rather than the primary mission of ecosystem restoration.

17 (cont.)

4. Page 3-4: Indicate what the current level of flood protection is so the reader can understand what additional level of protection is proposed by the project.

5. Page 3-10: No Action alternative description needs to identify the potential for future public safety and ecosystem health concerns associated with continued deterioration of a large dam located in an earthquake-prone area.

18

6. Page 3-10, Section 3.1, "Modification of downstream water supply facilities to maintain water quantity and quality": There is no evidence provided to demonstrate the need for the capital cost and environmental impact of new facilities proposed at Robles diversion. It appears to us that the probability of depositions occurring that would be significant enough to affect water supply or operations to the Casitas system are quite low. A probability estimate of the cumulative probability of the combination of events that would be necessary for Casitas water supply facilities to be significantly affected should be provided. Then, the associated degree of impact and expense should be provided to demonstrate whether the benefits of the proposed measures are greater than the costs. In addition, there is no indication of whether other alternative approaches, non-structural as well as structural, have been analyzed to address the remote risk that sediments might accumulate in the Robles diversion. For example, two non-structural options include: (1) having pre-arranged emergency service contracts established with qualified contractors to remove sediments immediately if they occur, or (2) scheduling dam removal and sediment management activities to occur only under appropriate annual water conditions (e.g., not during low water years, or during a series of low water years). The Corps has an obligation to investigate all non-structural options first.

19

7. Page 3-11: No Action alternative should note that not only would native steelhead be denied passage and habitat, but so would other native wildlife in the food chain be denied habitat, e.g., birds that feed on steelhead, benthic invertebrates that would live in the restored area.

20

8. Page 3-29: 3.6.2 Alternative 4b – "Full Dam Removal/Long-Term Sediment Transport – Short-Term Transport Period" is confusing and inaccurate name for this alternative. "Long-term" should not be used to describe 4b at all. See general comments above for suggestions.

21

9. Page 3-31: "Institute for Fisheries Resources" should be included in list of members of Environmental Working Group.

10. Page 3-37: "Institute for Fisheries Resources" should be included in list of members of Plan Formulation Group.

22

4. <u>Affected Environment</u>

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(did not review; used as reference only)

5. Environmental Consequences Of Proposed Action and Alternatives

a. 5.2 Hydrology and Water Resources

1. Section 5.2.3 states no detailed analysis has been conducted to determine deposition. Much detailed analysis has been done to date. This is unclear. 23

2. Page 5.2-4 2nd Para. Last sentence states that turbidity will increase by a factor of ten *until the first storm passes* but fails to state what the starting point is. The first storm after what? The last piece of dam is removed? When does this begin and end. This period could be as long as two years. Is the turbidity higher for two years? This has implications to wells (ground water use), fisheries, and surface water diversion. 24

3. Page 5.2-4 3rd Para. This paragraph says that turbidity is up by a factor of 2 to 3 for the first few high flow events greater than a 10 storm. Because the events are greater than 10 year events these would occur over a period exceeding 10 or more years. So the river sees this impact for many years. It then says "decreasing to levels not exceeding 50 percent after a few years." This is confusing to say the least. The first storm that occurs after dredging will scour the bottom thereby increasing TSS. Storms will cause increased TSS until soil cement is finished. This section does not give the reader a clear understanding of when and to what degree the effects of fine sediments occur for this alternative. It especially does not give a clear indication of when diversion at Foster Park might need to be stopped.

4. Page 5.2-4 last Para. How long does this desilting basin operate? On the Elwha dam removal project it was found not to be feasible to mechanically remove sludge due to the rate of sludge accumulation. 25

5. Page 5.2-5 The height of the soil cement revetment is inconsistent with the height shown in the Draft Report Recommended Plan. The EIS states the height will be 3 feet (3rd Para.). The Draft Report (pg 4-5) states that the revetment will be 7 feet high. The lowest height that provides adequate protection should be used. 26

6. Page 5.2-5 In 100 foot wide channel with 4 to 1 bottom slope (3rd para.) the height of sediment at the edge of the channel would be 12.5 feet deep. When this erodes, as it states in the EIS – not the Draft Report – the revetment will be above ground. This section is very unclear. 27

7. Page 5.2-6 4th Para. It is not clear from this discussion that aggradation does not affect elevations at Robles. Also the discussion of page 5.2-8 para. 3 suggests that significant aggradation will occur upstream and downstream of Robles (12 28

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feet immediately downstream). If the entire reach aggrades, as implied by this discussion, will Robles be affected or become inoperable?

8. Page 5.2-7 Impacts on ground water will occur due to reduced infiltration when aggradation occurs. Studies conducted on the Elwha River – a river with a less permeable substrate than the Ventura River- showed a direct connection between river and groundwater turbidity. This will especially affect areas with wells and overall aquifer yield. No discussion of that was found. 29

9. Page 5.2-10 does discuss this impact but suggest that it would be temporary. Permanent changes may occur in locations that experience significant aggradation. 30

10. Page 5.2-17 Alternative 4a is only similar to Alternative 1 if the protection of stored sediments is sufficient to withstand extremely large floods. In general, rip-rap protection must include maintenance. If the large storm occurs at the end of a maintenance cycle and failures occur, environmental impacts may be similar to alternative 2b. 31

11. Page 5.2-11 states that impacts due to lateral erosion would be similar to alternative 4b. Should this not be 4a? Alternative 1 and 4a are similar in that they do not allow reservoir sediments to erode downstream. 32

12. Page 5.3-2, last sentence on the page: Rather than indicating that effects on steelhead of another 40 years of sediment starvation are unknown, indicate the effects would be expected to be further detrimental to the steelhead. 33

13. Page 5.3-2, second paragraph discussion regarding dam staying in place should also indicate that failure of a deteriorated dam could prove catastrophic to Threatened and Endangered Species and other biological resources downstream.

14. Page 5.3-10: There is insufficient baseline data on steelhead. Mitigation measures should include "Pre-Construction biological surveys for special-status fish within all areas subject to project disturbance." 34

15. Page 5.3-10. Mitigation measures for fish, specifically steelhead, should include assistance to help the fishery rebound in the same vein that assistance will be provided for the red-legged frog, i.e., assistance in addition to habitat restoration. 35

16. Page 5.3-10, B8, Downstream Monitoring – Monitoring should continue for the life of the project, rather than end when construction ends. This type of scientific information is sorely lacking and is vitally important not only for ascertaining the success of this restoration, but for future ecosystem restorations involving large dam removal in this state and the nation. It is critical that good baseline data (pre-removal) be gathered for fish and all other biological resources affected. 36

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17. Page 5.3-13: Because this is an ecosystem restoration project, at project completion the ecosystem should be restored as much as practicable. Following project completion, levees should be re-evaluated and protection no longer needed should be removed (e.g., levee lowered or removed). The project structures should be considered temporary from the start to discourage development in the floodplain and retain the potential for riparian restoration, and otherwise reduce long-term negative impacts on the local community (e.g., aesthetic). 37

18. Page 5.3-14: We strongly support the removal of soil revetment in Reach 7 at the end of 20 years, but the language should be stronger. It should read that the revetment will be removed (rather than it is expected that…), and this cost should be included in the budget if it is not. 38

19. Page 5.3-16: Provide more information on which species would be eradicated and what measures and products would be used for eradication. 39

20. Page 5.3-20: Re impacts to steelhead, the numbers are already so low, the project should explore the feasibility of reducing potential negative impacts, including short-term impacts, on the steelhead, e.g., getting some of the <100 fish out of there, captive breeding, or other methods consistent with state-of-the science practices for restoring native fisheries – in addition to habitat restoration. For example, the US Forest Service and Trout Unlimited (National) have developed low-tech and inexpensive incubators for helping to restore native fisheries that have met with great success in other areas (e.g., Nevada). 40

21. Page 5.3-21, Chub, herbicide impacts: document says Class II, but possibly means Class III. 41

22. 5.3: It would be helpful to the reader if there were a chart in this section showing all biological mitigation measures (just the main header for each). 42

23. 5.5.2, Aesthetics, No action: Needs to state explicitly that the central feature of the current scenic classification, Lake Matilija, is going to disappear when the dam fills in complete with sediment. 43

24. 5.5.3 and 4, Impacts to visual resources along the river due to increased flood control: Some of the aesthetic impacts are mitigable that are identified as unmitigitable. If the levee adjustments necessary for this project were removed or decreased in size, negative impacts would be reduced or eliminated at a fraction of the costs of other mitigation measures already included as a part of this project (e.g., water supply related) – and are much more clearly and directed related to achieving the goals of the project, which is ecosystem restoration. This is especially the case where the project is building large structures in dominantly natural areas (e.g., Camino Cielo), but also especially important for environmental justice reasons where lower income properties are being negatively impacted (e.g., Casitas Springs mobile home park). 44

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25. 5.5-3 and 4: Aesthetic impacts and levees: it should be clear to the reader how high the levees will be; therefore, it is necessary to include information about current height of existing levees in each of the description (not just how much additional height is likely).

44 (cont.)

26. Chapter 5.6 and 5.7 Air Quality and Noise. The chosen dredge engine will affect air and noise quality. Two diesel dredges running 24 hours a day 7 days a week will produce significant odor, pollutants, and noise. A note below Table 5.6-1 implies that dredges will be diesel powered but text preceding the Table does not mention dredges in the context of diesel engines. The cost estimate does not include a line item for electricity to operate electric dredge engines nor the cost of fuel or fueling facilities. Portable electric diesel generators can be used to power electric engines but no discussion of the specific impacts of diesel generation 24-7 was found. Direct power diesel engines are common but have the above-mentioned drawbacks. Both direct and electric powered engines have the need for repeated fueling, servicing and servicing facilities which were not included in the cost estimates. Section 4.6.2 does mention portable diesel engine registration requirements but no linkage was found in the document between this and the type and means of powering the dredging operations.

45

27. Table 5.7-1 does not mention noise related to dredges.

28. Page 5.8-1, Section 5.8.2: This section states that the No Action alternative would have no significant socioeconomic impact on Western Ventura County. This conclusion ignores the substantial effect of future management of the dam for its safety, sediment, and water/sediment flooding risks. For the Casitas Water District and its customers (including agriculture), leaving the dam in place raises major socioeconomic concerns over the impact of uncontrolled and uncontrollable releases of water and sediment on their diversion and transport facilities, the storage reservoir, and thereby on the District's customers. In addition, these matters will certainly cause a degree of risk that will affect development anywhere in the floodplain downstream of the dam. If in the future local residents have to pay for removal of an uncontrollable, sediment-passing, flood prone, and unsafe dam, the impact on the local economy would likely be considerable due to the taxes and other revenues required to undertake this major expenditure.

46

29. Page 5.8-3, Section 5.8.3: This section does not reflect the impact of new high levees creating a virtual wall between the respective low income communities and the river. At a minimum, this will have an adverse effect on life-style and may have an adverse effect on their property values.

47

30. Page 5.8, Section 5.8.2 and .3: If the levee wall cited above has an adverse impact on property values for low income residents, a compensation program should be provided to make them whole or the levee heights should be reduced.

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31. Page 5.9-2, Section 5.9-2: Transportation socioeconomic impacts of the no action alternative once again suggest that there would be no impacts. This does not take account of the impact of future over-topping of the dam by uncontrolled and uncontrollable releases of water and sediment and their corresponding impact on downstream roads and bridges. 48

32. Page 5.10-1, Section 5.10.2: The no action alternative should consider the effects of future uncontrolled and uncontrollable releases of water and sediment on downstream land use including the effect on physical structures that, in turn, affect land use. For example, future flood risk, sediment deposition in Robles Diversion and canal, and subsequent impacts on water supply and associated land use (agricultural and residential) should be considered. 49

33. Page 5.10-2, Section 5.10.3: We have previously expressed our concern that increased flood protection and associated flood measures, such as levees (more or higher than what is needed to mitigate the project), are expanding the scope of an ecosystem restoration project into other areas that we remain concerned about. Characterization of the increased levees and floodwalls as "required" for this ecosystem restoration project is not appropriate. 50

34. Page 5.10-3, Section 5.10.4: Alternative 1 lacks a desilting basin because one was not designed for this alternative. Worded the way this paragraph is, a reader could conclude that such a basin could not be designed. 51

35. Page 5.11-1, Section 5.11.2: The No Action alternative would likely have an adverse effect on recreation at Lake Casitas as uncontrolled and uncontrollable releases of sediments from Matilija dam increase in the future. There could be a significant local cost to the respective agencies to manage or repair such adverse effects in the future. 52

36. Page 5.11-1, Secion 5.11.2, second paragraph, last sentence is confusing and potentially misleading: delete "normal" as there is nothing normal about the situation. More accurate would be that sediments would regularly pass over the top of the dam. Also delete "begin to", as sediments already pass over the dam today in high flows. 53

37. Page 5.11-2, end of top paragraph: Note that other sites where dams have been removed have resulted in increased diversity of fish species (Kanehl 1997), and increased opportunities for recreational angling from the restored fishery (contact Sara Johnson for references if needed). This may be an important benefit to the local community when steelhead return in healthy numbers, as the river historically was enjoyed by locals for steelhead angling. 54

38. Page 5.12-1, Section 5.12: This section does not specifically address the applicable local and state regulations, policies, and standards that would be affected, including local permitting procedures, CEQA, Coastal Act, and others. 55

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6. Unavoidable Significant Impacts

    1. Page 6-1: Biological resources, wildlife movement: Second sentence is confusing; seems to indicate that removing giant reed will be harmful to wildlife. 56

    2. Page 6-1: Direct impacts to steelhead: indicate whether two times the natural levels is particularly harmful or not. 57

    3. Page 6-1: Aesthetics: impacts of additional levee structures are able to be mitigated – they could be reduced if levee height were reduced as part of completing the ecosystem restoration project. 58

7. Cumulative Impact Analysis

    a. New wells? New diversions? Critical that no new efforts decrease water for the fish. 59

    b. Page 7-2 A planning constraint was also to develop a plan that did not destroy the remaining spawning stock 60

8. Mitigation Measures/Environmental Commitments

Comments regarding measures that should be taken to reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts are addressed in the individual sections above.

9. Relationship Between Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

[[No comments]]

10. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

    1. Page 10-1. The project should in no way encourage or facilitate development in the floodplain; if it does, e.g., through additional permanent levees, then when the newly flood-protected areas are developed, these riparian areas will be permanently damaged and should be included here as an irreversible commitment of resources. 61

11. Growth Inducing Effects

    1. Page 11-1: The project should take responsibility for discouraging growth into areas in the floodplain receiving greater flood protection as a part of this project. As an ecosystem restoration project, it should be a given that the project should not encourage and facilitate land use 62

activities inconsistent with the goal of the project. This can be achieved by making the additional flood structures temporary.

APPENDICES

Cost Issues for Alternative 4

1. No OMRRR costs are shown for operation of the desilting basin in Alt 4b.

2. Alternative 4a costs are short by nearly $2 million. The listed costs do not add to the value shown at the bottom (short by $2 mil) The Timber crib structure cost does not appear to have been included ($1.3 million plus add on due to contingencies etc.).

3. Cost for water replacement at $650 per acre-foot is dramatically different than cost for use in slurry operations ($177). Without this difference Alt 2b becomes the least expensive alternative $87 million rather than $121 million).

4. It is not clear whether quantities were based on 7 foot or 3 foot high revetment (both are mentioned) for alternative 4b.

5. Overall the cost of the slurry system appears optimistically low. Mobilization of dredges may cost around $1 million. No specific cost for dredge mobilization is included. Power for the dredge is not listed. If they are diesel motors, environmental issues need to be mentioned and fuel cost should be included.

6. Alternatives that use the slurry line have no costs for maintaining the line. 24-7 operations generally require 24-7 maintenance crews. This will be especially true when thickeners are used.

63

7. No costs are included for docks, supply boats, and construction administration facilities for the dredging operation.

8. Item 12 indicates that 26,400 Man-hours would be required but using the personnel indicated (4operators and one technician) the number should be 32,400. The figure listed is for 4 persons not 5 indicated. Personnel costs listed appear to be lower than costs listed in Means.

9. Material costs listed in *Means Heavy Construction Cost* Data 2004 for 24" HDPE pipe is $34.5 per foot. Item 11.5 lists the in-place cost for this pipe at $24 per foot. The in-place cost should include costs for lateral stabilization, elbows, transportation, fusing, repairs, placement and removal, and local bridging. For a similar project on the Elwha River, 1994 HDPE pipeline costs were estimated at approximately $50 per lineal foot. Item 9.6 in alternate 4b list the cost at $15 per foot. The cost for 8 miles of cast iron pipe does not appear to be consistent with cost of this item for other similar projects. *Means Heavy Construction Cost* Data 2004 list the total cost for *1-foot* diameter (the proposal is for 2' pipe) cast iron pipe at $92 per foot. The cost listed would not even appear to cover

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material costs for A53 cast iron pipe. Material costs alone for 24 inch even HDPE pipe exceeds $15.

APPENDIX E: Habitat Valuation Analysis:

1. Page E-6: The text notes that the numerical rating system adopted by the EWG was further modified by the Corps into a 0.0-1.0 rating system. The method and rationale for the modification should be provided along with an explanation for why the EWG didn't use the 0.0-1.0 scale in the first place. 64

2. Page E-7, habitat valuation rating system for fish passage (and associated appendices to this section): This scaling system is linear and implies that the habitat values increase at the same rate from zero to 100%. This is not likely true. The relationship is unlikely to be linear and it is likely that there are thresholds where the value drops to zero sooner than less than 10%. The linear scaling technique is similarly flawed for other habitat valuations. 65

3. Page E-12 and elsewhere: Habitat values calculated on a linear per acre basis assume all riparian habitat is of equal value irrespective of location and availability of surface water for fish and amphibian habitat. For example, the per acre values are assumed to be the same whether the riparian acre is up a streambank or adjoining a year-round pool. The riparian resources on the streambank might not be associated at all with surface waters during key parts of the year. 66

4. Page E-15: The HEP analysis should analyze the differential impacts of the modifications at Robles for each project alternative. Since there are other approaches to address a sediment deposition problem, if it exists, the HEP analysis should also consider the difference between non-structural approaches and structural approaches. 67

5. Page E-16: Why would the stream be allowed to braid freely? This appears inconsistent with the fisheries restoration objectives of the project. 68

6. Page E-17: This discussion seems to imply that, for Alternative 4b, the HEP analysis assumed the soil cement walls behind the reservoir would be left in place permanently. There would be an impact each time part or all of the soil cement would be removed. 69

APPENDIX I

1. Page I-1 et seq.: Has a determination been made that any part of the project falls within the Coastal Act/Coastal Commission jurisdiction? It seems unlikely. If the project is not within the Coastal Commission's jurisdiction, much of the 70

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discussion about access, recreation, sediment deposition, etc., is not needed or is irrelevant to this section.

APPENDIX J

1. Page J-1: Based on the information provided, which is not very detailed, a capture and relocate or temporary rearing facility option or some other option should be investigated for the steelhead. If one has already been investigated and rejected, the analysis and reasoning should be provided. The fact that there are not very many and that they would be hard to find does not relieve the responsibility for providing assistance for their recovery. 71

2. Page J-2: The downstream monitoring program should be continued for a suitable period of time after construction. It is not clear here what the proposal is. 72

3. Page J-2: The oak and walnut replanting program should replace trees on a ratio greater than 1:1, such as 2:1, taking account that the trees lost are likely to be more mature than the plantings. 73

GRAMCKOW1

Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company

P.O. Box 579
Port Hueneme, CA 93044

August 23, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

We have reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam removal project. Pursuant to a 1902 adjudicated water right, Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company owns and operates numerous wells in the Ventura River serving agricultural water to approximately 400 acres. The wells are located in Reaches 5 and 6 of the above referenced project description. In regard to predicting the results of implementation, the plan describes itself as having "high levels of risk and uncertainty of obtaining the proposed outputs..." We are taking this opportunity to express our current concerns. Given the uncertainty, we reserve the right to comment and/or object further as the project develops.

1
M, P7

Our first concern pertains to the potential adverse effect of sediment flows on the permeability of riverbed sand and gravel, specifically as it relates to recharge of underflow and aquifers. Our understanding of the project design is that both slurry pumping and erosion will accomplish the dam's sediment removal. Slurry pumping accounts for only 2.1 million cubic yards out of an estimated 6 million yards of material. The remaining sediment is to be eroded out of the dam area in a controlled manner designed to coincide with river flow volumes exceeding ten-year storm events, and that "...complete removal is expected to occur within 20 years."

We are very concerned that allowing the sediments to be flushed out of the reservoir based on the vagaries of flood events is extremely risky. In the worst case scenario a 100 year flood could occur the year after dam removal. It would result in an avalanche of mud through the upper reaches of the river causing tremendous damage to habitat and private property, including our pumping facilities in Reach 6b. Assuming flows occur according to statistical probability, one could expect two ten-year flood events in 20 years. Each would carry approximately 2 million cubic yards of material in excess of that which already flows naturally. We are very concerned that even these planned flows will carry excessive sediment that will find its way into the riverbed aggregate, significantly and permanently reducing its permeability. The result will be slower recharge of underground storage. This is particularly critical in dry years where river flows are less frequent and rapid permeability is the key to rebuilding storage quickly.

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In addition to underground storage, the river's geology supports underflow. Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company derives significant water supply from its underflow pumps located in Reach 6b. Since underflow is also a function of permeability, less permeability will result in less water availability both in terms of quantity and seasonal duration.

1 (cont.)

The report states, "The outcome of removing Matilija Dam is expected to have little effect on local landowner water extraction operations." That conclusion is not supported. In our analysis, there will be negative impacts on water supply; the question is to what degree. Specific mitigation measures are identified for CMWD and the City of Ventura, including a sediment bypass and new wells. We would submit those measures as evidence of the project's anticipated adverse effect on water supplies and would expect to have some assurances of appropriate mitigation for smaller water districts and landowner extraction operations.

Another concern is the loss of storage and flood control behind Matilija Dam. Due to sedimentation, the capacity, which is down to 500 acre-feet, has been characterized as insignificant. We are not in a position to evaluate the relative significance of 500 acre-feet of storage and flood control on the river's over all water shed. However, we believe there is substantial value in it, particularly since it is actively managed by CMWD, thereby leveraging the storage. Late spring releases, particularly in dry years, have the effect of prolonging underflow and aquifer recharge. This directly increases the reliability of downstream wells. During the wet season, each time the capacity is released and refilled 500 acre-feet goes to increasing underflow and downstream underground storage, while simultaneously setting up flood control capacity for the next storm event. The flood control capacity may be limited, but even minimal control of peak flows could make the difference in the event of disaster.

2 P1

Our pumps located in the narrows at the south end of Reach 6b are particularly vulnerable to increased flood risk. That vulnerability is acknowledged in Table 4-1 of the plan wherein some Camino Cielo properties are slated for acquisition. The report states "Proximity… to dam, channel, and narrowness of canyon, poses high risk from sediment-laden flows…" Our pumps are in the narrows due to the favorable elevation and concentration of underflow in that location. We are not aware of a similarly favorable spot and would be resistant to relocation or buyout.

3

Finally, I would like to point out that we have a well in the 50 acre sediment storage area north of Highway 150. The well is currently in reserve status. That is to say it is operational, but not in regular use. We would expect replacement or remuneration for the loss of the well.

4

Yours truly,

Jurgen Gramckow
President

GRAMCKOW2

Jurgen Gramckow
1060 Shokat Drive
Ojai, CA 93023

August 23, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Pages 4-26 through 4-28 of the above referenced study designate potential desilting basin and sediment disposal sites adjacent to the Robles Casitas Canal. "Alternative B" is on property owned by the J&G Family Trust. The Trust is not interested in selling its land for the purpose of this project. We urge you to limit further study of the desilting basin and sediment disposal sites to "Alternative A," which is already on government land. 1

Yours truly,

Jurgen Gramckow, Trustee
J&G Family Trust

GREENE-BARTON

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

25 August 2004

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

I am the owner with my wife of Matilija Hot springs immediately down stream from Matilija Dam in Ojai, Ventura County, CA. The current Draft EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study states several times the need for acquisition of Matilija Hot Springs to facilitate the removal of Matilija Dam and accumulated sediment behind this dam.

Please address the following issues as soon as possible:

Why is it necessary to put the public to the expense of acquiring Matilija Hot Springs when other options like leasing it, organizing temporary easements with some restoration expense, limited liability agreements and allowing the current owners to sell it to a party that will increase its value substantially and therefore its tax base would actually save millions of dollars of tax payers money?

1
Q1

What is to be done about safeguarding the forests that we have worked hard to restore to botanical garden status during this restoration process? How about the hot springs, cold springs and historical landmarks and preservation interests?

If the sediment increase above the rock floor of the river basin could increase seven feet temporarily, which I believe is being represented, would there be any objection to building new structure substantially above this level, like a new residential home, up a hill near bye, that would guarantee the continued use of this property for private purposes and therefore save the County again several million dollars?

Thank you,

Brooks Greene-Barton
Matilija Hot Springs Sanctuary
788 South Matilija Road
Ojai, CA 93023

STATE OF CALIFORNIA -- THE RESOURCES AGENCY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 942360001
(916) 653-5791

GUTTIEREZ

AUG 5 2004 RECEIVED

AUG 16 2004

WATERSHED PROTECTION DIST.

1. Ms. Nadell Gayou
   Resources Agency Project Coordinator
   Environmental Review Section, DPLA
   901 P Street
   Sacramento, California 95814

2. Ms. Pam Lindsey
   Ventura County Watershed Protection District
   800 South Victoria Avenue
   Ventura, California 93009-1610

SCH #2002011094, Notice of Completion and Environmental Document Transmittal for Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, July 15, 2004, Ventura County

The Division of Safety of Dams has reviewed the Notice of Completion and Environmental Document for Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, and finds that Matilija Dam, No. 86-000 is currently under State jurisdiction for safety.

An application, together with plans and specifications, must be filed with the Division for an alteration, repair, or removal of the dam. All dam safety issues must be resolved prior to the approval of the application. Design and construction of the alteration, repair, or removal must be performed under the direction of a civil engineer registered in California. The Acting Design Engineering Branch Chief is responsible for the application approval process and can be reached at (916) 227-4660.

1 V

If you have any questions, please contact Office Engineer Chuck Wong at (916) 227-4601 or Regional Engineer Mutaz Mihyar at (916) 227-4600.

Sincerely,

for

David A. Gutierrez, Acting Chief
Division of Safety of Dams
(916) 227-9800

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 942360001
(916) 653-5791

GUTTIEREZ2

AUG 17 2004

1. Ms. Nadell Gayou
Resources Agency Project Coordinator
Environmental Review Section, DPLA
901 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

2. Mr. John Vivanti, Study Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017-3401

SCH # 2002011094 Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

The Division of Safety of Dams has completed the review of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and EIS/EIR, dated July 2004. Our comments pertaining to the safety of the dam are attached.

1 V

If you have any questions, please contact Design Engineer Philip Lee at (916) 227-4633 or Project Engineer Frank Fong at (916) 227-4626.

David A. Gutierrez, Acting Chief
Division of Safety of Dams
(916) 227-9800

Attachment

cc: Mr. Ronald Coons, Director
Public Works Agency
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009-1600

GUTTIEREZ2

The Resources Agency
Department of Water Resources
Division of Safety of Dams

Comments on Ecosystem Restoration Facility Study for Matilija Dam, No. 86, dated July 2004

1. Section 4.1.3.2, paragraph titled: "California Division of Safety of Dams" indicates the need for an application to perform any work listed.

   When the owner (Ventura County) is ready to begin plans for removing the dam, they will need to file an application with the Division of Safety of Dams, allowing adequate time for review and approval. The application shall include detailed plans and specifications for removing the dam, with supporting analyses and documents addressing the following items:

   a. Structural evaluation of the removal plan;
   b. Winterization plan;
   c. Dewatering and river diversion plan, if required;
   d. Proposed timelines and milestone schedules.

2. All dam safety related issues must be resolved prior to approval of the dam removal application.

3. All work must be performed under the direction of a Civil Engineer registered in the State of California.

1 (cont.)

HANDLEY

THE OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

Working to protect the Ojai Valley's future- today

August 27, 2004

Jon Vivanti,
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is a non-profit, public benefit organization with 1,200 members residing in the Ojai Valley and Ventura County. The Land Conservancy is extremely interested in the Matilija Dam decommissioning project and considers itself one of the major stakeholders in the project. We fully support the beneficial aspects of the dam removal including its positive impact on steelhead spawning grounds, replenishment of Ventura County beaches, removal of a public safety hazard and the creation of a public trail system along the corridor of the slurry pipe.

Our 1,591-acre Ventura River Preserve lies down river from the dam and is identified as a major site for the disposal of dam sediment. We cannot support the option that identifies a 90-acre portion of our preserve as a dumping site for dam sediment. This site lies directly west of our preserve trailhead and would severely impact the ability of the public to access and enjoy our preserve. A majority of the funds to purchase the Ventura River Preserve came from the California Coastal Conservancy. One of the major requirements that the Coastal Conservancy placed upon their funding was that public access had to be assured. We cannot support any sediment disposal that negatively impacts trail access or free movement across the preserve by the public and will actively oppose any such option.

The subsequent 50-acre disposal site that has been identified in the most recent draft of the plan is not as critical to public assess, but several issues should be addressed with this site. The Conservancy requests that any rock or cement rip-rap that is placed around this disposal site to protect it should be removed once the sediment has washed down the river. If the purpose of the rip rap is to secure this site from flooding for the foreseeable future, then the sediment at this site should be re-vegetated with native plants that are propagated from seed stock that is collected in the vicinity of the site.

1
A

Please also be aware that the Ventura River Preserve provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife such as coyote, bobcat, mountain

P.O. Box 1092 Ojai, CA 93024 Phone: (805) 646-7930 Fax: (805) 646-0253 e-mail address: ovlc@ojai.net www.ovlc.org

lion, black bear and many species of birds. The Land Conservancy would require that wildlife habitat in the preserve be disturbed as little as possible by the dam removal project and that necessary roads to access the sediment disposal sites be kept to a minimum and not opened to public use by motorized vehicles. Any disruption or removal of native vegetation in the preserve should be mitigated through a re-vegetation program that restores disturbed sites.

2
A

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Army Corp in making this project a success.

Sincerely,

Richard Handley
Preserve Manager
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
ovlcpreserve@ojai.net

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

HANF

August 27, 2004

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Subject Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (CEQ# 040323)

Dear Mr. Vivanti

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the **Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study**. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. This letter provides a summary of EPA's concerns. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) propose to restore the Matilija Creek and Ventura River ecosystem to a natural watershed system, restoring anadromous fish populations in Matilija Creek and returning natural sand replenishment to Ventura and other southern California beaches.

EPA commends the Corps for their efforts to design this ecosystem restoration project. The project will provide benefits to the ecosystem functioning of Matilija Creek and the Ventura River, improving aquatic and terrestrial habitat and benefitting fish and wildlife species, in particular the endangered southern California steelhead. It will also help restore the hydrologic and sediment transport regime, assisting in downstream coastal beach sand replenishment. The well-written DEIS provides a comprehensive evaluation of the potential environmental impacts and mitigation efforts related to the proposed action.

Although EPA supports the removal of Matilija Dam and the restoration of the Matilija Creek and Ventura River ecosystem, we are concerned about the potential adverse impacts to the downstream ecosystem that could result from a large quantity of sediment mobilized during a flooding event. Also, information regarding the comparative impacts of the proposed slurry disposal sites should be provided. As such, we have rated this DEIS as EC-2, Environmental Concerns- Insufficient Information (see attached "Summary of EPA Rating System").

HANF

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. If you have any questions regarding this letter, or wish to discuss our comments, please call me at (415) 972-3854.

Sincerely,

Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office

Enclosures: EPA's Detailed Comments
Summary of Rating Definintions

HANF

Water Quality

Under the preferred alternative, approximately 4 million cubic yards of sediment will be left in the reservoir basin and stabilized. This sediment will erode at a controlled rate in order to minimize downstream impacts (page 3-29). However, there is limited discussion of the potential adverse impacts to the downstream ecosystem should a major flooding event mobilize a large quantity of this sediment into the Ventura River drainage system (page 5.2-4). Similarly, it appears from the maps provided (Figure 3.1-1 to Figure 3.1-4) that all of the potential slurry disposal sites for the sediment excavated are within the Ventura River floodplain. A large flooding event could also mobilize this material, and may cause adverse impacts for downstream habitat and water quality. If it is reasonably forseeable that large quantity of sediment could be mobilized and released into the drainage system, the potential impacts of such a mobilization should be analyzed and disclosed (40 CFR 1508.8(b)).

1

Recommendations

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should fully analyze and disclose the potential impacts of a flooding event that could mobilize a large quantity of sediment into the Ventura River drainage system. Potential impacts to water quality, downstream habitat, and particularly to the steelhead population, should be disclosed.

Slurry Disposal

Under the preferred alternative, approximately 2.1 million cubic yards of sediment will be excavated to one or more of three proposed slurry disposal sites. The potential impacts of disposal of this slurried material is not fully addressed. Table 5.3.1 (Estimated Temporary and Permanent Habitat Impacts in Acres) shows the same number of acres affected by all of the alternatives using slurry transportation and storage of sediments. This does not seem to account for the unique location and attributes of each slurry site, nor does it account for the habitat through which slurry transfer pipes and booster pumps would have to be placed.

2
A, P7

The comparative impacts of the slurry disposal options would be better disclosed with project maps that more fully illustrate the proposed slurry disposal sites, including plan view, representative cross-sections, and elevations. Conceptual maps showing the location and extent of the facility structures (e.g., dikes, berms, transfer pipes, and booster pumps) would be helpful.

Recommendations:

The Final EIS should provide a comparison of the environmental impacts from each of the slurry disposal sites. This comparison should take into account the unique locations and characteristics of each of the proposed storage sites and include any impacts from placement of slurry transfer pipes and booster pipes.

HANF

The Corps should provide project maps that fully illustrate the proposed slurry disposal sites in the Final EIS. Maps illustrating the location and extent of disposal site facility structures as well as the proposed route of slurry transfer pipes and location of booster pumps should also be included.

SUMMARY OF EPA RATING DEFINITIONS

HANF

This rating system was developed as a means to summarize EPA's level of concern with a proposed action. The ratings are a combination of alphabetical categories for evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposal and numerical categories for evaluation of the adequacy of the EIS.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION

"LO" (Lack of Objections)

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

"EC" (Environmental Concerns)

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EO" (Environmental Objections)

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EU" (Environmentally Unsatisfactory)

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

ADEQUACY OF THE IMPACT STATEMENT

Category 1" (Adequate)

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

"Category 2" (Insufficient Information)

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analysed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

"Category 3" (Inadequate)

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analysed in the draft EIS, which should be analysed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From EPA Manual 1640, "Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment."

8 2 2004
1917 N Dwight Av
Camarillo CA 93010

HAUSER

Attention Mr Jon Vivanti
U S Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles CA 90017-3401

Subject; Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration EIS/EIR

Gentlemen

There is one proposal missing from the eight proposals/alternatives presented in the Public Draft Report dated July 2004.

That is:
Utilize the existing concrete structure as a core in an "earthen" dam.
Place fill on the dam's downstream face.
Slope the fill surface at 10 ± horizontal to 1 vertical.
Surface the slope with grouted rock.
Incorporate a fishway to match the natural downstream slope of 4 %.
Resting pools to be incorporated in the fishway.
Notch the spillway 1 m deep by 2 m wide for migration of aquatic life.

1

Advantages:
Existing sediment remains undisturbed.
Minimum construction effort utilizing nearby quarry.
Minimum time to construct.
Minimum impact on air quality in Ojai Valley.
Soil particles will pass on toward the ocean.
Private properties near the Ventura River will be spared flood hazards due to silt clogging the channel.
Cost savings estimated at $100 m.

Don Hauser, CRCE 20406

Don Hauser

Note; Local streams experienced drastic reduction in the number of steelhead immediatly after the March 1937 storms.

cc; Rep E Gallegly

HEBENSTREIT

08/24/04

Mr. Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Dear Jon,

We have reviewed the proposals for the Matilija Dam demolition and mitigation procedures. We are property owners in the Meiners Oaks project area (963 & 945 Oso Rd.) whose properties back up to the Casitas Municipal Water District lease by the Los Robles Diversion Dam.

1

We favor the proposal for constructing a 5 foot concrete flood wall on the Bureau of Land Management property with a maintenance road that will also double as a hiking trail.

Thank you for the opportunity of providing our feedback.

Best regards,

Lyn Hebenstreit & Maria Blasco

HILLEN

Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re:

Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Ventura County, California

Dear Jon Vivanti,

My family and I operate and run the "Flying H Ranch", a 22 acre, 2,000 tree avocado ranch that employs one permanent employee and up to a dozen part time employees during the year for harvesting and orchard maintenance. We have done so since 1977, the ranch, which previously grew oranges, has been here for over a century. The Flying H Ranch is located at 484 Camino Cielo, just downstream from the Matilija Dam.

I have received a publication from Casitas Municipal Water District (CMD) that identifies the ranch as being on the "Matilija Dam Conduit" water supply line. According to CMD, they are contracted to supply conduit customers with water up to year 2008 and the county has made "NO" provision to make up for the short-fall of water due to the removal of the Matilija Dam after that date. CMD further indicates that there will be "NO" water allocated to the conduit customers after 2008.

According to the web page - Matilija Dam - Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, there will be considerable confiscation of personal property and real estate to complete this plan. The mere threat of such a confiscation, plus cessation of water, devalues all property mentioned in this plan. I can neither sell, nor borrow against this property under these conditions. I now have a government-imposed hardship of unknown duration.

My questions to you, sir:

1) Can you guarantee an uninterrupted water supply beyond 2008? 1 P1, P2

2) There is mention of money for the removal of utilities at the Camino Cielo area. Is there money allocated for the replacement of said utilities? Without water, and the electricity to operate pumps, 2,000 trees will die, along with the hopes and dreams of this family, among others. 2

HILLEN

3) Will there be continuous and "uninterrupted" access by bridge and road to the ranch? Not only the human suffering of no access i.e. food etc., but employee access, and truck access for the continuation of avocado production and harvesting are at issue here. 3

I hope these concerns have been addressed, just not published, as yet. In any case, I need your assurance that I will not lose my home and my family's livelihood.

In closing, I must object to this proposal. When the Federal Government and State Government are in financial deficit, why are we spending over $23,000,000 borrowed dollars to facilitate fish and sand? I live on this stream and there is no water reaching the ocean now. There never is until we enter into the rainy season. So how can fish survive, and sand transport to the ocean? The only time you have sufficient water flow to facilitate sand transfer is during the rainy season. That is when the water flows over the top of the dam. It takes about 4 to 6 inches of rain to start this overflow. From then on, all rainfall comes over the dam with the accompanying silt. So what is the difference between a dam that cannot contain but a few inches of rain and no dam at all? One difference is that we will be $23,000,000 LESS in debt and I, among my neighbors, can continue to live in our homes, as we should be allowed to do. You are disrupting many lives for a dubious, and very outrageously expensive boondoggle.

Sincerely,

Jack Hillen
Flying H Ranch
484 Camino Cielo
Ojai, CA 93023

RMA 04-065

HOCKING

August 26, 2004

To: Carl Morehouse, Outside Environmental Document Coordinator
From: Kim Hocking, Staff, Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board
Subject: Matilija Dam Demolition Environmental Document Comments

By Order of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board:

1. The document does not recognize that Matilija Hot Springs is County Landmark No. 25. It was designated thirty-two years ago. Therefore, under the provisions of CEQA it is a historically/culturally significant resource. The document notes (p. 5.4-3) that it is "Potentially NRHP-eligible..." and says further that "Additional investigation of the significance of Matilija Hot Springs would need to be performed." Additional investigation for the purpose of establishing significance pursuant to CEQA is not necessary, **the site is historically significant.** However, NEPA will require such additional research to establish National Register eligibility. This work will need to be as part of this EIS. 1

2. Matilija Hot Springs is a local historic resource pursuant to CEQA as it is contained in a local register of historic resources and is therefore presumed to be culturally and historically significant. Therefore, the conclusion is that the demolition of the site constitutes a significant effect on the historical resources environment. The document must reflect this. 2

3. The document did not evaluate Matilija Dam, Camino Cielo (Ojala) and Soper's Ranch. **(Exhibit 1)** These are likely significant historical resources and there may be significant impacts as a result from the proposed demolition. The latter two are very clearly potential significant historic resources. **(Exhibit 2)** 3

The Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board found that:

a. The environmental document does not recognize that Matilija Hot Springs is County Landmark No. 25. 4

b. The environmental document does not recognize that the proposed demolition actions constitute a significant environmental impact on Matilija Hot Springs. 5

c. That a qualified Architectural Historian should completely evaluate the historic significance of Matilija Dam and the Camino Cielo (Ojala)/Soper's Ranch area, as well as National Register Eligibility of Landmark No. 25. 6

d. That the County establish a mitigation plan for the Landmark demolition as well as Ojala, Soper's Ranch and Matilija Dam, as appropriate. 7

e. The environmental document should also include the following:

HOCKING

•Discussion of the Ventura County General Plan Goals and Policies re. Cultural Resources 8

•Discussion of the Ventura County Historic Preservation Plan

f. The Board must be listed in the EIR as a Responsible Agency as demolition of the Hot Springs requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Board prior to demolition.. 9

g. That these revisions be returned to the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board for evaluation prior to finalization of the document. 10

g/matildamcomments

EXHIBIT 1

HOCKING

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REPRESENTED BY THE
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Munger family collection
At left, Julia (Robison) Munger, 1888; at right, the Munger boarding house built in 1910 on Fox Street; from the left, Seymour Munger, his sons, Claude and Leon, and daughters, Marion and Ruby. Julia is standing far right.

Cottages Among the Flowers

Even people who have lived for quite a while in Ojai wonder about the Cottages Among the Flowers on West Aliso Street. Huge, shapely oaks cast deep shadows on a handful of tiny wooden cottages there. A local architect named Harold Burket designed the Welsh-style cottages in 1925. Apparently the construction was considered quite modern for the time. Some say the cottages were a matter of pride to Ojai because they had centrally-located, electric refrigeration systems built into the laundry rooms. In the 1920's and 30's a profusion of flowers grew over the nearly three acres of ground; hence the place name, which is still painted on the sign in front of the cottages.

Famous Resorts of the Matilija Canyon

In 1839 Raphael Lopez built an adobe home at the mouth of Matilija Canyon using bricks of sun-dried mud mixed with straw. Old tales reveal that the Lopez adobe was known as a fortress against fierce natives, and a trading post for the peaceful Matilija tribe.

Members of the Lopez family occupied the adobe for over a century. During that time, they welcomed the occasional mountain wanderer by offering him provisions and a place to pause. Long after the Lopez family vacated their old home, a modern house was built there, incorporating the token remains of the original adobe within it. Technically, this is the oldest inhabited adobe in Ventura County. It is a private home, however, and is not open to the public.

To passersby, the history of the adobe is invisible. People don't give the place, which is west of the highway, a second glance. They often notice Bodee's, the small bar nearby to the east of the road, however, and wonder about its origin.

Hiram Imboden Cromer opened Bodee's in 1939. In 1952 his establishment caught fire and burned to the ground with him inside. Friends helped his wife rebuild the place, and Bodee's bar is still operating nearly fifty years after its beginning.

Ojala

A few miles up the highway is a dirt road that crosses the river and leads to Ojala. This old resort is no longer open to the public, but the story behind its conception is rather interesting.

vcns
Philander Wallace Soper, 1875.

In 1875 Philander Wallace Soper and his wife, Sara Elizabeth, homesteaded 160 acres of land in the Matilija Canyon. Soper made coffins for a living. He also managed John Meiners' ranch for many years. Their son, Clarence Anthony and his twin, Clara, were born on the ranch in 1881.

When he grew to manhood, Clarence took a job on the railroad. Seventeen years later a doctor told him he would soon die. He became despondent, gave up his job, and packed into the local backcountry where he lived in seclusion, waiting to die.

After a year, however, he felt better and returned to civilization. In 1916 he bought some acreage from his father's estate and opened a guest camp there five years later.

Jack Dempsey (World Heavyweight Boxing Champion from 1920) visited the resort. He suggested that Soper could rake in money if he would fix up a ring and charge a buck a head for all

wanted to watch the boxer train for his bout with Gene Tunney. Pop, as Clarence was known, liked the idea, and in 1925 he opened a fight training camp.

VCHS
Clarence (Pop) Soper in front of the sign advertising his resort.

Dempsey used to trot to the Y and walk back. While they were building the tunnels on Maricopa Highway, Dempsey would sometimes go up there and swing the huge hammer which was used to break big rocks. Once he got hit in the face by a rock and his trainer put a stop to this form of exercise.

Besides Dempsey, Gene Tunney, (World Heavyweight Champion from 1926 1928) trained at Sopers, as did Tony Chavez, Bob Nestell, Roscoe Scally, Jimmy Webster, Jackie Wilson, Jimmy Casino, and Ray Brown

In 1929 Pop sold part of the ranch to Rick and Eugenia Everett, who established a religious artists' colony known as Ojala. Ojala means *hope* or *promise* in Spanish. They built the pool in 1949 and opened it to the public shortly after and they also rented cabins to vacationers for many years. Pop Soper, who himself boxed professionally for a short time, died in 1957 at the age of 76.

Matilija Hot Springs

North of the old Soper place is what is now known as Matilija Hot Springs. It was not the first resort by this name, however.

In 1872 J.W. Wilcox discovered some hot springs in Matilija Canyon. He homesteaded the property and then sold it to R.M. Brown.

who built a road and invited guests there. Brown advertised his resort as being in *Matilija Canyon* and called it San Buenaventura Springs. According to his *Ventura Signal* ad. in September, 1873, a first-class cook provided meals and an attendant was provided for each bath house. "No pain shall be spared," the ad promised, "to make an invalid comfortable." Brown advertised good beds, a well-stocked library, and great scenery. A man known as Captain Gardner bought the springs around 1877 and erected cottages, calling the resort *Matilija Hot Springs.*

Mr. Wilcoxen and his daughter, Mrs. Vicker, took over the springs shortly before the flood of 1884 destroyed it. They continued to maintain a home there, but never again opened it to the public.

In 1887, Abram Blumberg homesteaded some land about two miles below the original Matilija Hot Springs. He pitched tents, built cottages, established a store and dining room, and opened the resort, Ojai Hot Springs. Mr. Blumberg widely advertised his "village for the sick." He claimed that the 104-degree sulphur springs contained many healing properties. The *Fountain of Life Spring*, he said, was tonic in effect, and the spring called *Mother Eve* was an alterative and cathartic.

Berry family collection
Inez (Blumberg) Berry, Abram Wheeler Blumberg, 1890.

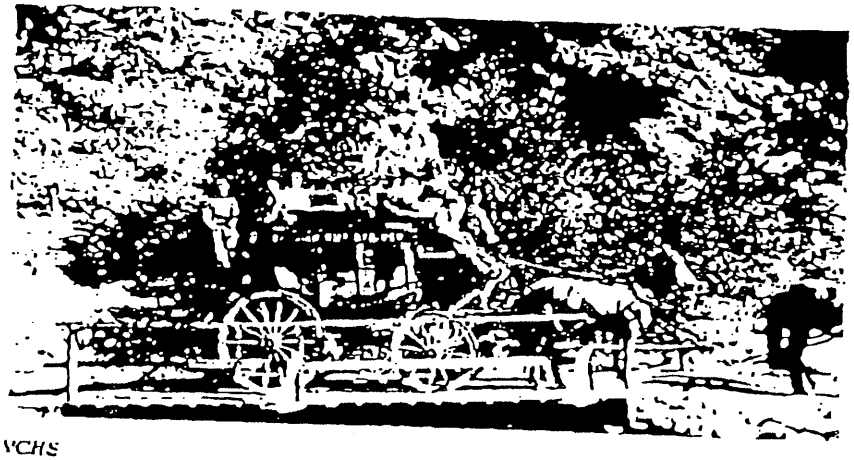
His hot mineral baths were considered the finest known. He claimed they cured these dread diseases: rheumatism (a disease of joints and muscles), catarrh (inflammation of nose and t erysipelas (inflammation of the skin), dyspepsia (indige chronic diarrhea, sore eyes, liver and kidney complaints,

HOCKING

syphilis, and all kinds of blood and skin diseases. He encouraged people to drink the water and to bathe in it. Mary Galle even attempted to boil an egg in it once.

By 1893 Blumberg could accommodate 100 guests at Ojai Hot Springs. He ran a daily stage to Nordhoff to fetch patrons bound for his health resort. He delivered spring water, too. Mr. Mesick, *The Ojai* editor, was one of his best customers. Mesick had a "cranky liver," but once he began a regular program using Blumberg's curative water, he felt quite a lot better. Blumberg shipped Matilija water as far away as New York.

Abram Wheeler Blumberg had been educated as a lawyer. He had moved his family from Iowa to Los Angeles in 1872 in hopes that his wife's health would improve. Blumberg and Catherine Elizabeth Vancuren (Andy Vancuren's sister) had been married for thirteen years by then. Part of her ill health was, no doubt, a result of the loss of their two-year-old daughter, Izora, who lay buried in Boon County, Iowa. The Blumbergs had four living children: Wheeler, Inez, Birdsel Ward, and Irene May, who was born in Ojai.



VCHS

The stage to Matilija Hot Springs, circa 1900

Catherine died at the age of forty-seven in 1890. Three years later Abram married a San Franciscan, Ella Ranard, daughter of D.A. Sackett of Ventura. They divorced in 1895, and in 1898 he married Mrs. F.H. Roberts of Santa Monica and promptly separated from her because he thought she was a bigamist.

During his later years, Abram ventured out and learned to ride a two-wheeler. He became quite fond of the sport. In 1899 in Los

VCHS

At left, Mr. and Mrs. Sim Meyers; at right, Matilija Hot Springs. The road at the right of the building leads to Lyon's Springs, 1908.

Angeles, however, he fell from his bicycle and died of the injuries at the age of sixty-three.

In 1901 the Blumberg heirs sold the resort, then known as Matilija Hot Springs to S.P. Creasinger of Los Angeles. He spent $50,000 to improve the resort by adding a pool and electric lighting, but he went bankrupt. Sim Meyers took over in 1904 and ran it for ten

OVM

Matilija Hot Springs post office established in the 1890's, and the dance hall, probably early 1900's.

years, dropping a reported $100,000 into the resort. Joe Linnel, Ann Yant's father, ran the springs between 1920 and 1938. In 1947 Ventura County acquired the sixty-year-old resort when it purchased land for the Matilija Dam project. Mr. and Mrs. William Olivas manage the resort now, offering therapeutic massages and hot mineral bathing.

Lyon's Springs

Beyond Matilija, deeper in the canyon, was another resort, once a thriving vacation spot. Newcomers and natives under forty, however, may never have heard of Lyon's Springs.

In 1871, when Robert Lyon became ill, he took leave of his position as auditor and recorder in Douglas County, Nevada, and bought a home on Ventura Avenue. His next door neighbor, Mr. Chilson, knew that Lyon's health was failing and related a story to him about some curative springs in the mountains. Chilson said he accidentally stumbled upon the springs and that only he and some Mexican cowboys knew about them. He camped there once and noticed an improvement in his own health. Chilson agreed to lead Lyon along the rugged route to the springs.

After a short stay, Lyon felt so much better that he returned for his family. He hired an experienced guide named Mr. Morrian to lead the four of them to the wilderness spot. They camped at the Lopez adobe the first night and secured some horses and gear there. In an article she wrote about her life several years later, Belle Lyon said that this was the first horseback ride she and her sister had ever been on.

The family grew fond of the rustic retreat and built a house there. People were in the habit of naming their homes then, and the Lyons called theirs Cliff Glen. They lived in the mountains for six months at a time, spending the remainder of the year on Ventura Avenue. Mr. Lyon's condition worsened and when he became an invalid, according to an article by his daughter, Belle, six of his friends carried him up and down the treacherous mountainside in a rocking chair.

After the original Matilija Hot Springs resort, which was above Cliff Glen, was destroyed in a flood and the owners decided not to rebuild, several former guests who were aware of the Lyons' location, wrote begging the family to find a place to tuck them in for a few weeks. The idea of boarders didn't much appeal to the Lyons, but the mortgage forced the issue, and in 1888 they opened Cliff Glen to visitors. Robert Lyon died in 1889 and his widow, Gertrude, and her two daughters continued to run the resort.

OVM
Lyon's Hot Springs, early 1900's.

They advertised the "health and pleasure resort" as being at the 1321-foot elevation level, where the climate was "delightful" and the scenery "beautiful." Mrs. Lyon provided "camper's homes" measuring ten by twelve feet. They had "good floors, shake roofs, doors, and siding of heavy, dark blue duck." The furnished huts rented for $2.00 per week. Bedding, extra cots, cooking utensils, and so forth could be secured on the premises at reasonable rates. Gertrude established Live Oak Park for campers who had their own tents and they paid an extra $1.00 for baths, towels, and water.

The butcher wagon called upon vacationers three times per week, or guests could dine on Mrs. Lyon's "good home cooking," of which there was always "plenty." Resort goers enjoyed lawn tennis and croquet. There was a dance pavilion and even a darkroom, "fitted up for the Kodaker." Lyon's ads assured anglers that, within a stone's throw, they would find a large mountain stream, "filled with speckled trout." One resort guest claimed that she watched a man catch 105 fish in one evening.

The postal department granted a post office for Cliff Glen in 1906, but not under the original name. They pointed out that there were already too many towns using the names *Cliff* and *Glen*, and so the resort became known as Lyon's Springs.

HOWELL

From: Rick Howell [fhowell2@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 26, 2004 1:07 PM
To: jonathon.d.vivanti@usace.army.mil
Subject: Matilija Dam Removal Project Comments

Comments re Matilija Dam Removal Project:
1.Constraints on construction hours need to include the entire area from the north end of State Highway Freeway 33 to the Matilija Dam project area. Construction and truck traffic are scheduled adjacent to or near Casitas Springs, Oak View, Live Oak, and Meiners Oaks. All deserve the same courtesy and period of quiet you are extending to the City of Ojai.
2.Re all construction trucking travel in the Ojai Valley from the north end of State Highway 33 Freeway to the Matilija Dam project area-Forbid the use of compression brakes (JAKE BRAKES).
Trucks using JAKE BRAKES in Oak View can be heard clear over to Lake Casitas and resonate throughtout the valley.

1
C

F.A.(Rick) Howell
290 Monte Via
Oak View, CA 93022
805.649.2058home
805.208.4511cell
530.684.8771efax

HYSORE

Jon Vivante
US Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wlshire Blvd
Los Angeles, Cal
90017-3401

Subject : Casitas Dam Removal

Dear Sir

I trust that it quite obvious to you that Casitas Lake serves as an infiltration pond for water to enter the aquifer of the Ventura River Valley. This is true regardless of the depth of water in the lake. I am not aware that the lake has ever emptied below the level of the lake-bed.

So, please advise the infiltration rate of water as measured by the monthly decline of water level during the average dry season. Also, after the rather dry winter of 2003, i.e summer, 2003. Also, after after a series of anticipatable dry winters. I do believe that such figures have not appeared in our local, rabble-rousing, newspaper. 1

Also, advise how much water is currently withdrawn from the aquifer by wells serving Ojai and other towns in the Ventura River Valley, for comparison with the above.

Also, advise the method and location of sewage treatment facilities used in Ojai and other towns in the Ventura River Valley. You are, of course aware, though our local newspapers are not, that, if the water table in the Ventura River Valley drops, those wells will deliver sewage unless, of course, such sewage is piped direct to the sea !

And, have you considered an alternative to destroying the dam ? Which is to fill the lake with rocks and, also, bury the dam with rocks. This would preserve the area as an infiltration basin, though one with reduced capacity. But it would remove an area of contention AND avoid the consequences of making a very-embarassing mistake at this time !

Yours truly,

John C Hysore
174 Montclair Dr
Ventura CA
93003

To comment

The 45-day public review period for this proposal ends Aug. 30. Send comments to: Jon Vivanti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, 915 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401. A public meeting will be held 7 p.m. July 28 in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, Ventura County Government Center, Hall of Administration, 800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura.

JACKSON

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0035
(916) 319-2035
FAX (916) 319-2135

DISTRICT OFFICES
101 W. ANAPAMU STREET, SUITE A
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
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FAX (805) 564-1651

711 E. SANTA CLARA STREET, SUITE 25
VENTURA, CA 93001
(805) 648-9943
FAX (805) 648-9946

Assembly
California Legislature

HANNAH-BETH JACKSON
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, THIRTY-FIFTH DISTRICT
CHAIR, NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES
BUDGET
HIGHER EDUCATION
JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ECONOMY
JUDICIARY
JOINT COMMITTEES
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
THE ARTS
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEES
CHAIR, COASTAL PROTECTION
CO-CHAIR, TITLE IX
STATE BOARDS
COASTAL CONSERVANCY
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 30, 2004

Jon Vivanti, Study Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

I am writing to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) that has been prepared on the Matilija Dam removal and Ventura River restoration effort.

This undertaking represents one of the most ambitious and complex ecosystem restoration projects ever planned. I remember well the moment in the fall of 2000, when I watched then-Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt operate the crane that symbolically tore down the dam's first 16-ton chunk of concrete. I congratulate the project sponsors and the many other participants for successfully advancing the project to this point.

The project has been so successful thus far in part because of the active participation by the wide range of stakeholders, many of whom initiated the project more than five years ago. To build upon this success, I strongly urge that project sponsors maintain a collaborative planning process, continuing to hold meetings of the various committees and working groups that have been involved in crafting the project and will continue to work out the design details after the final EIS/EIR is certified.

Such a collaborative process will help to ensure that checks and balances are incorporated into the future technical analyses that will complete the project, especially for sediment management, water supply gains and losses, and benefits to endangered species including the Southern Steelhead Trout.

The 35th Assembly District, which I represent, includes the portion of the Ventura County coastline that would most benefit from the dam removal project. I agree with and support the selection of project Alternative 4b as the Preferred Project Alternative and Environmentally Superior Alternative. This alternative calls for full dam removal in one

JACKSON

phase and short-term storage of a portion of the trapped sediment within the reservoir basin.

I am pleased to see that Alternative 4b ensures the sand-starved beaches of Ventura County will benefit from sand replenishment in a timely manner – within 10 to 20 years, as opposed to 100 years or longer if the obsolete Matilija Dam is left in place. The beaches of Ventura County, and the local economy that depends upon them, simply cannot wait that long.

In addition, I am encouraged by the economic analysis included in the draft environmental report, which indicates Alternative 4b would provide the most favorable ratio in terms of cost v. environmental benefit. Further, the project will save local jurisdictions millions of dollars in the long term, as the state and cities along the Ventura County coast will no longer have to expend their own funds on beach replenishment. Overall, Alternative 4b provides the best balance of sediment management, habitat improvements and beach benefits.

Alternative 4b also supports the objectives of the draft California Coastal Sediment Management Master Plan, a joint effort to be concluded next year by the California Resources Agency and Corps of Engineers. Revisions to the Matilija EIS/EIR should indicate more clearly where and how the project supports this coastal sediment plan.

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In closing, I would again like to commend the project participants for crafting an alternative that provides for the removal of Matilija Dam in a timely manner, along with a sensible plan for beach replenishment and restoration of endangered steelhead trout runs.

Sincerely,

HANNAH-BETH JACKSON
Assemblymember, 35th District
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources

Cc: Ventura County Watershed Protection District

HBJ/jra

JENKIN

Surfrider Foundation

Ventura County Chapter – Matilija Coalition
239 W Main St., Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 667-2222 **www.matilija-coalition.org**

August 30, 2004

Jon Vivanti
Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

RE: Comments on Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project F5 Draft Feasibility Study

Dear Mr Vivanti:

The Matilija Coalition has reviewed the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project F5 Draft Feasibility Study and EIR/EIS. Our comments are based upon our participation as a stakeholder in the three-year multi-agency study process.

Removing a dam of this magnitude is no small task in a watershed that has seen significant floodplain encroachment and other modifications since dam construction in 1948. The Matilija Coalition's objective has been to ensure that the engineering approach to removing Matilija Dam will provide the anticipated benefits while minimizing any potential adverse impacts.

We support the plan reached by consensus of the Matilija Dam Plan Formulation committee on January 22, 2004. As the Feasibility Study demonstrates, the plan for ***"Full Dam Removal with Short-Term Sediment Stabilization on Site"*** accomplishes the removal of Matilija Dam to provide fish passage and restoration of natural beach sedimentation, while fully mitigating project impacts and adopting an adaptive approach to long-term project management.

We believe that the concept of *"Temporary Sediment Stabilization on Site"* is the best approach to solving the problem posed by the six million cubic yards of sediment that have accumulated upstream of the dam. Under this plan, the controlled release of sediment will provide for the gradual restoration of the natural processes that nourish coastal beaches and the associated ecosystems.

Ultimately, the renewed public trust natural resources resulting from this ecosystem restoration project will provide significant assets to the citizens of this community, the State of California, and the nation. The project will also serve as a dramatic example one of the most ambitious ecosystem restoration projects ever undertaken.

Progress on Prior Concerns & Future collaboration:

We would like to acknowledge the work effort completed by the study team in completing the F5 Draft Feasibility Report. Having being involved in the study since its inception, we understand the complexity of the issues and the competing interests in this watershed restoration project.

During the planning process we suggested design features such as a meandering upstream channel with short-term sediment stabilization, levee heights and streambank stabilization appropriate for flooding risk, slurry disposal away from popular recreation and access areas, and trails and trailheads for public use. We also encouraged full mitigation for water supply impacts and the inclusion of coastal benefits.

Our previous comment letter, dated March 24 2004, focused primarily on some of the more visible potential public impacts including the *Slurry Disposal Site*, *Levees*, and the plan for *Temporary Stabilization* of sediments in Matilija Canyon. The F5 Draft shows considerable improvements in these aspects of the project, and we believe that the impacts of these measures have been significantly reduced in the most recent project description. However, we do encourage that further refinements during the detailed design phase should be considered with the goal of enhancing the "Ecosystem Restoration" objectives of the project. Specific suggestions are include in our comments below.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the collaborative multi-agency process that has been so successful at generated the draft plan. We trust that our comment and input has proven to be a constructive and valuable part of this process. The Matilija Coalition looks forward to our continued involvement as a project stakeholder throughout the future design and implementation of this precedent-setting restoration project.

Comments on F5 Draft Feasibility Study & EIS/EIR

We endorse the project concept as currently defined, but understand that further refinements will be necessary to minimize impacts and maximize the "Ecosystem Restoration" objectives. Some of these issues are outlined in our comments below.

Because of the volume of the document and diffuse placement of issues throughout the Feasibility Report and EIR/EIS, our comments are based upon the contents of the entire volume and are arranged by the topic. These issues are:

I. FLOOD CONTROL
II. WATER RESOURCES
III. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT
IV. RECREATION
V. FISHERIES BENEFITS AND IMPACTS
VI. COASTAL BENEFITS

I. FLOOD CONTROL

References: Draft Feasibility Report pages 4-7 to 4-17 and EIS/EIR Section 5-2 and throughout

In general, we are concerned that all mitigation measures should be appropriate to the "Ecosystem Restoration" project objectives. It is not clear that all of the proposed levees and mitigation are required, and we believe that some of these may be built in an "environmentally friendly" or temporary manner.

We are concerned that:

- The project should be designed in a manner that balances the need to provide protection without "over-engineering."
- Further study may show that flood protection needs could be decreased from that currently proposed. Current proposed levee additions are still based upon what has been described as "grossly conservative" estimates.

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- Levees not needed once river equilibrium has been reached should be constructed in an environmentally friendly manner or removed as part of the Ecosystem Restoration project. 1 N

Flood maps – FEMA vs. modeled inundation & levee construction

The Feasibility Report indicates that, in general, the flood risk will increase in areas where development has taken place in already flood-prone areas, and levees will be raised or constructed to be equal or greater than current protection levels. Upon review, it appears that the flood plain mapping is based upon model simulations rather than the existing FEMA floodplain designation, and we believe further clarification is needed throughout.

This is most evident in the Meiners Oaks area. Figure 4-7 shows very little increase in flooding within the developed floodplain, yet a substantial levee is planned for this area. If, indeed, these residences are currently outside the 100-year floodplain, the modeling shows little increased risk to the community. If the levees are built, will the FEMA flood plain designation change? If so, this will become a growth inducing measure, allowing expansion or additions to the residential area. 2

Levee construction

The modeling shows a generally minor increase in flood risk resulting from the plan for removal of Matilija Dam. Most of this risk is associated with the relatively short-term increases in sediment yield until the river equilibrium is established. In areas that do not currently have levees, it would make sense to examine the possibility of constructing less intrusive means of flood protection. 3

For example, the modeling shows that an existing berm adjacent to the Meiners Oaks site provides a degree of flood protection. Extending or enhancing this berm may provide the desired level of flood protection while reducing impact to existing habitat and public access and recreation. This may be accomplished using on-site materials or those resulting from the construction work at Robles or Matilija dams (i.e. slurry, cobble, etc.)

Private Property Mitigation

The buyout of private property is an issue that was raised at the public meeting by residents in areas deemed to be at increased risk of flooding. The flood mapping does not appear to indicate that these properties would be exposed to catastrophic flooding. Many of these properties have been inhabited for decades, and the residents have learned to deal with occasional flooding. If possible, we encourage other means of working with these property owners in order to alleviate liability concerns, rather than risk alienating long-time residents who are otherwise supportive of the project. 4 Q1

Cost Effectiveness

All of the issues outlined above may present opportunities to save money in the overall construction effort. Where possible, the least intrusive option will also be the least expensive.

II. WATER RESOURCES

Reference: Feasibility Report pages 4-17 to 4-23 and **EIS** Section 5-2

There has been significant discussion relating to the impact of the project upon the local water supply. The Matilija Coalition has consistently advocated for mitigation measures to ensure that water supply

remain at or above current levels, while being appropriate to the Ecosystem Restoration project objectives.

Water supply with No Project:

It is clear from the Feasibility Study that Casitas Municipal Water District's lease for Matilija Reservoir expires in 2009, by which time Matilija Reservoir will fill with sediment and lose useable water supply capacity. Downstream sediment impacts will gradually increase over time, even if the dam remains in place. However, recent comments from CMWD suggest that there may be a future use for the dam. **The study should note that at no point during the three-year planning process did CMWD propose re-commissioning Matilija Dam for water supply as an alternative.**

Point of Clarification:

Page 2-33 states:

CMWD supplied water directly from Matilija Dam to end users in eastern Ojai via the Matilija Conduit, an underground pipeline.

This statement is not an accurate representation of the historical use of Matilija Dam and Conduit. Our review of the historic conditions indicates that Ventura County delivered water directly from Matilija Dam to the Ojai area prior to the agreement with CMWD. The CMWD agreement does not provide for the direct delivery of Matilija water, but rather the use of Matilija Dam to control downstream releases for re-diversion at the Robles Diversion facility.

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Water supply "With Project":

Although the NEPA/CEQA environmental review process generally requires mitigation to baseline conditions, the program managers have committed to mitigating to today's water supply. However, the mitigation measures should based upon appropriate analysis of current and future condition and conform to the project objectives, especially the goals of increased steelhead habitat.

The question remains: **what is the "with project" water supply?**

In order to better answer this question and in the interest of conflict resolution, there should be some analysis of the water supply benefits resulting from the preferred alternative. Analysis should include the following:

Dredge & Slurry: Two million cubic yards of fine sediments in the reservoir area will be mechanically transported downstream of Robles Diversion. This effectively eliminates short-term impacts to water supply and fish from "muddy water." However, water will be used in the slurry operation, and this water will be re-released into the watershed, entering the aquifer and becoming available to downstream diversion. This is a short-term effect, but the net impact to water supply should be considered.

High-Flow Bypass: A new radial gate in the Robles Diversion Dam will allow natural flushing of the sand and cobble that normally builds up and reduces diversions during floods. This solves an existing problem, *and* one that will continue to worsen even if the dam were to remain in place. The Feasibility Study states:

> *In addition, for larger flow events that may cause interruptions to diversion operations under current conditions, the bypass structure will effectively prolong the time to which diversion operations would be impacted by allowing deposition to occur more gradually.*

The potential net benefit to water diversion opportunity should be quantified. Also, the final design of this facility should include optimization of water supply benefits. 6

Desilting Basin: This facility will also greatly enhance the current operational efficiency of the Robles Diversion facility, even though the studies show this is not necessary mitigation, hence a "local betterment." The net benefit of this facility to water supply should be analyzed.

Foster Park Wells: Two groundwater wells constructed at Foster Park will enhance the City of Ventura's water diversion capability. This is also included in the project even though the actual need for "mitigation" is minimal. The diversion capacity of these wells should be considered in the overall water supply, including the recapture of the slurry discharge from within the aquifer.

Arundo donax is known to use up to 10 times the amount of groundwater as native riparian flora. The removal of 250 acres of this noxious weed as part of the Ecosystem Restoration project will represent a water savings. The net benefit of Arundo removal to water supply should be analyzed.

Other water supply issues:

Robles Fish Passage Facility – this new facility includes an automated control system that will prove to be more efficient at controlling and optimizing diversion flows. Although this is considered to be a separate project, the increased water diversion opportunity should be considered in the overall water supply. 7

Water Conservation: Casitas still has not implemented 10 of the 14 Best Management Practices for water conservation that are generally accepted and adopted by the water supply industry. While analysis thus far has been concentrated on the Supply, the other part of the equation is Demand. This issue should be considered in relation to ongoing CMWD claims.

Alternate Water Supply: The Watershed Protection District has indicated that it will pursue alternate sources of water, perhaps at levels *exceeding* that which would be available if Matilija Dam were left in place. Sources may include new groundwater wells and/or connecting to the State Water Project. The impacts of such measures should be considered, both in relation to the overall water supply situation and the long-term ecosystem restoration project objectives.

III. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Due to the significant uncertainties inherent to removing a dam in this watershed, the Adaptive Management program will become a critical part of the project once it is constructed.

P4-30: *The Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan covers monitoring and adaptive management actions during the first 5 years after initial construction. After the first 5 years, monitoring and/or adaptive management becomes the responsibility of the Local Sponsor.* 8

The hydrologic conditions of the watershed are such that the post-construction project management may extend for decades (i.e. prolonged drought, or lack of extreme flood events). In this case, the Adaptive Management will fall on the local sponsor. Assurance is needed for the budget to complete the tasks required to completely realize the Ecosystem Restoration objectives of the project. 9

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Soil Cement Revetments and Levees:

The preferred alternative calls for the use of temporary soil cement structures in Matilija Canyon. The plan calls for the complete removal of these structures within a 20-year time horizon. Further detail should be provided on criteria for removal, methodology, and monitoring and adaptive management plans. In addition, some sort of administrative or legal mechanism should be specified to ensure that this aspect of the project is completed.

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Additionally, *"possible other less costly and more environmentally acceptable measures,"* should be included in the final design for "Short Term Stabilization" and downstream levees. The use of native or on-site materials would minimize the need for disruptive and costly excavation and removal of the soil cement as proposed. As we have previously suggested, the ideal solution would be to engineer a "maintenance free" project that would be allowed to erode and evolve in response to the larger storm flows. Some preliminary brainstorming on this issue was reflected in the environmental working group notes of 10/27/03.

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IV. RECREATION

This aspect of the project will ultimately be one of the most visible and useable public benefits of the project, and we would like to encourage further refinement of the Recreation Plan in cooperation with the local stakeholder groups.

Some specific issues that should be examined are:

Hanging Rock Trail: Removal of the dam and sediment may uncover the scenic geologic formation historically known as "Hanging Rock," once a popular destination for local citizens and tourists. The initial plans included a "lower trail" along the stream bank that would provide access to the "Hanging Rock" depicted in historic photos. The rest area shown on the current map is located far above the stream bank so would not provide access to this site or the stream. Future planning should include provisions for this lower trail and rest area as initially conceived.

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Fences and Barriers: There is a significant budget for these items, and during the detailed design phase this money may be better spent on other trail construction or access amenities.

Other trails: Connections or restoration of other trails in the vicinity should be examined in the context of creating a useable trail network. Possibilities include historic trails such as Camino Cielo Road and other trails once part of the Matilija Reservoir recreation complex. The impact of these should be carefully considered with local residences and private property owners.

V. FISHERIES BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

References: draft EIS/EIR pages 2.4 to 2.6, 4.3-32, 5.3-19 to 5.3-21, and Appendix C1 (especially pages C1-15 to C1-23), and other pages and sections scattered throughout the draft EIS/EIR.

It is clear from the report that one of the primary benefits of the project will be fisheries restoration. This is entirely dependent upon restoration of fish passage between the upper and lower watershed. Despite reports to the contrary, recent history shows that the downstream habitat is not sufficient to support a viable population of steelhead trout, and the connectivity to the perennial flows in the upper watershed is the key to survival of the species.

The southern steelhead has evolved in an environment formed by flood, fire, and drought. The plan for removing Matilija Dam will remove the majority of excess fine sediment from the system, minimizing impacts to migrating fish during the short-tem decommissioning phase. Most importantly, it should be stressed that the multiple life history strategies for this species include the resident native trout in the upper watershed, which should be considered the "ace in the hole" for the recovery of this population.

- The Matilija Coalition remains concerned that additional adverse impacts to steelhead through a reduction in Ventura River flows could result if water purveyors are offered a net gain of water supply above and beyond compensation for the actual reduction in water during the remaining short-lived water storage capacity of Matilija Reservoir. We support an appropriate balance of mitigation and ecosystem restoration.
- *High-Flow Bypass:* The new sediment bypass in the Robles Diversion Dam should also be designed with fish passage in mind. Enhancing migration opportunity during higher flows will increase the restoration objectives of the project.

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VI. COASTAL BENEFITS

From the inception of this project, one of the primary objectives has been to restore sediment transport down the Ventura River to the beaches. Political support was based upon the realization that this would provide significant long-term socioeconomic benefits to a region currently experiencing increased beach erosion. Natural sediment delivery to the coast will provide a long-term no-cost solution to what is becoming an increasingly costly problem throughout California. The implementation of this project will serve as a case study for such restorative actions, and provide a real-world setting in which to monitor and evaluate these benefits.

The Feasibility Study analysis indicates that the removal of Matilija Dam will gradually increase sand delivery to the coast over a 20-year period, helping to offset ongoing coastal erosion problems and associated costs. The analysis states that the beaches will receive a net increase of about 32% more sand, estimated to be worth $19-$29 million dollars if it were delivered artificially.

- This analysis does not include the potential value of increased cobble delivery to the eroding marine delta and associated habitat and recreational resources.
- The coastal benefits of this watershed restoration project are included merely as "Other Social Effects", lumped in with other issues such as trucking impacts. The value of the sand alone is worth almost 30% of the project cost, so there should be some more meaningful way to add it into the system of accounts.

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- It would also be helpful to quantify the increased sediment yield in terms of the local littoral transport rates, and in the context of local beach erosion and maintenance dredging at the harbor. The BEACON (1989) study provides a quantitative estimate of the net erosion experienced within the Pierpont Bay. The BEACON littoral budget analysis indicates that this coastline currently requires ongoing maintenance dredging, both to bypass the harbor and renourish upcoast beaches.

- In addition, the Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District is undertaking a coastal study to examine the potential benefit of "backpass" dredging from the Ventura Harbor. This would provide benefits to upcoast beaches, and assumes that such actions are needed. Any engineering and economic information from that study would be valuable in this Feasibility Study.

The Matilija Coalition believes that the plan for the removal of Matilija Dam presents a viable method for the restoration of the Ventura River watershed, given the many constraints of a developed floodplain. We are proud to participate as a stakeholder in this precedent setting project, and look forward to further success with the future milestones. We hope these comments are helpful in addressing some of the ongoing issues and concerns, and look forward to working with the study team in the design and planning stages of this ecosystem restoration project.

Sincerely,

A. Paul Jenkin
Coordinator, Matilija Coalition
Environmental Director, Surfrider Foundation - Ventura County Chapter
(805) 648-4005

KEHOE

JULY 27, 2004
SOUTH PASADENA

ATTN: JON VIVANTI
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, LOS ANGELES DISTRICT
915 WILSHIRE BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017-3401

DEAR MR. VIVANTI

I AM WRITING IN REFERENCE TO THE FINAL EIS/EIR REPORT PERTAINING TO THE MATILIJA DAM REMOVAL PROJECT AND THE POTENTIAL REMOVAL OF STRUCTURES BENEATH THE DAM, AND, SPECIFICALLY, THE PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE KEHOE RESIDENCE, BUILT BY MY LATE FATHER, JERRY J. KEHOE, AND DESIGNED BY MY LATE BROTHER, ARCHITECT, RICHARD H.KEHOE, IN 1969-1970.

IT IS RECALLED THAT THIS HOME WAS DESIGNED AFTER A MAJOR WINTER STORM(PERHAPS A PERFECT 100 YEAR STORM) IN 1969, WHICH CAUSED GREAT DAMAGE ALL THE WAY TO THE COAST OF VENTURA, CREATING HAVOC AT THE MARINA IN VENTURA, AND THROUGHOUT THE COASTAL PLAIN.

THIS STORM AND MANY OTHERS AFTERWARD REMIND US OF THE REASON FOR BUILDING SUCH DAMS IN THE FIRST PLACE—CONTROLLING FLOOD DAMAGE AS WELL AS SUPPLYING A WATER A WATER SUPPLY FOR PEOPLE.

IRONICALLY, THE COST OF REPLACING THIS RESIDENCE INHABITED BY DOROTHY KEHOE AND FAMILY, BASED UPON THE CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET, AND THE SECURING OF A SIMILAR RESIDENCE IN THE OJAI AREA, MIGHT COST AS MUCH AS THE ORIGINAL PRICE OF BUILDING THE MATILIJA DAM IN 1948—THREE MILLION DOLLARS. THIS MAY SEEM A SMALL PRICE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL DREAMERS BEHIND THIS PROJECT WHO ESTIMATE THE TOTAL COST OF DAM REMOVAL AT ANYWHERE FROM 120 TO 300 MILLION DOLLARS. THE CURRENT FEASIBILITY STUDY ALONE IS COSTING TAXPAYERS 4.2 MILLION DOLLARS.

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WHILE WE ALL CAN DREAM OF RETURNING TO A SYLVAN PAST WHERE 'THE FISH ARE JUMPING, AND THE COTTON IS HIGH', THE QUESTION EMERGES AS TO WHERE ALL THIS MONEY WILL COME FROM, AND WILL THE GOVERNMENT FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW DECIDE THAT A DAM MAY BE NEEDED AFTERALL.

WILL ATTEMPTING TO RESTORE A FISHERMAN'S PARADISE(if the project works) WHERE THOUSANDS OF STEELHEAD TROUT WILL MULTIPLY MIRACULOUSLY, AND PROVIDING SAND TO THE SURFERS AT THE POINT IN VENTURA, BE WORTH THE PRICE OF THE LARGEST DAM BUSTING PROJECT IN AMERICA.

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WE ARE TOLD THAT SENATOR BARBARA BOXER, HERETOFORE, FAMOUS FOR HER ADVOCACY OF ABORTION AND LATE TERM ABORTION, IS NOW FIGHTING FOR THE STEELHEAD TROUT!

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SENATOR BOXER GUARANTEES THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL PAY FOR 65% OF THE COST; AND VENTURANS AND CALIFORNIANS WILL PAY FOR THE REST!

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IT IS HOPED THAT YOUR REPORT WILL INCLUDE ALL THE DETAILS AND COST OF THE DESTRUCTION NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BUCOLIC REVIVAL OF THE RIVER VALLEY, AND IN SPECIFIC, THE NUMBER OF BUILDINGS TO BE DESTROYED, AND THE DETAILS OF HOMEOWNERS GETTING THE TRUE VALUE OF THEIR HOMES.

FURTHERMORE, THE EIS/EIR REPORT SHOULD GIVE EQUAL WEIGHT TO LESS RADICAL SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES TO TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE DAM, AND A COMPROMISE REMEDY TO SAVE THE FISH AS WELL AS THE CITIZENS WHO LIVE BELOW THE DAM. THERE SHOULD NOT BE AN AUTOMATIC APPROVAL OF THE COMPLETE DAM REMOVAL BASED UPON THE CURRENT INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL(Sierra Club, Forest Conservation Portal, Surfer's Association, ad infinitum)MOVEMENT.

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I URGE THE CORP OF ENGINEERS TO ADDRESS ALL THE ALTERNATIVE PLANS INCLUDING THE FEASIBILITY OF A FULL FISH LADDER WITH NO DAM REMOVAL; A FISH TUNNEL BYPASS; PARTIAL DAM REMOVAL; AND ALL OTHER COMPROMISE PLANS WHICH WILL REFLECT A MORE RATIONAL AND SANE ECOLOGICAL SOLUTION FOR THE MATILIJA CREEK AND VENTURA RIVER.

VERY TRULY YOURS,

Barry Kehoe

BARRY KEHOE
218 ST. ALBANS AVENUE,
SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030
PH. 323 257 6579.

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August 21, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90017-3401

Re: Matilija Dam

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

I recently heard by word of mouth that when, and if, Matilija Dam is removed, my home is to be removed. I read in a report that 11 cabins were to be removed. My home is not a cabin. It was designed and built by my late husband, an architect, for us and our six children. It's on seven plus acres and is a large home (six bedrooms and 3.5 baths) with a pool, spa, sauna and tennis court. It's worth over two million. My husband, Richard, did a lot of research and had survey reports done. Our property withstood the '69 flood; otherwise, we would not have built our home.

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In looking at the alternative plans considered, we do not understand why other ideas for mitigation were not considered. For instance, a 200' deep notch (or a tunnel as suggested by Jerry Conrow) could be cut in the ridge between the North Fork of Matilija Creek and Lake Matilija for considerably less than the recommended project cost. This would allow for continued use of the lake as a water source for the rest of its projected life, allow fish migration during storm flows and whatever controlled flows were let out of the lake, and obviate the need to move solid material of any grain size except by natural stream flow and to the level of the water districts current ability to regulate water flow from the lake. If properly protected, downstream property would not have to be taken by eminent domain.

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Additionally, walls and/or levies could be built; and, in the long run, this would save money. Where will the funds come from to repay these people for their million-dollar homes?

I have faith that you will find a solution to this pending disaster.

Thanking you in advance,

Dorothy Kehoe

Dorothy Kehoe
15220 Camino Cielo
Ojai CA 93023

Mr. Vivanti—
Would you or someone from Army Corps of Engineers be able to look at my property? I would appreciate it!

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7/16/2004

KNUTH

To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Attention: Jon Vivanti

Subject: Comments on plan to remove Matilija Dam

The recommended alternative for the subject project does not appear to address the items listed below. These are significant impacts, and if the EIR did not address them, it is deficient as well.

1. The existing silt behind the dam forms a buttress at the base of a very steep slope on the south side of the beginning of Matilija Canyon Road, just upstream from the dam. The removal of this silt will significantly increase the probability of a landslide, which will destroy the road at this location. This road is the only access for the residents who live upstream in the canyon, and its destruction will cause severe access and safety problems for these residents.

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2. The additional silt deposited by this project will significantly exacerbate the existing silting problem at the entrance of the Ventura Marina.This will cause an additional hazard to boaters, and also require significant additional dredging of the marina entrance.

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3. I didn't see a cost/benefit analysis for the project, but the recommended project appears to be one of the more costly alternatives.

3

As a general comment, there is no doubt that the dam has outlived it's "usefullness" long ago, but it does not constitute a hazard in its current condition. Therefore, the removal of the dam by gradually enlarging the existing notch over a period of many years seems to be a more practical and economical method.

Respectfully submited,

Al F. Knuth

Al F.Knuth, P.E.; C.E. 18000 T.E. 155 805-484-3138

cc: Ventura County Board of Supervisors

Al & Lynn Knuth - Box 336
5235 Mission Oaks Blvd.
Camarillo, Calif. 93012

KRUSE

Vivanti, Jonathan D SPL

From: Suzanne_Kruse@usw.salvationarmy.org
Sent: Friday, August 27, 2004 10:41 AM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D SPL
Subject: RE: Matilija Dam Project

Oooops. Sorry about that. Here is the original email.

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Subject: Matilija Dam Removal

This letter is to request that alternatives to the Matilija Dam Removal be explored and other options be evaluated to avoid our family home being removed. Our home has been identified as being within the flood plain and is identified for acquisition

The property at 15220 Camino Cielo Rd, Ojai CA has been our family home most of my life. It is very important to our family to keep our property intact. It is a place where we gather for many multi-generational gatherings. It would be devastating to have our house acquired as a result of eminent domain. My children look forward to bringing their children and continuing the family traditions at our home in Ojai.

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It is possible to remove the sediment behind the dam or build retaining walls to protect our home if the dam is removed?

I hope you will take our family home, as well as the homes of other families that have had property in that area for many years, into consideration when making decisions on the Matilija Dam project.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Kruse
2107 SE Yukon St.
Portland, OR 97202
503-236-6966
skruse@usw.salvationarmy.org

LALANI

AUG 2 3 2004

PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
Traffic, Advance Planning & Permits Division

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 20, 2004

TO: Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
Attention: Carl Morehouse

FROM: Nazir Lalani, Deputy Director NL

SUBJECT: Review Document – 04-065 (Matilija Dam Removal)
EIR/EIS for Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project
Matilija Dam is located just over half a mile from the Matilija Creek confluence with the Ventura River in western Ventura County, within the Los Padres National Forest
Lead Agency: Army Corps of Engineers/Ventura County Watershed Protection District

The Transportation Department has reviewed the Draft EIR/EIS for the subject project as proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Matilija Dam is located just over half a mile from the Matilija Creek confluence with the Ventura River in western Ventura County, within the Los Padres National Forest, located north of the SR 33 Impact area.

The primary objectives of the project are specified as follows:

- Improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat and access to habitat along Matilija Creek and Ventura River.
- Restore the hydrologic/sediment transport to support downstream coastal beach sand replenishment.
- Enhance recreational opportunities along Matilija Creek and the downstream Ventura River system.

The project activities will be as follows:

- Removal of Matilija Dam;
- Removal of material from behind the dam;
- Implementation of downstream flood protection, including replacement of the existing Camino Cielo Bridge, and extension of the existing Santa Ana Boulevard Bridge.
- Removal of giant reed Reaches 7, 8, & 9 and continuing with eradication activities downstream;
- Modification of downstream water supply facilities to maintain water quantity and quality;
- Revegetation and restoration.

The following concerns/issues should be addressed in the EIR/EIS:

1. Matilija Canyon Road (Matilija Road North) is the only link for several residences that are located near the end of the road. It is their lifeline for emergency services as well as daily commuting. This road is frequently subject to closure due to landslides and washouts during storm events. At one location the roadway is currently down to one lane because of storm damage from 1998 that we were

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unable to fully restore to two lanes. If the road is cut off, the residents are literally isolated. On occasion the Sheriff has had to evacuate some homeowners from this community by helicopter.

Matilija Dam serves as a velocity retardant, particularly at the southerly end of the creek, and protects the road from more extensive erosion damage. If the dam removal causes additional potential for erosion or flood damage to Matilija Canyon Road, some mitigation measures should be considered including improvements aimed at protecting the survivability of the roadway, which serves a US National Forest area in addition to the local residential community. 1 (cont.)

The draft EIR/EIS should include mitigation measures for protecting the roadway including provisions for regular pilot channeling this fork of Matilija Creek away from the roadway side, roadway slope hardening and slope stabilization at those locations that are traditionally subject to damage from storms.

It should be noted that a good portion of the roadway is within and the property of the US Forest Service. The Transportation Department only has a license for it.

2. The following issues/conditions regarding the removal/replacement of Camino Cielo Bridge and extension of Santa Ana Boulevard Bridge should be addressed in the draft EIR/EIS.

   - Funding for design, getting all permits, construction, construction engineering for the bridge project should be identified.
   - The new structures should comply with Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VC WPD) and FEMA standards for flood plain requirements including the necessary freeboard requirements.
   - The new bridge should meet minimum AASHTO and County Road Standards in regards to bridge width, structural integrity, guardrail requirements, etc.
   - Access for residents and emergency response vehicles during construction should be addressed.
   - Right-of-way requirements for the construction of both structures should be identified.

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3. The draft EIR/EIS indicated that this project would generate an average of 298 (124 employee and 174 heavy duty) construction related vehicles for a period of two years. The project includes transporting concrete rubble to Hanson Aggregates and non-recyclable debris to Toland Road Landfill. Therefore this project will have site specific and cumulative impacts on Ventura County roadway that will have to be mitigated. 3

4. Mitigation measure T-1on page 5.9-3 of the EIR/EIS states that a Transportation Management Plan (TMP)/Traffic Study that covers all aspects of construction traffic including the practices and safety precautions to minimize the traffic impact will be submitted to the County Public Works Department and Caltrans. The TMP should be part of the EIR/EIS and should identify and provide mitigation measures acceptable to the Transportation Department for any impacts this project may have on the County local roads and network system in particular the impacts on North Matilija Road, South Matilija Road, Santa Ana Boulevard and Toland Road. The Traffic Study should also identify the truck routes the project proposes to use. 4

5. According to the information provided on Page 5.9-3, this project will have an adverse impact on SR 33. Unless the project proponent mitigates the significant adverse impacts to less than significant levels, the County General Plan requires that the Transportation Department oppose this project. The potential traffic impacts on SR 33 between Casitas Springs and the City of Ojai may be mitigated by restricting employee and truck trips on SR 33 to before 6:30 a.m., between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. or 5

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after 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

6. Mitigation measure T-2 on page 5.9-4 indicates that the damage to the local roads and drainage systems will be adequately restored. However the EIR/EIS should include mitigation measures that can be reasonably enforced and guaranteed. The applicant shall reconstruct any damaged or defaced asphalt concrete paving and driveways per County Standards. The videotape prepared and submitted by the applicant shall be used in conjunction with an after hauling inspection to determine if any of the above existing surface improvements were damaged by trucks during hauling. 6

7. The amount of truck trips generated by this project will reduce the life expectancy of the AC pavements on Matilija Road (North and South) and any other County road that may be used during the project. This will make the need for pavement resurfacing and rehabilitation improvement occur much sooner than normally scheduled. The project proponent is required to pay the improvement fees corresponding to the amount of traffic contributed by this project. The project proponent shall deposit these fees into a trust fund with the County of Ventura. 7

8. To address the cumulative impacts of this project on the Regional Road Network, the project proponent must submit a traffic analysis in sufficient detail that shows the increases in average daily traffic (ADT) on the County's Regional Road Network attributable to this project. As an alternative to the above traffic analysis, we could accept the County fee, which is based on the current County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance (#4246). If the project proponent wishes to follow this procedure, before the issuance of a Permit for the project and pursuant to the Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance, the project proponent shall deposit with the Transportation Department a Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee. Based on the information provided in Table 5.9-3, Page 5.9-3 of the EIR/EIS the Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee due the County would be: 8

   298 ADT X $46.48/ ADT = **$13,851.04**

   If the TIMF is paid, this project will address the cumulative impact of this project on the Regional Road Network.

9. Our review of this Draft EIR/EIS is limited to the impacts this project may have on the County's Regional Road Network. 9

10. Since this project will impact state highways, CALTRANS should also review this project. 10

Please call me at 654-2080 if you have questions.

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LANNING

August 26, 2004

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

ATTN: Jon Vivanti, CESPL-PD-WW

RE: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Lanning Property at 414 Riverside Road, Oak View, CA

Lanning Property at 284 Riverside Road, Oak View, CA

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

We own two properties which covers 47 acres in the Live Oak Acres area of Oak View. Roughly 16 acres are on the west side of the river and are protected by the Live Oak Levee, 8 acres are in the river bottom of which the Ventura County Flood Control District (VCFCD) has an easement with restrictions, and 23 acres are on the east side of the river. As you know, VCFCD has been renamed the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. Our easement was with VCFCD so we will continue to use this acronym.

Most of the river bottom in the Live Oak Acre area is privately owned and is fenced. There is no access for the public. The 'Flood Control' road along the top of the levee is fenced and gated at both ends. This river bottom area remains peaceful with little human interaction. There are many animals including egrets, cranes, ducks, owls, hawks, coyotes, bobcats that can be seen on a daily basis.

Our hope is that this project will be done with as little impact to the quality of our life and surroundings as possible.

After reviewing the Study, we have some concerns and questions with the project for which we would like a response. They are:

1. Removal of the dam and some of the silt will leave silt to be moved down the river naturally. This silt will slowly fill up the river which could cause flooding in our area. There is mention in the Study of raising the Live Oak Levee 2-6 feet in height, but no mention of how much the silt will raise the floor of the river over time which could be more then 6 feet, especially if there is no plan to annually remove silt out the river bottom as it gets deposited.

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2. When the levee is raised, there is no mention of how the levee would be constructed and the money values included in the Study do not account for the cost to construct the levee with the appropriate materials. The Live Oak Levee broke 300 feet below our house in 1995 and was rebuilt with rip-rap rock. It broke in the same spot again in 1998 and was rebuilt with a 5 ft deep x 5 ft wide concrete footing under a rock levee which had concrete gunited between the rocks. This was done to patch were the levee broke. To fully protect the Live Oak Acres neighborhood, the complete length of levee would need to be constructed in this manner.

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3. We use well water for domestic, livestock and landscape use. Our property falls in the Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) district's boundaries but is surrounded by the Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD). It would cost us over $25,000.00 to annex and hookup to water with the VRCWD so we are naturally concerned that the quality and quantity of ground water that feeds our well would not be affected by this project as has been mentioned in other letters written by VRCWD and CMWD. Will the silt that is deposited upstream from our well in areas along the river cause the rainwater and river water to be unable to penetrate the ground and reach the aquifer? Will the silt change the quality of the water in the aquifer? How will the deposited silt be protected from liquefying in a major earthquake?

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4. The slurry pipe will travel down the VCFCD easement of which our property encompasses over 2000 feet. Questions with the slurry pipe are:

a. Will this slurry pipe contain chemicals and/or oils which would help the water flow easier though the pipe?
b. Will the slurry pipe be placed on the Live Oak Levee or in the river bottom?
c. Our house is within 40 feet of the levee so our concern for pollution is great. Will the slurry pipe cause the ground to shake, create noise and/or smell from its operation? How much daily/weekly traffic will be on the support road along side of the slurry pipe for maintenance? Will there be generators running for pumps along the pipe line?
d. Since our property goes through the river and continues on the other side and we currently have access to all of it through the river, will the slurry pipe and support road block access to our property on the other side of the river?

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e. Our easement with VCFCD specifically states that no recreation is allowed and that the gates on each end of our property that sit on the levee are to remain closed. The gates need to continue to be closed to keep in our livestock. How will you prevent unwanted persons from traveling or trespassing along the pipeline and support road?
f. Who does the liability fall on when lawsuits occur over injuries from construction to completion of the project? Will the Corps and County maintain proper insurance to cover the cost of these lawsuits?

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We have allowed the VCFCD to gain access to the levee through our property from the street during emergencies and during normal maintenance work. VCFCD used our property for equipment staging during the 95 and 98 floods. We also allowed VCFCD access to work on the levee from our other property at 284 Riverside Road when levee improvements were being done.

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We understand that the project will happen. We would like to maintain our current water well supply. We would like to maintain our current privacy and peacefulness that living in this neighborhood has provided. This pipeline will be temporary, but the effects could last much longer and the Study does need to try to account for all changes that could take place.

We would hope that our concerns will be addressed. We would like to be kept informed and participate in the planning stages if possible. If you would like to contact us, please do so at the address listed below.

Sincerely,

Rex and Heidi Lanning
414 Riverside Road
Oak View, CA 93022
(805) 649-4501

cc: Pam Lindsey, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
cc: Steve Bennett, Ventura County Board of Supervisors

LIGHT

From: RM Light & Co. Inc. [rmlight@silcom.com]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2004 11:33 AM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D
Subject: <no subject>

Dear Mr. Vivanti -

I am the owner of a 110 acre parcel which formed part of the Baldwin Ranch, off Baldwin Road, Ojai. The Robles Casitas Canal is the southern border of my property; de la Garrigue Road is the western boundary and the parcel is bounded at the east by the land recently acquired by the Ojai Land Conservancy.

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Pages 4-26 through 4-28 of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study designate potential desilting basin and sediment disposal sites adjacent to the Robles Casitas Canal. Having spent a great deal of money recently in developing my parcel, I would oppose having any part of my land used for this purpose. I urge you to limit further study of the desilting basin and sediment disposal sites to "Alernative A", which is already on government land.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Light
P.O.B. 5597
Sta. Barbara, CA., 93150

21 East Carrillo Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Telephone: (805) 963-7000
Fax: (805) 965-4333

HATCH & PARENT
A Law Corporation

MCGLOTHLIN

Russell McGlothlin

August 25, 2004

By US Mail

Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: Comments from Southern California Water Company on the Draft EIR/EIS for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

This letter sets forth the comments and concerns of Southern California Water Company ("SCWC") pertaining to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement ("EIR/EIS") for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project ("Project"). These comments are submitted in addition to the oral comments presented at the hearing on the EIR/EIS on July 28, 2004.

I. SCWC Water Service and the Ojai Valley Water Supply

The availability of fresh water supplies within the Ojai Valley are essentially limited to local groundwater and surface water imported from Casitas Municipal Water District ("Casitas"). SCWC provides domestic water service to customers within the City of Ojai and surrounding areas within the Ojai Valley. SCWC's water supply is obtained from Casitas and groundwater produced from the Ojai Valley Groundwater Basin ("Basin").

Casitas obtains its water supply from the Ventura River, which is in part supplied from Matilija Creek and the Matilija Reservoir. Casitas delivers approximately 8500 to 9000 acre-feet of water per year to water users in the Ojai Valley, including SCWC. Accordingly, any impairment of Casitas' ability to supply water to the Ojai Valley could impact the availability of Casitas' supplies allocated to Ojai Valley water users. In turn, this would force the Ojai Valley water users to increase their use of local groundwater. Further, a reduction in the use of Casitas' water supplies in the Ojai Valley would reduce the Basin replenishment that occurs from the application of these imported water supplies to lands overlying the Basin.

As demonstrated by the groundwater problems that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the Ojai Valley, the Basin does not hold significant quantities of groundwater in storage, and therefore can be dewatered during drought conditions. Accordingly, any loss of

Casitas water could jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of the people within the Ojai Valley, including the Valley's municipal water supply, its economy, and its preparedness for the frequent wildfires in the region. For these reasons, SCWC must ensure that there is sufficient water supply for all water users within the Ojai Valley. In specific regard to this Project, SCWC seeks to ensure that the removal of the Matilija Reservoir does not jeopardize Casitas' ability to deliver water to the Ojai Valley.

II. The Analysis of the Project's Impacts on the Local Water Supply in the Draft EIR/EIS is Insufficient

The EIR/EIS must address the effect of the project on Casitas' water supply and the associated effect on the region's water supplies. At present, the Draft EIR/EIS only states, at page 5.2-10, that the lost water supply associated with Matilija would be adverse but less than significant because there may be State Water Project ("SWP") water or other alternative supplies available to offset the lost supply. The EIR/EIS does not identify: (1) what the "alternative supplies" are; (2) the quantity and quality of the SWP or alternative supplies (collectively "substitute supplies"); (3) the costs of obtaining the substitute supplies; (4) what entity will bear the costs of obtaining the substitute supplies and the effects of imposing those costs; (5) the likelihood of actually completing a project to obtain the substitute supplies; (6) the reliability of the substitute supplies, including during drought periods; (7) and the environmental effects of pursuing the substitute supplies, including all necessary infrastructure that will be required to be constructed to make the substitute supplies available. Each of these issues must be addressed if the EIR/EIS is to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act ("NEPA") and the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA").

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For example, if the chosen substitute water supply is the delivery of SWP water to Casitas, such a project would require wheeling agreements with existing SWP customers with adequate conveyance capacity, new Casitas pipelines, and payment for the water – all at substantial costs. To comply with NEPA/CEQA, the EIR/EIS must address, among other things, the allocation of these costs and the environmental impacts of obtaining and importing SWP water, as well as the reliability of the SWP supply. (Public Resources Code § 21100; *Santa Clarita Organization for Planning the Environment v. County of Los Angeles* (2003) 106 Cal.App.4th 715, 717-718 ["An environmental impact report. . . must contain a thorough analysis that reasonably informs the reader of the amount of water available. The dream of water entitlements from the incomplete State Water Project (SWP) is no substitute for the reality of actual water the SWP can deliver."]; 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8 [Effects to be analyzed under NEPA include social and economic impacts].)

SCWC is generally supportive of the Project and is pleased to see the community come together for restoration of the Ventura River watershed. It is also imperative, however, that the EIR/EIS provide a comprehensive analysis of, and realistic solutions to the Project's impacts on consumptive water supplies. The US Army Corps of Engineers and all participating agencies must solve these water supply issues as a part of the Project implementation, so that this worthwhile Project can proceed.

Thank you for considering SCWC's comments and concerns. Please feel free to contact me as you desire.

Sincerely,

Russell McGlothlin
For HATCH & PARENT
A Law Corporation

cc: Warren Morgan, Southern California Water Company
Frank Bennett, Southern California Water Company
Jeff Pratt, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Susan Hughes, County of Ventura
Harry Bodell, Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency
Jim Ruch, Ojai Water Conservation District
Dan Singer, City of Ojai
John Johnson, Casitas Municipal Water District
Robert Sawyer, Esq.

MCINNIS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802- 4213

F/SWR:MC

AUG 31 2004

John Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
911 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Thank you for providing the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) with an opportunity to comment on the Public Draft Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (July 2004).

These comments follow our previous comments on the Preliminary Draft Report and EIS/EIR (See NOAA Fisheries letter to Darrell Buxton, Corps of Engineers, dated October 2, 2003). As NOAA Fisheries has indicated previously, the Matilija Dam removal and ecosystem restoration project represents one of the most ambitious and potentially effective recovery actions for the Southern California steelhead Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) which is Federally listed as endangered. Reestablishment of access to prime historic steelhead spawning and rearing habitat, and restoration of riparian and lotic ecosystem functions in both the main stem of the Ventura River and Matilija Canyon is essential to restoration of the historic steelhead run in the Ventura River system. This run was one of the largest and most consistent runs in southern California.

Of the 6 alternatives identified in the Draft Report, the locally preferred 4b alternative (full dam removal in a single phase with incremental, natural transport of reservoir sediments to the ocean) provides the greatest potential to achieve all three of the originally stated objectives of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project which include:

> "Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat along Matilija Creek and the Ventura River to benefit native fish and wildlife species, particularly the endangered Southern California steelhead trout."
>
> "Improve the hydrologic and sediment transport processes to support the riverine and coastal regime of the Ventura River Watershed."

"Enhance recreational opportunities along Matilija Creek (including U.S. Forest Service land) and the downstream Ventura River system."

Of particular interest to NOAA Fisheries is the project's potential to significantly improve habitat conditions for steelhead trout by removing the major remaining impediment to fish passage to one of the two principal steelhead spawning and rearing tributary systems in the Ventura River. The California Department of Fish and Game has estimated that steelhead runs in the Ventura River averaged between 4,000 and 5,000 adults per year prior to the construction of Matilija Dam in 1947, with the Matilija Creek drainage supplying close to half of the steelhead spawning and rearing habitat within the Ventura River watershed. These runs historically supported a sport fishery (for both juvenile and adult steelhead) which contributed significantly to the local economy. Restoration of these runs (1,000 annual adults) has been estimated to have the potential to contribute over a half a million dollars annually to the locally economy. (See Meyers Resources, Inc. *Benefits from Present and Future Salmon and Steelhead Production in California*, 1988). Additionally, opening up the upper watershed of Matilija Creek through the removal of Matilija Dam would assist in naturally re-seeding the greatly diminished runs of native anadromous steelhead in the Ventura River system with stock carrying important native genetic material that is characteristic of the region. A recently completed study of the population genetic structure of rainbow trout above Matilija Dam indicates that a significant percentage of the remaining stock contains haplotypes which are not found in hatchery populations of rainbow trout. (See Jennifer L. Nielsen and Talia C. Wiacek, *Population Genetic Structure of Rainbow Trout above the Matilija Dam Based on Microsattellite and mtDNA Analysis*, 2004, USGS Western Fisheries Research Center). NOAA Fisheries believes that these currently land-locked fish may have the potential to contribute to the increased viability of the remnant anadromous runs in the Ventura River.

In addition to the two basic elements of the 4b alternative (full dam removal and incremental removal of stored sediments), the locally preferred alternative contains a number of other basic elements which have the potential for either short-term or long-term adverse environmental impact. These include.:

* slurrying of approximately 1.2 million cubic yards of fine sediments stored behind the dam to an off-stream disposal location in the vicinity of Highway 150; 1

* excavation of a 100 foot wide channel through the coarse lake sediments and temporarily stockpiling those sediments on riverine terraces within the reservoir site;

* temporarily stabilizing the excavated and unexcavated coarse sediments within the reservoir site with some type of soil cement;

* removal of soil cement in the reservoir site in stages to allow for gradual erosion and transport of sediment in response to natural storm events;

* construction of a high-flow sediment bypass at the Robles Diversion, along with a fine sediment siltation basin along the Robles Diversion Canal;

* provision of make-up water to the Casitas Municipal Water District (either in the form of water purchases from the State Water Project, or the drilling of new wells in the vicinity of the Robles Diversion); 2

* enlarging the Santa Ana Road Bridge over the Ventura River and removal of Camino Cielo Bridge over the Ventura River; 3

* drilling two new municipal water wells in the vicinity of Foster Park;

* construction of new and enlargement of existing levees along developed sections of the main stem of the Ventura River;

* removal of Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) from selected reaches of Matilija Creek and the Ventura River;

* revegetation of sediment storage areas within the reservoir site; and

* installation of a 5-mile recreational trail along the slurry line route (extending from Highway 150 to the Matilija Dam site), and appurtenant rest and interpretive facilities.

These project components raise a variety of issues which NOAA Fisheries believe should be further addressed in the Final EIS/EIR. The issues raised by these individual components of the project are discussed more fully below.

Temporary Storage of Course Sediments: This component involves the excavation of a 100 foot wide channel through the Matilija Reservoir site to provide a temporary channel for conveyance of Matilija Creek flows. The excavated material would be temporarily stockpiled on adjacent riverine terraces. The storage areas would be temporarily stabilized with a type of soil cement varying in height above the excavated channel invert from 3 to 7 feet. The lower portion of the soil cement would be designed to be overtopped by a two- to five-year event (estimated at 3,000 to 7,000 cubic feet per second). The higher portion of the soil cement would be overtopped by a 10-year event (approximately 12,500 cubic feet per second). The strategy of temporarily storing a majority of the coarse sediments by stabilizing in a manner which will allow their natural erosion and transport under varying flow conditions is sound. However, from the description and analysis of the plan it is unclear how the soil cement will perform under high flow conditions.

Because a thinly applied coating of material such as soil cement over loosely consolidated sediments will have limited structural integrity, and may be subject to sudden and potentially catastrophic failure resulting in the release of unwanted amounts of sediment, it may be more effective to utilize un-grouted rock rip-rap materials (perhaps excavated from the reservoir 4 O

sediments) with known structural and flood control capability. This type of material could be disassembled in a more controlled manner as appropriate, thus providing additional flexibility to the adaptive management program which is proposed for this component of the project. Alternatively, excavated coarse sediments could be stockpiled in the form of large, naturally shaped point bars. If properly located and shaped, these features could provide a self-regulating mechanism for the release of sediment, and thus obviate the need for at least some of the temporary artificial stabilization. All temporarily stockpiled sediments should be vegetated with native plant species to reduce the introduction of fine sediments into the stream channel and prevent the colonization and spread of non-native invasive plant species.

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Temporary Storage of Fine Sediments: This component entails slurrying 1.2 million cubic yards of fine sediments currently stored in the Matilija Reservoir site to a point below the Robles Diversion, and placing these sediments on a river terrace stabilized to withstand a 50 year flood event (approximately 60,000 cubic feet per second). The eight scattered disposal sites encompass approximately 118 acres, the majority of which contain relatively intact scrub-shrub and oak woodland immediately adjacent to the active channel of the Ventura River. Because these sites presently contain intact habitat and are intended to store fine sediments for a considerable period of time, the plan for these disposal sites should contain more detail regarding where and how the sediments would be deposited. Specifically, the plan should identify mature specimen native trees (including oak trees) which should be protected, and should include a native re-vegetation program which would provide viable native terrestrial habitat during the life of the disposal site and prevent either the colonization of non-native invasive plants or wind erosion of unvegetated fine sediments.

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Natural Transport of Sediments: The principal means of transporting sediment from the Matilija Reservoir site to the ocean is via the Ventura River channel. As the analysis indicates this method of removing both fine and coarse sediments from the Matilija Reservoir site and transporting them to the ocean has the potential to adversely impact steelhead trout habitat, particularly in the short-term (2-10 years). The principal potential impacts include filling in spawning gravels with fine sediments, reducing fish passage opportunities as a result of the deposition of course sediments which cause a widening of the river channel, and interfering with the operation of the fish passage facilities now under construction at the Robles Diversion facilities.

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With respect to smothering spawning gravel in the lower river, the sediment transport model developed by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) indicates that the fine sediments remaining in the Matilija Dam Reservoir site after the removal of 1.2 million cubic yards of material by slurrying would be transported through the system by two or three moderate flood events. It is these fine sediments, not the courser materials, which pose a potential impact to the spawning gravels in the lower river. The natural transport of these sediments would temporarily impact approximately three miles of spawning habitat between Matilija Dam and the Highway 150 Bridge and another two miles of habitat located in the vicinity of Foster Park, but would not affect the spawning and rearing habitat in San Antonio Creek which is the principal spawning and rearing habitat currently accessible to upstream migrating steelhead in the Ventura River system. It is also important to

recognize that the removal of Matilija Dam would re-open approximately 20 miles of prime steelhead spawning habitat that is currently inaccessible, and that access to this additional habitat would result in a net gain of spawning habitat (even with a temporary loss or degradation of spawning habitat in the lower river). The monitoring of downstream habitat conditions and fish responses should provide a basis for taking any temporary remedial actions if necessary. (See Thomas R. Payne & Associates, *Assessment of Steelhead Habitat in the Ventura River/Matilija Creek Basin: Final Report*, August 30, 2004. Prepared for Ventura County Public Works Agency.)

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Second, with respect to broadening the river channel and reducing fish passage opportunities, sediment transport models developed for the project by the BOR indicate that the principal change in channel morphology will be in its vertical elevation rather than its lateral width. While the change in grade elevation can be dramatic in some locations, the natural fluvial dynamics of the river is projected to result in the creation of a temporary natural thalwag through these deposits, thus providing fish passage. While there may be some broadening of the river channel in the middle reaches of the river during large flood events (when fish passage is less problematic), the sediment model indicates that there will actually be a narrowing of the active river channel during mid-range flood events in the range of 1,000 cfs that would improve fish passage opportunities. Further, these changes in channel morphology are projected to be relatively short-lived (2 or 3 moderate flood events) rather than permanent, and are within the natural range of habitat conditions exhibited by the Ventura River. Nevertheless, the Adaptive Management Plan for the project should include the development of transects across the mainstem of the Ventura River channel at locations expected to receive the highest sedimentation, a monitoring program to identify any changes in channel morphology which would adversely affect steelhead passage, and a set of protocols to remedy any temporary blockage of fish passage in an expeditious manner.

Lastly, with respect to the potential sediment clogging of the fish passage facilities at the Robles Diversion, a number of design and project features should serve to reduce the likelihood of impairing the operation of the Robles Diversion fish passage facilities. The fish passage facilities themselves have been located outside of the river channel and within the diversion canal intake, the entrance of which is situated at an elevation of approximately 5 feet above the natural grade of the Ventura River. This basic design approach has the advantage of minimizing the induction of sediments, particularly bed-load sediments, into the fish passage facilities. Regarding the temporarily elevated sediment loads which would be experienced as a result of the removal of Matilija Dam, a number of mitigating measures are being considered as part of the overall Matilija Dam removal project. These include mechanical removal of sediments in the upstream stilling basin (periodically undertaken at present to deal with existing sediment accumulation); by-passing the Robles Diversion and fish passage facilities with a temporary slurry line; and the construction of a permanent high-flow sediment bypass which would pass sediments around the Robles Diversion and fish passage facilities during large storm events when accumulation of sediment is most likely to occur. Nevertheless, additional sediment may enter the intake for the diversion and fish passage facilities, and require additional maintenance which would interfere with both the operation of the diversion and the fish passage facilities. Provisions should be made

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to minimize the accumulation of sediment within the stilling basin, and provide for rapid clean-out of the diversion and fish passage intake if sediment build-up impedes the operation of either. This could be accomplished by establishing standards for sediment accumulation build-up in the stilling basin and protocols for removing sediment from the diversion intake and fish passage facilities (including the fish screens). 8 (cont.)

High-Flow Bypass at Robles Diversion: This component entails the installation of a permanent bypass facility consisting of three radial gates with a bypass capacity of 10,000 cubic feet per second and replacement of the existing timber cutoff wall between the existing Robles Diversion bypass gates and the new high-flow sediment bypass facility with a permanent rock-filled weir. The project description indicates that the high-flow sediment bypass facility would be operated at flows ranging from 1,000 cubic feet per second up to 17,000 cubic feet per second (the combined capacity of the existing and proposed radial gates). The current design of the facility would allow the coarse sediments temporarily stored in the Matilija Reservoir site to be bypassed at the Robles Diversion, thus reducing the likelihood that sediment transport through the natural channel of the Ventura River would interfere with the water diversion and fish passage facilities operations at the Robles Diversion.

The current design of the high-flow sediment bypass facility is comparable to the existing Robles Diversion bypass gates, with a concrete sill set several feet above the downstream existing river grade and a concrete apron extending approximately 50 feet downstream of the radial gates. As a result this facility would not allow passage of upstream migrating steelhead when the radial gates were raised to bypass sediments during high flow conditions, but would serve to attract steelhead to this bypass point with no possibility of upstream passage. Additionally, the proposed operational scheme to raise the bypass gates at river flows beginning at 1,000 cubic feet would conflict with the operation the Robles Diversion Fish Passage Facility which is designed and required to be operated during the winter months between river flows ranging from 50 to 1,500 cubic feet per second. The upstream intake of the Robles Diversion Fish Passage Facility has been incorporated into the intake of the Robles Diversion and operation of both are dependent upon raising the water levels in the stilling basin created by the existing Robles Diversion bypass radial gates and the timber cutoff wall. Opening the high-flow sediment bypass gates to bypass sediments at flows between 1,000 and 1,500 cubic feet per second would effectively render the Robles Diversion Fish Passage facilities inoperative during a significant portion of its design range with no alternative means of allowing upstream migrating fish to pass upstream of the Robles Diversion site (See NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion for the operation of the Robles Diversion Fish Passage Facilities, March 31, 2003). 9 D1

Aside from addressing the technical feasibility and maintenance issues associated with the high-flow sediment bypass facility, the design of the high-flow sediment bypass facility should be modified to allow fish passage (both up and downstream) when the facility is used to bypass sediments during high-flow events (when the fish passage facilities at the Robles Diversion are non-operable). Additionally, the operational range of the high-flow sediment bypass facility should be reconciled with the operational design of the Robles Diversion Fish Passage Facilities.

Desiltation Basin: This project component entails the construction of a water desiltation basin along the Robles Diversion Canal downstream of the diversion intake and fish passage facilities. The facility's principal purpose is to trap elevated levels of fine sediments caused by the initial removal of Matilija Dam, but which are not removed through slurrying of the 1.2 million cubic yards of fine sediments to a disposal site below the Robles Diversion site. Currently, this facility is proposed to be sited on approximately 17 acres of property owned by the BOR; however, the precise location of this facility has not been identified, nor have the operational aspects such as sediment clean-out been identified. The sediment analysis indicates that the background level of fine sediments will reach an equilibrium comparable to pre-project conditions within 10 years, after which the need for such a facility would no longer be justified as mitigation for the project. In addition, we note that the present diversion operations at the Robles Diversion facility are not normally curtailed by the periodic high suspended sediment levels naturally experienced during high-flow events. Analysis of this project component should clearly justify the need for a permanent desiltation basin. Additionally, if the diversion capability is increased by construction of this facility, the magnitude of this increased capacity should be identified, and the impacts of exercising this increased capacity should be assessed as part of the environmental review process. Alternative sites for this project component should be examined, and the impacts associated with these sites evaluated. In particular, the impacts of increasing the amount of water diverted from the Ventura River should be fully evaluated. 10

Foster Park Municipal Wells: This project component involves the installation of two new water wells at the City of Ventura's Foster Park well field. These are presumably intended to mitigate the impacts of fine sediments which would reduce percolation of surface flows into the aquifer upon which the City's existing well field draws water. However, there is no analysis of how the infiltration into the Ventura River aquifer would be affected by the project. The rate of infiltration into an aquifer is controlled by the overall porosity of the sediments and the Ventura River flood plain is comprised of coarse sediments which facilitate rapid percolation. These conditions are reflected in the documented rapid recharge of the shallow aquifer within a few days to a week of a major storm event. The percolation rates into the shallow Ventura River aquifer would only be affected by fine sediments accumulated at the surface. These fine sediments are subject to rapid flushing through the system during high flows and not subject to natural accumulation. The accumulation of elevated levels of fine sediments in downstream areas is addressed in part by the slurrying of fine sediments to an off-stream site protected against a 50 year flood event. The remaining fine sediments are projected to be naturally flushed through the system after three moderate storm events (or within two or three years), thus causing only a temporary affect, if any, on the recharge of the shallow Ventura River aquifer. 11 P4

NOAA Fisheries has previously expressed concerns about the impacts of water withdrawals from the shallow aquifer on surface flows and pools. The reach of the Ventura River in which the proposed water wells would be located is one of the few reaches in the mainstem of the Ventura River which sustains a year-round surface flow, extending approximately from the confluence of San Antonio Creek downstream to the estuary at the rivers mouth. Perennial flow below the

confluence of San Antonio Creek is sustained by a combination of upstream surface flows, springs, and rising groundwater. As a result, this reach the provides important spawning and rearing habitat for the endangered southern California steelhead trout. Surface or groundwater extractions from this reach of the Ventura River have the potential to adversely affect steelhead trout in the Ventura River. The project does not provide any operating criteria for these two new wells which would address the potential adverse impacts of additional water withdrawal from the Ventura River. The same issues that were recently raised by the City's proposal to add or replace wells in this well-field are raised by this proposal. As a result of these concerns, the City's proposal was deferred until more extensive environmental review could be conducted (See the letters from NOAA Fisheries to the City of San Buenaventura, dated October 7, 2002, and March 4, 2004). 12 D2

Upper River Water Wells: The project's co-sponsors are exploring the possibility of installing an unspecified number of new water wells below the Robles Diversion to provide an alternative back-water supply should the operation of the Robles Diversion be temporarily incapacitated by the release of sediment from Matilija Dam. The operation of these wells would affect not only the riverine habitat (both lotic and riparian) in the immediate vicinity of the wells, but the between storm surface flows downstream to the ocean. As with the Foster Park water wells discussed above, the magnitude of this potential impact has not been quantified nor have operating criteria for these new wells been identified. Additionally, no analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with this project component have been presented. The same issues which are raised by the City of Ventura's proposal to add or replace wells in its well-field are raised by this potential proposal and should be addressed in the final EIS/EIR (See NOAA Fisheries letter to the County of Ventura regarding a similar proposal to activate water wells in the area of the Robles Diversion, dated November 30, 2001). 13

Permanent Levees/Floodwalls: This project component involves the construction of a series of new levees/floodwalls and the enlargement of existing levees along the mainstem of the Ventura River. These proposed levees are intended to maintain flood flow capacity in the channel downstream of Matilija Dam while released sediments are naturally routed through the system to the ocean. Although the need to provide additional flood protection is temporary, the levees are proposed to be permanent. This would result in substantial reaches of the river which are not now leveed being confined by levees, and enlarged levees in other river reaches. Specifically, new levees are proposed on the east side of the mainstem of the Ventura River extending 4,000 feet from the Robles Diversion Facility downstream to Miners Oaks at the Meyers Road drainage channel. Enlarged levees are proposed for the west side of the mainstem of the Ventura River extending 6,000 feet from the end of Riverside Road downstream to the Santa Ana Road Bridge, and for the east side of the mainstem of the Ventura River extending 6,000 feet from the confluence of San Antonio Creek downstream to Edison Drive. 14 N

The new levees would adversely impact the ecosystem of the Ventura River in a number of ways, including displacing or encroaching on existing riparian/aquatic habitat, constraining natural fluvial processes which create and maintain habitat diversity, fragmenting terrestrial/riparian 15

habitat, and facilitating the introduction of exotic plant species. There are also potential secondary impacts stemming from levee maintenance such as vegetation control along the levees through the application of herbicides. Additionally, the enlargement of existing or construction of new levees/floodwalls may restrict public access to the Ventura River for recreational purposes as a result of liability concerns associated with the public use of flood protection facilities. The analysis of this project component should clearly justify the needs for new or enlarged levees, and the time frame for this need. The sediment transport model developed for the project indicates that a majority of the coarse sediments could be flushed through the system within ten years from the initiation of the project. Where levees are needed only temporarily for mitigation, these levees should be removed or restored to their pre-project configurations to restore natural fluvial processes and eliminate the impacts associated with the levees which are intended only to address the temporary impacts associated with the removal the coarse sediments stored in the Matilija Reservoir site.

15 (cont.)

Bridge Replacements: This project component entails replacement of the Santa Ana Road Bridge with a larger structure, and the potential elimination of one private bridge at Camino Cielo Road. The design and size of the replacement structure for the Santa Ana Road Bridge should be more fully described, including any bridge abutment protection measures. In addition, the replacement structure should be free-spanning, and minimize the bridge footprint in the adjacent riparian corridor. Lastly, restoration activities at the site of the private bridge that may be eliminated should be described in detail.

16

Arundo Removal: A significant portion of the Matilija Reservoir site, and reaches of the Ventura River downstream of Matilija Dam have been colonized with the non-native *Arundo donax*. This plant has degraded ecosystem functions of the Ventura River by displacing the natural diversity of native riparian plant species with homogenous stands of non-native vegetation. The project should include a clear and comprehensive plan for the removal of *Arundo donax* as part of the 4b alternative which includes removal of the *Arundo donax* within and above the Matilija Reservoir site, as well as removal of Arundo in the lower reaches of the mainstem of the Ventura River. Removal of this non-native invasive plant species, and plans to monitor its status, are essential components of the project and necessary to achieve restoration of the Ventura River/Matilija ecosystem.

17

Public Access and Recreation: The project includes a number of public access and recreational features which will increase access to riverine habitats along the mainstem of the Ventura River and lower Matilija Creek. These include conversion of the slurry pipeline route between the Matilija Dam site and the Highway 150 Bridge into a trail, and the installation of interpretive and rest areas along the trail route. While the addition of this trail and associated facilities will provide substantial public benefits, they also have the potential to result in adverse impacts to natural habitats and the unauthorized harvest of steelhead from reaches of the Ventura River and Matilija Creek not currently easily accessible to the public. To offset these potential impacts, any interpretive materials prepared as part of this component of the project should include specific materials regarding the status of endangered species, including the endangered steelhead trout,

18 F1

and any restrictions regarding the harvesting or other forms of take of these species.

Finally, we would note that the nearshore habitats extending up and down coast from the mouth of the Ventura River contain a variety of distinct habitat types, including intertidal cobble habitat, primary dune habitat, subtidal cobble habitat, sand beach habitat, and nearshore subtidal mudflat habitats. Each one of these habitats supports a distinct assemblage of marine organisms, including marine plants and animals. The Final Report and EIS/EIR should provide more specificity regarding the potential long-term benefits and short-term impacts of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project on these shoreline and nearshore marine habitats. Particular focus should be on the effects of increasing beach nourishment of beaches as a result of the natural transport of sediment stored in the Matilija Reservoir site to the coast.

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In closing, NOAA Fisheries would like to reiterate that the proposed Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project presents an unprecedented opportunity to restore steelhead in the Ventura River watershed and contribute significantly to recovery of the endangered Southern California steelhead ESU. Additionally, the locally preferred alternative best meets the three major planning objectives for this project. NOAA Fisheries would like to express its appreciation to the Corps of Engineers, the BOR, and the County of Ventura for the commitment they have made to this effort, and for the cooperation they have exhibited in addressing the specific issues which NOAA Fisheries has raised through this planning process. While planning for this project has advanced considerably, it is not yet complete as the co-sponsors are undoubtedly aware. These comments are submitted with the intent of focusing future analysis on those major issues which need to be addressed in completing the plan formulation and environmental analysis. If you should wish to discuss any of these issues further, please contact Mark Capelli at (805) 6478 or Brian Cluer at (707) 575-6061.

Sincerely,

for Rodney R. McInnis
Regional Administrator

cc: Michael Delamore, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
John Bridgewater, U.S. Forest Service
Diane K. Noda, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Charles Raysbrook, California Department of Fish and Game
Jeff Pratt, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Steve Bennett, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
John K. Flynn, Ventura County of Supervisors

MOWER

August 23, 2004

To: Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

From: Bernard H. Mower
10440 N. Karen Avenue
Oak View, CA 93022

Re: Matilija Dam Removal

As a resident of the Ojai Valley, I've been subjected to propaganda sheets from the Casitas Municipal Water District claiming that our water supply will be jeopardized by the removal of the Matilija Dam. The dam, silted from bottom to top, is useless. The water available to residents of the Valley will be the same—whether the dam exists or not. I can only assume that the Water District's arguments are disingenuous, and that its obstructionist tactics are simply an effort to extort additional funds from the federal government. 1

I urge that the removal be implemented as quickly as possible. I look forward to the day when the Water District will issue me a rebate check for the services of its public relations staff.

Bernard H. Mower

League of Women Voters

Ventura County

...Making Democracy Work

MURRAY

RECEIVED
AUG 16 2004
PLANNING DIVISION

August 16, 2004

Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Attn.: Jeff Pratt, Director
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventua, CA 93009-1610

The League of Women Voters of Ventura County, together with the League of Women Voters of California take this opportunity to comment on the proposed removal of the Matilija Dam in Ventura County.

As representatives of a segment of both local and state voters, we are pleased to lend our support to this cooperative endeavor. We have been impressed with the public input into the process which has involved three layers of government as well as the general public.

1

The League supports comprehensive restoration of the ecosystem. More specifically, we favor policies to restore a stream flow essential for maintaining species population and diversity.It is also our position that the federal government should provide leadership and financial assistance for such restoration.

At the same time, we also urge that every available mitigation be utilized to prevent permanent degradation of the water quality in the downstream wells or the feeder conduit into Casitas Lake.

We are confident that future problems can be solved by the coming together of all stake holders.

Sincerely,

Patricia Y. Murray
Patricia Y. Murray
President, LWVVC

Ann Gist Levin
Ann Gist Levin
Action Chair. LWVVC

CC; U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Members of Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Sue Hughes, Chief Executive Office, County of Ventura
California Coastal Conservancy

805-648-4731 • www.ez2.net/lwv • lwv@ez2.net

OBRIEN

August 27, 2004

August 27, 2004

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Subject: Comments on Draft Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Jon,

I live in the Meiners Oaks area of the Ojai Valley and appreciate the letter informing me of the subject study and the opportunity to comment.

I would like a hard copy of the Final report when it is available.

Thanks for your consideration of these comments and your work on this complex project.

William (Bill) O'Brien, PE
1287 Avila Drive
Ojai, CA 93023
805-646-1542
ojaiob@pacbell.net

General Comments

I must say from the outset I appreciate the efforts to analyze the complex and transient sedimentation processes.

Flood protection has a thorough analysis in Appendix D. However there should be a section on flood impacts in the main report. I found most of the information about the proposed levees scattered in such places as "noise", why not a main report section on Flood Protection? I was hoping to see a clear statement if the proposed levees were sized based on the aggraded channel or the existing channel, but did not see it.

1

Water rights are not addressed. This is a serious oversight in this report and needs attention for the final report. The Institutional Setting is very important to this river and how the project will affect people's water supplies.

2

The effects on **groundwater recharge** in the upper Ventura River alluvium were not described well, maybe it is because recharge is somewhat lost in the effort to discuss effects on surface water and on groundwater separately. The sediment moving down the river and the aggradation

3
M, P7

of the river channel will affect the amount and timing of percolation that goes to support public water wells along the river.

The **local water purveyors** were not described in the main report and I found them on Appendix D, pg 99. It seems to me that these public water wells need to be protected in this process from reduced recharge or turbidity problems that are discussed for the Foster Park wells owned by the City of Ventura (in Section 5.2.3 page 5.2-4). A bigger and better coverage of impacts to the local water supply wells is needed in the final report. 4

Line numbers would have facilitated providing and reviewing comments.

Some pages were bound upside down in Appendix D in the hard copy at the Ojai Library.

Specific Comments:

Pg. 4.2-19 There is no mention of the adjudicated Ojai Valley groundwater (Groundwater Management Agency) and how the upper Ventura River recharge contributes. This needs to be addressed with other water right issues in an institutional setting/effects section. 5

Pg. 4.2-19 Need to mention the public water supply wells, and would expect more thorough coverage of local water purveyor plans. Compare this section with Aesthetics that covered local policy, institutions, and general plans. 6

Pg. 5.2-3 Why say there is no detailed analysis done when there is extensive analysis in Appendix D (pg 24 of Appendix D). 7

Pg. 5.2-4 If turbidity would affect the Foster Park wells, then what about turbidity effects on the Ventura County River Water District wells, or the wells in Meiners Oaks? 8

Appendix D:

Pg. 16 – why not identify the model used?

Pg. 32 – Table 8: It would help the reader to add a few words to identify each reach. 9

Pg. 33 – Table 9: River aggradations would be from 6.4 to 2.2 feet – is this accounted for in the HEC-RAS modeling used to determine the flood protection required? 10

A clear statement in the main report about if the proposed flood protection levees are adequate for the aggraded channel is needed. 11

PACKARD

U.S.Army Corps of Engineers **August 28, 2004**

915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Attention: Mr. Jon Vivanti

Subject: Matiltja Dam

Dear Mr. Vivanti

With all that has been written and said about the status of the subject dam ,and what should be done about it, it seems that little has been said about how the dam could be utilized if it is to remain at it's present location.

In as much as the dam has been there for 56 years, and that there are still steelhead trout in the stream, it seems that to remove the dam so the steelhead trout can return to it's original spawning areas above the dam should be out of the question. Where have these fish been spawning in the past 56 years, albeit in small numbers, they still exist.

1

As for the possibility of the sand being carried down stream to replenish the beaches, why not fill in the remaining area behind the dam with silt and use the notched out dam as a water fall, thus, as any natural water fall , the sand will flow down stream. The dam could even be notched down even further if necessary for a more effective flow.

The dam may have been built with an approved bond way back then, and it surly has been paid up by now, but it has/is still a taxpayer liability and the cost, what ever is to be done, should surly be taken into account. It just seems ridiculous to spend millions of dollars to remove something that can still be utilized one way or another.

Your comments and consideration of this subject will be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Monte Packard Monte Packard
1362 Seafarer Street
Ventura, Calif. 93001-4252

CC: US SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN

RECEIVED
AUG 31 2004
PLANNING DIVISION

PEARSON

August 24, 2004

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, Ca. 90017-3401

Dear Mr. Jon Vivanti,

I'm writing to you with the following thoughts and five questions. I was born, raised and now retiring to Pierpont Beach. I was one of the original surf rats, fisherman and boaters from the late '50, 60's and 70's. I have witnessed the high tides that took out the beaches before the jetties were in place and have seen the destruction of the great floods of the Ventura river and the Santa Clara river. I have been a Ventura Country or California State lifeguard for seven summers and winters. I have made life saving rescues in the harbor mouth before the cross jetty and sand trap were in place. I have much practical experience and knowledge about the Ventura beaches. The dam removal presents risks that needing to addressed. I am needing answers to five questions concerning the beaches and harbors.

Question 1

When the dam is removed and the sand, gravel and debris ends up at the mouth of the Ventura River the material, it will head south with the lateral currents that run down the coast. The Pierpont beaches are at capacity for retaining sand. The sand and debris will continue down coast until it is trapped at the Ventura Marina Sand trap. The increased sand will, depending the river runoff, require more dredging and possible second dredging. The Marina mouth and Pierpont basin will trap sand and debris and require more dredging. The Keys will also trap sand and debris. Who will pay for these dredging?

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Question 2

In big river run off years the Ventura Marina sand trap fills right after the January dredging is completed. There is no extra dredging money from the Corp or the City of Ventura. Who will pay for the second dredging if necessary in a high run off year?

Question 3

The existing winter runoff fills the beaches with large quantities of non-sand debris. The state, City and, flood districts always fight over who is liable for the clean up. The additional debris from behind the dam and up stream debris will make the cleanup even bigger and more costly. Who will be responsible for the beach debris?

The debris and sand will also settle in the Ventura Keys. Who will be responsible for the cleanup in that area?

Question 4

The sand that is dredged from the Ventura Marina and Ventura Keys is dumped at the Santa Clara river mouth. It then is pushed southerly by the down coast currents until it is trapped at the Channel Islands Marina sand trap, Marina mouth and harbor channel.

PEARSON

Who will pick up these additional dredging costs?

Question 5

We know from years of dredging the Marinas and Keys areas the rate at which the sand drifts down coast and fills up these areas up. Has the study put these years of sand drift rates and settling rates into the study? I can recall a study where they followed sand down the river, down on to the beaches and finally settling at the Marina trap and the Keys.

1 (cont.)

Answers to these questions will help me understand how the Corp. of Engineers and others will effect my home and life.

Thank you,

Larry Pearson
2886 Bayshore Ave.
Ventura, Ca.
93004

CC: The Honorable Steve Bennett
CC: The Honorable Elton Galllegly
CC: Ms. Johanna Williams, Office of Senator Barbara Boxer
CC: Guillermo Gonzalez, Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein

PORT

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 520
Oakland, CA 94607

August 23, 2004

ER 04/544

Ruth Bajza Villalobos
Department of Army
Los Angeles Districkt Corps of Engineers
P.O.Box 532711
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Subject: Review of Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report on the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration, Ventura County, California

Dear Ms. Villalobos,

The U.S. Department of the Interior has received and reviewed the subject document and has no comments to offer.

1

Thank you for our opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sanderson Port
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: OEPC, HQ
FWS, Portland, OR

POWELL

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7, OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND REGIONAL PLANNING
IGR/CEQA BRANCH
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 897-3747
FAX (213) 897-1337

Flex your power!
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August 30, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Re: ***Matilija Dam Restoration Project***
Draft EIR
IGR/CEQA 040809/EA
Vic. VEN 33, VEN 150
SCH#2002011094

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

We have received notice of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Matilija Dam Restoration project. The removal of the Dam is to provide better habitat for certain fish types and for their migration. We note that extensive habitat improvement work (such as cane removal) has been performed for considerable distances downriver, in conjunction with this dam removal. We also note that about 6 million CY of sediment, which is currently behind the dam, will have to be dealt with. The dam site is somewhat over three miles N E of Ojai and a couple tenths mile west of the Maricopa Highway State Route 33. SR-33 runs along and near the Ventura River downstream for most of a mile below the dam and again from the south end of Ojai Valley to near the ocean. For the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), we have the following comments on this dam removal project.

- We note the preferred alternative (alternative 4b) would include placement of finer sediment material adjacent or near Caltrans bridge structures. This would primarily impact State Route 150 over the Ventura River, though the downstream Route 101 could also be impacted. The chief impact may include scour damage, or large boulders washing down hitting and potentially undermining the structure. Placement of silt material near State Highway structures coming from the dam should be coordinated with this Department. 1

- Because of the very large amount of sediment to be dealt with, extensive earth-moving activity might at times be associated with this project. Therefore, we recommend that the applicant explicitly consider truck-management plans to be developed if and when needed. We request that truck trips on State highways be limited to periods other than peak commute times. Rock/Dirt hauling trucks need to have proper equipment so as to avoid overflow or spill of material onto the highway. In addition, we request that the applicant avoid excessive or poorly timed truck platooning (caravans of trucks). Finally, we would like to remind you that any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials, or other special equipment, which requires the use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways would require a Caltrans transportation permit. 2

POWELL

- We are also concerned about the possible and likely implications for limitations on future management and improvements of the SR-33 facility, in consideration of the Ventura River as possibly part of wildlife migration corridors. (This is in reference to species in addition to fish/aquatic.) We would appreciate identification of locations in the Ventura River corridor of particular sensitivity. They would include places where it would connect with other corridors, where stress on wildlife passage might tend to be more severe (especially, unless protections were developed), or where some areas along that corridor might be particularly useful as intermediate locations for temporary habitations of wildlife types in the process of migration. If particular actions to mitigate effects of the existing SR-33 highway on-crossings in this area would be helpful, we would like to receive word of them. 3 A 4 E

If you have any questions, you may reach me at (213) 897-3747 and refer to IGR/CEQA record number 040809/EA.

Sincerely,

CHERYL J. POWELL
IGR/CEQA Program Manager
Caltrans, District 7

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

PRITCHETT

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Steelhead Coalition

www.socalsteelhead.org
5436 Westview Court
Westlake Village, CA 91362
tel. (818) 865-2888

Coalition Program Director
David Pritchett, tel. 805-403-8830
P. O. Box 91034, Santa Barbara 93190

30 August 2004 **by email attachment**

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District, Planning Division
Attention: Jon Vivanti, Project Manager

Subject: **Comments on Draft EIS / EIR**
Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

We wholly support this project as currently described. On behalf of Southern California Steelhead Coalition, I am pleased to offer these attached detailed comments about the draft Environmental Impact Statement and draft Environmental Impact Report for the subject project.

Our substantive comments are attached (9 additional pages) and include paragraph headings about prominent issues in the planning process and certain sections of the draft EIS/EIR. Also attached are recent news articles and research editorials about the project, so the administrative record and project decisionmakers have these references.

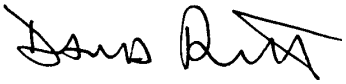
As explained in the attached comments, and just as we wrote in our September 2003 comments on the draft F4 documents, the most important issues of concern at this time to the Steelhead Coalition include the following 5 points.

- No net loss of baseflow in Ventura River,
- No net loss of water supply for local water agencies collectively,
- Removal of Matilija Dam within a 2-year period,
- Gradual transport of sequestered sediment to the beach, and
- No artificially maintained sediment retention above the dam.

Southern California Steelhead Coalition formed in January 2000 and is now the leading private-sector advocate for recovery of endangered steelhead trout in the Southern California Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU). Our cumulative group memberships include thousands of Californians with an interest in river conservation, ocean surfing, aquatic species recovery, and/or recreational and commercial angling. *We believe that establishment of fish passage and appropriate ecologic restoration of Ventura River represents the best opportunity for steelhead recovery in the ESU during the next 10 to 20 years.*

Please feel free to contact me about this project by email dapritch@cox.net or by telephone 805-403-8830. We look forward to our continued participation in the robust and effective project planning process that has made the project so successful this far.

Respectfully yours,



David A. Pritchett
Steelhead Coalition Program Director

Introduction and Background. Southern California Steelhead Coalition continues to be pleased that the Matilija Dam and Ventura River ecosystem restoration project is progressing from concept to technical feasibility. We congratulate the Corps, County, and myriad project participants for advancing the planning so far. In early 1999, Matilija Coalition, Friends of the Ventura River, and other local organizations first met with elected officials and local agencies to spawn the initial restoration concepts and project goals, after decades of scattered discussions in the community. A later highlight in October 2000 was witnessing the dam deconstruction demonstration project and ceremonial dam concrete slice removal effort by (then) U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt. Since the feasibility study through the Corps began in early 2001, the Steelhead Coalition, mainly represented by David Pritchett, has participated regularly through the Plan Formulation and Environmental working groups.

Intent of Comments. Our comments not only are intended to assist with making a better project plan and environmental review documents, but also to establish a reference for all project participants about the Steelhead Coalition positions on the project planning and alternatives selection. Project success eventually will require strong public and political support, initially from interests in Ventura County. Our group and Matilija Coalition are well poised to gauge the status of local and statewide support for the project and to convey those issues to the Corps and County through our continued participation in the project.

Continuing Participation by Stakeholders. The success of the project so far is mainly the result of the work of the diverse and productive group of stakeholders participating, combined with the tireless efforts of the project sponsors. The project should to continue its successful public and stakeholder participation process, with frequent communications and stakeholder input afforded during meetings of each working group to be held at least once per quarter through the PED phase of planning and beyond. The revised EIS/EIR should indicate how this public and stakeholder participation process will continue for the project, including which committees and working groups will persist and how often they will meet. 1

Organization of Comments and Project Documents. These comments here about the project planning and review mainly describe what should be included in the project description and environmental review, and not always what the draft EIS/EIR and supporting report and appendices actually may specify. The review documents appear to be more than 2000 pages in total, with particular details not always (or perhaps seldom) in the section of the draft EIS/EIR where we expected to find all of the material about a particular issue. Revisions to the EIS/EIR should move around or copy whole sections and place them within the EIS/EIR proper instead of scattered among the Report and numerous appendices, where the material may be difficult to find. 2

Definition of Restoration. The revised EIS/EIR should include a clear definition of "restoration" as intended for the project, as many parties interested in the project may be distorting this concept or bringing in their own narrow or broad meaning. The widely accepted definition of "ecological restoration" promulgated by Society for Ecological Restoration (www.ser.org) can serve the project: "the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed." The Ventura River ecosystem restoration project should fulfill this widely accepted definition of restoration, especially to focus on natural *process* and whole *ecosystem*. 3

Selection of Preferred Project Alternative 4b. We very strongly support project alternative 4b as the Preferred Project Alternative and Environmentally Superior Alternative. This alternative is for full dam removal in one phase and short-term storage of a portion of the trapped sediment within the reservoir basin. Alternative 4b offers the best all-around suite of measures to accommodate the credible needs of project stakeholders. Also, alternative 4b provides the most environmental benefit for the lowest financial cost, an

admirable quality for any project. However, we recognize that some components of 4b require more analysis during the next phases of project planning in the Pre-construction Engineering Design (PED) phase .

Opposition to Alternative 4a. This alternative specifies that most of the 6 million cubic yards of sediment behind the dam would be "permanently stabilized" through artificial, engineered structures in Matilija Canyon above the dam site. While this method may seem like a relatively convenient way to deal with the sediment at one site instead of through multiple sediment management features downriver, this alternative has numerous flaws that make it far too risky and expensive to pursue further for the project. Accordingly, a few paragraphs of explanation are offered in these comments so the project planners and decisionmakers better can understand our strong opposition to this alternative.

Failure of Alternative 4a to Meet Ecosystem Restoration Goals. Regarding the ecosystem restoration goal of the whole project, we especially are concerned that under alternative 4a the defacto horizontal dam –a new dam in the canyon– parallel with Matilija Creek would be subject to catastrophic failure during heavy flow events, especially considering that the plans show the material to be "stabilized" at the high-energy outer (left) streambank. Nothing in upper Matilija Canyon is permanently stable, and we doubt an artificially engineered structure would be either. A catastrophic failure of the new structure easily could cause a long, linear fish passage barrier to form as material slumps into the channel. A high-velocity hydraulic passage barrier also could develop as the streamflow is constricted and accelerated into a narrowing channel. An example of this effect is happening now in Topanga Creek near Malibu, where boulder revetments installed by CalTrans are steadily slumping into nearly 100 meters of linear stream channel, thereby causing higher velocity flows, more downstream erosion, and reduction of steelhead habitat below the revetment. This situation at Topanga Creek is described in reports by Resource Conservation District of Santa Monica Mountains.

Failure of Alternative 4a to Meet Other Project Goals. Alternative 4a also would sequester 60 years of sediment accumulation that should be passing down to the beach as part of widely-recognized natural river functions and beach nourishment goals of the project. The severe sediment deficit on the beach has led to substantial and costly shoreline erosion downcoast of the eroding Ventura River delta. Under alternative 4a, an artificially engineered solution to stabilize or sequester the sediment also contradicts recreation goals of the project. This especially is objectionable if the structure blocks human access or is to be isolated with an ugly, formidable fence, as has been mentioned during planning meetings as means to address County liability concerns. Nearby upstream residents also would be directly impacted, as they currently and frequently access the stream channel for educational and recreational uses.

Project Alternatives not Included. The sediment management features and expenses that comprise much of alternative 4b could be negated by a project alternative yet to receive full consideration on par with the other alternatives, even those alternatives rejected early in the study with a more cursory analysis. The infiltration gallery method –using examples from Elwah River in Washington with assistance from Institute for Fisheries Resources, a project participant– and smaller local examples from Sespe Creek could apply to Ventura River as a means to divert subsurface river water (but not groundwater) into a gallery of long perforated pipes leading to the existing diversion canal to Casitas Reservoir. Sediment thereby could flow freely downriver, and fish could swim upriver, with no impedance at the existing Robles Dam, which may be modified under this alternative. This method and potential new project alternative already are known to many of the project participants and sponsors, and apparently has been explored to a limited degree but never reported, but should be in the revised documents. Of course, an infiltration gallery, if technically feasible, would require unprecedented cooperation among local water interests, but its status as feasible or infeasible should be based only on objective, technical reasons at this stage of the planning process. Revisions to the EIS/EIR should

outline the technical reasons why an infiltration gallery method seems to have been rejected considering its earlier discussions but omissions from the review documents. 4 (cont.)

Water Quality. In the Geotechnical report (likely page 28), the mention of arsenic needs a more thorough reference about what the "consultations with another water agency" really were regarding those background levels. This claim of sediment contamination by arsenic and other contaminants is one of the top 4 arguments or complaints continuously expressed by Casitas water district through many venues and their ongoing public relations campaign. Accordingly, a more detailed explanation should be offered about background levels of arsenic in every place arsenic and other purported contaminants are noted in the documents. This would avoid a lot of distracting and non-substantive debate later, and would address proactively one of the top issues continually raised by Casitas water district and others. 5

Habitat Evaluation Procedure. The HEP for the project is an innovative and robust model that represents well the ecological restoration accomplishments of the whole project and its alternative configurations. The HEP for Ventura River is so good that it can apply to future riverine projects throughout California if not much of the world. One area for improvement, though, is to consider how eradication of exotic predatory aquatic animals, such as bullfrogs, may improve the portion of the HEP calculations for steelhead habitat, using the "other factors" component of the HEP model. The revised EIS/EIR should address this potential gain in HEP values for the financial cost if some reliable data on bullfrog and other predation on steelhead are readily available for Ventura River. 6

Further Analysis of Proposed Levees. As part of alternative 4b or any project alternative, a more rigorous determination should be conducted about which proposed levees really need to be permanent and which can be temporary once the bulk of the sediment has moved downriver. Coordination with State Coastal Conservancy and Ojai Valley Land Conservancy also should to occur for identifying parcels that may be available for property acquisition and preservation as natural areas that can be subject to some sediment deposition instead of assuming that levees need to be constructed there. Higher HEP values also may be realized through these land preservation considerations. The urban growth-inducing impact of levee construction also should be analyzed where lands no longer would in the floodplain or floodway if permanent levees are constructed. Also, a summary table of project betterments should be included in revisions to the EIS/EIR. 7

High-Flow Bypass Structure. We especially like the high-flow bypass structure for Robles Diversion Dam, which as currently described also could increase the migratory window period for steelhead passage during some heavy river flows. The operation of this structure, though, should be analyzed further in the next phases of the study, especially to see if opening the bypass gates will draw down the pool behind Robles Dam so the new fishway there cannot function with the fishway flows needed. 8

Water Supply Budget. How the project actually influences water supply sources in the watershed should be examined in future project planning through an impartial and objective analysis free of legal and financial conflicts of interest. Many of the comments about the project so far have not been impartial and objective. So the early and consistent promise of making the water purveyors "whole" can be realized properly, a water supply budget needs to be calculated and based upon an actual baseline figure that is determined from honest and credible figures on what the Ventura River restoration project actually affects, and what the water supply situation actually would be if the project did not happen at all, versus other water demands and supply crunches not caused by the project. (See also the *Water Negotiations Tactic* paragraph below.) The project revisions should outline how this water budget will be determined, and by whom, during the future planning process. Also, all should realize that water purchased from within the watershed should not be considered a "loss" of water supply, as that would be double counting and water sold is not water lost. 9

Water Budget Examples. A possible outcome of an impartial water supply budget is that some local water agencies may realize a net loss of water supply, while others may realize a net gain of water supply as the project moves around water from reservoirs to surface flow to groundwater recharge. The net overall effect is that total water supply in the affected area may change very little if at all because the water stays within the Ventura River watershed. The project document revisions should address the requirements under CEQA for a review of impacts on the entire water resource as a whole, rather than just impacts to a few specific agency jurisdictions. For example, if a local agency drawing water from wells no longer needs to purchase water from Casitas water district because the project is enhancing groundwater recharge from the slurry line, then Casitas water district actually may not realize as much of a water shortage as initially alleged. Some of the other representative issues that should be included in the water supply budget include, but are not limited to, the following: 10

- improved water diversion efficiency with the new fishway at Robles Diversion Dam;
- reduction in transpiration and increased river flows because arundo is eradicated as part of the project (see *Arundo Effects* paragraph below);
- potential reductions in the means to secure water supply because sediment will start to flow over Matilija Dam in 20 years or so regardless of whether the project happened or not;
- water demand management and conservation methods that are becoming standard practice in arid regions of California and the nation;
- increased water storage capacity at Casitas Reservoir (described below); and
- other water gains mentioned in other comments on the project.

Water Supply Provisions at Casitas Reservoir. As part of the impartial evaluation of a water supply budget in the Ventura River watershed, we support the proposal made by Casitas water district to increase the long-term water storage capacity of Casitas reservoir, likely by raising the Casitas Dam spillway elevation. This action is described as a potential "viable option" on page 5 in the Casitas letter to the County, dated 29 August 2003.

Water Supply Provisions with New In-line Storage Reservoir. We are concerned about the potential for a new fine-sediment retention basin (reservoir) to result in a reduction in baseflow in Ventura River below Robles Diversion Dam. These river reaches are extremely critical to assure adequate flows for fish passage between the ocean and the Robles Dam fishway now under construction. This potential retention basin has been discussed at length during project meetings and is noted in the 29 August 2003 letter by Casitas (referenced above). We agree that the fine-sediment retention basin as described in the draft EIS/EIR and current project plans is sufficiently large to serve its sediment retention functions, but not too large to serve as another reservoir that could diminish river flows. This optimal sizing should be verified during future project planning details. 11

Water Supply Provisions for Loss of Matilija Reservoir. Consistent with its objectives, the project definitely should convert the dwindling Matilija Reservoir into a free-flowing stream with full fish passage, and as a result would eliminate any water storage capacity provided by the shrinking volume of Matilija Reservoir. The analysis in Main Report, top of page 5-3, is a good and concise analysis of the actual value and duration of lost water, recognizing it is 2 years of actual losses for that volume of water before the lease reverts back to the County Watershed Protection District.

Supplemental Water from State Water Project. The draft EIS/EIR mentions that securing water from the State Water Project ("State water") could be an option to compensate for any local water supply shortfalls that may be caused by the project, if any shortfalls actually are caused. We highly discourage the 12

importation of State water into the Ventura River watershed, and those suggestions should be excised completely from the planning documents. Water supply and demand in Ventura River watershed should be sustainable, and everyone should live (consume water) within their local means at a river watershed scale. Also, importation of State water could be highly expensive with costs outside of local control, and would require a series of legal agreements for "wheeling" water. Importation of State water also just leads to degradation of salmon and steelhead habitat elsewhere in California. 12 (cont.)

Water Negotiation Tactics. Several news articles and editorials attached reveal how Casitas water district, and apparently other allied agencies, such as Ojai Water Conservation District, are attempting to leverage the project as a means to secure a water supply and/or water right that likely is not related to the project. The project planners and decisionmakers should be aware of these tactics, and these attached news references should be part of the project records. Especially succinct and revealing is the analysis (based on primary sources) in the editorial essay from 29 August 2004 by columnist John Krist in *Ventura County Star*.

Slurry Deposition Sites. Ventura River County Water District and others have commented that the slurry sediment deposition sites may lead to fine soil particles clogging the infiltration zone around their water extraction wells (not their words, but what their comments meant). Using the expertise of the USBR staff who have long worked on the Matilija project, the revised EIS/EIR certainly should address this hydrologic theory, starting with a basic analysis of where the actual aquifer infiltration and recharge zone may from which the wells in question draw. Like most riverine systems in steep coastal watersheds of southern California, those wells along and in Ventura River probably draw from a recharge zone extending several kilometers along the river and floodplain corridor and not just the immediate vicinity of the wells in question. 13

Ongoing Habitat Conservation Plan. Ventura River County Water District and others have commented that the draft EIS/EIR does not mention anything from the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) under preparation by that and several other agencies. The revised EIS/EIR certainly should indicate what relevance, if any, that embryonic HCP has to the project, especially if the HCP under development has yet to produce any drafts for the federal review agencies. Attempts to link the HCP to the project just seem like a tactic to stall the project for other motivations. 14

Arundo Effects. The project should include removal or eradication of arundo from the watershed, and it does, although the discussion of methods and schedule should be improved. Considering the comment by Ventura County Resource Conservation District (RCD) that conversion of an acre of arundo cover to an acre of native riparian vegetation can save nearly 4 acre-feet of water because of less transpiration by arundo, the water supply benefits of the arundo removal should be analyzed further in the water supply budget discussed above. Water districts that are implementing ambitious arundo eradication projects in Orange County and Riverside County also may have figures about water savings benefits. The project also should coordinate further with Ventura County RCD about what is being learned from their demonstration project currently underway along Ventura River near Casitas Springs. 15

Federal Nexi for Matilija Dam. Any federal nexus with the dam should be explained in the overview discussions about the dam. We cannot think of any nexi, such as with FERC, USFS, USBR, or other agencies that typically are involved in dams and land management in the region. The only remote federal nexus that we can imagine would lead to regulatory permit conditions is if a hypothetical future project, by some unknown party, must secure an Individual (not Nationwide) permit from Corps of Engineers; however, no such permit has ever occurred for Matilija Dam nor, considering the stability of the dam, can we imagine any such federal action during the next 50 years that would affect Matilija Dam outside of the actual project in the current draft EIS/EIR. 16

Adaptive Management. The project plans should include a means for adaptive management as the project enfolds during implementation. Examples of issues that would be ripe for adaptive management strategies include, but are not limited to:

- extent and height of soil cement in the reservoir area;
- actual height and duration downstream levees need to be for the required flood protection;
- establishment of native plant communities on sediment storage sites, by monitoring natural recolonization versus need for deliberate seeding or planting; and
- operation of the high-flow bypass gates that may impede fish passage flows because the upstream pool elevation drops to low.

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Sediment Effects on Steelhead. The discussion in Appendix C1 (Biological Assessment, NMFS) is excellent about short-term effects on steelhead caused by sediment loads, with many citations of how fish populations have returned in short times after very heavy sediment flows in streams. These paragraphs address some of the top 4 issues of criticism made in various pubic comments and documents by Casitas water district, and should be presented more prominently in other sections of the EIS/EIR to be sure they are not missed. We agree with the repeated allegations by Casitas or Entrix that short-term negative impacts to a downstream population of steelhead could occur with a massive increase in sediment transport originating from the sediment mass currently sequestered behind Matilija Dam. However, even if any downstream population of steelhead were "annihilated" by large loads of suspended sediment for several years (as we have heard it described during some planning meetings), we feel this impact still would be an acceptable short-term adverse impact to gain a hugely beneficial long-term recovery benefit for the species. Fortunately, though, the current analysis shows that turbidity only would be highly elevated during the first few rain events of a season, and not for continuous years.

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Sediment Tolerances of Steelhead. We are not aware of any scientific studies that show how much suspended sediment southern California steelhead can tolerate during their upstream migration, but we would expect the fish to behave in a typical fashion by swimming upriver during the receding flows following peak discharge and peak sediment transport. Therefore, the fish actually would be adjusting their behavior to migrate during short times of lower turbidity. Also, considering the dynamic nature of southern California watershed functions, we anticipate that southern California steelhead are adapted to tolerate far more suspended sediment than their well-studied cousins from northern California or further north.

Sediment Effects on Lower River Habitat. As reported by *Los Angeles Times* (27 July 2004, news article attached), Casitas water district staff said "releasing the 6 million cubic yards of sediment trapped behind the nearly full dam will widen and flatten the riverbed, reducing the chance that enough water will flow through the river to enable steelhead to spawn. And the spaces amid the gravel on the river bottom, where steelhead lay eggs, will disappear under all that silt." Actually, we disagree and the revised EIS/EIR should clarify how the river channel could become narrower into a more defined channel because the riverbanks no longer would be eroding as a result of a sediment-deprived river system. The Hydrology Report appendix should be more clear, and the issue reported earlier in the documents, about how the riverbanks have suffered from increased erosion because replenishment from upstream sediment sources has been cut off by Matilija Dam.

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Habitat Gains for Steelhead. Although sediment loads in Ventura River are a short-term adverse impact, the overriding benefit, of course, would be permanent access to more than 16 linear miles of premium spawning and rearing habitat in upper Matilija Creek. Such habitat is described in detail in the qualitative and quantitative studies by Payne and Associates that were conducted as part of the project. Those studies, including all photos and graphics, should be fully included in revisions to the EIS/EIR, as their absence from

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the set of documents only encourages more allegations or misconceptions that steelhead somehow will not benefit by the project. 20 (cont.)

Fish Capture and Translocation. Verbal and written comments by Casitas water district or its representatives during the past few months have advocated for the capture and translocation of steelhead from the lower river, where sediment flows may adversely affect the fish. This suggestion seems to be a tactic for stalling the entire project and/or justifying why adequate fish passage flows should not be released into the river, even if the fish instead can be captured and held in captivity. The project should not consider this proposal for capturing fish. The depleted population of 100 or so fish in a high-flow year likely could not be found anyway, and fish captured for their alleged safekeeping would suffer mortalities in the process. Also, no facility exists for holding the fish, and the project should not get into the business of holding if not propagating endangered steelhead in artificial, unsustainable habitats, contrary to the project goals for ecosystem restoration. 21

Concerns about Steelhead Population Size. So the project planning may proceed without unnecessary delay, we feel the concerns about steelhead population size and downstream genetic variability (expressed on page 5 of the 29 August 2003 letter by Casitas, and elsewhere) are unwarranted because steelhead recovery really will be driven by genetic diversity and sheer numbers of individuals from the landlocked populations of wild trout currently residing in the upper tributaries of Matilija Creek. With migratory passage restored to upper Matilija Creek, genetic variability of the Ventura River population will not be dependent upon any population of 100 to 200 adult fish possibly lingering in the lower river and becoming vulnerable to negative impacts and a local population decline caused by heavy sediment loads. The revisions should highlight this.

Restoration of Anadromy is Good. This benefit to endangered steelhead recovery is far more than just personal opinion, as Casitas or Entrix have alleged in their draft if not final comments on the EIS/EIR. By allowing access to the spawning and rearing habitat above Matilija Dam, the project will provide a substantial, if not essential, recovery boost to the population of endangered steelhead trout in southern California, by allowing the fish to resume anadromy. The natural phenomenon of landlocked trout populations returning to anadromy when given the opportunity is so widely known in coastal watersheds throughout California that a detailed justification hardly seems necessary. However, plenty of references to scientific studies more than 10 years old can be found in the *1996 Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California*, by McEwan and Jackson of California Department of Fish and Game. That report also refers to removal of Matilija Dam as a specific project that should occur. Numerous other references about the benefit of restoring fish passage and anadromy can readily can be found elsewhere, such as the administrative and other records of National Marine Fisheries Service as prepared for the endangered species listing in 1997.

Assurance of Project Completion. In the design criteria section and perhaps elsewhere in the set of draft documents, the life of the project is described as 20 years for active management. The revised EIS/EIR should describe clearly which agency or agencies will be responsible to carry out all elements of the whole project package, such as incremental removal of the soil cement in the reservoir area or levees at downstream sites. Also, the documents should describe what provisions will or can be made if project elements require longer to complete, depending upon river flows or other weather-dependent variables. 22

Endangered Species Consultation. NOAA Fisheries Service, of course, will the final arbiter and decisionmaker on all project issues that potentially could negatively affect steelhead. NOAA will consult with the Corps to prepare a project Biological Opinion that specifies what level of take is acceptable and which of the sponsoring agencies are responsible. Unlike claims by Casitas water district staff during some

project planning meetings and elsewhere, we see no way that Casitas could be held responsible for take of steelhead caused by the project led by the Corps and County.

NOAA Biological Opinion. The eventual Biological Opinion by NOAA does not need to be, and cannot be, completed until the project is designed and described in great detail, likely towards the late PED phase, when other permits and authorizations are secured. Any other outside comments on the draft EIS/EIR alleging that the Biological Opinion must be completed earlier seem only to be comments intended to stall the whole project for some other self-serving motivation.

Summary Position of Steelhead Coalition. We wish to emphasize that certain components of the entire project that need to be incorporated into the final plan and design. No matter what the final project alternative or configuration entails, the final project should include these 5 parameters:

- ***No net loss of baseflow*** in Ventura River, the importance of which is described at length in the recent March 2003 Biological Opinion by NOAA Fisheries Service about Ventura River;
- ***No net loss of water supply*** for Casitas water district and other suppliers in the watershed, to be verified by an impartial analysis on what the actual baseline water supply and demand may be with and without the project;
- ***Removal of Matilija Dam within a 2-year deconstruction period*** to allow fish passage with no substantial delay, a scenario described as readily achievable in the project planning documents;
- ***Gradual transport of sequestered sediment*** to be released within a 10-to-20-year period, to reverse beach and downstream riparian erosion and to maintain the existing, widespread project support; and conversely
- ***No artificially maintained storage of sediment above the dam***, to avoid a potentially catastrophic failure, to save significant construction and maintenance costs, and to be consistent with the 3 main project goals of ecosystem restoration, beach nourishment, and recreational access.

Conclusion. While some of these project parameters listed above may be more of a technical or fiscal challenge to accomplish –although in the end we do not think they will be as the design proceeds– we believe each of these 5 parameters is essential and to garner the most credible public and political support for the project while achieving the project goals and objectives already established and agreed upon in the original Project Study Plan. These project parameters also establish an important model for the success of other ecosystem restoration and steelhead recovery projects already underway in southern California, especially the project that will address Rindge Dam on Malibu Creek. Most importantly, of course, these project planning parameters outlined above also do the most good for recovery of endangered steelhead trout in southern California. Based on quantity and quality of habitat opened up to anadromous fish access, historic and potentially recoverable fish populations, and socio-political climate in the watershed to support river restoration, Southern California Steelhead Coalition considers the Matilija project to be one of the most important opportunities for steelhead recovery in the region, perhaps for the next 10 to 20 years.

Contact Information

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Objections to dam removal don't hold water

Demolishing flawed Matilija Dam in Ventura County will restore ecosystem

By John Krist
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In America's dam-building heyday, it was easy to slap a whopping big pile of concrete across a river.

Between 1935 and 1965, when America was completing big dams almost too fast to count them, such concerns as Native American treaty rights, the needs of fish and the recreational value of running water were considered subordinate to other imperatives: the pursuit of private wealth, the defense of national security, the quest for power. In the absence of any significant regulatory impediments, tremendous construction projects could be carried out with a speed that seems incomprehensible today.

Hoover Dam, the most breathtaking engineering achievement of its time, rose above the Colorado River in less than four years. Bonneville Dam on the Columbia, another Depression-era project, also was completed in a mere four years.

Dams wear out, silt up, cease to make economic sense. But removing them when they become dangerous or obsolete is much more difficult today than building them was 40 or 50 years ago. Ventura County residents are being offered a lesson in just how difficult this process can be as they watch the slow progress of one of the most elaborate dam-removal projects in American history: the demolition of Matilija Dam, which after more than five years of work and study has entered its most delicate stage.

Although a remarkable coalition of interests has united behind the effort, a small but insistent chorus of dissenters has in recent weeks raised objections that could, if pursued in the courts, bring the project to a halt before a single chunk of crumbling concrete has been removed.

Analysis of the documentary record suggests most of the objections are without merit. But the dissenters don't have to win a courtroom battle or even present a particularly compelling case to block the Matilija project. All they have to do is delay it long enough for the fragile funding arrangements to unravel. In light of that, it's important for the discussion of project impacts to be as careful and accurate as possible, and for everyone involved to keep their eyes on the overarching goal: resurrection of a crippled river system.

The conflict, as is so often the case in the semiarid West, revolves around water. Not much of it. But some. The dispute is an illustration that, particularly in fast-growing California, there is no such thing as a trivial amount of this precious resource.

Fatal flaws

Matilija Dam, completed in 1948 in a narrow canyon 16 miles north of Ventura, was envisioned as a means of providing flood control to small downstream communities and recharging groundwater used by a handful of farmers in the Ojai Valley. With so few potential beneficiaries, the dam had such a dismal cost-benefit ratio that no federal agency could be persuaded to build it. Undaunted, the backers of Matilija Dam persuaded local voters to pass a bond measure to provide funding, and the county flood control district tackled the project.

Problems were apparent nearly from the start. Cracks began appearing on the downstream face of the dam almost immediately after completion, and they worsened over time. A 1959 survey revealed that the dam's crest was shifting upstream, probably because a chemical reaction between alkali in the cement and silica in the aggregate used in the concrete was causing it to expand and deteriorate. Concerned about the dam's integrity, the state Division of Dam Safety ordered the county to notch the dam's spillway crest to reduce stress on the structure before the 1965-66 storm season. The dam originally was 198 feet tall; subsequent modifications lowered it 30 feet.

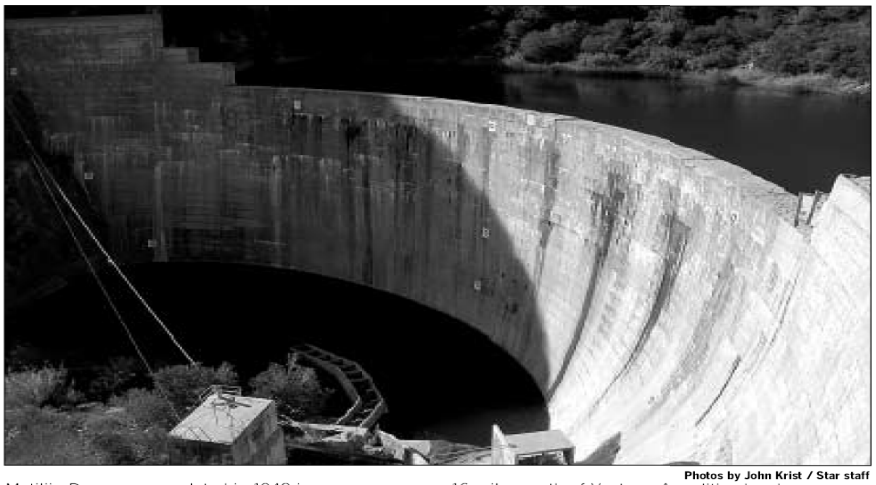
Bad concrete was not Matilija Dam's only flaw. Although this was not appreciated at the time, the mountains surrounding the dam site are rising rapidly — they are, in fact, the fastest-rising mountains in the United States — and they are eroding nearly as rapidly, producing huge amounts of debris. Matilija's 7,000-acre-foot reservoir first filled with water in 1952. (An acre-foot is 325,900 gallons, or the amount consumed by two average Southern California households in a year.) But it also had begun filling with erosional sediment: about 127,000 cubic yards of it a year, according to a 1954 report by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

According to the bureau, the dam now traps 6 million cubic yards of sediment, the equivalent of 14 Rose Bowl stadiums full of sand, silt, gravel and cobbles, and the reservoir has a storage capacity of about 500 acre-feet. The dam contributes to beach erosion by trapping sand that would otherwise reach the coast, and blocks access to critical spawning grounds for endangered southern steelhead in the Ventura River watershed.

Efforts to demolish the dam and restore the ecosystem have been under way since 1998, when local advocates secured federal support for a feasibility study. (The study process has taken longer to complete than Hoover Dam took to build.) Strategies for taking out the dam and dealing with the sediment behind it are detailed in a draft environmental impact report released July 16, opening a public-comment period that closes Monday. Local lawmakers have managed to get $79 million in federal funding for the $110 million project into this year's Water Resources Development Act.

Congressional support for project funding reflects the extremely broad coalition of interests united behind the removal proposal, including virtually every federal, state and local agency with an interest in the dam or in steelhead, as well as a lengthy roster of environmental groups.

At a July 28 public hearing on the draft EIR, however, representatives of several small rural water agencies and the Ojai area's main water provider, the Casitas Municipal Water District, complained that the document fails to address the effect of the dam removal on their water supply. And at least one of those representatives, a Santa Barbara attorney, argued that this failure left the document open to challenge under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act — a hint of litigation to come.



Photos by John Krist / Star staff

Matilija Dam was completed in 1948 in a narrow canyon 16 miles north of Ventura. A coalition has been working to remove the dam and restore the area's ecosystem. Opponents' objections threaten to delay the demolition and, thus, endanger its funding.

> The district has had half a century to devise a long-term solution to this water-supply problem. It hardly seems fair now to lay it at the feet of the dam-removal project

The Robles Diversion Canal carries water from the Ventura River to Lake Casitas.

Conflicting numbers

In a state where individual farms and desert golf courses may each consume hundreds of acre-feet a year, the amount of water at stake seems trivial.

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The question at the heart of the disagreement thus boils down to this: How much water will actually be lost as a direct consequence of the dam's removal? And who should be responsible for replacing it?

A review of the relevant documents, including the EIR, its supporting hydrological and sedimentation studies, lease agreements and water licenses, suggests Casitas is on shaky ground no matter which figure it uses.

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As a practical matter, the water that is stored behind Matilija Dam is not directly delivered to anyone; it is commingled in the water of Lake Casitas, a 250,000-acre-foot reservoir built by the Bureau of Reclamation, which is the immediate source of water for all of the district's 75,000 customers. The old direct pipeline from Matilija Dam, which was intended to dump water on spreading grounds in the Ojai Valley to recharge aquifers tapped by farm irrigation wells, is no longer functional. So, in a technical sense, there are no customers on the "Matilija system."

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In about four-and-a-half years, in other words, Casitas will lose the water, lose the storage, lose the diversion right — lose everything but the customers it claims rely on that water. For nowhere in the lease agreement or its various amendments is there an explicit stipulation that the legal obligation to serve water customers be transferred to the county when the Matilija lease expires.

From a practical standpoint, the county would probably offer to extend the lease and thereby the water rights as long as there's a dam in place to store that water. So, if the Matilija project were delayed — or if the dam were allowed to remain in place until sedimentation finally eliminates the reservoir — Casitas would stand to reap some additional water-supply benefits. Those are largely speculative, however. The county may wish to make up for that potential loss in order to expedite the project, but its obligation to do so is extremely limited. What's more, the reservoir could vanish even sooner than projected.

One big storm

Continuing sediment deposition will reduce Matilija Reservoir's capacity to 150 acre-feet by 2010 and less than 50 acre-feet by 2020, according to the draft EIR. Those estimates, however, are based on the average deposition rate. According to the sedimentation study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the great majority of the 6 million cubic yards of debris trapped behind the dam was deposited there in a remarkably brief period, in a series of huge pulses.

The 1969 floods alone deposited 1.6 million cubic yards of sediment, the report estimates. Of the 1.4 million cubic yards deposited in the reservoir since then, almost all was transported during big storms in 1978, 1992, 1995 and 1998, according to the report.

What this means is the Matilija Reservoir, which has only about 807,000 cubic yards of water storage left in it, is really just one exceptionally wet winter — one really big storm — from disappearing.

Presumably, Casitas management has known for years that it faced the likely loss of water supplied by Matilija Dam, either through expiration of the lease, continued deterioration of the structure or natural elimination of reservoir storage space. The problem of continuing sedimentation was, in fact, recognized in the original 1954 lease agreement with the county, a document preceding the current lease. That earlier agreement, in a clause that was incorporated into all subsequent agreements, gave the water district legal responsibility for operating and maintaining the Matilija Project — but with "ordinary depreciation, obsolescence and siltation excepted."

Casitas, in other words, sought and received legal assurances 50 years ago that it would not have to bear the cost of continual dredging to maintain the reservoir storage space for which it was paying. The district has had half a century to devise a long-term solution to this water-supply problem. It hardly seems fair now to lay it at the feet of the dam-removal project, particularly when the district's greater challenge is continuing growth in demand and its tardiness in adopting the kind of conservation measures that have become commonplace among Southern California water districts.

Real issues

Although most criticism of the dam removal project EIR is overblown or without merit, there are a few potential effects that ought to be more fully addressed. Some rural water agencies, for example, have valid concerns that recharge of their Ventura River wells could be blocked if enormous heaps of silt from behind the dam are piled nearby. That issue needs to be analyzed further and the deposition sites moved, if warranted, to protect those water sources.

But it's important that directors of Casitas and other local water districts — as well as those in the environmental community who might reflexively object to any increased water diversions, no matter how ecologically benign — avoid the temptation to use the $110 million project as a bargaining chip to achieve unrelated aims. In the long history of dam construction in America, and the much shorter history of dam demolition, there has never been anything like the Matilija restoration project. It represents a historic opportunity to reverse a profound ecological and geotechnical mistake.

Such undertakings are much easier to derail than to carry out, and this one will collapse if asked to bear too great a burden. Efforts must be undertaken to solve the future water challenges facing western Ventura County, where the margin between supply and demand is growing uncomfortably thin. But there is no legitimate reason to hold the removal of Matilija Dam hostage to those discussions.

— John Krist is a senior reporter and Opinion page columnist for The Star.

Public comments

The draft environmental review and supporting documents for the Matilija Dam removal project are available at http://www.matilijadam.org/. Public comments regarding the report must be postmarked or e-mailed by midnight Monday, and can be submitted to Jon Vivanti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 915 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, 90017-3401 (jonathan.d.vivanti@usace.army.mil).

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Sunday STAR Opinion

SUNDAY

VENTURA COUNTY STAR

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Objections to dam removal don't hold water

Demolishing flawed Matilija Dam in Ventura County will restore ecosystem

By John Krist *jkrist@VenturaCountyStar.com*

In America's dam-building heyday, it was easy to slap a whopping big pile of concrete across a river.

Between 1935 and 1965, when America was completing big dams almost too fast to count them, such concerns as Native American treaty rights, the needs of fish and the recreational value of running water were considered subordinate to other imperatives: the pursuit of private wealth, the defense of national security, the quest for power. In the absence of any significant regulatory impediments, tremendous construction projects could be carried out with a speed that seems incomprehensible today.

Hoover Dam, the most breathtaking engineering achievement of its time, rose above the Colorado River in less than four years. Bonneville Dam on the Columbia, another Depression-era project, also was completed in a mere four years.

Dams wear out, silt up, cease to make economic sense. But removing them when they become dangerous or obsolete is much more difficult today than building them was 40 or 50 years ago. Ventura County residents are being offered a lesson in just how difficult this process can be as they watch the slow progress of one of the most elaborate dam-removal projects in American history: the demolition of Matilija Dam, which after more than five years of work and study has entered its most delicate stage.

Although a remarkable coalition of interests has united behind the effort, a small but insistent chorus of dissenters has in recent weeks raised objections that could, if pursued in the courts, bring the project to a halt before a single chunk of crumbling concrete has been removed.

Analysis of the documentary record suggests most of the objections are without merit. But the dissenters don't have to win a courtroom battle or even present a particularly compelling case to block the Matilija project. All they have to do is delay it long enough for the fragile funding arrangements to unravel. In light of that, it's important for the discussion of project impacts to be as careful and accurate as possible, and for everyone involved to keep their eyes on the overarching goal: resurrection of a crippled river system.

The conflict, as is so often the case in the semiarid West, revolves around water. Not much of it. But some. The dispute is an illustration that, particularly in fast-growing California, there is no such thing as a trivial amount of this precious resource.

Fatal flaws

Matilija Dam, completed in 1948 in a narrow canyon 16 miles north of Ventura, was envisioned as a means of providing flood control to small downstream communities and recharging groundwater used by a handful of farmers in the Ojai Valley. With so few potential beneficiaries, the dam had such a dismal cost-benefit ratio that no federal agency could be persuaded to build it. Undaunted, the backers of Matilija Dam persuaded local voters to pass a bond measure to provide funding, and the county flood control district tackled the project.

Problems were apparent nearly from the start. Cracks began appearing on the downstream face of the dam almost immediately after completion, and they worsened over time. A 1959 survey revealed that the dam's crest was shifting upstream, probably because a chemical reaction between alkali in the cement and silica in the aggregate used in the concrete was causing it to expand and deteriorate. Concerned about the dam's integrity, the state Division of Dam Safety ordered the county to notch the dam's spillway crest to reduce stress on the structure before the 1965-66 storm season. The dam originally was 198 feet tall; subsequent modifications lowered it 30 feet.

Bad concrete was not Matilija Dam's only flaw. Although this was not appreciated at the time, the mountains surrounding the dam site are rising rapidly -- they are, in fact, the fastest-rising mountains in the United States -- and they are eroding nearly as rapidly, producing huge amounts of debris. Matilija's 7,000-acre-foot reservoir first filled with water in 1952. (An acre-foot is 325,900 gallons, or the amount consumed by two average Southern California households in a year.) But it also had begun filling with erosional sediment: about 127,000 cubic yards of it a year,

according to a 1954 report by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

According to the bureau, the dam now traps 6 million cubic yards of sediment, the equivalent of 14 Rose Bowl stadiums full of sand, silt, gravel and cobbles, and the reservoir has a storage capacity of about 500 acre-feet. The dam contributes to beach erosion by trapping sand that would otherwise reach the coast, and blocks access to critical spawning grounds for endangered southern steelhead in the Ventura River watershed.

Efforts to demolish the dam and restore the ecosystem have been under way since 1998, when local advocates secured federal support for a feasibility study. (The study process has taken longer to complete than Hoover Dam took to build.) Strategies for taking out the dam and dealing with the sediment behind it are detailed in a draft environmental impact report released July 16, opening a public-comment period that closes Monday. Local lawmakers have managed to get $79 million in federal funding for the $110 million project into this year's Water Resources Development Act.

Congressional support for project funding reflects the extremely broad coalition of interests united behind the removal proposal, including virtually every federal, state and local agency with an interest in the dam or in steelhead, as well as a lengthy roster of environmental groups.

At a July 28 public hearing on the draft EIR, however, representatives of several small rural water agencies and the Ojai area's main water provider, the Casitas Municipal Water District, complained that the document fails to address the effect of the dam removal on their water supply. And at least one of those representatives, a Santa Barbara attorney, argued that this failure left the document open to challenge under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act -- a hint of litigation to come.

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-- John Krist is a senior reporter and Opinion page columnist for The Star.

Matilija Dam debate

Photos by Juan Carlo / Star staff

Jim Hutchinson, an engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, talked to reporters about the demolition plan at Matilija Dam near Ojai on Wednesday. Part of the plan aims to restore an endangered steelhead trout.

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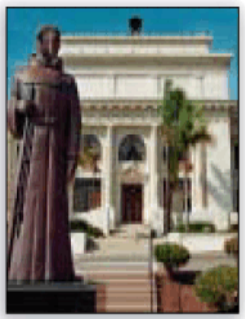

STAR Ventura
Santa Paula, Ojai and Fillmore
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Thursday, July 29, 2004

Plan to demolish the structure gets protests, support

Nearly 100 attend meeting to offer input on project

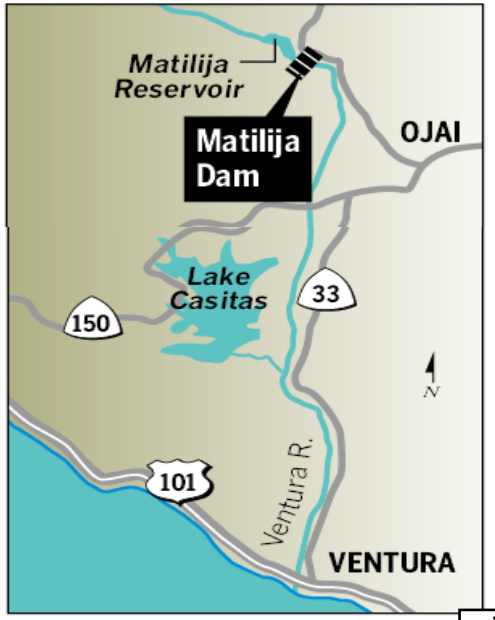
By Charles Levin
clevin@VenturaCountyStar.com

Several water district officials and residents near Matilija Dam on Wednesday criticized a plan to demolish the 56-year-old structure, saying it offered more questions than answers about water quality and neighborhood impacts.

But environmentalists backed the plan, which aims to restore endangered steelhead trout, replenish beach sand and boost recreational opportunities on the Ventura River and Matilija Creek by tearing down the 168-foot dam.

More than 20 people spoke at the County Government Center during a meeting called to soli it public comment and hear co cerns about the plan.

About 100 people attende the meeting, sponsored by th Ventura County Watershe



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"There's a limited life span to a dam, and Matilija has become one of those. If the structure does fail, just imagine the consequences for those downstream."

Paul Jenkin, member of the Matilija Coalition

Environmental impacts worry plan opponents

Neal Fishman, left, deputy executive officer for the Coastal Conservancy, and county Supervisor Steve Bennett visit the Matilija Dam on Wednesday.

MATILIJA

From B1

Protection District and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Both agencies unveiled the demolition plan July 14. A public comment period for the plan ends Aug. 30.

The three-year, $110 million plan, a "preferred alternative" of seven choices, outlines how to remove 6 million cubic yards of silt behind the dam that have rendered it obsolete. The plan still awaits completion of an environmental impact report, approval by the full U.S. Senate and President Bush's signature.

According to the preferred alternative, a slurry pipeline would carry about 2.1 million cubic yards of silt downstream, where it will be deposited along the Ventura River near Highways 150 and 33. The remaining silt would flow downstream, where a specially installed plant near the Robles Diversion Dam would divert coarse sediment to the ocean while steering clean water into Lake Casitas.

See MATILIJA on B2

Board members, however, with Ventura River County Water District and Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Co. worry that silt deposited near the river would leach into soil, contaminate groundwater and clog wells, said Lindsay Nielson, an attorney representing both agencies. The environmental report does not address these issues, Nielson said.

Oso Road resident Robert Brown said he worried that demolition would destroy the solitude of his rural downstream neighborhood, where the retired actor and his wife recently moved. "I love trout but not that much," Brown said, criticizing backers of the plan as intellectuals out of touch with downstream residents. "You folks live far away," Brown said. "What about the taxpaying citizens who live there?"

David Pritchett, with the Southern California Steelhead Coalition, said that demolition is the only way to restore the endangered fish. Even though steelhead have been isolated from spawning grounds for 60 years, they instinctively know how to return to those areas, Pritchett said. "It's in their DNA," he said.

Pritchett acknowledged that some existing steelhead could die from the release of sediment, but he chalked that up to "short-term impacts" for "long-term gains."

Paul Jenkin, with the Matilija Coalition, said the plan addressed his organization's concerns over beach erosion. "There's a limited life span to a dam, and Matilija has become one of those," Jenkin said. "If the structure does fail, just imagine the consequences for those downstream."

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OJAI VALLEY NEWS
Ojai Valley's newspaper since 1891 www.ojaivalleynews.com
Wednesday, July 28, 2004 Newsracks, 75¢, retail stores, 70¢ plus tax • Yearly subscription, $45

Case made against dam removal plan

Casitas Municipal Water District calls meeting to address cost concerns

By Jay Ford Cullis
jay@ojaivalleynews.com

Casitas Municipal Water District presented their case for amending a Ventura County Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Matilija Dam Removal Project at a public meeting Monday.

Stating in a press release that they were concerned about several points in the report — released at a public meeting in the County Hall of Administration — and anticipating community concerns about rising water prices, Casitas held the meeting to address those worries.

"The purpose of the meeting tonight is to inform our customers who are on the Matilija conduit exactly what's going on and how it's likely to affect them," said John Johnson, general manager of CMWD. Johnson presented a history of the dam and the Matilija Conduit, a pipeline that runs from the dam to the Ojai Valley. For nearly 50 years the Matilija Dam, scheduled for deconstruction since 1998 because of deteriorating building materials, rising silt levels in the reservoir, and other safety concerns, has funneled water from the reservoir to Lake Casitas where it's treated and then piped back up to the conduit for customer use.

"Hundreds of Casitas Municipal Water District customers on the Matilija pipeline ... face a potential loss of water supply or significantly increased water rates if the Matilija Dam Removal Plan — Draft Environmental Impact Report ... is not amended to fully resolve issues related to water supply, water rights, and future water service agreements," stated Casitas in their press release.

But many attending the

Please see Matilija, Page A-3

Matilija:

(Continued from Page A-1)

meeting saw the board's environmental concerns as weapons of mitigation in a political and economic battle.

"My feeling is that Casitas Municipal Water District has been looking for ways to stop this project, not ways to make it work," said David Bury, Ojai city councilman. "I think ... your concerns about the habitat (for endangered steelhead trout) that may be impacted by the solutions for removing sediment are disingenuous," Bury told the board. Russ Baggerly had similar sentiments.

"There is no threat to water loss to the Matilija Conduit customers if the Matilija Dam is torn down," said Baggerly, presenting three pages of research to the crowd. "The water comes from (Lake) Casitas, it has come from Lake Casitas forever. What happens if the dam is decommissioned and taken out?" Baggerly asked the crowd. "Absolutely nothing," he said.

Even with the dam gone, he said, the water will still run down the creeks and into the Ventura River where Casitas can draw it into treatment facilities. "Casitas has a license to divert up to 300,000 acre-feet of water per year," Baggerly said of the Robles Diversion which draws from the Ventura River. "This board has a responsibility to make sure everything is properly taken care of here and to ensure that all our customers have an adequate supply of water," said board member Pete Kaiser. "We are still going to be a contributing member to the steelhead habitat ... it's a conundrum of different issues," Kaiser said.

Jack Curtis appealed to the board to exercise its clout. "Do you see a point when you would say 'We are opposed to removing the dam?'" Curtis asked.

"Right now we're attempting to get the county to mitigate the concerns we have because we feel it's improper to have ... hidden costs that will fall on the water bill of the people that live here," answered board member Jim Coultas. "If we find that our areas of concern are [illegible] mitigated, then there's a cha[illegible] we would be in oppositio[illegible] Coultas said.

The county's meet[illegible] concerning the Dr[illegible] Environmental Impact Rep[illegible] will be held at 6:30 this even[illegible] in the County Hall [illegible] Administration.

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VENTURA COUNTY STAR

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STAR Ventura
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Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2004

Group says district delays dam demolition

Environmentalists challenge Casitas' rights to Matilija water

By Charles Levin
clevin@VenturaCountyStar.com

An environmental group has accused the Casitas Municipal Water District of stalling a longtime plan to tear down Matilija Dam by falsely saying demolition will reduce its water supplies.

Jim Edmondson, the Southern California manager of California Trout, asked the state Water Resources Control Board in an Aug. 12 letter to investigate the matter and determine whether Casitas has a legal right to water behind the 56-year-old dam.

Casitas General Manager John Johnson said Tuesday the district supports the dam's removal as long as its water-supply concerns are addressed. About 200 of the district's 3,000 customers rely on water from Matilija reservoir. Johnson questioned whether the state water board had any jurisdiction over the matter but did not elaborate.

Edmondson's request is under consideration, said Liz Kanter, a spokeswoman with the state agency. She said Casitas' license to store and carry water from Matilija reservoir is in good standing. But the district has failed to report how much water it diverts from Matilija reservoir in its annual reports, she said. "So that is something we're going to have to take a look at," Kanter said.

Johnson was unavailable later to comment on the annual state reports.

Demolishing the 168-foot dam would hasten the return of endangered steelhead trout to spawning grounds and replenish eroding beaches with sand, proponents say.

About 6 million cubic yards of sediment behind the dam have rendered it obsolete. The $130 million demolition plan is detailed in an environmental study, released last month by the county's Watershed Protection District and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Demolition still requires U.S. Senate approval and President Bush's signature.

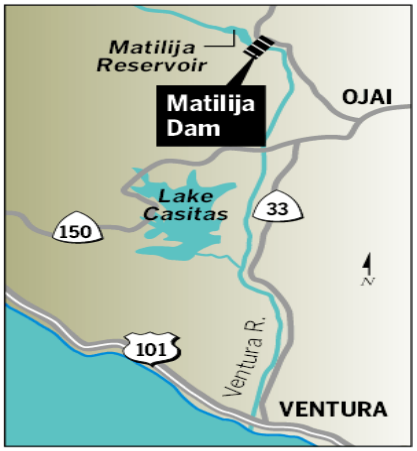
At issue is a license granted by the state water board to Casitas in 1973 that allows the district to store 2,470 acre-feet of water behind the dam and withdraw up to 4,750 acre-feet of water a year, Edmondson said.

An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, enough to supply two average households for a year.

But with sediment choking the reservoir's capacity to about 500 acre-feet, "the license may be subject to revocation," Edmondson said in his letter. Moreover, he said, the district may have no legal right to a five-mile pipeline because it hasn't used it for at least five years or longer. The pipeline carries water from the dam to the eastern end of Ojai Valley.

"If you don't use water for five consecutive years, then you've given up your right to

See MATILIJA on B2



Star staff

Environmental group challenges water district

MATILIJA
From B1

use it and you lose it," Edmondson said.

Johnson said the district had no position yet on the license allegations. But occasional rainfall enables the district to take more than 500 acre-feet a year from the dam, he said. Johnson said the district still actively uses the pipeline.

The district leases the dam, pipeline and rights to the dam's water from the Watershed Protection District. The 50-year lease ends Jan. 1, 2009. If the dam is torn down, the district could be held liable for the water supply, Johnson said. That could mean higher fees to buy more water, he said.

"Someone has the respon bility to serve those c tomers," Johnson said. "T county has to maintain serv to those customers after (lease ends)." The county either come up with a wa supply or "contract with sitas to do that for them," Jo son said.

PRITCHETT

REGION & STATE

Casitas' Claim for Dam Challenged

Environmentalists ask the state to check water district's assertion that it needs the structure.

By Gregory W. Griggs
Times Staff Writer

August 19, 2004

Worried that the $130-million demolition project could be delayed, environmentalists are challenging Casitas Municipal Water District's claims that tearing down the Matilija Dam near Ojai would reduce its water supply.

The group California Trout has asked the State Water Resources Control Board to determine the merit of Casitas' assertion that dismantling the 168-foot-high dam would adversely affect its ability to serve 200 of its more than 50,000 customers. Casitas contends that its customers have a right to a portion of the water stored behind the dam.

But in a recent letter to the state water board's chairman, Jim Edmondson, Southern California manager for California Trout, said Casitas' claim to such water rights was erroneous.

"We surmise that [Casitas] is raising these claims as a negotiation tactic and/or leverage to delay the dam removal and thwart the whole river restoration project, or to gain entitlement to water it does not have," he wrote.

Casitas has several options after the dam comes down, Edmondson said, including seeking state approval to add a location other than the dam site to divert Ventura River flows, applying for new water rights or seeking other sources.

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District, which owns the 56-year-old structure, plans to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to remove the aging dam to restore the river's ecosystem, replenish sand-starved beaches and enhance a breeding area for the threatened steelhead trout.

Casitas Municipal Water District operates the dam and a downstream water system for the county under a 50-year agreement that expires Jan. 1, 2009. Casitas is concerned that the county has not made clear how it intends to supply water to some of its customers — including two small water companies and several agricultural users — once the dam is removed.

"This is not a contract ploy," said General Manager John Johnson. "If you take the dam down, how do you capture the water? There is no other storage device."

Under a state water license granted to the county and transferred to Casitas in 1959, it can store up to 2,470 acre-feet of water behind the dam and withdraw up to 4,570 acre-feet per year. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, or enough water to supply two typical homes for a year.

But Edmondson said the Casitas argument was flawed because the dam's capacity has been significantly diminished. Over the years, silt has clogged the dam and now it can hold only about 500 acre-feet of water, yet Casitas continues to supply its customers, he said. If the dam remains, it will completely fill with silt within 20 years.

"The general manager's statements in the past seem to play fast and loose with the facts," Edmondson said. "We want factual, credible answers from the state water board."

The county has pledged to restore the water Casitas would lose when the dam is gone, said Jeff Pratt, director of the Watershed Protection District. The replacement water could come from untapped groundwater under county control, paying for portions of the city of Ventura's unused water and general conservation measures.

But Pratt added that "nobody has said we would guarantee [Casitas] water forever."

Liz Kanter, spokeswoman for the state water board, said the agency would review California Trout's concerns and respond in a few weeks.

PRITCHETT

Water Agency Has Concerns About Report

Environmental review of Matilija Dam removal doesn't fully address the effects on Casitas district customers and steelhead trout, officials say.

By GREGORY W. GRIGGS
Times Staff Writer

Demolition of Matilija Dam near Ojai could reduce water supplies for some customers, while harming efforts to rescue the endangered steelhead trout, said local water agency officials who are concerned that these issues are not addressed in the project's environmental impact report.

The report released this month outlines the environmental challenges and benefits posed by the $130-million project, which supporters say will ultimately help restore the Ventura River to its natural state, replenish sand-starved beaches and revive a historic breeding area for the threatened steelhead.

But officials with Casitas Municipal Water District said the short-term effects of the three-year project are not adequately covered in the new study. The district, under a long-term contract with Ventura County, serves about 200 customers with water collected at the dam.

Without that water, the district could be forced to buy supplies from other sources, resulting in higher rates for customers, officials said. These and other issues were scheduled to be the focus of a public hearing Monday night at the district's headquarters in Oak View.

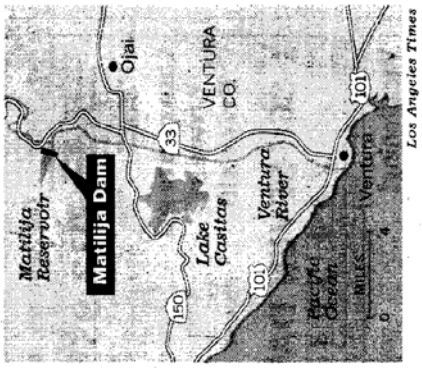
Before the hearing, John Johnson, the water district's general manager, said the environmental study also fails to provide specific ways to protect steelhead trout during the roughly three years it will take to remove the 190-foot-high structure, among the largest dam removal projects in the nation's history.

While dismantling the dam is expected to improve the Ventura River's ecosystem in the long run, the report acknowledges that fish and other wildlife along the river's 17-mile-long watershed would suffer temporarily.

Johnson said releasing the 6 million cubic yards of sediment trapped behind the nearly full dam will widen and flatten the riverbed, reducing the chance that enough water will flow through the river to enable steelhead to spawn. And the spaces amid the gravel on the river bottom, where steelhead lay eggs, will disappear under all that silt, he added.

[See Matilija, Page B10]

Water Agency Has Concerns About Report



[Matilija, from Page B1]

But supporters of the dam project said that to do nothing would end up doing more harm to the river's ecosystem.

"The short-term adversity is far outweighed by the long-term good of removing that dam," said Jim Edmondson of California Trout, a nonprofit group dedicated to protecting the state's cold-water fish.

Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett, whose district includes the dam area, said the involvement of several state and federal fish and wildlife agencies during the environmental process ensures the ecosystem is properly protected.

"I'm confident these top scientists working on this are ensuring that nothing is done to diminish the supply or quality of the water," he said.

Johnson suggests that the county conduct comprehensive tests to identify potential contaminants in the sediment before they are released downstream. He also wants guarantees that the district will not lose a portion of its water supply once the dam is removed.

> *'Do we have all the definitive answers right now? No, but we're getting very close.'*
>
> **Jeff Pratt,** director of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District

"How they will supply those customers without a water supply I do not know," said Johnson, whose district serves about 75,000 customers in the Ventura and Ojai areas combined. "And the [environmental impact report] doesn't address it."

Jeff Pratt, director of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, which owns the dam, said Casitas was among the numerous agencies that jointly discussed the dam removal proposal before the environmental document was drafted and that its comments — along with the district's responses — will be included in the final report.

"Do we have all the definitive answers right now? No, but we're getting very close," Pratt said. "I can guarantee you, the politicians are not going to threaten the water supply in Southern California. That's just not an option."

The 56-year-old dam has about 5% of its original capacity left and can hold less than 500 acre-feet of water. An acre-foot is nearly 326,000 gallons, or enough water to supply two typical homes for a year.

Bennett said Casitas customers must deal with the sediment problem sooner or later and that acting now could mean financial help from Washington. If the review process concludes by year's end, the project would qualify for nearly $79 million in federal funds toward the demolition and restoration project.

The Army Corps of Engineers and the Watershed Protection District will have a public hearing on the project at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Ventura County Government Center.

PRITCHETT

Opinion

VENTURA COUNTY STAR

Section B, Page 8 July 15, 2004

Editorials

Rectifying old mistakes

Matilija is one of many useless dams in the West

Essay

Pasadena's Rose Bowl stadium is 895 feet long, 660 feet wide, 100 feet deep and seats 90,000 people. The combined populations of Camarillo and Moorpark could gather there at once to munch hot dogs and watch football.

Now imagine the cavernous stadium packed from turf to brim with sand, silt, gravel and cobbles. And then imagine 13 more Rose Bowls similarly filled. That will give you some idea of the technical challenge facing those who would like to tear down Matilija Dam, a concrete relic of America's dam-building heyday slowly disintegrating in a rugged canyon 16 miles north of Ventura.

Fourteen Rose Bowls' worth of lithic dandruff shed by the steep slopes of rapidly rising mountains. That's what hides behind one of the most pointless big dams ever built in the West, a region that has seen plenty of river-blocking boondoggles. Had the dam never been built, that rocky material would have been distributed downstream over the past half century by Matilija Creek and the Ventura River. Instead, it has piled up nearly to the dam's crest, becoming an expensive headache for those who would like to see the dam removed to aid imperiled steelhead and rebuild beaches.

Strategies for taking out the dam and dealing with the estimated 6 million cubic yards of sediment it has captured are detailed in a technical analysis released June 29 and will be examined further in a draft environmental impact report due out this week. Although focused on a single dam and a single watershed, the documents may be also read as a general primer on the West's recent past, when politicians and planners often failed to recognize the dynamic complexity and value of living river systems. They also foreshadow its future, when thousands of other dams will reach the end of their useful lives and force a public discussion of what to do with them.

John **Krist**

Although hundreds of dams in the United States have faced the wrecking ball in recent years, their symbolic dimensions generally have exceeded their physical ones. Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Maine is a prominent example, barely two stories high, breached in July 1999 to restore spawning grounds for striped bass, shad, Atlantic salmon and sturgeon. More than 250 lesser dams, mostly serving small irrigation districts and water agencies, have been removed nationwide since then.

The campaign to remove Matilija Dam has drawn national attention because it is the largest such structure ever to face likely demolition, originally 190 feet tall. (It is now 30 feet shorter, structural flaws having forced engineers to notch its concrete crest in 1965.) Although there have been proposals to demolish or decommission far larger dams, including 710-foot-tall Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River in Arizona and 312-foot-tall O'Shaughnessy Dam on the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park, no comparable proposal has proceeded as far down the planning path as the one to dismantle Matilija.

In the case of most large dams in the West, small but disproportionately influential interests still profit from their existence and the political barriers to removal loom large. That's not the case with Matilija, however: Because of the dam's uselessness and decrepitude, it is a political orphan, there being no significant constituency for a structure that controls no floods, generates no power and stores but a teacup of water. In contrast, a broad coalition of local interests has coalesced around the cause of removal. That is why $79 million in federal funding for the project has survived committee scrutiny and made it into this year's Water Resources Development Act, which is headed for a Senate vote later this month.

Yet, the quick demise of Matilija Dam and its reservoir, which was half-filled with sediment within two decades of its 1947 completion, offers a preview of the fate awaiting most dams, even popular ones. By some estimates, the average life expectancy of dams is 50 years, meaning the majority of the approximately 75,000 large dams in the United States are operating on borrowed time. Someday, even Glen Canyon Dam will become useless, its reservoir filled with sediment.

It will not always make sense to demolish a dam, even when it is both useless and ecologically harmful, like Matilija. The process is time-consuming and terribly expensive — 14 Rose Bowls take a long time to empty once they've been filled with rocks — and there may be cheaper ways to accomplish the same ecological goals. But as more dams age, and as the social and economic assumptions upon they were built erode like a storm-washed beach, many communities will find themselves grappling with the same question now facing Ventura County: How best to rectify a 60-year-old mistake?

— John Krist is a senior reporter and Opinion page columnist for The Star. His e-mail address is jkrist@VenturaCountyStar.com.

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State of California - The Resources Agency
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
http://www.dfg.ca.gov
4949 Viewridge Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 467-4201

August 30, 2004

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
Attn: Mr. Jon Vivanti (CESPL-PD-WW)
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Draft Environmental Impact Report for
the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project
SCH #2002011094

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

The Department of Fish and Game (Department), has reviewed the above referenced Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and the project's Main Report for impacts to biological resources. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers(ACOE) and Ventura County Watershed Protection District (District) propose the restoration of the Matilija Creek to a riverine ecosystem, with emphasis on restoring historic spawning grounds above the Matilija Dam barrier site for the Federally Endangered southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). The Department's *Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California* recommends the removal of Matilija Dam to maximize restoration efforts for the Southern steelhead. We believe the subject project has the potential to provide long-term benefits to steelhead trout not only in the Ventura River watershed, but throughout all of the Southern California Steelhead Evolutionarily Significant Unit, and could be key to their recovery. We support this project, although we have some concerns regarding the DEIR, as written.

The focus of habitat restoration involves the removal of the dam and the sediment behind the dam, and the re-establishment of the natural creek channel. In addition to dam removal, proposed project actions include:

- the slurry, transport, and deposition off-site of 2.1 million cubic yards of fine sediments from the Matilija Reservoir lakebed;
- stabilization of the remaining reservoir sediments on-site, to be transported downstream over time through natural processes;
- downstream flood protection measures, including floodwall levees at Camino Cielo, Meiners Oaks, Live Oak Acres, and Casitas Springs, and replacement of the Santa Ana Road Bridge across the Ventura River near Oak View;
- a sediment bypass structure located at the Robles Diversion;

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- a desilting basin;
- 25,000 ft. of recreational trail and associated features (e.g., rest areas);
- the drilling of two water wells at Foster Park.

General Comments

Habitat types with the potential to be impacted by the project include riverine, lacustrine, estuarine, marine, coastal scrub, coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) woodland, montane and foothill riparian, and annual grassland. In addition to southern steelhead, wildlife with the potential to be impacted by the project include the Federal and State Endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), the Federally Threatened and State Protected California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), the State Fully Protected white-tailed kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) and ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*), the State Protected and Special Concern Species southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*), and two-striped garter snake (*thamnophis hammondii*), the Federal and State Special Concern Species tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), silvery legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*), and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and the State Special Concern Species pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Coast Range newt (*Taricha torasa torosa*), coast patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis virgultea*), Cooper=s hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*).

Measures proposed to mitigate impacts include:

- pre-construction biological surveys;
- capture and relocation of sensitive species;
- avoidance of the bird nesting season;
- monitoring of construction activities by a qualified biologist;
- eradication of giant cane (*Arundo donax*) within the project area; 1
- removal of aquatic predators;
- restoration of habitats disturbed by project construction; and
- oak and walnut tree replanting.

The following statements and comments have been prepared pursuant to the Department's authority as Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project (CEQA Guidelines §15386(a)) and pursuant to our authority as a Responsible Agency (CEQA Guidelines §15381) over those aspects of the proposed project that come under the purview of the Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq.:

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The Biological Resources sections of the DEIR provide a thorough description of those resources which may be found within the study area. However, except for the dam site and reservoir, they contain no detailed descriptions of impact analyses and mitigation measures for biological resources that may be found within specific areas of the proposed actions. We do not agree that Table 5.3-1, on page 5.3-3 of the DEIR, contains sufficient detail of these impacts for adequate review, and we are therefore concerned that impacts to wildlife may not be adequately mitigated.

For example, Table 5.3-1 describes the 29 acres of coastal scrub, 27 acres of California walnut woodland, 31 acres of annual grassland, and 2 acres of oak woodland lost to the slurry disposal site as temporary impacts. Are these impacts considered temporary because of the proposed restoration of the site at some future date, as described at the bottom of page 4-3 of the Main Report, and required by mitigation measure B-13, on page 5.3-16 of the DEIR? Without detail on how restoration would be accomplished to restore these habitats, and at what ratios, the Department cannot evaluate the effectiveness of this mitigation measure or whether the impacts are temporary, and therefore cannot determine if the measure is feasible, as required by CEQA (CEQA Guidelines §15126.4(a)(1)). We question whether coastal scrub and the other native upland habitats can be restored on soils composed of fine sediment from a lakebed. Table 5.3-1 also does not identify the location of the slurry disposal site listed, and there are three different potential disposal sites discussed in the DEIR. The DEIR should list potential impacts for all three sites.

2

The DEIR states, on page 5.3-17, that "No federal- or State-listed plants are expected to be impacted by project activities...", and relies on the botanical survey report contained in Appendix F.4 of the DEIR. However, several proposed project actions which have potential for impacts to vegetation would take place outside of the botanical survey area described in the appendix. These include the potential slurry disposal site Number 3, the proposed desiltation basins, portions of the proposed slurry and water pipelines, and portions of the proposed recreational trial and associated features. We also do not believe the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Draft Coordination Act Report (Dilith, 2004) included these areas in their evaluation of potential wildlife impacts resulting from the proposed project. These areas should therefore be surveyed for plants according to the Guidelines provided as an attachment to our letter submitted in response to the Notice of Preparation of the DEIR. They also should be surveyed for animal species, with emphasis on those upland special status wildlife species listed above.

The document does not includude site specific surveys for ringtail or details concerning equipment staging and access routes. This information would be helpful to the Department in fully assessing project impacts.

3

Specific Comments

Temporary Storage of Sediments (4b) – Appendix A, Civil Design

The concept of temporarily storing a significant fraction of the sediments and then metering them downstream during large storm events is a sound idea for a project like this. However, the adaptive management scheme on which it relies is poorly defined. For example,

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the sediment management plan needs to have clearly stated objectives and performance standards and monitoring plans. Absent such information, the Department cannot provide meaningful comment.

4 (cont.)

The Department also has serious concerns about the proposed sediment storage mechanism and plan-form. As currently proposed, temporary storage would be accomplished through the creation of a meandering trapezoidal channel with soil cement used to stabilize the banks. As stated in Appendix A of the DEIR, "staged removal of the soil cement will occur as portions of the sediment are eroded from the reservoir bank". Our concerns are three-fold: 1) hardened bank structures in the hydrology and geology of Southern CA have a tendency to fail and create additional problems (e.g. Santa Paula Creek); 2) the soil cement, as shown in cross section (Figure 9), does not appear to be keyed to a sufficient depth to prevent undercutting due to scour; and 3) the design does not provide for long term self-adjusting and self-maintenance of the channel after the initial planned sediment release is accomplished.

5 O

The Department remains apprehensive about this mechanism and suggests that the plan-form and sediment storage approach should be substantially refined, modified and improved. One alternative approach would be to utilize the size and width of the site above Matilija to recreate large point bar-type sediment storage features that will more naturally meter the sediment through the system. Sediment storage and release in the American River channel at the old Auburn dam site is being managed in this way. The project entails one mile of channel and big point bars. Concrete is only being used to pin several grade control elements in place.

Another option would be to replace the soil cement with rock excavated from the site and placed as rip-rap keyed into the substrate at a depth based on calculated local and long-term scour rates. The rip-rap could be designed to fail, one section at a time, or could be progressively removed under a more defined adaptive management plan.

High Flow Bypass at Robles – Appendix D, Exhibit I

6 D1

The DEIR fails to provide an adequate description of the potential impacts to the operation of the Robles Fish Ladder, to upstream and downstream migration of steelhead, and to the natural resources in the riparian corridor adjacent to the proposed high flow bypass. In particular, the document states that the high flow bypass would start operations at 1,000 cfs, which is in conflict with the NOAA Fisheries' Biological Opinion for operation of the Robles Fish Ladder. The Fish Ladder is to become operational at 50 cfs, to be fully functional at 1,500 cfs and be fairly functional at 3,000 cfs.

The last goal stated for the High Flow Bypass is "increasing the flexibility of spillway flow releases to enhance fish passage. Attraction of upstream migrants and stranding of downstream migrants during weir flow [at the existing radial gates] has been identified as a concern with existing right bank spillway." However, the attraction of upstream migrants and stranding of downstream migrants was identified in the design of the Robles Fish Ladder and fish screen. Most of these problems occurred at flows below 1000 cfs on which the High Flow Bypass would have no effect, even if operated as proposed. Furthermore, those identified problems were addressed by adding multiple adult exits and changing operations to minimize stranding of juveniles. It is unclear in what way this structure would help with those problems.

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Additionally the new high flow bypass would be a permanent impassable structure unlike the existing timber wall, which is designed to overflow in extreme flow conditions. Since the existing structure is at grade, this has historically given steelhead an opportunity to move upstream past the Robles Diversion. Given that the expected duration of sediment movement downstream from the Matilija reach is estimated to last up to 20 years and these overtopping events are only expected every five years (by the report's own hydrology studies), is a permanent structure needed? Does it need to start operations at 1000 cfs? If so, fish passage on this structure will need to be provided. The DEIR should identify how the proposed structure can be operated or designed so as not to interfere with fish passage and the operations of the Robles Fish Ladder.

6 (cont.)

Foster Park Wells – Appendix D

No analyses were presented on impacts from drilling the two proposed water wells in the vicinity of Foster Park. Additionally no specific details were provided about the proposed pump capacity and no potential impacts from increased water extraction in the live reach of the Ventura River were identified.

7 D2

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measure B-1, on page 5.3-9 of the DEIR, addresses the need for pre-construction surveys for listed and non-listed bird species. The Department recommends the addition of surveys for all animal species, with emphasis on those special status species listed above.

8

Tree Removal - The DEIR proposes to mitigate the loss of trees with mitigation measure B-14, on page 5.3-16 of the DEIR, which consists of replacing any native oaks or California black walnut trees removed during project construction. The Department mitigation standard for removal of mature coast live oak trees and Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) (8 inch or greater DBH) is replacement at a ratio of 10:1. This ratio accounts not only for the less than 100% survival rate for replacement trees, but also mitigates for the habitat that is lost until the replacement trees reach functional maturity. Spacing of replacement trees should be 20 feet minimum and should be monitored, nurtured, and protected within the dripline so they survive a minimum of five years. Additionally, the Department considers oak woodland to have biological value beyond the individual trees. Oak woodland restoration therefore should include understory species and oak trees planted in appropriate soils and spaced appropriately in an area large enough to mitigate the loss.

9

Impacts to Nesting Birds – The DEIR proposes to mitigate impacts to nesting birds by avoiding the bird nesting season of March 15 - Sept. 15 (Mitigation Measure B-5, on page 5.3-10). However, the Department protocol to avoid the bird breeding season begins March 1, and often is extended to February 1 for raptor species such as the white-tailed kite (WTK). Data collected in the late 1960's and early 1970's on More Mesa in Santa Barbara County shows WTK having eggs in their nests as early as March 5 (Waian, 1973), indicating some WTK must have been nest building and breeding in February. We therefore recommend the dates for this

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mitigation measure be amended to begin February 1.

Streambed Alteration

The Department will require issuance of a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) under FGC Section 1600, prior to commencing work. You may call our San Diego office at (858) 636-3160 to initiate the 1600 process. You may also obtain an application package online by visiting the Department's website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/1600/notification_pkg.html. The Department's issuance of an SAA is considered a project that is subject to CEQA. To minimize additional requirements by the Department pursuant to Section 1600 et seq., the DEIR should fully identify the potential impacts to any drainage or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments. The Department emphasizes that in order to protect sensitive resources, substantial revisions to the proposed project may be required in the SAA. 11

For the reasons noted, the Department is unable to adequately review the DEIR with respect to impacts to biological resources. The District has acknowledged deficiencies in the DEIR and has indicated that Supplemental EIRs will be prepared for those proposed project actions which have not received adequate analyses (Pam Lindsey, pers. com.). We are reminded that Supplemental EIRs are required to be given the same kind of notice and public review as a draft EIR (CEQA Guidelines §15163(c)), and understand this implies an extended administrative process. The above comments are provided in that context and some are accordingly general in nature. 12

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. Questions regarding this letter and further coordination on these issues should be directed to Mr. Martin Potter, Wildlife Biologist, at (805) 640-3677.

Sincerely,

C. F. Raysbrook

C. F. Raysbrook

References:

Diltih, Chris. 2004. Draft Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, scope of work #W81EYN12572757. 43 pp.

Waian, Lee. 1973. The Behavioral Ecology of the North American White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus majusculus*) of the Santa Barbara Coastal Plain. PhD. Dissertation, Department of Biological Sciences, U.C. Santa Barbara.

cc: See next page

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cc: Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Martin Potter (Ojai)
Ms. Mary Meyer (Ojai)
Ms. Mary Larson (Los Alamitos)
Mr. Marcin Whitman (Sacramento)
CFR-Chron (San Diego)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mr. Chris Dilith
Ventura, California

State Clearinghouse
Mr. Scott Morgan
Sacramento, California

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REID

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July 28, 2004

Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Dr. Mr. Vivanti,

We are writing this letter to voice our endorsements to remove the defunct Matilija Dam. We are homeowners on the Ventura River in Oak View and also a Casitas Municipal Water District customer. Throughout the year, we spend a tremendous amount of time recreating along the Ventura River and Matilija Creek corridors. Being professional nature photographers, we can attest to the unique beauty of the upper Matilija Creek and the newly acquired Ventura River Preserve by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy.

Our recreational activities is not only limited to hiking along the Ventura River but also biking along the Ojai bike path that parallels the river. We also enjoy surfing at C Street in Ventura and kayaking on Lake Casitas. Over the years we have seen Ventura Point continually erode and the Ventura River slowly degrade from lack of water. 1

We consider the decaying Matilija Dam a taxpayer's liability and feel strongly that everyone would benefit from the removal of this obsolete structure. On a recent hiking trip to the headwaters of the Matilija Creek, we were pleasantly surprise in the number of steelhead fry that were in the deep pools and how well intact the riparian habitat was. On the contrary, the Ventura River is need of replenished water, soil and the eradication of noxious vegetation.

Our main concern in the removal of the dam would be CMWD using this process as a platform to increase their take of water from the watershed and not allowing for adequate flow to replenish the Ventura River and Casitas Springs aquifers. We pay an average of $13 a month for water and are willing to accept a rate increase to improve the river systems and our beaches. In my opinion, CMWD lacks the necessary promotion for water conservation but instead encourages water use.

By removing the Matilija Dam, promoting water conservation and enhancing the riparian ecosystem, we believe that the quality of life for the people and animals along the Ventura River and surrounding areas would be greatly increased.

Sincerely,

Rich and Gloria Reid
Colors of Nature

ROBERTS

Rancho Matilija Property Owners' Association
Seville Office Building
530 W. Ojai Avenue, Suite 106 / Ojai, CA 93023 / Telephone: (805) 646-5888

August 23, 2004

US Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
Attn : Mr Jon Vivanti
915 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles CA 90017-3401

Dear Mr. Vivanti Re: Matilija Dam, Ecosystem Restoration and Feasibility Study

The following concerns were presented to the Rancho Matilija Property Owners Association by owners residing within Rancho Matilija POA. The Board of Directors is requesting consideration of and response to the following concerns.

1. The spoil area is shown on the east side of the River directly opposite from homes in Rancho Matilija. The purpose of this spoil area is to help prevent bank erosion. The plans do not show any provision for handling significant surface street run-off from Rancho Matilija POA. Our main drain channel discharges directly across from the spoil area.

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2. The Public Draft Report dated July, 2004 does not identify potential problems or provide any analysis of possible bank erosion on the West side of the Ventura river immediately adjacent to the homes in Rancho Matilija.

3. Owners residing on Lots 32, 34, 35 in Rancho Matilija were conditioned to install concrete dikes along the west bank to divert Ventura river water away from the west bank. Will there be any adverse effects from the installation of the spoil area across from these dikes?

We appreciate your consideration and response to the above.

Sincerely,
Rancho Matilija Property Owners Association

K. L. Roberts, PCAM®
for the Board of Directors

ROSE

Ventura County Resource Conservation District
P.O. Box 147 - 3380 Somis Road - Somis, California 93066 – Phone (805) 386-4685

August 30, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

RE: Comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

The Ventura County Resource Conservation District is the lead agency for the Ventura County Arundo Task Force. We agree that the *Arundo donax* (Arundo) in the Ventura River Watershed is problematic. In addition to the displacement of native vegetation and its ancillary effects to the habitat in the area, Arundo is also a tremendous consumer of water. Water is obviously a precious commodity in the watershed and should be conserved wherever possible. Studies show that for every acre of Arundo removed and replaced with native vegetation, the available groundwater would be increased by 3.75 acre-feet per year. Given the abundance of Arundo in both the main stem and major tributaries, the available groundwater would be greatly increased. We feel that the removal of all Arundo in the watershed is paramount to the overall success of the Ecosystem Restoration efforts being proposed.

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B

Sincerely,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
VENTURA COUNTY
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Lee C. Waddle, III, President

Peggy Rose
Project Manager

SYLVESTER

August 15th, 2004

The Principle of Geological Zones: "In nature, geological forces literally lay the groundwork for habitats to evolve. After that, the forces of erosion gradually help to shape the land. Finally, climate plays a major role in determining the plant communities characteristic of each habitat. It is rock that, through igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic processes, functions as the skeletal "bone" that shapes the earth's topographical features. The relationship of exposed rock, whether in concentrated formations or loosely scattered, provides visual cues regarding the geological forces that shape the landscape."

TO: Ventura County Supervisor Mr. S. Bennett, Mr. J. Johnson Casitas Municipal Water District General Manager, Pam Lindsey Watershed Ecologist, Jon Vivanti Study Manager, Ventura County Watershed Protection District/U>S> Army Corps of Engineers, and Draft Environment Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Response.

From: Old Oak View Schoolhouse
655 Santa Ana Blvd.
Oak View, CA. 93022
c/o Stephen and Christina Sylvester

Dear Sirs:

As the above statement addresses, it is the relationship of exposed rock that will assist in the future geological changes that will assist shoring-up, and provide erosion protection for the future generations. I have personally read as many of the recent reports concerning the future viewpoints and potential options as possible. These have included the Los Angeles Times article, "Water Agency has concerns about report", by G. Wriggs. The specific information concerns sediment released downstream, and the potential of releasing Six Billion cubic yards of sediment, and the possibility of flattening the Ventura riverbed. Also, Casitas Municipal Water District Reports (with the opportunity for members of the public to provide direct input) on the "long term ecosystem restoration goals." With this in mind it is necessary for me to respond personally, and perhaps offer a solution to my concern. And finally, Feb. 2004 Casitas Municipal Water District: addressing the important concern for our next major rainfall and flooding ("the Ventura River, with heavy annual silt runoff, could increase significantly after dam removal unless appropriate steps are taken").

1

Watershed Protection District, Ventura County: "removal of the Matilija Dam to ultimately restore the Ventura River to a more natural streambed configuration."
A Public Notice: Section 15087 allows me to comment on the potential adverse impacts.

SYLVESTER

I would sincerely appreciate your kind attention in reviewing my proposal to promote a landscape effort to shore-up the Old Oak View School House property. In the long run it will be a necessity.

Several years ago a great deal of attention was directed toward shoring-up the opposite side of the river lip, as well as the (2) prominent wall extensions under the bridge. As you know we have not had a substantial winter rain fall to test the design of these projections, and how their design is to actually affect the flow of maximum water force.

1 (cont.)

When I purchased this property (8) years ago the natural river flow was in the middle of the river bed, and on the low side of the river lip. Upon building the (2) bridge extensions the flow has moved to the cliff side. I have photographed this development, and with this concern, I am writing to address my proposed solution. Can the effort be made to place large river stones along the exposed cliff base. If not, the constant future undermining of water current will certainly erode the cliff base, and the cliff will collapse. The simple solution of placing river boulders along the cliff edge bottom will eliminate a future potential disaster. Many countries such as Japan and Switzerland deal with such concerns as routine.

Sincerely,

Stephen and Christina
Sylvester

THACHER

From: TThacher@aol.com
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2004 4:33 PM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D
Cc: efthacher@yahoo.com; rmerckling@casitaswater.com
Subject: Matilija Dam EIS

Friend's Ranches, Inc.
15150 Maricopa Highway
Ojai, CA 93023

August 15, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Thank you for allowing me to comment at the public hearing on the Draft EIS/EIR on the proposed removal of Matilija Dam and for receiving these written comments. I realize that many organizations and individuals have work long and hard on producing this document, but I feel that one public hearing in a time frame of six weeks or so is totally inadequate for the public to discuss and reflect upon several thousand pages of technical material.

Our family lives and farms along the east side of the Ventura River in what is called Reach 6b in your report. A portion of the river runs through our property, and we also have a riparian water right on the North Fork of Matilija Creek.

We take issue with and are unequivocally opposed to any of our property being taken by eminent domain, although we remain open to discussions on how our ranch might be improved through temporary lease during the project period. We are opposed to the suggested equestrian trail going through our property at any time and believe that this would be a detriment to one of the primary goals of improving the steel head habitat. Further we do not understand why the existing road (Rice/Camino) was not considered as a cheaper and more appropriate location for temporary pipeline placement and for forest access.

1 Q1

2 F2

Please allow me to comment on what I perceive as the larger issues or objectives raised by your report—the enhancement of the steelhead fishery in the river and the protection of the public's water supply in the Ventura River watershed. I do not presume to be an expert in these matters, but my observations and historical discussions with the previous

THACHER

generation of occupants of this area lead me to believe that the fishery will never be significantly enhanced while we humans continue to inhabit these valleys. We are simply unwilling to limit population, control irrigated agriculture, eliminate landscaping such as lawns and golf courses in order to raise the ground water levels and enhance stream flows to the extent needed to bring back historic numbers of fish. My observation and anecdotal evidence from heavy equipment operators who have been in the rivers after peak flows lead me to believe that what steelhead remain will indeed attempt to reach available spawning grounds during those few years where flood conditions exist, but I don't believe we are willing to release enough water in years of 'normal' rainfall to allow enhancement of the Ventura River fishery. As far as I have been able to determine the fish ladder on the Vern Freeman diversion of the Santa Clara River has done little to enhance the Sespe River fish population, and our own San Antonio Creek has contained little water much less fish during the critical spring spawning season over the past 60 years or more. It's certainly true that the distribution of water into the Ojai Valley from the Ventura River by building the Matilija and Casitas projects eased the seasonal variation in the ground water levels of the Valley. However, the cutbacks in agricultural water use caused by the increased use of more water efficient irrigation systems implemented during the drought years of the 1980's and the increases in cost of CMWD versus pumping ground water over the past two decades has all but eliminated that stabilization. We all remain the villains as far as the fish are concerned.

3 D

With that preface, allow me to return to the question of the Matilija Dam as addressed in the EIS. It seems to me that the fishery, such as it is and such as it will be, would best be served at a lower cost by either drilling a tunnel or, better yet, cutting a 160 foot high notch at the narrowest point from the North Fork Matilija Creek to the level of the current delta area behind the dam. Although not as aesthetically pleasing as removing the dam, it would allow the steelhead access to the upper reaches of the river system, allow new flows of sediments to the river, obviate the need to condemn developed property that existed before the dam was built, and eliminate the need to deal with the silt accumulated directly behind the dam. In my rapid perusal of the EIS and accompanying documents I saw the mention of a tunnel only once but no serious discussion of tunneling or notching between the river forks.

4

I also did not think there was adequate weight given to the most obvious solution of incrementally removing the dam over 20 to 30 years. Again my perusal of the report shows that in spite mentioning deconstructing the dam in 15' increments (10 steps?), the only options considered identify incremental removal as being in two phases or less. From a sediment flow point of view taking increments of 4% of the dam's capacity over 25 years would cause less impact on the river system and would be an economically better solution. I would certainly agree that most sediment transport is accomplished during the brief periods when the river is in flood stage. I further agree that the silt is of little value, economically or ecologically, and will continue inevitably to the Channel floor. I find the ability of computer modeling as I inadequately understand it to be less than useful in predicting the sediment transport process into the future. For instance, no where in the report could I find a clear discussion of how the stream profile through our ranch given the bed rock constraints might be affected by any of the alternatives.

5

THACHER

Further, I did not see or understand at what elevations the Camino Cielo crossing or the proposed pipeline road and subsequent equestrian trail was to be built to avoid flooding in the future.

As to the continual debate—legal, political, and emotional—as to the water supply behind Matilija Dam, even the Corps seems to be unable to stick to known facts. If one can assume that your "Frequently Asked Questions" is one of the few documents that the public is likely to see and to read, I think that the answers should accurately fit the questions and should be as objective as possible. Matilija Dam is not on the North Fork of Matilija Creek. At Friend's Ranches we consider 400 or 500 acre-feet of water to be a considerable and useful amount, especially if a major portion of it can be renewed and diverted several times over in one wet winter. And it's about 100 times more than the 1.3 million gallons stated—enough to supply 800-1000 households a year. The answers to the 'endangered animals' and 'increased flooding if the dam is removed' questions are both incorrect and beg the queries.

It is inevitable that the sediment level will reach the notched top of Matilija Dam soon, but we can understand CMWD's reluctance to embrace the proposed alternative. They have reluctantly built a fish ladder at the Los Robles Diversion and committed considerable water resource to maintain sufficient flows during the critical spawning season. When the fish do not respond in the numbers some people would hope, the obvious solution is to pass even more water down the Ventura River. That CMWD has been in the business of water selling to the detriment of water conservation over the lifetime of the District, we as farmers are all too painfully aware. People, not trees, continue to vote.

However, we at Friend's Ranches think more not less water should be diverted to Lake Casitas and that this consideration should be part of any plan to remove Matilija Dam. We believe a better and larger diversion structure and canal should be constructed with improved capacity for sorting sediments from water during peak flows should be part of the Matilija Dam's deconstruction. We believe local water sources will always be cheaper than water imported from other areas and that expensive water is always a population growth inducement to the detriment of our efforts to maintain agriculture in the Ojai Valley.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Anson B. Thacher
Anne F. Thacher

THACHERA

Friend's Ranches, Inc.
15150 Maricopa Highway
Ojai, CA 93023

July 26, 2004

Casitas Municipal Water District
1055 Ventura Avenue
Oak View, California 93022

Sirs:

Although the Draft EIS and supporting documentation on the removal of Matilija Dam have been available to us as members of the public for less than a week, as property owners who appear to be affected, we feel the need to ask some preliminary questions and make some comments on the recommended plan.

In looking at the alternative plans considered, we do not understand why other ideas for mitigation were not considered. For instance, a 200' deep notch (or a tunnel as suggested by Jerry Conrow) could be cut in the ridge between the North Fork of Matilija Creek and Lake Matilija for considerably less than the recommended project cost. This would allow for continued use of the lake as a water resource for the rest of its projected life, allow fish migration during storm flows and whatever controlled flows were let out of the lake, and obviate the need to move solid material of any grain size except by natural stream flow and to the level of your current ability to regulate water flow from the lake. If properly protected, downstream property would not have to be taken by eminent domain. The hard sandstone from the notch could be used as revetment material. Finally, as much as I dislike the current daily truck traffic hauling sand and gravel from the Cuyama and San Joaquin past our ranch, some careful consideration of mining the delta area behind the dam for these materials should provide a closer supply for the coastal demands as well as extending the useful life of the lake.

1

As to the recommended plan 4b and your Board's deliberations, we have to question the use of 4500 ac-ft of our water resources for slurry transport during a drought period when no property-owner hookups are allowed. Also as to water supplies, it is unclear to us what happens after the year 2009 to the 3,500 ac-ft allotment that Matilija Dam and pipeline were built to supply to the east end of the Ojai Valley for agricultural use.

2
P1, P2

We hope to be allowed to make additional comments in the time before August 30th. We realize a great deal of time and effort has been put forth by a great many participants to produce these many thousands of pages, but allowing the public access for just six weeks to digest the material and comment seems a bit precipitous.

Sincerely yours,

Anson B. Thacher

FRIEND'S RANCHES
15150 MARICOPA HIGHWAY
OJAI, CALIFORNIA 93023
PHONE: 805 - 646-2871

THACHERE

August 5, 2004

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

ATTN: Jon Vivanti, CESPL-PD-WW

Dear Sir;

I was born in Ojai and grew-up on the land my family and I own (Friend's Ranches) just downstream from the Matilija Dam. Throughout my life I been aware of the various issues the dam has had; from listening to my grandparents and parents discussions about the dam being built, through it's notchings, silt problems, etc. I have spent time over the past 32 years playing, walking and enjoying the area of the Ventura River that runs through our land. I am quite aware of changes in the ecosystem around our farm property and in the river. In looking over the Draft EIS and plans for the removal of the Matilija Dam there are several concerns I have that have not been adequately addressed.

1) My first major issue is that affected property owners such as Friend's Ranches have not been contacted directly by the Army Corps to fully understand the implications of the proposal to our land. Maps provided in the EIS are unclear and it is difficult to determine how the proposed plan will affect our property. Your office should take the time to contact landowners and discuss the plan one-on-one with sufficient time for us to comment on the proposal as it might affect our farm and our ability to make a living for our family.

1 Q

2) The proposed plan states that several pipelines will be built for the slurry line, which under the proposal will bisect our land. From my understanding this swath of land will be taken and after the slurry has been removed the swath of land will become an equestrian/hiking trail. The idea of having a trail bisecting multiple private properties and the introduction of equine and humans into the river is not sound logistically or ecologically.

a. The swath of land will bisect our property, making access from one side to another difficult.
b. Where will access to and from such a trail be? Will there be parking, trash receptacles, etc.?
c. How will such a trail cross the various small tributaries to the river (i.e. Sheldon creek, Cozy Dell creek)?
d. Who will maintain the trail and for how long? The Forest Service is currently unable to maintain existing trails in the district. Many trails have not been maintained and for all intents abandoned for lack of funds to maintain them. The Forest Service currently depends upon other

2

Friend's R. 1/2

THACHERE

local trail maintenance crews, which are funded by short-term grants and other soft money. I am skeptical about relying on any such crews for long-term commitment to new trail maintenance.

e. Who will insure that hikers and riders stay on the trail rather than veering onto private land? Who will be responsible for such stray hikers/riders in the event of accidents, vandalism and theft?

f. Do the biologists involved in the Steelhead recovery plan think that introducing people and horses (and trash, manure, and weed seed) along the length of the river will improve habitat health for the endangered fish?

g. Why hasn't the existing road on the west side of the river been considered as a more suitable and less costly alternative for the pipeline/trail?

2 (cont.)

3) My third major concern pertains to our ability to access water for our farm during and after the project. We have riparian water rights to the north fork of the Matilija River. Our intake lies just above the bridge to the Matilija Sanctuary. Our pipeline runs along the western edge of Hwy 33 before going underground and reaching the northern edge of our property. We also have a well on the southern edge of our property. The map provided in the EIS shows the slurry pipeline running atop much of our water infrastructure. We grow citrus and cannot afford to be without sufficient water for more than a few days.

3

4) Lastly, I understand that under the proposed plan our property will change from a 50-year flood zone to a 10-year flood zone. I have yet to find any reasoning for this change. Is there any document that models the alteration of the streambed profile? We have considerable experience in dealing with flooding from the creeks in this canyon and other streams in the Ojai Valley in the recent past and also from before the dam was built and current road was constructed. In our opinion all the statistical data are of little help in planning or dealing with an intense south Pacific winter storm.

4

I have many other concerns about the project which I heard others state at the meetings on July 26th and 28th in Oakview and Ventura. I trust that all of these concerns will be properly addressed in the final EIS. I do hope that project managers and contractors are able to work together with private property managers to mitigate all of our concerns.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Emily Friend Thacher

cc. John Johnson Casitas Municipal Water District
Supervisor Steve Bennett, County of Ventura

Friends R 2/2

WALD

Mr Jeff Pratt, Director
Watershed Protection District
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria ave
Ventura CA 93009

8-27-2004

Ref: Matilija Dam Removal Project

1

Is it practical to Tunnel a Flow way thru the dam near the old stream bed level that would allow the fish to swim up and down Stream thru the Tunnel

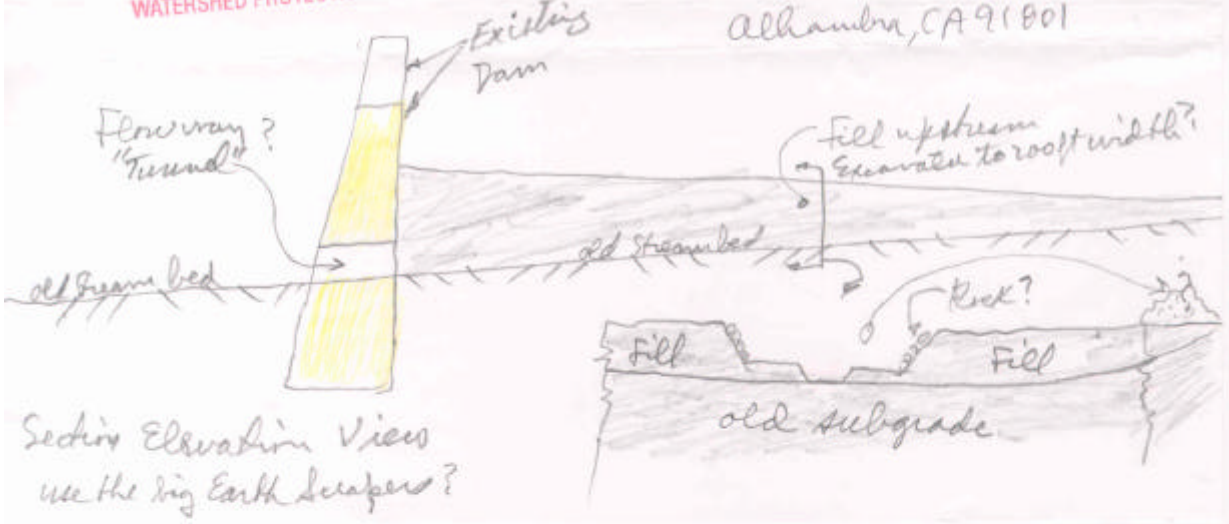
Can a rock and sand Contractor excavate a 200 or 300 foot wide flow way at the old stream bed level thru the silt, sand, gravel, rock and debris fill ~~behind~~ upstream of the dam.

the details of water flow planning during the Tunneling and Fill excavation upstream might require a initial water flow "pipe" while fill excavation proceeds?

would the dam be a Tourist attraction and a walkway across the stream

RECEIVED
AUG 30 2004
WATERSHED PROTECTION DIST.

Edwin Wald
230 N. Valencia
Alhambra, CA 91801



Section Elevation Views
use the big Earth Scrapers?

WALKER

Frank R. Walker Jr.
16001 Maricopa Hwy.
Ojai, Ca. 93023

7/23/04

Jon Vivanti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

I am writing you in regards to the proposed removal of the Matilija Dam. My wife and I own 38 acres near the dam. We are not convinced that removal of the dam is the best plan for the area.

To start with, how is dumping all of the silt in the Ventura River going to replenish the sand at the beaches? Silt is not sand! 1

The argument that the dam is blocking the spawning grounds for the steelhead trout is somewhat flawed. The primary reason the steelhead trout cannot spawn upstream of the Ventura River is because of the diversion facility for Lake Casitas. A fish ladder is being built at this site to facilitate the travel of fish. Any fish that make it past the fish ladder can migrate up the north fork of the Matilija Creek and spawn there! 2

The dam was built to provide flood control and water supply. The usefulness of the dam has diminished because of the silt that has deposited upstream of the dam. If the removal of the silt would be allowed to remove the dam, then why couldn't the silt be removed to restore the dam? 3

The water level in Lake Casitas is extremely low. Since this is the primary water supply for the area, I would think removing any source of supplemental water would be a big mistake! The dam has been a good source of water for fire-fighting helicopters! 4

Removing the dam could make the Ventura River more vulnerable to erosion. 5

Is this the cheapest and most practical way to remove the dam and the material behind the dam? Would it be practical to remove the dam in sections, starting from the top down and let the river move the silt on its own? 6

Ventura has a shortage of sand gravel. Most of the sand and gravel used in the Ventura area is trucked a very long distance. Some of the material comes from as far away as Little Rock! I think that there are sand and gravel operators in Ventura that would haul away material behind the dam at no charge to the taxpayers! 7

Removing of the Matilija dam is a very big undertaking. I think that all options should be considered. Perhaps the $110 millions dollars of taxpayer's money could be spent on something more constructive! 8

Feel free to contact me at 805-640-0651.

Frank R. Walker Jr.

Cc: Casitas Municipal Water District

Word

WORD

CASITAS Municipal Water District

1055 Ventura Avenue
Oak View, CA 93022
(805) 649-2251
Fax (805) 649-3001

August 27, 2004

Mr. Jon Vivanti
Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Casitas Municipal Water District has reviewed the latest version of the draft environmental documents for the proposed Matilija Dam removal project. Once again, we are concerned about the information provided in these documents and the approach the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and Ventura County (County) have chosen to assess and address potential impacts of the project on other resources, communities, and individuals within the Ventura River Basin. On numerous occasions, we have raised our concerns with the ACOE and County. By way of reference, we request that you include those earlier comments as part of the public comments on the *Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR)* (see attachments). 1

To provide comments on the July 2004 public review draft of the EIS/EIR, and supporting documents, Casitas reviewed the documents to determine whether or not the preferred alternative adequately addressed concerns raised by Casitas over the last year. Specifically, did the preferred alternative offset potential: 1) Water quality impacts, 2) Southern California steelhead population impacts, 3) Water supply impacts, and 4) Recreation impacts. The results of that review are attached. We request that you address all of the comments contained in that review.

Based on our assessment, Casitas believes that the *Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report*, prepared in July 2004, is inadequate. Additionally, the preferred alternative does not provide adequate analysis or protective measures to prevent impacts associated with the four primary areas of concerns raised by Casitas over the last year. We request the following:

The EIS/EIR and a decision on the project should not be finalized until the following issues are satisfactorily addressed.

1) Include avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to reduce the short-term impacts to Southern California steelhead (consider downstream migrating juvenile trap-and-truck operations or use of conservation hatchery program);
2) Develop and implement a viable program whereby the Project Proponents will be accountable and responsible for potential long-term effects to Southern California steelhead should they occur; 2
3) The EIS/EIR should include an analysis of the results with respect to drinking water standards: This analysis should include, but not be limited to:
   a) Arsenic addition to the lake through sediment input requires further study to determine possible effects on the drinking water supply, and Casitas' ability to meet future regulations.

WORD 2

b) Concerns regarding DDT detected in the sediment samples need to be adequately addressed. It was determined that the sediments contaminated with DDT should not be classified as a hazardous waste, but water quality criteria and mitigation of potential water quality impacts have not been addressed.
c) The possible effects of sediment loads on the lake and Water Treatment Plant need to be assessed in a study. As a worst case, degradation of the finished water quality could occur with possible violations of Federal or State drinking water standards.
d) The potential effects of releases of poor quality water need to be studied and addressed in the EIR/EIS. As an example, water with low dissolved oxygen levels or high hydrogen sulfide levels may cause problems downstream of the project area.

4) If appropriate, identify mitigation measures to mitigate for adverse impacts to water quality with respect to drinking water standards;
5) Facility maintenance mitigation (e.g. cost reimbursement) and site identification information and mitigation (e.g. land purchase/lease arrangement) should be included and assessed; 2
6) The impacts to facility maintenance should be addressed in the EIS/EIR.
7) The EIS/EIR should identify and analyze a specific alternate source of water to offset the impacts of the Project;
8) The EIS/EIR should address the impact of the project on Matilija Conduit water users and the associated water supply;
9) The EIS/EIR should identify and analyze the effect of the final disposition of water rights associated with Matilija Reservoir;
10) Recreational impacts at Lake Casitas associated with the proposed project should be assessed;
11) Implementation of any avoidance, minimization, and mitigation actions associated with the Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation on this project need to be identified and assessed;
12) Impacts to any resources (e.g. water resources) resulting from the Section 7 Consultation for this project need to be mitigated;
13) Impacts need to be assessed for Agricultural, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services; and Utilities and Service Systems resources;
14) Include scientifically accurate and unbiased information in your description of Fisheries Resources.

We recognize the efforts that the ACOE and County have made to address the concerns raised by Casitas. However, as a matte of public record, we have stated on numerous occasions that we must object to this project when it does not adequately address the issues we have raised.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

James W. Word
President, Board of Directors

Attachments: Casitas Review July 2004 Public Review Draft EIS/EIR and associated documents
Jim Edmondson August 12, 2004 letter
Previous comments from Casitas

Cc w/attachment: Casitas Review July 2004 Public Review Draft EIS/EIR:

Jeff Pratt, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Bull Luce, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Kirk Rogers, U.S Bureau of Reclamation
Colonel Richard G. Thompson, Army Corp of Engineers
Reynaurd M. Farve, Army Corp of Engineers
Rebecca Lend, NOAA Fisheries
Diane Noda, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Rodney McInnis, NOAA Fisheries
Charles Raysbrook, California Department of Fish & Game
Arthur Baggett, State Water Resources Control Board
Jim Edmondson, California Trout Inc.
Congressman Elton Gallegly
Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Diane Feinstein
Congresswoman Lois Capps
Assembly Member Hannah-Beth Jackson
Linda Parks, Ventura County Supervisor
Steve Bennett, Ventura County Supervisor
Judy Mikels, Ventura County Supervisor
Kathy Long, Ventura County Supervisor
John Flynn, Ventura County Supervisor

WORD

Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
July 2004 Public Review Draft EIS/EIR Review

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The preferred alternative for the removal of Matilija Dam is designated as Alternative 4b – Full Dam Removal/Short-Term Transport Period. The goal of the Proposed Action is to remove Matilija Dam, restore passage for steelhead, remove invasive giant cane, and return natural stream dynamics to this section of the Ventura watershed. The Proposed Action includes the following project activities:

- Removal of Matilija Dam;
  - Removal of the entire concrete dam structure above the original streambed
- Removal of material from behind the dam;
  - Removal of reservoir fine sediment by hydraulic dredge and transport by slurry line to an offsite disposal location;
  - Construction of a temporarily stable channel through the remaining sediments in the delta and upstream channel;
  - Placement of excavated sediments in storage areas within the original reservoir limits and delta area and protecting these areas with soil cement revetments. The height of the revetments would vary from 3 to 7 feet above the constructed channel thalweg and would be designed to overtop at flows equivalent to the 2-, 5-, and 10-year recurrence intervals to allow for entrainment and transport of the stored material at these flows; and
  - Removal of the soil cement revetments in stages to allow for gradual erosion and transport of stored sediments.
- Implementation of downstream flood protection;
- Removal of giant reed beginning in Reaches 7, 8, and 9 (all located upstream of the dam), then continuing with eradication efforts downstream;
- Modification of downstream water supply facilities to maintain water quantity and quality;
  - Construction of a sediment bypass structure at the Robles Fish Passage and Water Diversion Facility;
  - Construction of a basin to reduce the turbidity level of water entering Lake Casitas;
  - Obtaining water from sources such as the California State Water Project and/or groundwater supplies to offset water supply losses from operation of Matilija Reservoir
- Revegetation and restoration.
  - Revegetation of the sediment storage areas following removal of the soil cement revetments.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT:

The majority of the District's water supply is obtained from surface water diversions from the Ventura River, at the Robles Diversion Dam, located approximately 2 miles downstream of Matilija Dam. Casitas utilizes Matilija Reservoir for water storage and

enhancement of the water supply in Lake Casitas. Additionally, Casitas has made a considerable economic investment in the Robles Fish Passage Facility and has obligated a significant portion of their water supply to enhance migration of Southern California steelhead in the Ventura River. Accordingly, Casitas has reviewed the aforementioned documents to determine whether these documents adequately address concerns raised by Casitas on potential impacts to the Casitas water supply and facility operations and, if so, provided adequate mitigation for these impacts.

In regards to the predictions of sediment transport and deposition following removal of the dam, it is important to note some of the limitations/uncertainties of these predictions and the potential impact on the model results. In regards to the hydrologic input to the sediment transport model, the hydrological record from 1991 to 2001 was simulated 5 times in succession to generate the 50-year hydrograph used in the model. This period represents a relatively wet period and, accordingly, likely under predicts the time required to move sediment through the system and reach equilibrium conditions as noted in the text of the Hydrology Report. In regards to bedload transport, a comparison of the computed bedload transport capacity with measured bedload transport data indicates that the equation used in the model generally over predicts the volume of material transported at a given flow as shown in Figure 8.12 of the Hydrology Report. For example, at a flow of approximately 6,000 cfs, the measured bedload transport of grain sizes greater than 4 mm was approximately 400 tons/day and the computed bedload transport is approximately 5,500 tons/day. This discrepancy is noted in the Hydrology Report and is likely partially attributable to difficulties in accurately measuring bedload transport at high flows and in streams with relatively large substrate. However, it appears that the computed bedload transport used in the model likely over predicts the volume of material transported at a given flow which results in an underestimation of the time required to move sediment through the system and reach equilibrium conditions. Another area of uncertainty is related to the erosion of the reservoir sediments. As indicated in the Hydrology Report, it is difficult to accurately predict the erosion of these sediments. Accordingly, the actual rate of erosion may be more or less than those predicted by the model. Finally, in regards to the preferred alternative, the design of the project includes placing excavated sediments in storage areas within the original reservoir limits and delta area and protecting these areas with soil cement revetments designed to overtop at flows equivalent to the 2-, 5-, and 10-year recurrence intervals to allow for entrainment and transport of the stored material at these flows. Although difficult to predict future runoff conditions, if a larger than 10-year storm occurs within the first few years following removal of the dam, then a larger than predicted amount of sediment will be transported and deposited downstream.

The following comments have been prepared based on that review and assessment:

POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO STEELHEAD

Information presented within the document:

Project-related impacts on steelhead are presented in Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR. Direct impacts to steelhead may result from the dispersion of sediments into the water column during dam removal and sediment stabilization activities. Sediments could damage spawning grounds, negatively impact water, habitat, and food quality. Large sediment pulses may partially or completely fill channels, resulting in or permanent changes to the channel course. Sediment and fine particulate matter can fill interstitial spaces between gravel and result in lower oxygen content or smothering and subsequent mortality to egg masses. Increases of sediment may also fill in pools and spawning habitat, clog gill structures, reduce visibility, and

result in abrasions to migrating fish. By stabilizing these sediments downstream, it is expected that after two or three storms, the turbidity levels would be no more than twice the natural levels. The short-term effects of aggradation during the first two storm events may result in significant impacts to steelhead. After the third storm passes, the concentrations should return to natural levels. In addition, aquatic organisms have evolved under natural disturbances such as sediment pulses and have been documented as recovering rapidly (USACOE, 2004), often within 2 or 3 years (CDPHE, 2000; NMFS, 2001). Therefore, potential short-term impacts to steelhead as a result of increased sediment load and turbidity are considered adverse and significant. Potential long-term impacts resulting from fine sediment transport associated with implementation of Alternative 4b may be adverse but not significant.

Section 5.3.3 states that the removal of Matilija Dam would clearly benefit steelhead populations in the Ventura River watershed. The removal of the dam would open 16 miles of prime steelhead spawning habitat to the species. The accessibility of this additional habitat would result in the net gain of spawning habitat even with the temporary loss or degradation of spawning habitat in the lower river. The removal of Matilija Dam would also provide steelhead populations that have been landlocked since the construction of the dam access to the Pacific Ocean and allow a potential return to anadromy. Eventually, a natural free-flowing river would result in normal sediment deposition downstream that assuredly would lead to better habitat for steelhead, where only coarse boulder streambeds currently exist. This is expected to occur within ten years following the beginning of deconstruction activities. Therefore, the deposition of sediment is expected to be gradual and not expected to cause any blockages or barriers to fish passage or migration (USACOE, 2004).

Proposed Mitigation:
To control the large sediment pulses from occurring and/or limit their effects, the majority of fine sediments of silt and clay would be transported to a downstream 94-acre proposed slurry site and stabilized to a 50-year event. Coarse material that is less damaging to water quality would be temporarily stabilized at three locations within Reach 7, located upstream of Matilija Dam. Three levels of protection (during 2-, 5-, and 10-year storm events or greater) incorporating soil cement revetments would be used, such that areas with higher proportions of fines are protected.

Assessment:
In general, the analysis of potential impacts to Southern California steelhead was generally lacking in detail and was not a through scientific analysis of the information.
The potential short-term impacts to steelhead as a result of increased sediment load and turbidity during dam removal and sediment stabilization activities would be adverse and significant. There is a potential for direct injury or mortality to fish due to the increase in sediment input to the channel. The effects to rearing and spawning habitat would be substantial in the first few years. The habitat effects include the loss of rearing habitat associated with reduced pool availability and general loss of hydraulic and associated aquatic habitat complexity. The overall effect on the population would be high. It should be noted that short-term impacts could, and probably would, result in negative long-term effects. 3

The conclusion that the overall benefits of opening up spawning habitat for Southern California steelhead will outweigh the short-term impacts is unfounded. The document does not present any information or analysis to support the conclusion. It appears that it simply the "opinion" of the author. If the conclusion is based on re-colonization of the Ventura River those conclusions should be described and based on scientific evidence. Additionally, the potential loss of population fitness for steelhead was not addressed. The removal of Matilija 4 5

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Dam could, in fact, provide steelhead/rainbow trout populations above the dam access to the Pacific Ocean, however, it is not known if the progeny of the landlocked population will ever be able to smolt and regain the anadromous lifestyle of their ancestors. The integration of the population residing above Matilija Dam with anadromous steelhead inhabiting the Ventura River mainstem and tributaries downstream of the Robles Diversion could reduce the overall fitness of the current steelhead population in the Ventura River Watershed. This potential effect was not addressed.

5 (cont.)

Recommendations:

1) Include measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the short-term impacts to Southern California steelhead (e.g. trap and truck juvenile fish);
2) Develop and implement a viable program whereby the Project Proponents will be accountable and responsible for potential long-term effects to Southern California steelhead should they occur.
3) The EIS/EIR should not be finalized until these issues are addressed.

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POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO WATER QUALITY- CONTAMINANTS

Information presented within the document:
Section 5.1.3 presents information on how Alternative 4b would not result in any substantial soil contamination or involve activities that would mobilize contaminants. Initial soil samples performed by the BOR in March 2002 and included in the Geotechnical Field Investigations of the Feasibility Study indicated that sediments stored behind the dam are not toxic (BOR, 2002). However, it is possible that unexpected soil or groundwater contamination could be encountered during grading or excavation.

Proposed Mitigation:
Additional tests would be conducted in later stages of the planning process to ensure that no undiscovered contaminants are exposed during construction. Also, Mitigation Measures ER-3 and ER-4 would ensure that potentially significant impacts are reduced to less-than-significant levels.

ER-3 Observed exposed soil. During trenching, grading, or excavation work for the project, the contractor shall observe the exposed soil for visual evidence of contamination. If visual contamination indicators are observed during construction, the contractor shall stop work until the material is properly characterized and appropriate measures are taken to protect human health and the environment. The contractor shall comply with all local, State, and federal requirements for sampling and testing, and subsequent removal, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. In the event that evidence of contamination is observed, the contractor shall document the exact location of the contamination and shall immediately notify the Corps of Engineers' construction manager. The Corps shall be responsible for formulating and implementing plans to characterize and remediate any contamination encountered during construction. These plans shall specify procedures for monitoring, identifying, handling, and disposing of hazardous wastes in accordance with federal and State regulations.
ER-4 Hazardous substance control. The Corps of Engineers, or its construction contractor, shall prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan that will include preparations for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The Plan will prescribe hazardous materials handling procedures to reduce the potential for a spill during construction, and will include an emergency response program to ensure quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The Plan will identify areas where refueling and vehicle-maintenance activities and storage of hazardous materials, if any, will be permitted.

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Assessment:
The evaluation of potential water quality impacts associated with the sediment presently deposited behind Matilija Dam does not appear to have considered affects on water quality with respect to drinking water standards. The sediment characterization results are discussed in the *Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Geotechnical Field Investigations* prepared by the Bureau of Reclamation in July 2002. In this document, the sediment characterization results are evaluated for suitability for beach nourishment and upland disposal using the Puget Sound Dredged Disposal Analysis (PSDDA) and NOAA sediment quality criteria and hazardous waste criteria outlined in 40 CFR. The PSDDA and NOAA sediment quality criteria are used to evaluate potential impacts to aquatic organisms and the hazardous waste criteria are used to evaluate disposal requirements for waste. However, the surface water of the Ventura River is utilized by Casitas for a drinking water suppply: which has different standards.

The EIS/EIR does not include information regarding the possible effects the project may have on compliance with current or future State and Federal drinking water quality standards. Additionally, there is inadequate information on how this project relates to the Basin Plan, and how California Regional Water Quality Control Board guidelines will be addressed. Documentation of plans for compliance with the Clean Water Act Requirements have not been provided. There is a lack of detail concerning consultations with RWQCB and California Department of Health Services. If the possible negative effects of the project are underestimated, the beneficial use of Lake Casitas may be impaired.

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Recommendations:
1) The EIS/EIR should include an analysis of the results with respect to drinking water standards. This analysis should include, but not be limited to:
   a) Arsenic addition to the lake through sediment input requires further study to determine possible effects on the drinking water supply, and Casitas' ability to meet future regulations.
   b) Concerns regarding DDT detected in the sediment samples need to be adequately addressed. It was determined that the sediments contaminated with DDT should not be classified as a hazardous waste, but water quality criteria and mitigation of potential water quality impacts have not been addressed.

2) If appropriate, identify mitigation measures to mitigate for adverse impacts to water quality with respect to drinking water standards.
3) These issues should be addressed prior to finalizing the EIS/EIR.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO WATER QUALITY- TURBIDITY

Information presented within the document:
The Project will result in turbidity levels higher than existing conditions, which could potentially impact water quality in Lake Casitas, a drinking water supply reservoir.

Proposed Mitigation:
In order to mitigate for this impact, the EIR/EIS includes the construction of a desilting basin for the Robles-Casitas Diversion Canal. Fine sediment will be settled out in the basin by the addition of a flocculant. Incorporation of this basin will reduce the potential impact to water quality in Lake Casitas. Additionally, it will likely allow the District to divert water at higher/more turbid flows than under current operations; however, it will

require additional maintenance by the District in order to periodically remove the deposited sediment to a nearby storage site.

Assessment:
The impacts to facility maintenance are not addressed in the EIS/EIR and a suitable storage site is not identified in the document.

Recommendations:
1) The issues of facility maintenance and site identification should be included and assessed prior to finalizing the EIR/EIS.
2) The possible effects of sediment loads on the lake and Water Treatment Plant need to be assessed in a study. As a worst case, degradation of the finished water quality could occur with possible violations of Federal or State drinking water standards.
3) The potential effects of releases of poor quality water need to be studied and addressed in the EIR/EIS. As an example, water with low dissolved oxygen levels or high hydrogen sulfide levels may cause problems downstream of the project area.

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POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO WATER SUPPLY (QUANTITY)-

Information Presented within the Document:
Section 5.2.3 presents information on sediment transport and increased turbidity of flows downstream as a result of the Proposed Action. In the short term, demolition of the dam and the mechanical removal of sediment would introduce fine sediment into the river system. The fine sediment concentrations are estimated to be between two and ten times higher from beginning of dam demolition until the first storm passes through the reservoir area. The long-term increase in turbidity after construction is complete should only occur during high flow events.
Near Robles Diversion Dam, deposition would increase considerably. The expected deposition is expected to be approximately twice the current deposition or 22,400 cy/yr (equivalent to 14 AF/yr) under equilibrium conditions. Currently, operation of the Robles Diversion becomes difficult once 40,000 cy is deposited behind the diversion dam. This volume is presently only exceeded for floods with a return period of at least as long as 20 years, but with the re-supply of sediment from Matilija Creek, this volume may be exceeded for average floods as well. Under equilibrium conditions, it is estimated that floods with a return period larger than three to four years would deposit 40,000 cy or more of material behind Robles Diversion.
In the event that sediment deposition levels at the Robles Diversion facility exceed 40,000 cy, diversion operations to Lake Casitas would be interrupted until the sediment basin is cleared out. Should this occur at the beginning or middle of the diversion season, the facility would miss diversion opportunities for the remaining portion of the season. Repeated missed diversion opportunities could adversely affect the safe annual yield for Lake Casitas. Based on the sediment transport modeling studies for Alternative 4b, the deposition associated with the first few years of storm events would exceed 40,000 cy in the sediment basin. After that, storms would deliver between two to three times the existing condition levels. The safe yield could be impacted for at least the first three major storm seasons, potentially reducing the safe yield in Lake Casitas by 6,000 AF/yr, for a total of 18,000 AF.
Section 5.2.3 states that, with the exception of induced flooding, sediment related impacts are generally beneficial for the reason that the river channel downstream of the dam would return to sediment equilibrium after approximately ten years. Alternative 4b would result in a potential increase in flood hazards primarily through sediment deposition that would reduce channel and levee capacity, reduce bridge capacity, and raise flood water surface elevations.

The Robles Diversion Dam would be impacted by sediment-laden flood flows, but is not expected to suffer severe damage by simple inundation.
The removal of Matilija Dam could potentially deplete groundwater or surface water supplies or interfere with groundwater flow or recharge due to increases in turbidity and sedimentation. Potential impacts to diversion operations at Lake Casitas are prevented by the proposed sediment bypass structure. Impacts would be adverse, but less-than-significant.

Casitas has a lease with Ventura County to use stored water at Matilija Dam until 2009, when the current lease expires. Matilija Dam provides an average of 590 AF/yr of water for Robles diversion under current operating criteria. The safe yield water supply that is estimated to be lost when the Dam is removed in year 2007 is 1,180 AF.

Proposed Mitigation:
A sediment bypass structure is included in Alternative 4b to reduce the amount of coarse sediment deposition that occurs at the Robles Diversion sediment basin. The bypass includes four radial gates that, when combined with three existing radial gates, allows for passage of sediments and flows up to 17,000 cfs. Initial modeling shows that a sediment bypass structure placed at the sediment basin would limit the amount of deposition to approximately existing level conditions. This bypass feature would substantially reduce any potential impacts related to water diversions at Robles Diversion facility. Adverse downstream impacts are not anticipated with this bypass feature in place. With the implementation of this feature, aggradation impacts would be adverse, but less than significant.
Between RM 14.4 and 14.15 (at the Robles Diversion), a combination of levees (2,500 ft) and floodwalls (approximately 2,523 ft) is included in this Alternative to reduce the flood-induced impacts. The levee/floodwall feature would extend from approximately RM 14.4 to 13.45 and would tie into high ground at either end. The levee/floodwall would be up to 17 ft high above the existing bank. With these levees and floodwalls in place, impacts would be less-than-significant.
To offset the safe yield water supply that is estimated to be lost when the Dam is removed, Alternative 4b assumes this would involve purchasing water from the California State Water Project. However, during Pre-construction Engineering and Design, other alternatives such as obtaining water from groundwater or other less costly sources would be considered for mitigation. Because the water could be obtained from other sources, the loss of Matilija Dam storage water is considered adverse, but less-than-significant.

Assessment:
The Project will result in an increase in the volume of sediment being deposited in the area impounded by the Robles Diversion Dam. The EIS/EIR indicates that the volume of deposition "is expected to be approximately twice the current deposition or 22,400 cy/year under equilibrium conditions." This volume of deposition is based on the sediment modeling simulations described in the Hydrology Report and represents an estimate of the deposition based on the assumptions used to develop the model. The actual volume of deposition could be less or greater than this amount in any given year based on the runoff conditions.

The increased deposition could affect the District's diversion operations and adversely affect the District's water supply. The EIR/EIS recognizes this impact and includes a mitigation measure of constructing a sediment bypass structure to reduce the amount of coarse sediment deposition at the Robles Diversion and, conversely, potential impacts to the water diversions. However, even with the sediment bypass structure, sediment deposition at the Robles Diversion will likely be greater than existing conditions which will result in increased

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maintenance costs for the removal of sediment from the impounded area, in the vicinity of the fish screen, and, potentially, the fish passage facility. These impacts to facility maintenance are not addressed in the EIS/EIR.
The EIS/EIR indicates that Matilija Dam provides an average of 590 acre-feet/year of water for the District. To mitigate for this loss, the EIR/EIS proposes obtaining a similar amount of water from other sources such as the California State Water Project and/or groundwater; however, no definite alternate source is identified.

The results of the sediment modeling discussed in the Hydrology Report indicate that deposition is expected to occur in the reach situated between the Robles Diversion and the Baldwin Road Bridge (Reach 5). This reach is of particular interest to the District due to fish passage concerns. The present water release requirements associated with the Robles Fish Passage Facility were developed to provide adequate flow for fish passage in this reach. If deposition in this reach results in an increase in the width-depth ratio of the channel, then additional water release requirements may be imposed on the District to provide for adequate fish passage.

The documents to don adequately assess the potential impacts of the project on Matilija Conduit water users or their water supply. The long-term supply of water associated with these water users is bound with Matilija Reservoir. The potential impact on their water supply and the potential water conveyors that may need to provide that supply is not addressed in the EIS/EIR. The documents fail to be public disclosure documents without this analysis. 10

The long-term disposition of water rights associated with this project was not addressed in the EIS/EIR. The disposition of these rights is an important consideration as it relates to this project. Casitas has raised this issue on many occasions. Additionally, Cal-Trout has identified this as a significant issue for the Matilija Project in a letter to the State Water Resources Control Board (Edmondson August 12, 2004 see attachment).

Recommendations:

1) The impacts to facility maintenance should be addressed in the EIS/EIR.
2) The EIS/EIR should identify and analyze the potential effects of the project on Matilija Conduit water users and their water supply;
3) The EIS/EIR should identify and analyze the effect of the final disposition of water rights associated with Matilija Reservoir;
4) The EIS/EIR should identify and analyze an alternate source of water to offset the impacts of the Project.
5) The potential impact to the Casitas water supply associated with potential increases in water releases to the Robles reach as a result of this project should be addressed and analyzed.
6) Develop and implement a viable program whereby the Project Proponents will be accountable and responsible for potential long-term effects to migration of Southern California steelhead should they occur as a result of this project. This program should include the installation of channel cross-sections in this reach at selected sites, annual monitoring of these cross-sections to evaluate changes in channel geometry, criteria for determining potential impacts to fish passage, and proposed measures to mitigate for potential impacts to fish passage. 11
7) The EIS/EIR should not be finalized until these issues are addressed.

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POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS TO RECREATION AT LAKE CASITAS-

Information Presented within the Document:
Section 4.11 presents information on recreational facilities and states that Lake Casitas is not included in this study because it is geographically separated from the Ventura River and Matilija Canyon, so recreational opportunities at Lake Casitas are not expected to be affected by the Proposed Action.

Proposed Mitigation:
No mitigation identified.

Assessment:
The proposed slurry water supply pipeline and the sedimentation basin to decrease turbidity are proposed in the vicinity of Lake Casitas. Both of these proposed actions have the potential to have an impact on recreation at Lake Casitas. 12

Recommendation:
1) Recreational impacts associated with the proposed project should be assessed prior to finalizing the EIS/EIR.

OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES:

- Without completed Biological Opinions on ESA listed species it was impossible to assess al of the potential impacts associated with this project. At this point in time, the EIS/EIR is not a complete public disclosure documents. 13
- We question the citation (USFWS, 2003) on pg. 2-2. Steelhead are known to occur in the Ventura River system and were estimated to be between 4,000 and 5,000 individuals prior to the development of the Matilija Dam in 1947. To our knowledge NOAA Fisheries did not conduct any population estimation surveys associated with the Matilija Project. If the authors are citing a comment made in a biological opinion they should reference the citation "In the opinion of NOAA". Additionally, we are concerned that 1) the citation implies that a scientifically based fish population estimate occurred (which it did not) and 2) that the information presented is not complete and implies that the reduction in numbers is solely the result of Matilija Dam. For example, CDFG employees reported that as many as 4,000 to 5,000 spawning adult steelhead could have been in the Ventura river in 1946 (Clanton and Jarvis 1946). They developed this number by interviewing anglers and counting fish in some sections of the Ventura River. The number they developed was not based on a scientific method. Additionally, they did not describe their methodology is such a manner that it can be repeated today. The use of the citation also gives the appearance of selective use of the available information. In March 1947, only 250-300 adult fish were believed to be in the Ventura River (Evans 1947). The EIS/EIR should cite both sources of information. 14
- CEQA resource areas not addressed within the affected environment section: Agricultural, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services; and Utilities and Service Systems
- Absent, a statement briefly indicating that various possible significant effects of a proposed action were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the document 15

WYDZGA

From: awydzga [awydzga@bren.ucsb.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2004 3:08 AM
To: Vivanti, Jonathan D
Cc: awydzga@bren.ucsb.edu
Subject: Comments for EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (MDERP). Let me preface my comments by stating that the EIS/EIR and supporting documents for the MDERP are sizeable documents. I apologize if my questions are addressed somewhere within the document that I was not able to locate.

Although I strongly support the removal of the dam, I have the following concerns that I was not able to find in the EIS/EIR.

One of the main stated purposes of the dam is to restore a population of southern California steelhead. Is the population of steelhead that currently utilize the Ventura River downstream of the dam critical to the long-term survival of the California steelhead population in the Ventura River/Matilija Creek watershed? If so, where is the prime rearing and spawning habitat of the southern California steelhead located downstream of the dam (i.e. in the Ventura River)? How will this habitat be affected both over the short term by the sediment that will be released from dam removal and over the long term by restoring a natural bed load regime to the river? The EIR/EIS states that sediment released from the dam removal may completely fill channels, pools, or spawning habitat. Could the sediment release have a severe impact on steelhead habitat downstream of the dam and lead to the extinction of the steelhead population before it has a chance to recover?

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The EIS/EIR states that dam removal will result in a "natural" sediment regime downstream of the dam that "contributes to habitat complexity and diversity by redistributing spawning gravel, formation of riffles, channel widening, increase in channel braiding, and contribution of channel movement (p. 5-3-20)". However, the reality is that the flow and sediment regime in the mainstem of the Ventura River will not return to some ideal "natural" conditions but will continue to be affected by human impacts such as a constrained valley bottom due the presence of levees and the 33 highway and the presence of the diversion dam just to name a few. As such, both the short-term impacts of the sediment release and the long-term impacts of restoring a natural bed load regime to the river will affect the distribution and quality of salmonid habitat downstream of the dam (or any other sensitive species dependant on the main channel of river system or the floodplain for its habitat) in a way that is different from previous "natural" conditions. Again will these changes be positive, neutral, or

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negative? Where is the critical spawning and rearing habitat? If it is temporarily wiped out, will spawning and rearing habitat form in other locations over the same time period to ensure the survival of any of the threatened, endangered, or sensitive species in the Ventura River downstream of the dam?

These questions can and should be answered to evaluate the best alternative for dam removal.

Sincerely,

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APPEARANCES:

COLONEL DAVID TURK - Acting Commander, Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District

STEVE BENNETT - Ventura County Supervisor, District 1

NEAL FISHMAN - California Coastal Conservancy

RUTH VILLALOBOS - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

JEFF PRATT - Ventura County Watershed Protection District

SUE HUGHES - Ventura County Executive Office

JON VIVANTI - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DARRELL BUXTON - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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BLAIR GREIMANN - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Transcription by: Joanne Zivich
Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 1

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2004

VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

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COLONEL TURK: Good evening. I'm Colonel Turk from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I'm the Acting Commander. Thank you coming taking -- excuse me. Thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to join us tonight.

The purpose of this meeting is to give us an opportunity to hear your comments on the Matilija Dam Public Draft Report and, in particular, your comments on the tentatively Recommended Plan. This meeting is part of the public review process ending on August 30th for the draft Feasibility Study and the Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report. I'll talk about some more details of this meeting and the public review time a little later, but first let me introduce a few others sitting with me tonight:

Supervisor Steve Bennett. Supervisor Bennett is the Chair of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. He has been a strong advocate for action. His suggestions, comments, and participation in all aspects of this study are one of the primary reasons we are here tonight.

Supervisor John Flynn. Supervisor Flynn was critical in initiating this effort a few years ago.

Mr. Neal Fishman. Mr. Fishman is with the California Coastal Conservancy. The Conservancy has provided State funding to assist in the preparations of this Feasibility Study.

Ms. Ruth Villalobos. Ms. Villalobos is the Chief of the Corps' Planning Division in Los Angeles and has been a key member of the Executive Team.

On the wings we have members of the Team from the Corps, Ventura County Watershed Protection District, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. To my right, from the Corps of Engineers, we have Darrell Buxton, the Project Manager; Jim Hutchison, Chief of the Watershed Studies Group; and Jon Vivanti, the Study Manager.

To my left, from the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, we have Sue Hughes, the Legislative Assistant -- excuse me, the Legislative Analyst from the County CEO's office; Jeff Pratt, the Director of Ventura County Watershed Protection District; Sergio Vargas, the Deputy Director of Ventura County Watershed Protection District; and Blair Greimann, the lead hydraulic engineer for this study from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

I would like to recognize one more participant that has been critical in providing funding to the Corps to allow

us to progress so rapidly. That participant is Congressman Ed Gallegly. Many thanks to him and his District Chief of Staff, Brian Miller.

In a few minutes we will hear from Jon Vivanti. He will present a summary of the tentative Recommended Plan features. After that, we will start the public comment portion of this meeting. Everyone who is interested in speaking tonight should have filled out an interest card and checked the appropriate box showing your interest. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out a card, please do so now. We will have someone come around and collect these cards in a few minutes.

Speakers will be selected in a random order. When your name is read, please approach the microphone and state your name clearly before presenting your comments for our record. We will have a transcript made documenting this workshop. To allow enough time for everyone to speak, everyone that is interested in speaking tonight, we ask that you hold your comments to no more than three minutes.

In the interests of time, we will address some of the questions and comments at the end of tonight's meeting after everyone interested has had a chance to comment. We will not be able to provide answers to all comments tonight, though. More detailed responses will be prepared for comments made this evening, or written comments received

before the end of the public review timeframe, which ends on Monday, 30 August. All comments made tonight and submitted in writing during the public review will be documented in the final Environmental Report. Changes may be made to the tentatively Recommended Plan based on the comments that we receive tonight, and in writing.

Before John begins, I would like to introduce Supervisor Steve Bennett, the co-chair for tonight's meeting.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, Colonel Turk.

And before I begin, I'd also like to recognize that there are a number of elected officials that have honored us with their presence here this evening. We have the Mayor of the City of Ventura, one of the cities that is certainly heavily interested in the Ventura River project, Brian Brennan. We also have, representing the Ojai City Council, City Council member Rae Hanstad, there. We have four members -- if I'm reading this -- if I'm seeing this properly, we have four members from the Casitas Municipal Water District: Bill Hicks, Jim Coultas, Pete Kaiser, and Chuck Bennett. And we also have from the Ventura River Water District, Jack Curtis. I appreciate that.

Are there any other elected officials in the room that I did not -- Russ Baggerly from the Ojai Valley. Thank

you very much, Russ. I appreciate that. What's that? And Jim Word has shown up. Oh, great. Okay. Good. And Jim Word's here. So, we appreciate your interest and all the constituents that you represent here.

Today we find ourselves at a very critical spot in the Feasibility Study with this important public meeting that we have now, and we also find ourselves with this project being introduced to Congress in the water bill. And there are many skeptics -- there were many skeptics out there two and a half years ago when we launched this project that said we would never stay on schedule; that we wouldn't be here at this point in time with this project.

And although there is much to be done before this project becomes a reality, I think it is appropriate to just pause for a minute and thank the key players that have gotten us this far along the lines on a project where, I think, there's no question, in my mind, that anybody that does any ratio cost benefit analysis would say that this project is increasingly providing fewer and fewer benefits, and it has more and more impacts on the public. And so the question, I think, for any rational-thinking person, it's just a question of when this -- this dam is -- when is the appropriate time for us to remove this dam.

But who has gotten us here to this point in time? I think there are a number of people I'd like to just very

quickly recognize. And first, Elton Gallegly's support has been absolutely instrumental over and over again. We've had funding shortages and we've had to go, and the Congressman has been able to battle for us to get the key funding. We recently just had a shortfall on funding, and that was -- that was able to be worked out again to keep us on track. Without those efforts, the project simply would not have been able to stay on track and be here.

And so we have Brian Miller, who has been a very steady advocate -- and I shouldn't say advocate, very steadily interested in this project; and there are meetings we really appreciate it.

Secondly, the professionalism of the Corps. We have had great partners in the Corps, and I won't name everybody there, because we have so many people from the Corps that have done this, but there's been tremendous professionalism and tremendous flexibility on the part of the Corps to adjust. And it took a while for all of us -- for us to learn how to work with the Corps, and the Corps to learn how to work with us. The great credibility that they've earned with us because of their flexibility in trying to adjust and make this work.

And then our most important State partner, Neal Fishman and the Coastal Conservancy. Neal has been instrumental. Quite a bit of the funding that we have for

this Feasibility Study has come as a result of Neal's efforts through the Coastal Conservancy. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for his willingness to collaborate, also.

And then there are two other people from our staff. We have staff people that take on projects all the time, but if you take on Matilija Dam removal, you're not just taking on a project. You're taking on something you're going to live, eat, and sleep with. I think it's a 24/7 project for Jeff Pratt and Sue Hughes, and I think all of us recognize the tremendous efforts that they put in way beyond the normal call of duty for this.

And then, finally, all the people in our Plan Formulation Team, and I'll very briefly just read their names off. We asked them all to sit together in the front row, but they are an independent group and they have chosen not to. They are all over the audience. But those people that -- at least I know of that are on the Plan Formation Team that are here -- and if there are others here, if you'll let me know -- Russ Baggerly, Darrell Buxton from the Corps, Mark Capelli, Jim Coultas, Don Davis, Jim Engel, Rey Farve, Neal Fishman, of course, up here, Blair Greimann, Jim Hutchison, Paul Jenkin, John Johnson from Casitas, Sara Johnson, Pam Lindsey, Valerie Olson, Guy Phillips, David Pritchett, Yunsheng Su, Jon Vivanti, of course, has been called out, Karen Waln from the City of Ventura, Darla Wise.

Those people. Is there anybody else here from the Plan Formulation Team that's here? We'd just like to know you're here, if we've missed you. Thank you very much.

But, literally, we wouldn't be here, and so I would just -- my opening comments before we take the comments that we're going to get here tonight. So this is a very important step for us in the project. We have had great stakeholders that have come together and we are here because those stakeholders have been willing to collaborate, offer information, compromise where appropriate, and as a result we've gotten here. This kind of project is so complex it will not happen if there's not further collaboration and compromise and openness in terms of trying to make this work.

So tonight -- we look at tonight as an opportunity for us to grow the stakeholders. We need to hear from you tonight so that we can stay on schedule. What are those issues you have with Matilija Dam? This is an appropriate time for that stakeholder group to grow as we have become more specific about what we will do. We've gone from a vague concept of the dam removal to, now, a specific plan, at the conceptual level at least, in terms of what would happen. So it's an appropriate time for us to grow the stakeholders.

I want to encourage everybody. I'm unabashedly a

supporter of removing the dam, but you may not be. And tonight we will respect and honor whatever opinion you bring to the table, whether you are in favor wholeheartedly and you want to offer the positives. We'd love to hear that. Whether you are guardedly in favor, but you have concerns. We certainly need to hear that. If you're not in favor of it, we certainly will honor and respect everybody's opinion at this point in time.

The final thing that I would offer as we kick off this meeting, and this is particularly to those people who are proponents and want the project to move forward, but have concerns -- which probably puts about all of us in that category, it's so complex you can't -- and that is I hope you recognize that to accomplish this is the difficult thing to do. To have all of the stakeholders and all the issues get resolved appropriately. To kill this is the easy thing to do. Any of us virtually have the power to cause -- to take us down the path that could end up in this project not moving forward.

So if you -- particularly if you're a proponent of this going forward, I hope as you offer your comments and you think about this project, you'll try to work with us proactively to get concerns addressed, but still continue to keep us on schedule in terms of moving forward with this, because that is -- that's the real accomplishment. We won't

find very many -- in the history books we won't talk about how it didn't happen. We will only talk about how it did happen.

And with that, I will ask if there are other people up here on the dais that would like to make comments. Neal or Ruth?

NEAL FISHMAN: I'll just make a quick comment; and I want to parrot a lot of what the Supervisor said about the great effort that's gone into this project so far. It's really been an extraordinary collaboration among public agencies and nonprofit organizations who have really come together and hammered out a lot of this plan. It hasn't always been easy, but what has really been something that's held extraordinarily efficient it's been up until now.

The Corps of Engineers have been wonderful and the Bureau of Reclamation, another Federal agency, have collaborated in a way that was just a model in their engineers getting together and working on this project and then bringing it before this plan formulation commission -- committee and hammering out things. And real changes have been made in the plan based on diverse views. More changes undoubtedly will still be made, so -- and I just also wanted to say how happy I am to be in Ventura County again. It's such a wonderful place. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Anything else? All right.

Ruth?

RUTH VILLALOBOS: I'd just like to say a few words echoing Supervisor Bennett's comments, as well, not only for the recognition of the folks that are up here tonight that are the cost-sharing partners, but I recognize about 95 percent of the people in this room have been at one or all of the meetings that we've had over the last several years, continuing to provide your input and, at times, your criticism or critique of the project and the process, et cetera. So we just ask that you continue to do that as we move forward.

This is one step in our process to get this report to Congress under our regulations for an authorization that will allow us to go forward into a design and construction mode of whatever plan is eventually selected through this process. So I'd like to thank all of you for being there all the way with us and continuing to provide your input. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, Ruth and Neal. And, Neal, thank you for catching that the Bureau of Reclamation is one that I had failed to call out here in our comments.

NEAL FISHMAN: And if you'll indulge me one more time. Also, the County Watershed Protection District that's been the other lead on this project has really been a key

partner in all of this and worked so well with these Federal agencies. I just wanted to recognize your local talent.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you. Thank you very much. And with that, we will turn this over to Jon Vivanti who will do a PowerPoint presentation, and after that we will describe our procedures for taking public comment from everybody.

Jon.

JON VIVANTI: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett.

Good evening, everybody. I just want to present a brief overview of the Recommended Plan. I'll talk a little bit about how we got here, and also some of the specific features of the plan itself. I'm going to be referring to the screen over there with my pointer at times, and so just direct your attention there and not in back of me; and if you don't hear me at a certain point, just tell me to speak up, as well.

I want to begin first with the study area, which is the Ventura River Watershed. It's located in the western part of Ventura County and it comprises approximately 225 square miles. The area also includes the region around Matilija Dam, which is about 16 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

This is kind of an aerial shot over the dam and the reservoir. The dam itself is located in the lower right of

each picture. The top picture is from 1960, circa, and the lower picture is a little bit more recent, and what we're trying to show here is the difference in what it looks like -- what it looked like back then, what it looks like now with the sedimentation that's been occurring.

The capacity of the reservoir at the moment is -- it has lost approximately 93 percent of its original capacity. We forecast in the future that the remnant lake that is visible in the lower picture will be completely disappeared by approximately year 2020.

There's approximately 6 million cubic yards of sediment trapped behind the dam, and once the lake fills, there's going to be continued deposition for a while until the sediment starts to spill over the dam itself. And so we forecast by approximately year 2038 there will be an additional 3 million cubic yards of material accumulating. So the trend, for sure, is that the reservoir will completely be filled in the future.

At one time Ventura River had thousands of Southern steelhead trout. Today those numbers dwindle in the low hundreds. As a result, the steelhead has been placed on the Federal Endangered Species list. The construction of the dam itself has blocked approximately 50 percent of the steelhead habitat in the Ventura River Watershed.

The shot on the left is Matilija Dam as it appeared

shortly after construction. The original intent of the dam was to supply water to the region and also for limited flood control. Notching had to take place a couple of times in the '60s and '70s to basically decrease some of the growing stresses in the dam due to the buildup of sediment behind the dam.

The fish ladder that you see in the lower picture in the lowest portion there was kind of put in as an afterthought, and was never entirely successful as it was damaged by falling debris from the dam spillway crest.

The primary objectives of the study are geared for environmental restoration. The first objective is to improve the habitat along the Ventura River and the Matilija Creek to benefit native fish and wildlife, including the endangered steelhead trout. The dam itself has deprived the streambed of sand and gravel-size material that are critical to specific types of habitat, and has also altered some of the natural hydrologic processes. There's also been a proliferation of invasive plant species, especially the giant reed, or Arundo Donax as it's called, which overtakes and displaces the native vegetation and seriously degrades the habitat quality.

Another objective is to restore sediment transport to the coast because sediment movement has been injured by the dam itself. There's been significant erosion in many

parts of the rivering system. Also, less sediment has ended up at the beach as a result of this.

Finally, the third objective is to enhance some of the recreational opportunities. There's no recreational connectivity between the Ventura River corridor south of the dam and the National Forest to the north of the dam.

As part of the process of developing alternatives, the Plan Formulation Team and the technical working groups have developed many different measures designed to address study objectives mentioned in the previous slide. These measures are combined in various ways to create alternative plans, then they were screened out according to established criteria, and then further refined.

The plan that met -- the plan that was selected best meets all of the objectives. I just want to highlight some of the measures in the list there. Essentially, the last four measures are common to all the alternatives. The other alternatives at the top, for dam deconstruction, we considered full dam removal; that is, removal all in one phase. We looked at incremental removal, partial removal, and also methods to deconstruct the dam itself.

The second item there, the dam remaining in place, basically we would consider what would happen if we just left the dam in place, if we built a large fish ladder to allow fish migration. We also looked at restoring the dam

to its original function.

Lastly, sediment management of the 6 million cubic yards was also considered. We looked at selling the material, we looked at trucking it, conveying it, slurrying it to the ocean, and also to a processing facility in the region, or also to a disposal site.

Okay. I get to the Recommended Plan a little bit now. This is an overview, and basically the plan maximizes ecosystem restoration benefits, while providing flood protection, continued water diversion operations, and recreation. So, Matilija Dam being near the top there, downstream of Matilija is Robles Diversion Dam, and this facility diverts water from the Ventura River over to Lake Casitas via a canal. You're going to hear Robles brought up a few times.

But essentially the features of the Recommended Plan include sediment management behind the dam, bridge and levee modifications to address flooding concerns, and also facilities that we are going to put in to protect water supply at Robles and also at Foster Park.

As a first step in removing the sediment behind the dam we are going to slurry the materials that lie directly behind the dam to a downstream site. These materials are the finest that you'll find in the reservoir. They're also the most problematic for water quality. So, what we're

going to do is -- these sites are located approximately three to six miles downstream in the vicinity of Highway 150 Bridge, and we're going to be slurrying materials via a pipeline constructed to these sites. The remainder of material, 4 million cubic yards, will have to be managed behind the reservoir itself.

What we intend to do is -- again, the dam is in the lower portion on the right there. We will be constructing and excavating a 100-foot-wide channel through the entire length of the reservoir. The materials that are excavated from the channel will be placed along the sides, as you see in those sediment storage areas. These are temporary sites designed to be -- to allow erosion of those materials downstream. So the 4 million cubic yards that remain will be naturally transported downstream.

Following that operation, the dam will be removed in one phase. Essentially what we're trying to do is the material that's in the upper half of the reservoir is more coarse-grained in nature, and the material on the lower half of the dam is fine material mixed with sands. So, being that the fine material present more water quality problems downstream, we are intending to put in -- you'll see it outlined in brown there -- the soil cement revetment, which is more or less slope protection along the channel side slopes that are basically going to be roughly 7 feet high.

So flows that are higher than the 7 feet will have access to those finer materials; and that occurs typically if you get a storm event that's greater than 10 years. For any kind of storm event that's less than 10 years, the flows will only have access to what's in the upper portion of the reservoir, which are coarser-grained material.

Downstream at Robles we are going to be putting in a high-flow bypass, and essentially what that does is it allows the flushing of materials, specifically the coarser materials that kind of settle down toward the bottom of a flow. Those will be flushed downstream. So what we're going to do is limit the sedimentation of trapped materials that are released downstream. We want to limit those impacts at Robles.

There is also a fish ladder that Casitas Municipal Water District is currently constructing, and by 2005 that facility will be online. During diversion activities, water is pooled up behind the structure and will be diverted via the canal down to Lake Casitas. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second.

Essentially, the high-flow bypass will limit the deposition at the sediment basin, it will increase diversion opportunities, and it may potentially improve fish passage at higher flow rates. So this is -- another feature, the desilting basin, is going to be constructed adjacent to the

Robles Canal, and what that will do is any kind of fine sediment that gets transported in the canal will be allowed to settle out in the desilting basin before it gets carried into Lake Casitas. So we're providing cleaner water from a turbidity standpoint to the lake. Once that facility gets filled, we will move those deposited materials over to that sediment storage site that you see to the right. So this -- the one on the left is the desilting basin, and the one on the right is the storage site.

Another facility that we would be impacting surface water diversion at is at Foster Park. It's a facility that's owned by the City of Ventura. As part of the Recommended Plan we're installing two groundwater extraction wells to compensate for the loss of surface water diversion operations at the facility.

To protect against increased risk of flooding, we will be providing some modifications to some of the existing levees and also constructing new levees. So, at Meiners Oaks we are constructing a 5-foot levee, at Live Oaks and Casitas Springs we are raising the existing levees by 6 and 5 feet respectively.

There's a couple places we will be doing bridge modifications at to increase the flow capacity beneath the bridges. These will be at Santa Ana Bridge and at the Camino Cielo Bridge.

As part of the environmental restoration aspects we will be removing the Arundo that is prevalent throughout the watershed. We will be removing it at the dam site and also upstream of the dam site, and from that point we will be moving downstream and do the entire reach. There's essentially a total of about 250 acres to remove; and once that initial removal occurs, there will be a maintenance program to ensure that new sprouts will be removed, as well.

Our project presents an opportunity to build new trails designed to link existing systems in the Ventura River Valley to the Matilija Wilderness area and the Los Padres National Forest. Specific facilities may also include comfort stations, shelters, picnic areas, interpretive signs, and other amenities.

This is a cost breakdown of the project itself. Essentially the total costs will be shared 65/35 percent between the Corps and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, except for the recreation, which will be cost-shared 50/50. The total cost of the project is about $110 million.

So, what are the next steps from here? The public period of review ends August 30th, so once we receive all our comments, we will be responding to those comments and then making appropriate changes in the report. Once our report is complete, the Division Engineer sends out a public

notice to signal the completion of the Feasibility Study. We are seeking Congressional authorization for this project under WRDA 2004. After our feasibility phase, we get into what is more detailed design, and then finally the preparation of plans and specifications. That period is roughly two to three years. And then, from that point, we're estimating somewhere around mid 2008 is when we will be initiating construction.

So this completes the technical presentation of the Recommended Plan, and I would like to turn it back to Supervisor Steve Bennett.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, Jon, and thanks for that presentation.

My first question is: Is there anybody out there who has not filled out a speaker card who wants to speak this evening? Okay. We have a number of speaker cards here. We have -- we will choose the speaker cards at random, and if, when you come up to the microphone, which is over here, if you please state your name clearly. Part of this has to be a legally-appropriate meeting. We have you, again, repeat your name. You'll be given three minutes to speak; and after everybody speaks, if we have time left over, we can go back and give people more time. I see some other cards coming in. I appreciate that.

We will also call out two other speakers besides

the speaker that is speaking. We'd like to ask those two speakers to come and sit in the two chairs next to the microphone that we will call our on-deck circle, for a lack of a more official term here, and that way we will have people promptly up to the microphone.

If, tonight, you do not wish to speak, but you wish to make a comment, please take a comment card and complete the comment card and send it in to the address that is on the comment card down here at the bottom. Those must be postmarked by August 30th. All of the comments will be published in the report that will -- that will come out following this review period. And we have a lot more speaker cards, and you can see why we are at three minutes for each one.

Colonel Turk, anything else before we start?

COLONEL TURK: No.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: All right. Then we'll go ahead and call out the cards. Our first speaker is Lindsay Nielson. On deck, Rae Hanstad, and then on deck from that, Russ Baggerly. So if the three of you would move there.

And Electeds, my apologies. We normally take Electeds first, but because we have to take the cards in random order, you are in the random order. Thank you.

Mr. Nielson.

LINDSAY NIELSON: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett.

I'm Lindsay Nielson. I'm an attorney. I'm here tonight speaking on behalf of two water purveyors that are going to be deeply affected by this. One is the Ventura River County Water District whose wells are just slightly north of Highway 150 in the river. The other is the Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company whose two wells are about a quarter mile north of the Robles Diversion Canal in the river.

Our concerns -- first of all, I want to comment I think that staff has done a fine job. I've, over the years, reviewed a lot of these reports, and I must compliment the work and effort that's gone into this. We are concerned, however, with a four-letter word that starts with "s" and ends with "t" -- silt! Relax.

We're concerned because the Approved Plan does not address the issues that are of concern to us. We saw the plan tonight: the storage materials, slurrying, things of this nature. But the river itself is a very porous structure. It's like a bowl in the area in the upper Ventura River. And we see it, when we get a little rain, it will go up 5 feet. It's just a small bowl and it's very porous.

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We're concerned mightily because, for example, Ventura River County Water District serves 2600 people. They want -- when the tap goes on, they expect water, and we have to supply that water to them. We're concerned about

the fines and the clays percolating into the depth of the river and creating problems for our wells. Either clogging them up, creating potability -- not potability, but problems in affecting the water quality.

We are just concerned with the pores of the river are going to be affected by this project. 6 million cubic yards is a lot of material, and I know you're going to be storing it. Our manager will be speaking lately -- shortly on that, because some of the storage picture was within a hundred feet of our wells. It's going to be a problem. It was not sufficiently addressed in the EIR -- or EIS. Excuse me.

1 (cont.)

Water quality was sort of dismissed in the Approved Plan. Just was not going to be affected. We want more study. We think more needs to be done about the users who, in fact, have wells in the river, particularly north of the Highway 150 Bridge.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 15 seconds.

LINDSAY NIELSON: Okay. Well, our question really is: Who do we turn to after the project is done and our wells are frozen up because of this material? So we do ask that more study be done; and I thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony. Our next speaker is Rae Hanstad, and on deck is James Ruch.

RAE HANSTAD: Good evening. My name is Rae Hanstad. I'm the Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Ojai. I'm also the past President and current Board Member of the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency, members of which I would like to acknowledge who are here tonight. I would like to bring you the regrets of Mayor Horgan who could not be here tonight, but is very interested in this project. She is out of town on City business. And I would also like to echo Supervisor Bennett's thanks to everybody who has worked so diligently. Especially thank you for providing accurate information for the public so that they can stay involved and participate in this process.

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The City of Ojai relies upon mostly groundwater and water from Lake Casitas, and as such we're always concerned about the quality and quantity of water in our basin and on the East end. And that said, I feel confident that the concerns that are being expressed will be addressed and that details will be taken care of so that the City of Ojai can continue with its support of the restoration of the Ventura River and the deconstruction of the dam. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony and your attendance tonight. Russ Baggerly, and on deck Robert Brown. And, Mr. Baggerly, if you would do us a favor. They've asked us to have the speakers face the cameras more.

RUSS BAGGERLY: Does my hair look all right?

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: So if you could just kind of turn. Yeah. If all the speakers --

RUSS BAGGERLY: How about some dye for the hair, too.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: If you will -- if you will -- I know it's hard. It's hard -- as much as I'd like you to be addressing us, they want you to address the camera. So that will help us all. Thank you very much.

RUSS BAGGERLY: Supervisor Bennett and Colonel Turk, thank you very much. I would like to thank all the Federal, State, County, and local nongovernmental officials that have worked years and years on this project, and it's finally all together. Thank you very much. And it's nice to see Blair. We always thought he was just a voice on a speakerphone. It was wonderful to see two supervisors happily going to long meetings and without getting a stipend. And Jeff Pratt always looking like he just stepped out of a photo shoot for GQ Magazine.

I sincerely believe that the minds that have come together for this plan to take down Matilija Dam are brighter and better than the minds that came together to build it. This is our first attempt to bring down a tall dam. Things may change, they probably will change, and because they probably will change, I think that we need a

strong, adaptive management program so that we can change ourselves in the process to find a better way to do things.

For example, the best modeling science that we have today for flooding comes from studies on the Missouri and the Mississippi River. They're not anything like our flashy Western streams. So if we find something different, we need to be able to change. So we need to keep this process going. Maybe we should meet every -- maybe twice a year during the entire process and make sure that everything is on track.

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And because the model is not exact for our flashy Western streams, the sediment sedimentation may not occur exactly as has been modeled. Sorry, Blair. In fact, there is some evidence and studies out there that when prehistoric earthen dams that were created by seismic events breached themselves, the sediment doesn't always find its way downstream. Maybe we don't need all the soil stabilization -- soil cement stabilization, the levees, and the flood walls, and we need to be able to work quickly to change that.

A little about water resources. I did not find in the EIR, so far, anything about the beneficial impacts from the automation of the Robles fish passage facility, the high-flow sediment bypass, and the desilting basin, which has been added to the Casitas project, and how that might

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enhance the ability of Casitas to divert water to Lake Casitas at flows over 30 to 50 CFS, cubic feet per second. I think that there probably is some number of water for that automation and those facilities.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 10 seconds.

RUSS BAGGERLY: Oh, boy. I need some more time, Supervisor Bennett.

4 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: After we get through with everybody else, we can call you back up. You can also submit those comments.

RUSS BAGGERLY: Our No. 1 action is water. If we take it out, let's have a water savings or take that away from the 1,180 acre feet that we say Casitas is going to lose. We're going to find some water with this project.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much. Sorry you ran out of time, but I appreciate the humorous comments at the beginning, Mr. Baggerly. Next speaker is James Ruch, and on deck Jim Engel.

JIM RUCH: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett. My name is Jim Ruch. I'm on the Board of the Ojai Water Conservation District. I'm facing the camera; is that correct? I'm on the Board of the Ojai Water Conservation District, an alternate member of the Board of the Ojai Groundwater Basin Management Agency. I grow pixie tangerines in the Ojai Valley. I'm also a former Director

of the Colorado Division of Wildlife and State Fish & Game agency.

And I've been following this process of the possibility of removing Matilija Dam since I first talked to Ed Henke about it probably 12 or 15 years ago, and I will say this: That if you want to have a self-sustaining population of steelhead in the Ventura River, you're going to have to take Matilija Dam out to do it, because the only place they've got sufficient spawning area is upstream in Matilija Creek.

However, there's a couple of problems that I don't think that the documents we have before us today have adequately addressed. The agencies that I represent do not oppose removal of the dam. What they are concerned about is the -- is the impact on the water rights that support the agricultural use in the East end of the Ojai Valley, and we do not think that's been adequately addressed.

It would take far longer than the three minutes that I have to go into the details of that problem. We think it's something that can be addressed, and we really want to follow up with you on that because it seems to us that in order for this project to proceed, it has to meet not just the needs of the fish, not just the needs of the sand going down to the ocean, not just the needs of the people who are concerned about ecological restoration of the

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Ventura River, not just the needs of Casitas Water District, but everybody who is impacted.

And we think that it is unfortunate at this time that these problems that I speak of, specifically connected with those real old rights, the well rights that connect the Matilija project with the Matilija conduit and what happens to those and how to assure the continuation of historical water available to the water users in the Ojai Valley, the City of Ojai, and most particularly the agricultural users in the East end of the Valley which, in fact, are responsible for the ambiance that makes that Valley such a wonderful place. How is that going to be maintained as part of this project? We very much hope that you will spend the time with us, and shortly, to make sure that that is addressed as part of the project. Thank you.

5 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony. Robert Brown, and on deck Matthew Bryant.

ROBERT BROWN: Good evening -- good afternoon. What is it?

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Good evening.

ROBERT BROWN: Good evening. I'm not a political fellow. I wasn't prepared to make a speech. I'm just a citizen who lives very close to where all this is going to happen. Maybe going to happen. We live on a little road called Oso Road. We used to live up on the East end for

many years, and my wife's an artist, and we moved down to Oso Road, which is the riverbed where the Indians, the Chumash, used to live, with our wonderful oak trees and very old house and it's a beautiful place. We moved there to build a studio for my wife. We're just citizens who are, in my graying-haired years, pleased to have a place to say goodbye to the planet earth one day because it was quiet. Well, every day -- almost every day we hear it's as if the garbage truck has driven up our driveway many times with the rocks and the banging, and this is just the beginning. They're in the riverbed getting some of the silt below the dam. As you all speak, this is all brand new to me, hearing what the plans are, what's going to happen, what might happen.

What the hell's going to happen to the people who live nearby? What kind of sound, what kind of trucks, all the banging and explosions, and how many years will this take? And what the hell for? I love trout, but not that much. What are we going to do about the people who really will be frightened of this great catastrophe that will befall us like a war, a bombing attack, where the trucks will be coming up and down near Rice Road and all that? What about -- what about us?

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C, G

You folks, most of you, I dare say, live far away. This is an intellectual thing and an idea about -- all the

dreaming, the water flowing to the ocean. Hey! What about the tax-paying citizens who live there? What about our lives? How will we live? How will my wife create the wonderful art that she does with the banging and the explosions and the trucks? I mean, after all, this is an intellectual thing, and it's like people talking about war. If you don't have a child, you don't think about war in the same way as your son being taken off, or your daughter being taken off, and slaughtered in some faraway place.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 10 seconds, Mr. Brown.

ROBERT BROWN: Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony, sir. Jim Engel, followed by Marlene O'Brien.

JIM ENGEL: My name is Jim Engel and I'm the Executive Director of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. We are the -- I'm speaking on behalf of our Board of Directors tonight. We are a nonprofit organization of about 1200 members in the Ojai Valley. We're the largest land owner along the river. We have over 1600 acres of land, including about three and a half miles of Ventura River and five miles of tributary streams, so this project is of great interest to us.

The people that you see in the first couple of rows and up here have spent numerous years on this project. We only got involved in the last six months because of certain

issues. Our board does endorse the Preferred Alternative and the major concepts laid out in that. There are still issues that need to be worked out, and I'm confident that they'll work towards that; but we'll all be keeping an eye on that and making sure that those issues are addressed.

In our support of this, there are certain clarifications that we would like to make. As far as the slurry deposition sites, we do support the Highway 150 option because it's a temporary site and not a permanent stabilization. We do ask that the manmade structures that are created, when they become obsolete, are removed. 7 L2

The other alternative site was the 90-acre site next to Rice Road and El Roblar, and that one we adamantly oppose because it would eliminate public access. I think it would have a severe impact on our neighbors on Oso and Meyer Road and Rice Road. It's an incredible visual corridor, and it would have a permanent adverse impact on the biological and botanical resources of that area.

We do support making sure that Casitas Municipal Water District owners are made whole for water that's documented that's lost in this process. At the same time, we want to make sure that that is not done at the cost of the river that we're spending $110 million to restore. So we don't want to trade one for the other, and we want to make sure that those alternatives make sense for the river, 8 O, P1

as well as all the water users in the Valley.

As far as the levees go, some have challenged whether those levees are necessary. From our standpoint, we know that there's going to be more study done on that, and we want to make sure that, again, our neighbors are protected in those areas, if necessary. Keeping those levees as low as possible, but still protecting those residents. We don't want the houses ending up on our property, and so just want to make sure that they are protected.

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Finally, on the Meiners Oaks levee that's up by Meyer and Oso, we need to make sure that there's recreational -- or I should say vehicle access so that we can access our property, also.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 10 seconds, Mr. Engel.

JIM ENGEL: And the recreation plan aspect of this is something that we endorse. We do want to make sure that we don't get too close to the residences, especially down on South Rice Road. We need to make sure we provide privacy for those folks, and we should consider that going up and down the river; that the people do live there, and they deserve a little bit of a buffer between them and any visitors that are using the area. So, thank you very much.

10 F2

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony. Matthew Bryant, and on deck Chuck Bennett.

MATTHEW BRYANT: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett, Colonel Turk, members of the committee. I'm the General Manager for the Ventura River County Water District --

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: And your name? And your name, for the record, please.

MATTHEW BRYANT: Matthew Bryant. I'm sorry.

Some of our concerns, as our counsel Lindsay Nielson spoke, was disposal sites north of the 150 Bridge. Those sites, as the member from Ojai Land Conservancy stated, the 90-acre site next to Rice Road, we -- those two sites are in -- within 100 feet, 150 feet of drinking water wells. To dispose of that material there would cause, we think, contamination as is stated in the EIS; that that material has potential for contaminating the soil.

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One of the further concerns we have is Lake Casitas is supplemental water supply for all the water districts within the Ojai Valley. Pumping that water inside that lake, back up to Matilija using a slurry process is, to us, irresponsible. That water that has actually been already diverted to the lake will then be put back up where it came from and allowed to run down after it's already been diverted for use.

12 L1

We submitted a letter of concern and notice of preparation to the County of Ventura, and none of our concerns in that letter -- that was dated back in

January 24th, 2002 -- were addressed in the EIS, and I plan to, along with counsel, additional concerns be submitted before the end of August 30th. Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thanks for your testimony, Mr. Bryant.

Marlene O'Brien, and on deck David Pritchett.

MARLENE O'BRIEN: I'm Marlene O'Brien. I'm a resident of Ojai, and I'm a friend and also employee of Brooks and Alison Greene-Barton who own Matilija Sanctuary which is at the base of the dam. And when I first arrived at Matilija Sanctuary last eight years ago, I was quite aware of the presence of Indian spirits on the property. The other thing I noticed is that there was a scarcity of trees on the hillsides and also birds on the property.

This property was an ancient healing ground for the Chumash Indians. It was held as sacred ground. When the Spanish invaded the area and decimated the tribe in the most horrendous manner, the energy of that massacre entered the earth and has lain there for many years. Brooks Greene-Barton has, along with his wife, and many friends over the years -- they were able to clear much of the distortion of energy from the land and has been brought back to a beautiful residence. The hillsides are lush with vegetation and there is an abundance of birds and wildlife, including the nesting of blue herons. If you could have

experienced the energy some eight years and what it is like now, you would find a very pristine solitude that wasn't there before. The spirits have gone to their resting place.

Last year, as they were beginning to tear down part of the dam, several huge boulders came down, one almost hitting a home in the Sanctuary. I believe that the noise and the drilling and whatever else they did to take down part of the dam had an impact, and the reverberation caused the boulders to come down.

What about all the noise of the trucks going back and forth? The disruption of wildlife and flora and fauna? Are these being considered? What can you say that this won't happen, when and if the dam is removed? What is happening with the 20-year plan? What are the safety issues? Are all these things being addressed? It seems that there has been absolutely no concern or anything addressed with the people and communities downstream from the dam. The concern has mostly been with getting the steelhead trout to swim back up the river. I guess that the human population has been relegated to second place; that their voices don't count; and that they don't have a right to be properly compensated for the takeover of their land.

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C, G

Someone of knowledge of steelhead trout said to me that it hasn't been in their DNA to swim up the Ventura River for many, many years. What is the assurance that they

will know how to do that now?

If you know anything about sacred Indian land, you should know that Mother Earth has a way of showing her hand in the desecration of sacred land. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. O'Brien. Chuck Bennett, and on deck Brian Brennan.

CHUCK BENNETT: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett, and welcome. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about this issue of the Matilija Dam coming down. I'm reminded when -- as Director of Casitas Water, that we finally came to the approval of the $9 million to put up a fish ladder. Kind of pales in comparison to the $110 million we're talking about here. I think the important thing to remember there is that rate payers are helping within western Ventura County to put up a fish ladder to make sure that we get salmon up that river. We feel it's a responsible thing to do, and we called it, at that time, a marriage contract; that all the players were finally getting together and staying together. And we believe this marriage contract can still work. The issue really is getting the steelhead up to the spawning grounds.

The Board of Supervisors, of course, I would call our parents. Maybe I would call them our grandparents because they, after all, built the dam, and they helped with

the birth of Casitas Water District, and we became the managers of it. So we're like a renter in a house and the Board of Supervisors can be likened to the landlord.

And as we have been hearing about being kept whole, made whole, this is the most important thing in any good family; that we are all made whole in the end. And I suggest to you that is why Casitas is so much in support of this, but we have a few worries. We worry about the fish, because they have become our worry. I think we worry more than just about anybody anymore, because if those fish don't come back, they're going to take more water.

And then we worry about water quality, and then we worry about water supply. And on the issue of water supply, about keeping us whole, is the issue of the sediment behind the dam. We've all heard these arguments. You listen to other people say 490, 350, 790, 2400. Well, there's an opportunity back there for 34-, 3500 acre feet of water if the sediment was removed. But I've been told very loudly at a couple of meetings that there is no way that we're going to get a permit to remove that sediment. But the issue really is that sediment, isn't it, when you finally get down to making us whole. So it is something that we need to address. We need to talk about.

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Jack Curtis reminded me in our last meeting, he said, You know that big drought started in 1941. And you

have information in that EIS report that's just been handed out that the dam was built in 1947. A lot of pressure happened in six short years, and I would suggest to you that miracles do happen, and that dams are very expensive, and this dam wasn't built -- it was voted down, I think, a couple of times. But in that pressure of that drought, it got built. And I would suggest to you that in the pressure of a drought that we've all -- we all may be in right now, miracles can happen. So, I hope that we can remain whole. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Bennett, for your testimony. David Pritchett, and on deck Paul Jenkin.

DAVID PRITCHETT: Good evening. It's great to see the project get this far. Again, I'm David Pritchett with Southern California Steelhead Coalition. We have 25 or so member organizations throughout Southern California. Our group is the public voice for recovery of endangered steelhead trout for all of Southern California.

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Some of the early drafts that went into the plan were a little sketchy. We made a lot of comments during our numerous committee meetings, and now, seeing the draft EIS, EIR, and appendices, I understand why Jon Vivanti sent out a lot of updates at 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. in the evenings that popped up in my E mail. So the plan looks pretty good so far. We're looking for particular issues about how will

steelhead recovery be improved by the project. In particular, we're concerned and we'll be analyzing the EIR in more detail, about the flow in Ventura River.

A lot of us know a year or so ago a very big public debate went on about the operation of the Robles Dam Fishway, which is almost near construction completion. Much of that dispute was how much water to run down the river so fish can swim from the ocean upriver during an adequate period of the year. So, we'll be looking at that.

One issue is, will this project give away water from the river flow? What is making Casitas Water District whole versus what I think I just heard, giving a net gain of water as some outcome of the project. So, all of you in the planning process, please be aware everyone is watching for that.

15 (cont.)

So, it's in the DNA. Yes, steelhead know how to get upriver. It's in the DNA. DNA lasts. Facts are stubborn things. DNA goes on and on. The fish has only been isolated for 60 years or so. Those wild trout in the upper watershed know how to swim back upstream, if they have the chance, with Matilija Dam gone. That will not be a problem. Plenty of studies show that.

Another concern that is part of the public debate in the last couple of weeks is what are short-term and long-term effects of the project, per se, on whatever

remnant fish are in the river. Yes, it will not be a good time for those few fish that happen to be in the lower river and are experiencing elevated sediment flow; however, that's short term. In the long term, the project will be a big boost to steelhead recovery in Southern California. So, it's short-term impacts, long-term gains. That's how the fish are going to benefit. No one should say the project's a bad idea because of too much sediment in the river. The Southern California steelhead can handle it.

15 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 10 seconds.

DAVID PRITCHETT: Very good. So, we're looking at these issues, there's a lot more to analyze, and some outreach material is available in the lobby. Some of us public organizations have prepared answers to six common questions about the project. Look for those outside. Thanks.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Pritchett. Brian Brennan, on deck Hills Sutton.

BRIAN BRENNAN: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here this evening. I'm Representative Brian Brennan, Mayor of the City of Ventura, representing the Council, and also the citizens of Ventura. I'm also wearing another hat here this evening as a board member of BEACON, a joint powers agency between Santa Barbara and half of Ventura County cities and the counties, and which the

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mandate is to deal with beach nourishment and restoration of our beaches.

Certainly I think that this is an incredible opportunity we have here today. 10 or 11 years ago when I was chairman of the Surfrider Foundation, this was something that came across our radar screen. An opportunity just to restore our beach and to look at what would -- what would take restoration. Certainly Jim Edmondson enlightened us about Matilija Dam. Cal Trout made us realize it was an opportunity. Everything was connected, realizing the Ventura River was the conveyor belt to the ocean for sand and sediment and things that do restoration between the river and our coastline.

16 (cont.)

Our community, two years ago, completed a visioning process that went -- involved about 3,000 citizens, and one of the top things that came out of that process was restoring our natural surroundings, both our rivers and our beaches, and this was one of the top items. The Ventura River was an opportunity that the community felt this was something that they wanted to press forward on and wanted to see come to some fruition.

Certainly I recognize -- I hear comments here today, I had an opportunity to look at the EIS, there's greater scientific and environmental minds in this room than certainly myself that are looking and giving comments, but

the major issues in terms of the City of Ventura certainly are being addressed. We've had our Director -- our Water Director sitting on the Plan Formation Committee. So our understanding of the water, the turbidity, the quantities, and things in regards to that, we feel are keeping us whole as this process goes forward. Certainly we're hearing from some folks this evening that don't feel that that's the case, and hopefully as there's further comments and direction studies will address their needs.

I just want to, in closing, just say that truly the opportunity we have in front of us is not just something to be a poster to say that it could just happen here in Ventura, but it's on the National Advisory Board and the Environmental Protection Agency. This is something that's on the radar screen across the country. It's not just something that we're dealing with here. It's something that lots of other coastal cities and communities throughout this country are looking to Ventura and Ventura County to come up with those answers.

16 (cont.)

We're not going to have all the answers in this document. I think we're going to do the best we can. I think the recognition best management practices will take over, and certainly our ability to be flexible as we come across some of these problems, and come together and build consensus over how we deal with some of these things that we

uncover as we go along is only going to benefit ourselves, but it's also going to encourage other folks around this country to do the same thing. Thanks for the opportunity here tonight.

16 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you, Mayor Brennan, for your testimony. Paul Jenkin, and on deck Valerie Olson.

PAUL JENKIN: Good evening. Paul Jenkin. I'm representing the Matilija Coalition and the Ventura County Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. Obviously I've been involved in this process for a long time now -- a little bit over 10 years, I believe -- and our chapter got involved in this originally specifically because of the beach erosion issue, looking at problems at the mouth of the Ventura River, problems resulting ultimately from the shortage of sediment due to damming on the river.

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I think when you take a look at dams worldwide, you really have to understand that the average life span of a dam worldwide is about 50 years. There's a lot of dams out there that are -- that are of age. There's a limited life span to a dam, and Matilija is one of those. In fact, Matilija really has become sort of a representative case study for dams like that worldwide.

And so, sure, there's going to be some impacts with the removing this dam. I think the study has been quite thorough to this point, and having been involved in the

process I can say that a lot of our concerns and our issues have been addressed. We've commented every step of the way on the project, and I think because of that we have a better project. So it's good to see a lot of people here this evening prepared to comment on this, because those comments are what makes it a better project.

But to those who are afraid of moving forward with this, I would just say imagine 50 years from now if that dam is still there. In 1965, I think there was a cost estimate of about $600,000 to remove the dam. In 1975, there was a cost estimate of about $3 million to remove the dam. In 2002-2004 we just spent $4 million just to study how to remove the dam. In 2030, when it's completely filled with silt, there's no telling what it might cost. There will be another 3 million cubic yards, or half again as much sediment backed up behind there. And if the structure does fail, just imagine the consequences for those who live downstream. Thank you.

17 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thanks for your testimony, Mr. Jenkin. Good luck with your ankle. And next speaker is Hills Sutton, and on deck Mark Capelli.

HILLS SUTTON: Hi. I'm Hills Sutton. I'm a resident of West Ventura. I live maybe an eighth of a mile from the riverbed. I'm a surfer, fisherman, and I just want to say that I see so much care and wisdom in this plan. And

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it's so exciting, for our children, to move forward. This is something so epic to restore something like this. It's a -- the river runs all year. It's the most amazing thing. That surf is so great at the Point. It's the most popular place in Ventura, that Point, and it's really a brilliant plan.

18 (cont.)

So far, I think that the people involved are -- are concerned and smart enough to deal with these issues that everybody is talking about. Everybody wants to stay together, so let's go forward with this. It's so exciting. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Sutton. Valerie Olson, and on deck Robert Auric.

VALERIE OLSON: My name is Valerie -- whoops. My name is Valerie Olson, and I've been working with the Matilija Coalition. I'm a member of Friends of the River. We represent statewide organization 5- or 7,000 people. I'm retired, but I've spent probably 5- to 800 hours in the last four years working on this project with a group of people. And we always haven't agreed, but I would like to state officially for the record that I am in favor of the Preferred solution, which is to bring stabilization, and I think we'll be able to work out whatever issues can be done and make this thing really go. Thank you.

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SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony,

Ms. Olson. Mark Capelli, and on deck Nan Tolbert.

MARK CAPELLI: Good evening. My name is Mark Capelli. I'm the Area Recovery Coordinator for the National Marine Fisheries Service. First of all, I'd like to thank the County and the Corps for holding the meeting locally where everyone can participate in an effective way. I'd also like to compliment the County and the Ventura County Watershed Management District, the Corps, and the Bureau, and the Coastal Conservancy, and the nongovernmental organizations led by the Matilija Coalition for the effort and the commitment that they made to this project. This is an ambitious undertaking. As Supervisor Bennett said, it was an improbable undertaking not too long ago, and it's because of the work of all these that we're at the point we are today.

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We will be presenting some detailed comments on the project plan in the draft EIS/EIR, but I want to make a few general comments here tonight. NOAA Fisheries' principal interest in this project is the opportunity that it provides to restore the federally-endangered steelhead trout into the Ventura River and into the Southern California area generally.

This is a very ambitious project. There are many challenges with it, and the single biggest is clearly the management of the sediments stored behind the dam; however,

it's also probably one of the most effective recovery actions that has been proposed along the Pacific Coast for steelhead trout. So the challenges are large, but potential benefits are, as well.

There is going to be undoubtedly, with a project of this magnitude, short-term impacts. They're almost inevitable. The project, as it's been proposed, contains many mitigations that address some, maybe most, if not all, of those impacts. There are, however, residual concerns that people have. The planning process is not completed, and I think there's opportunities to add additional mitigations, to refine those which are already included in the plan, and that's what the rest of this planning process, I think, is really going to focus on.

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When this project is completed, however, I think the conditions -- the habitat conditions in the Ventura River for this federally endangered species will be substantially, and I mean substantially, improved. As an earlier speaker said, the connection of the upper and the lower watershed is probably the key to the effective recovery of steelhead in the Ventura River. So this project, in effect, represents the recovery plan for this river system.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 15 seconds.

MARK CAPELLI: Like I said, we are going to be

providing more detailed comments, and we look forward to working with the Corps, and the County, and the others in this really ambitious endeavor. Thank you very much.

20 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Capelli, for your comments. Robert Auric, and on deck Russell Mc -- something, and I can't read that last name. Thank you.

ROBERT AURIC: Yes. Thank you. I'm Robert Auric. I'm the owner of the property called Ojala, 15477 Maricopa Highway, which is just downstream from Matilija Hot Springs, so this is in my back yard, so to speak. I kind of feel like a little fish facing a huge project here. I have several concerns.

We've owned the property for 26 years, and when I first saw the dam on a rainy day when it was overflooding -- overflowing and cresting, I took one look at it and said, That's got to go. So be careful for what you wish for. It may happen. Now I find that my property is actually at more risk from the dam being removed than the dam's presented all these years.

Two things: One, I do not believe that the studies that have been done so far, the hydrology and the mapping and the looking at the property, are correct. I do not believe that there will be increased flooding at our particular site, and so I hope that we'll still have the property when all this is said and done, and that the

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mitigations will put us back whole.

And the second thing is the whole project, the impact it's going to have on us and our lives and people who live there. There's about 10 residences at Ojala now. And it used to be a Chumash site, and then it was Pop Soper's place, and it was homesteaded before the National Forest was there. Now, there are trees there that -- the buildings -- all the buildings there that are left and have been there since we've been there and restored by us predate the dam.

21 (cont.)

There's no historical record of flooding where these buildings are, and even if the water level were to come up a couple of feet because of the additional sediment, which I don't think would really happen, given the dynamics of the flow down Matilija Creek and the Ventura River, our property is right where the two canyons come together. I don't think that there's going to be additional flooding there. I'm not a hydrologist, I'm not an engineer, but I also think the project could be done without needing our property for a launching pad. And I think that the recreational trail could be put in without -- with us still being there. There's plenty of room for it to go around the bend there.

So I'm hoping that we'll still be there, and that there will be mitigation concerns. I'm very concerned what's going to happen when Camino Cielo Bridge is removed,

because that's our only access to the property by car, although we do have a hundred-yard-long cable suspension bridge for when the access washes out, which is supposedly not too frequent, but occurs every two or three years when there's any significant rain over a short period of time. So I'm looking forward to better access to our property when all is said and done. And I'll be glad to see the Arundo all gone. And I hope the project does go through, but I hope we'll still be there. And we supported the removal of the dam. We've been good stewards of that property. That's enough.

21 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Auric, for your testimony. Nan Tolbert, and on deck Tony Thacher. Thank you.

NAN TOLBERT: Hello. I've been a resident of Ojai for 22 years, my name is Nan Tolbert, and one of the first places I lived when I came to Ojai was on this Ojala property which, by the way, for everyone's sake in the actual Feasibility Study, it's called the Camino Cielo structures. And I think it's gratuitous that I get to follow Robert because I really -- I think he gave a heartfelt rendition of just what some of the key factors are. I was really encouraged today to hear that some of the engineers were actually on the property and that they fell in love with it, like everyone does who walks there. It's

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magical. It's full of the great spirit that was talked about earlier. It's right next to the Matilija Sanctuary that was spoken of earlier.

If you're interested in some of the history of the property -- that, I think, needs to be addressed perhaps more than has been -- there's a wonderful rendition in the current Summer issue of the Ojai Visitors Guide. And so it's a bright orange packet that you can pick up at almost any store in Ojai. And when you finish reading the article, the last sentence says that it has already been restored to its natural place, which is the only part of the whole article that really isn't true.

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So, aside from that, if you are interested in this particular property and if you want to get a flavor of what the history and the love of this beautiful land is and preserving it with some of the real practical things like Robert was talking about, that if you lived there you know what it's like to schlep your laundry and groceries across the cable bridge, and you know what it's like when the little bridge goes out. But you also know that there's only been one cabin on the property that's ever been affected in all these years. So, if that could be considered; and I think it probably will be.

I trust -- I'm really encouraged by coming here tonight, and all the expert study, research plans for the

future that seem -- they really made me feel more trusting, and I wanted to thank everyone. But I think that the time given to actually perhaps walk the land and perhaps deal with more of the people issues would be appreciated. Thank you so much.

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SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much for your testimony, Ms. Tolbert. Russell McGlothlin, I believe, and on deck John Dupric.

RUSSELL McGLOTHLIN: Good evening, Supervisor Bennett, and the rest of the team here. My name is Russell McGlothlin. I'm from the law firm of Hatch & Parent in Santa Barbara, and I'm appearing before you tonight on behalf of the Southern California Water Company. Southern California Water Company serves water to the City of Ojai and surrounding areas and is a customer of Casitas for Wholesale Water Supply, and so its goals here tonight are to ensure that there is adequate water supply, and specifically with regards to the EIS/EIR is that the lost water supplies that are speculated to occur because of this project are mitigated.

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And as you said in the beginning of your comments, Supervisor Bennett, this is a very worthwhile project. Southern California Water Company is in full support of it, and we want to make sure that the obstacles, particularly the water supply obstacle, are adequately addressed so this

very worthwhile project can go forward.

To touch on what our real concerns are, because Casitas serves about 8- to 9,000 acre feet of water to the Ojai Valley every year, the Valley's water supply is very dependent on that continuing supply. If they -- if that water supply is eliminated or diminished, the water -- the demands turn to the groundwater basin there. The groundwater basin also loses replenishment from the loss of imported water, if that should occur. And it's a very shallow basin. It can be dewatered in a very short period of time. Without a supplemental source of water, the people of Ojai could be in a very serious health, safety, and welfare situation.

23 (cont.)

So, regarding the EIS and specifics, at present the draft only states that -- Page 5.2-10 -- that the lost water supply associated with Matilija would be adverse, but less than significant because alternative water supplies are available, mainly only specifies State Water Project water. Bringing State Water Project water to Casitas would require wheeling agreements with existing customers, would require new Casitas pipelines, and payment for the water, all at substantial cost. To comply with NEPA/CEQA, the EIR/EIS must sufficiently analyze the issues of the lost water supply and the environmental impacts in obtaining and improving the infrastructure to obtain alternative supplies.

As you may be familiar with the Scope case recently in Santa Clarita, which was a development based upon State Water Project water, the Court was very clear that paper water, speculative water supply source for the future, is not sufficient to satisfy CEQA compliance.

And so in short, in closing, again, Southern California Water Company is very encouraged by this project, very hopeful that the current concerns concerning water supply will be adequately addressed in this EIR/EIS so that there is not a necessity of a CEQA or NEPA challenge, and that this very worthwhile project will succeed. Thank you.

23 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. McGlothlin. Tony Thacher, and on deck Andrea Rolston.

TONY THACHER: Thank you, Supervisor Bennett. My name is Tony Thacher. I live and work at Friend's Ranches, which in the report is called on Reach 6b, about at Mile 15.3. I have a number of questions, and my first question, which I think has been answered, is: If we have further questions during this comment period, how do we get those answered or addressed? And I understand that we can send questions, as well as comments, to Mr. Vivanti, and I'm hopeful that we'll have an E mail address to do it, as well.

24

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Let me confirm. Just a moment on that. Mr. Vivanti, he's correct? They can send questions to you, also?

JON VIVANTI: Yes.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: And could you provide an E mail address right now while Mr. Thacher -- we will give it to you again, Mr. Thacher.

TONY THACHER: I think it's important for the public to be able to do that. Maybe put things up in a FAQ form so you don't have to answer this over and over again.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: So we'll get that in this meeting here before we finish this meeting, Mr. Thacher. Thank you.

JON VIVANTI: We actually have the E mail address posted on the matilijadam.org web site.

TONY THACHER: Okay. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: On this item here -- I'm going to give you more time here, but -- so posted on the matilijadam.org web site you will find the E mail address for the Army Corps of Engineers and project manager.

TONY THACHER: Thank you. I just -- since I never stick to my agenda, I wrote my questions on the back of the card, and since you couldn't read my name, you probably can't read the questions. I hope Mr. Vivanti is able to decipher them. I'm not going to ask them all because it would take too long.

And I'd like to second the people who showed

concern to the farmers on the East end of the Valley. My wife's family's farmed there since the 1870s, and my family -- my great uncle started the Topa Topa Ranch. My grandfather used to say that, Edward continues to plant orange trees, which God refuses to water. So I guess I'm concerned about how the East end is going to continue to use the water that it used to get through the Matilija conduit, and now gets thanks to Lake Casitas.

My question specifically, of course, is about where I live. It looks to me like they may be condemning some of our property to build this pipeline road and then turn it into a trail, and I question the need to do that. I'd much rather have what Mr. Capelli called a short-term impact. When the highway went out in 1969, we allowed contractors to use our property for their, you know, to fix up, and gave us back our property when they were through. I would hope that at some point there will be a meeting with property owners in which these kinds of issues can be discussed.

25
F2, L1

An equestrian trail would be nice, but I worry about who will maintain it. It does cross a number of very small creeks, as the road will when they build it. And I'd be curious to know if there is a map available that my eyes can see. I can't -- there isn't enough detail on those maps for me to be able to tell exactly where the proposals are, what they're planning to condemn, what they're planning to

just use, and I'd like that question be addressed. I hope there will be a meeting between -- I don't know if it's project people or contractors at some point so we, as property owners, know exactly what you're planning to do. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Thacher. You still had some time left and I'll use that to read the questions on the back of your card that you did not, so that they'll be read into the record. I have -- I can read your writing. After teaching with your wife at Nordhoff High School for many years, we learned how to read quite a bit of writing.

And a couple of questions: One, just to be read into the record, Mr. Thacher asks, If this is the only public informational meeting, how do we get additional questions answered? So, the first side of that, you may want to address that this is the only public informational meeting. Second question that he did not raise, he has written here, Why were other alternatives not addressed such as notching or tunneling to the north floor? He did ask the question about the property. He asked it a little bit differently. Why is the property being condemned rather than leased and returned to the property owners? Who will maintain the proposed equestrian trail, including its many small creek crossings? And finally a question you did ask,

26 Q1, S2, F1

Where can we obtain detailed maps of the proposed pipeline?

Thank you very much, Mr. Thacher, for your testimony. John Dupric, and on deck Carolyn Hernandez. Is Mr. Dupric here? Am I pronouncing that -- D-u-p-r-i-n. There you are.

JOHN DUPRIC: I've lived in Ventura for about 35 years. I'm a taxpayer, and I see the number $110 million. I think anybody here knows that the government doesn't do anything that's on budget. We're dealing with a lot more money and we're going to pay for it, and I don't think that's fair. We're going to pay for it with decreased County spending on things that we need and higher rates for our water. That's not fair.

27
D

What we're really dealing with is a fish. Are we willing to pay $10,000, maybe $20,000 a fish to preserve its endangered status? Or are -- we really want to reach out and see if we can put a fish hatchery in the vicinity and see if it works; and rely on a miracle, as our Casitas person spoke about, in that that fish will make two into a thousand, into a million, into 10 million? That can happen? A miracle? I think it should be looked into more seriously. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Dupric. Next speaker is Andrea Rolston, and on deck Jack Curtis.

ANDREA ROLSTON: My name is Andrea Rolston and I'm a resident of Matilija Canyon. I have a few concerns that I'd love to see addressed in this process. One is the reservoir that's there currently has served as fire protection. Helicopters dip out of it to fight fires, and I'd like to know if any thought has been given to creating some sort of a side pool in the midst of the stabilization process so that it can continue to serve that purpose.

28
P8

I'm also -- I haven't gotten a chance to see the report, so I'm not sure where the recreation that's planned is proposed to be happening, but I do know that in the canyon we -- there's a lot of confusion over what's public and what's private land. And there are a lot of people that go up there for recreation and do it on private land, and drive that very windy road and drink, and leave trash and things like that. So I'd like -- I'd like that to be thought of in the recreation plan.

29
F1, F2

And then my third concern is the Arundo Donax and the proposed removal methods. I've been going to the Arundo Donax past Corps meetings on and off for many years, and they're proposing to cut and paint stumps with an herbicide. It's, I think, Rodeo, which is like Roundup, but approved for use in watershed. And I'm concerned about the effects on water quality for people both above and below the dam. And -- I mean, that's water that will get diverted into

30
B

Lake Casitas. So I guess I'd like to request that alternative methods be addressed. I know on my own property I've dug it out and it's stayed out, as opposed to trying a lot of other things that haven't worked. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Rolston. Carolyn Hernandez, and on deck Lars Wallevik.

CAROLYN HERNANDEZ: Hi. My name is Carolyn Hernandez and I'm here to represent Matilija Sanctuary. I've worked at Matilija Sanctuary, which is right underneath the dam, and I've seen it go through a process of restoration that has brought it to a place of amazing beauty and nature that is abundant now. My concerns are that that will go away, and I just want to state my concern, and that integrity be brought to this project to continue to create a beautiful sanctuary and to restore it; that it not be taken away. And my concerns are the eminent domain of this property being taken away.

31
Q1

When I first saw the property many years ago, it was in devastation. It was a County Park and the public -- for them to be able to maintain it, it wasn't done very well. It was trashed. There was graffiti, there was beer bottles, there was a lot of damage done to this area. The trees were being torn -- just -- they weren't healthy. The area wasn't healthy. There wasn't animals. And right now there are amazing birds, there's amazing wildlife there.

And I just want that to be known; that my concern is that will go away; that I want to state that I want that to continue. Just like Ojala is a magical place, Matilija also is a magical place. So I just want to set the intention that that be continued. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Hernandez. Jack Curtis, and -- is it Lars Wallevik? Lars? Great. Thank you. And then on deck, Sara Johnson.

JACK CURTIS: My name is Jack Curtis. I'm a director with the Ventura River County Water District. Supervisor Bennett, Colonel Turk, I thank you for the opportunity to address you tonight.

I may be one of the few -- maybe Tony Thacher might have had this opportunity, but back in 1940 I actually fished the Ventura River for steelhead. I was seven years old. I was raised in Carpinteria and my father had a friend over here who had the Soper Ranch, and we used to go over to Pop Soper's place and watch the boxers work out when they used to work out there. That's only for oldtimers, because a lot of you people around here are probably not going to know anything about that.

But, anyway, let's get to what we're here talking about. The concern that I have is for the groundwater percolation recharge in the area where they're going to cover up approximately, if I'm not mistaken, 53 to 59 acres

of area right in front of our well fields with 13 feet of silt. I'm very familiar with silt. I was in heavy construction for 20 years, worked for the Metropolitan Water District, worked the San Diego Water Authority, I worked for East Bay Municipal Utilities District in Northern California on their aqueducts up there, so I know a little bit about construction.

I also know that when I moved to the Ojai Valley in 1962, I bought a new house and I had to get some topsoil. Well, if you know anything about the Ojai Valley, there's not a whole lot of topsoil in the Ojai Valley. But at that time they had built the Lake Casitas project, and there's a little place over there called Black Cat Lake. You don't see it very often, but it was the old ranch when there was a Black Cat Ranch there where they stored their water on the creek up there. I can't think of the name of the creek. But, anyway, behind there was the silt.

I brought the silt home and I put it in my front yard for the lawn, and the problem with that is you can't get water to go through it. It packs so hard. And that's my concern, because we have the very same thing here that you're going to bring down. And if I'm not mistaken, it's somewhere around 5- to 600 acre feet of slurry that you're going to put right in front of our well site. Currently the Ventura River flow, when it flows, is right in front of our

well sites. So that's our recharge area for our well sites, and that's my real big concern; that that is going to impact our recharge area. Thank you. 32 M

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your comments, Mr. Curtis. Lars Wallevik, and on deck Guy Phillips.

LARS WALLEVIK: My name is Lars Wallevik. I live on a ranch that my family owns down by Casitas Springs on the other side of the river, and the property borders the river for almost a mile. And my only concern is I understand that high-density population areas flooding and erosion issues have been addressed, but I don't feel that other areas that could be subject to flooding have been addressed sufficiently, or -- yeah, just studied. And I just feel that it should be in future processes or future studies those potential erosion areas should be looked at. And, yeah, I just want to say, also, that I do support the dam removal. 33 H

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you. Are you finished with your comments? Could you be more clear on what future areas you're talking about? I wasn't able to pick that up.

LARS WALLEVIK: Just erosion areas beyond the levees and how raising the levees will impact flooding in areas adjacent to the levees.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Okay.

LARS WALLEVIK: That's it.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you very much, sir.

LARS WALLEVIK: Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: The next speaker, Sara Johnson.

SARA JOHNSON: Oops. This is not set for short people.

I'm Sara Johnson with the Institute for Fisheries Resources, and my organization has been honored to be a part of this process over the last few years. And I say "honored" in part because we believe this is an historic project in the making. We believe that the eyes of the nation will truly be on Matilija Dam to see how this project is handled, how to deal with this much sediment, which is the vexing issue behind other major -- other large dam removals. 34

For the record, the Institute for Fisheries Resources believes this is a necessary and beneficial project -- beneficial to the fish and to people -- and we support the Preferred Alternative. I know that projects like this can be especially difficult for the local community, and so I ask you to consider two things.

One, I have worked with other communities that face this issue, and one of the local community members came up to me one time and said, Here's how I look at it. If this

community did not have a dam in it, we would be coming out in droves, if the question was whether or not to put a dam on the river. I heard somebody speak earlier about how Matilija is a magical place. We believe that it can be once again.

I'd also ask you to consider the No Project Alternative, in that some of the impacts that are being discussed today will also be felt by the local community. For example, one of them that will not be felt is when the dam is removed, a public safety hazard will be also removed. If the dam stays in place, you will face a public safety hazard. The dam has already been notched twice.

Further, at some point in the future, the dam will overtop, sediment will overtop, and the communities will then have to wrestle with sedimentation issues and with flood issues. The big difference will be, at that point in time, this project may not be of interest at the federal and national level, and the cost for those problems would likely be borne locally.

34 (cont.)

As we've mentioned several times, this is a draft document. Working on this project has not been a group hug. There's been conflict all along the way. The conflict, we believe, has made the project better, and we will look forward to continuing our role in this to make sure that an ecosystem restoration project is, in fact, that, and that

mitigation efforts, while necessary, are balanced, keeping in mind that ecosystem restoration. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony. Guy Phillips.

GUY PHILLIPS: Good evening. Guy Phillips from the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. Thank you, Supervisor Bennett, for this opportunity to speak tonight. Congratulations to the Corps, to the Bureau, and to the County, and the Planning Formulation Committee for a monumental piece of work, and for having done so in a record period of time. Of course, it's just really the beginning of a much longer process.

35

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations is an organization that represents the family-owned fishing communities up and down the coast from Canada to Mexico. People whose livelihoods are dependent on these fish. The people who for whom this is not merely an intellectual exercise. Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations has, among its membership, faced situations where, because the fishery's in the condition that it's in, they've had to sell their boats. They've had to take -- like farmers, they've had to take their families out of generations of the fishing industry. They've had to impose upon themselves taxes in order to try and improve the fishery. They've imposed upon themselves voluntarily

regulations limiting their own fishing practices.

These measures have not succeeded. They have not succeeded because we have torn the fabric of the fishery from Canada to Mexico. So PCFFA is interested today, and will be on an ongoing basis, in this project because it is a step to repair that fabric. That fabric that once again may afford these people an opportunity to put fresh fish, food, wholesome food, low-cost food on the tables of most people who live in California, a lot of people who live west of the Mississippi, and for those folks who live elsewhere in the nation.

35 (cont.)

So it is not merely an exercise about fish. It's about the livelihoods of hundreds and thousands of other people up and down the coast. We will be providing detailed comments on the document by the end of the period, so I'll not say much about those today.

What I will comment on, however, is that we do have an area of particular concern. That area of particular concern is that as we go forward to try and repair this fabric that represents what is now the torn fabric of the fisheries throughout the West Coast, that we not create new tears along the way. And how might we do that? As we look at ways to minimize or mitigate the impacts that this project most assuredly has, and that we not create new problems. And one of the ways in which we are concerned

that this might happen is as we look at the legitimate, reasonable concerns that people have about their water supplies being affected by this project. Clearly all measures that can be taken -- sorry.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: 10 seconds.

GUY PHILLIPS: 10. Wow. That we also look at the other tools available. That is to say, there are accepted best management practices within the water management industry that are management on the demand side of the equation to reduce the need for more surface waters and more groundwaters. The communities in this region, with all due respect to everyone and your efforts, of the 14 best management practices that have been promulgated within the water management industry itself, the communities here have implemented fewer than half.

35 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Phillips, for your comments. John Johnson is our last speaker.

JOHN JOHNSON: My name is John Johnson. I'm the General Manager at Casitas Municipal Water District, and I'm representing them tonight. Our board has supported this project, subject to mitigation of our issues. We still have three major issues with this project that we hope will be mitigated. The first issue has to do with short-term impact to the fish. We think that the EIR indicates those as significant issues. We agree. That they're not mitigable,

36

we disagree. We feel that those issues can be mitigated by a program that will survey the fish to identify where they are, rescue them, put them into some kind of conservation effort to increase their numbers so that they can be put back into the stream later.

Our second issue has to do with water quality. We do not believe that the water quality tests that the proponents have done have adequately demonstrated that there are no water -- potable water issues with that sediment. Once fluidized, that will impart contaminants to our water, and we think it needs to be studied in detail. We suggest a representative program that will cover all of the potable water, and proposed potable water constituents throughout the system.

36 (cont.)

Third issue has to do with supply. Casitas, in moving ahead its fish passage system, since 1999 has released more than 13,000 acre feet. That's representative of over $8 million to add to the $9 million we've already spent building the project. The impacts to our water supply from this project, both from the broadening and shallowing of the river and the inadequate discussion, or lack of any discussion, of what happens to the Matilija supply after the dam is taken down is simply inadequate and significant.

We feel your proponents, the agencies, need to mitigate those supplies and deal with them straightforward.

The argument that the dam is going to fill up and, therefore, the supplies will go anyway does not mitigate the requirement of the County of Ventura to take care of that problem. We object to the project as currently developed. Thank you.

36 (cont.)

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Johnson.

I have a note here about the fact that this meeting could be revisited on the County's web site at www.countyofventura.org if somebody wants to revisit that at home on their computer.

How long will they be able to do that, Miss Hughes?

SUE HUGHES: Right now I have it set up so that you'll be able to revisit for the next six months.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: Okay. So for the next six months this meeting will be there?

SUE HUGHES: Yes.

SUPERVISOR BENNETT: And I will thank everybody for their testimony tonight. As it's been said, it does make this a better project to hear these things; and turn it over to Colonel Turk.

COLONEL TURK: Again, I want to thank everybody for coming here. Before we leave, I'd like to know if Jeff or Jon would like to make any comments about some of the questions or issues raised tonight at this time.

JEFF PRATT: I don't have any comments, Colonel Turk. Thank you.

JON VIVANTI: Yes. I don't have any comments either. Excellent points were brought up and we will consider everything and respond appropriately.

COLONEL TURK: Okay. Anything else? Okay.

Again, I want to thank you for coming here tonight. This will conclude the meeting. But before you leave, the team will be staying around afterwards to take individual questions or comments, if you want to come back up and talk to the individuals to my right or left. Again, thank you for coming tonight.

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Comment Cards

Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study August 5, 2004
Public Meeting – July 28, 2004
Comment Card Summary

Elizabeth Haygood, Ventura Resident

I would just like to add to the record that I support this stabilization plan in order to remove Matilija Dam. This is an incredible opportunity for our community and government partnerships to actually give something back to generations to come. While some are worried about short tern effects to property it is just that short-term thinking. It is time for our communities to consider the long term and do our best to make decisions for our collective futures. Thank you for considering the wide array of comments to come up with the best solutions. But please know you have much support from many to help see this through.

1

Andrea Rolston, Matilija Canyon Resident

1. The reservoir above the dam has been crucial for fire fighting – helicopters fill there. It might be prudent to create a basin in the area where silt stabilization is planned.
2. I'm against using herbicides in the watershed to remove arundo donax!

2 P8

3 B

Tony Thatcher, Friend's Ranches

1. If this is the only public informational meeting, how do we get additional questions answered during the comment period?
2. Why were other alternatives not addressed, such as notching or tunneling to the North Fork?
3. Why is property being condemned rather than leased and returned to the property owners?
4. Who will maintain the proposed equestrian trail including its many small creek crossings?
5. Where can we obtain detailed maps of the proposed pipeline road?

4

5 S2

6 Q1

7 F2

8

Leticia Layson,

1. Are there plans for aruno donax eradication up to the head waters of Matilija Creek
2. If a concurrent (coordinated) project is not organized as a full system from the headwaters to the beach, the arundo from the top of Matilija Creek will continue to populate the river.
3. I am excited to see this project move forward, bring down the dam, conserve and restore the natural habitat for a healthy watershed.

9 B

Rich Reid, Ventura River Resident, Oak View

1. Thanks for the great meeting and all the multi – agency efforts getting to this point of the project. I am wholly in support of the preferred alternative of the am removal and restoring the riparian habitat in a pre- dam level. In addition, adding recreational trails to

10

the area with adjacent, and owners input. My main concern is CMWD using this project to claim water rights to the Matilija creek at the expense of downstream flora and fauna. I feel the water rights need to be addressed so adequate amounts of water is released past Robles Diversion in order to transport sediments downstream, replenish estuaries and allow steelhead passage.

10 (cont.)

2. The other issue that seemed to concern water users was storing slurry next to their wells. Has anyone considered using the slurry for adobe construction or brick manufacturing? It worked in Santa Barbara.

11 M

Emily Thacher, Fiend's Ranch, Ojai

1. How can higher resolution maps and diagrams be seen/obtained?
Appendix G; exhibits 2b,3a, etc.
Hydrology fig 16-4, plate 15

12

2. Under Plan 4b, What is the projected level of the streambed and proposed bridge at Camino Cielo?

13 U

3. Is the discussion/testimony of Tuesday nights meeting(July 26th) at CMWD included in the record of this meeting?

14

4. Is anyone (Army Corps or others) planning to meet individually with affected landowners?

15 Q

Robert M. Saywer, Legal Counsel, Casitas Municipal Water District
No written comments provided.

Lindsay Nielson Ahorney, Ventura River County Water Dist. And Ranch Matilija Mutual Water Co.
No written comments provided.

Rae Hanstad, City of Ojai Basin GMA
No written comments provided.

Russ Baggerly, Environmental Coalition
No written comments provided

James Ruch, Ojai Water Construction District
No written comments provided

Robert Brown
No written comments provided

Jim Engel, Ojai Valleyland Conservancy
No written comments provided

Matthew Bryant, Ventura River County Water District
No written comments provided

Marlene O' Brien
No written comments provided

Chuck Bennett, Casitas MWD Director
No written comments provided

Brian Brennan, City of Ventura
No written comments provided

Paul Jenkin, Matilija Coalition
No written comments provided

Hills Sutton, Ventura Resident
No written comments provided

Valerie Olson, Friends of the River
No written comments provided

Mark H. Capelli, NOAA Fisheries
No written comments provided

Robert Auric,
No written comments provided

Nan Tolbert
No written comments provided

Russell McGlothlin
No written comments provided

John Duprie, Taxpayer
No written comments provided

Carolyn Hernandez, Self
No written comments provided

Jack Curtis, VRCWD
No written comments

Lars Wallevik
No written comment provided

Sara Johnson, Institute for Fisheries Resources
No written comments provided

Guy Phillips, Pacific Coast Feration of Fishermen's Associations
No written comments proviiiiiided

John J. Johnson, Casitas MWD
No written comments provided

4. Responses to Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR

Introduction

Section 4 presents the Corps' responses to the comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, as presented in Section 3. Responses are provided for each comment letter received, in alphabetical order by the last name of the first signature. Each numbered response corresponds to the assigned comment number provided in Section 3.

Some comments have been assigned a letter code, which correspond to a specific topic. For each of these topics, a General Response has been prepared and is listed below. A specific response has been provided for all other comments.

The responses are presented in the following order:

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General Responses

Responses to issues and concerns raised by several commenters are addressed in a set of General Responses (GR-A through GR-X) as described below. All other responses are presented individually per comment letter.

GR-A General Biological Resources

Several commenters expressed concern over the impacts that the slurry disposal site would have on existing natural habitat and asked for clarification of how these sites would be re-vegetated to mitigate adverse impacts. Additionally, concerned was expressed over the re-vegetation of the temporary storage disposal sites in the Matilija Reservoir of the mostly coarse sediment

Mitigation Measure B-13 and B-14, of the EIS/EIR are a commitment to the development of the Habitat Restoration Plan, will include methods to restore habitats on all temporary impact areas, such as preserving and respreading topsoil, specific grading techniques including soil ripping to alleviate compaction, and choosing appropriate plant palettes. The Habitat Restoration Plan will also detail the re-vegetation of sites within the project area and will include a prescription of oak and walnut planting in appropriate areas. Appropriate maintenance and monitoring methods for the revegetated sites to ensure habitat restoration success will be included. These methods will be developed and defined during the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) Phase of the project.

Because of the overall ecological restoration goal of the project, planting plans will emphasize native, site appropriate planting palettes. Native plant communities in appropriate site conditions will be emphasized over specific numbers of trees or individual species planted.

The Corps and local sponsor expect that the preparation of the Habitat Restoration Plan would fully utilize the expertise of the Environmental Working Group that was established during the feasibility study.

GR-B Arundo Removal

Several commenters asked for more details on the removal of Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) identified as part of the proposed action.

Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) will be controlled in the study area as part of the proposed project. As described in both the Main Report and the EIS/R, a giant reed control program will be implemented that will remove this invasive species beginning at the top of the watershed and working downstream. The HEP habitat units gained from giant reed control are realized as this species is reduced to less than five percent cover within the

study area and the native vegetation recolonizes the river and riverbanks. The primary method for removal described includes the use of herbicides for the "cut and paint" initial biomass removal and the follow up treatment of regenerating canes with herbicide. Impacts to native wetland vegetation, wildlife, and water quality from giant reed removal were considered potentially significant without mitigation. Mitigation Measure B-11 Giant Reed Control BMPs, when implemented, will reduce these potential impacts to less than significant. Sections 3 (page 3-62) and Section 4 of the Main Report describe the giant reed removal project component.

The Ventura County Arundo Task Force is currently implementing a giant reed removal demonstration project near Casitas Springs along the Ventura River. Four methods of removal will be implemented with costs and effectiveness tracked for a five-year period. These methods include:

1. "cut and paint" with follow up herbicide treatment of sprouts;
2. foliar application with delayed above-ground biomass removal and follow up herbicide treatment of sprouts;
3. above-ground biomass removal with follow up herbicide treatment of sprouts; and
4. hand excavation of root masses.

Each of the methods includes the use of herbicide (glyphosate) except for treatment 4. As data are collected during the project, they will be used to develop the Giant Reed Control Plan for the Ecosystem Restoration Project. Any of the four methods may be deemed appropriate for use in the Plan and may be prescribed for specific circumstances. All methods will be subject to following the Giant Reed Control BMPs in Mitigation Measure B-11.

Several comments requested that the 250 acres of giant reed removal be translated into water savings for surface and groundwater budgets. Claims were made that high transpiration rates of the non-native vegetation when replaced by the lower rates of native vegetation will result in a quantifiable net gain of water. No hard data or study references, however, were provided to support these statements. Quantifying water savings would require detailed studies and research. Current data collected by a San Francisco State master's student indicate that under similar site conditions along the Napa River, both giant reed and willow (Salix sp.) have similar transpiration rates (Tom L. Dudley, unpublished data, personal communication). The primary difference found between these two species is that giant reed produces twice the amount of leaf area per unit of ground cover. Therefore, giant reed can use twice the amount of water as native willows simply because they have more leaves.

In the absence of quantitative data regarding giant reed water use in the Ventura River, no calculations were made as to water use savings. However, it is acknowledged in the DEIS/EIR that water use by vegetation in the river could decrease when the giant reed stands have been substantially controlled.

Reference:

(Dudley, personal communication with Pam Lindsey, VCWPD)

Tom L. Dudley, Associate Research Professor

University of Nevada Reno

Department of Environmental and Resource Sciences

College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources

GR-C Noise

Several commenters expressed the concern that the construction-generated noise would be a significant impact on the local area. In fact, the EIS/EIR discloses that under certain conditions, construction related noise could be above the significance threshold of 55 dBA (Ventura County 1-hour Leq standard). (See section 5.7.3 of the EIS/EIR.) (For example, the combined sound level of the three nosiest pieces of equipment could generate 99 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet from the source.)

The Corps and Ventura Co. Watershed District have committed to nine mitigation measures (N-1 to N-9 in section 5.7.3 of the EIS/EIR) to help lessen the adverse affects of noise on local residents. They include: limiting hand-held construction equipment use to 7am to 7pm, no heavy-duty construction equipment use in the City of Ojai from 7pm to 10am, locating haul routes away from homes, hospitals, and schools, providing public notices of construction activities, and investigating noise complaints and attempt to reduce the noise levels at the location of the complaint if it is above the 55 dBA threshold. (Also see General response G – Quality of Life issues).

GR-D Fisheries/Steelhead Trout

Several commentors question the need or importance in investing federal dollars into the restoration effort that appeared to be aimed solely (or largely) at steelhead trout.

Ecosystem restoration is a mission of the Corps of Engineers. Sections 305, 306, and 307 of the 1990 Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) added a significant congressional directive to the Corps to include an environmental mission to its traditional missions of navigation, flood damage reduction, hurricane and storm damage reduction, water supply, hydroelectric power generation, and recreation.

Specifically, Section 306 states: "The Secretary shall include environmental protection as one of the primary missions of the Corps of Engineers in planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining water resource projects". In 1999, the Corps finalized its Civil Works Ecosystem Restoration Policy (ER 1165-2-501), which established ecosystem restoration as one of the primary missions of the Corps' Civil Works program.

While the recommended plan is intended to provide significant benefits to the endangered steelhead trout by removing an impassible barrier that prevents upstream migration to about 17 miles of high quality habitat, the recommended plan was formulated to have significant benefits to the entire riparian or riverine ecosystem. The "need" for the study is detailed in Section 2 of the EIS/EIR but the following is a re-statement of expected beneficial effects that are presented in the EIS/EIR and its Appendices.

First, the recommended plan is expected to benefit the riparian and aquatic ecosystem by restoring a more natural sediment regime that leads to a braided, complex river channel with diverse aquatic and riparian habitats. Sediment movement in rivers is a natural occurrence of aquatic and riparian ecosystems. As such, these ecosystems have evolved

to take advantage of the periodic, natural disturbances associated with sediment movement. Sediment movement in the aquatic/riparian ecosystem contributes to habitat complexity/diversity by redistributing spawning gravels, formation of riffles, channel widening, increase channel braiding, and contributing to channel movement. The diversity of habitats created by the mosaic of channel forms and sediment movement contributes to the biotic productivity of the riparian ecosystem. (For a more detailed discussion of the beneficial impacts of natural sedimentation movement/regime to the riverine environment see Sections IV and IV. A.2.(c) of Appendix C1 of the EIS/EIR.)

Secondly, the proposed removal of the aggressive, invasive giant reed (*Arundo donax*) from the study area is expected to promote the recovery of native riparian vegetation and the associated native riparian wildlife that are associated with it. Giant reed aggressively spreads within the riparian zone and outcompetes the native vegetation. This exotic species has almost no value as native wildlife habitat. Removal of this species is expected to significantly benefit the entire riparian ecosystem. (For more detailed discussion, see Section 2 of Appendix E of the EIS/EIR)

Lastly, it is expected that there would be over 30% sand delivery to the ocean (above without project conditions) over the 50-year period-of-analysis. A beneficial effect of restoring sand to eroding beaches near the Ventura River estuary are expected to result

The recommended restoration plan is intended and expected to provide a broad range of benefits to the entire riparian ecosystem and restore many of the ecological functions and values that have been degraded within the study area since the construction of Matilija Dam.

GR-D1 Fisheries/Steelhead – Sediment Bypass Impacts

The NMFS, CDF&G, and Environmental Coalition expressed the concern that the high flow bypass, as described, would actually be an impediment to steelhead passage at the lower range of its operation (1000-1500cfs).

The primary purpose for the construction of the sediment (high flow) bypass is to limit deposition behind Robles Diversion as a mitigation for the increased sediment loads in the Ventura River due to the removal of Matilija Dam. The following is a revised list of the goals for the sediment by-pass (in H&H Appendix [Appendix D], Exhibit I – Appraisal Level Design of the Sediment By-pass).

Goals:

1. Provide for maintaining a nearly constant water surface for river flows up to 10,000 ft^3/s, (allocation of fish releases and diversion flow may result in lower pool elevations during low river flows.)

2. Provide for sediment sluicing near the left bank (facing downstream). Providing a strong left bank flow may reduce the transport of bed sediments toward the fishway and diversion. (Sediment movement in relation to spillway location will require further analysis.)

3. Begin left bank sluicing when river flows exceed 1,500 ft^3/s. Transport of sediment to the diversion pool is expected to increase significantly as flow exceeds 1,500 ft^3/s.

4. Increase the flexibility of spillway flow releases to enhance fish passage.

The above goals were modified slightly from those in the original draft by increasing the flow at which the bypass starts operating from 1,000 ft^3s/s to 1,500 ft^3/s. The flow was increased based upon the concern by CDF&G and NMFS that the bypass would reduce the effectiveness of the fish passage facility. (CDF&G states that the optimum operating flow for the fishway was 1,500 cfs.) Another modification to the H&H Appendix was to eliminate the following statement from the fourth goal: "attraction of upstream migrants and stranding of downstream migrants during weir flow with the existing right bank spillway" has been removed. (CDF&G stated that the fish passage facility at Robles did not have this concern at flows above 1,500 cfs, when the bypass would be operable.)

The proposed operations for the bypass have not been finalized and will be further developed in the next phase of design; further work will be done during the next design phase to ensure that the operation of the bypass is consistent with the operation of the Robles fishway. The sediment bypass will be operated and constructed so that fish passage is improved for flows higher than 1,500 ft^3/s and unaffected for flows below 1,500 ft^3/s. The possibility of designing the bypass so that fish passage could occur through the bypass structure and maintaining enough flow through the existing fishway and spillway so that fish passage is unaffected for flows larger than 1,500 ft^3/s will also be explored in the PED. (Also see GR-P6 Sediment Bypass, below).

GR-D2 Fisheries (Aquatic& Riparian Resources) –Impact From Foster Park Wells

Several commenters pointed out that the EIS/EIR provided no analysis of the impact of the two new wells at Foster Park on the riparian and aquatic ecosystem. As stated in the EIS/EIR (Section 3.1and 5.2.3), the two new wells at Foster Park are intended as mitigation for the expected shutdown of water diversion operations by the City of Ventura from the area. The following was added to the Final EIS/EIR.

The wells are proposed to be located on opposite sides of the river in the vicinity of Foster Park. The east well will be located in an open space area of the Foster Park recreation area and out of the active river area. The area has a few large trees and an understory of non-native grasses that appear to be mowed annually. The second well will be located on a low flood terrace at the west riverbank edge approximately 1,500 feet upstream of the park. The area may be categorized as passive agriculture with patches of small trees. Access to both wells would be via existing roads.

The groundwater extracted from the wells is expected to be no more than the amount of surface water the City would divert from the Ventura River to offset the loss of diversion resulting from Matilija sediment-generated turbidity. As such, no net increase of water is expected to be lost from the Foster Park area. No overall impact to aquatic or riparian resources are expected as the total groundwater and surface water amount is expected to be unaffected.

GR-E Barriers

Some commenters suggested that once fish passage was restored through the Robles Diversion facility when the fishway is finally completed, steelhead would have access past this previously impassible barrier up the Ventura River and to the North Fork of Matilija Creek. The implication being that once the Robles fishway was constructed and operational, that would be "enough" for steelhead.

The Biological Assessment (Appendix C1 of the EIS/EIR) acknowledges that once fish passage at Robles is established, steelhead should have access to approximately 4.5 miles of habitat above the diversion up to an impassible barrier on the North Fork of Matilija Creek at Wheeler Gorge Campground (see Sections III.C and III.C.3 of Appendix C1). Removal of Matilija Dam, however, is estimated to restore fish passage to about 17 miles of good to high quality spawning and rearing habitat up Matilija Creek and its tributaries. As such, the EIS/EIR contends that restoration of fish passage past Matilija Dam has a significant beneficial impact to steelhead trout.

Note that the beneficial impacts (increased habitat units) resulting from the Robles fishway are not claimed (i.e., not double counted) as benefits associated from the Matilija Feasibility study, as they are expected under future without project conditions. (See section 4 of Appendix E of the EIS/EIR).

GR- F Recreation

GR-F1 Environmental Impacts Associated With Recreation

Some comments raised the issue of the affect that recreation proposed in the feasibility study would have on the overall ecosystem restoration effort.

The Corps' policy relative to recreation activities on ecosystem restoration projects is fairly clear (see Engineer Regulations 1165-2-501, Civil Works Ecosystem Restoration Policy, parag. 13). Recreation can be included as part of an ecosystem restoration project as long as it is "compatible with the ecosystem restoration purpose of the project". Recreational activities "should not diminish the specifically restoration purpose" and "[w]henever conflicts occur between the ecosystem restoration purpose and recreation, ecosystem restoration shall have priority".

The conceptual recreation plan identified in the feasibility study will be more fully developed in the next (PED) phase. But the environmental stakeholders (the Environmental Working Group as identified in Fig. 1-3 of the EIS/EIR and Appendix E of the EIS/EIR, section 3) agree that the limited foot and horse traffic associated with the conceptual recreation plan are compatible with the proposed ecosystem restoration and it does not diminish the environmental outputs forecasted for the study. As the recreational plan is more fully developed, it will be reviewed by the EWG to ensure that ecosystem restoration will have priority over proposed recreational activities.

GR-F2 Access/Easement Issues Associated With Recreation

One of the main objectives of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Study is to improve recreation in the study area, which is an overall beneficial impact of the project. As explained in the Main Report Recreation Plan, beginning on Page 4-31, impacts to existing recreation facilities will be minimized and the creation of new recreation facilities will minimize impacts to wildlife and private property. The current plan was developed by the Recreation Subcommittee during the feasibility phase of the study. Details and fine tuning of the recreation plan will be developed during the design phase of the project, as many of the recreation components depend on the final engineering plans for many project components. During this time period, input from the local property owners, wildlife biologists, community members, and recreation agencies will be sought and utilized to refine the recreation network. Slurry pipeline routes and disposal sites will be carefully evaluated for their use for recreation and trails. To the maximum extent feasible, these areas will be revegetated with native habitats and provide trails that minimize access through private properties. These trails will also link to other area trails for form a comprehensive trail network.

Long-term maintenance of the new recreation facilities will likely be transferred to a suitable local agency. The study managers have opened discussions with several agencies, such as the USFS, OVLC, VC Parks and Recreation, and others.

GR-G Quality of Life

Several residents within the study area commented that the quality of life that they had come to expect would be adversely affected by this major deconstruction project.

Although the Proposed Action is an ecological restoration project, the deconstruction of Matilija Dam will have numerous impacts to the environment as indicated in the EIS/EIR. Impacts to earth, hydrology and water, biological, and cultural resources were identified in the analyses. Aesthetics, air quality, noise, socioeconomics, transportation, land use, and recreation topics were analyzed for potential impacts to the local and regional communities. Many of the impacts are considered less than significant or can be mitigated to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures and compliance with local and regional ordinances. However, several potential impacts associated with biological resources, aesthetics, air quality, and noise are considered significant and may not be feasibly mitigated.

During the next phase of the project, the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase, the Corps and the Ventura County Watershed District will work with local communities and individual property owners potentially affected by the deconstruction activities to minimize impacts to the maximum degree feasible. Routing of pipelines, trails, access ramps, levees, and other project features will be positioned to reduce direct and indirect impacts to property owners. In most instances temporary easements or other types of easements may be negotiated instead of full condemnation for affected properties. Additional public meetings, including neighborhood meetings, will be held to provide information and receive comments and suggestions on the proposed details of the project.

During construction, the matilijadam.org website will be updated with a full construction schedule. Items such as road and bridge work, expected truck traffic, noise issues, and

other project activities that may affect local communities will be included. Contact information for the project will be clearly posted on and near project action sites, on the website, and in community publications. Local residents may use these sites to obtain information, make inquires, or express concerns about the project. (Also see GR-C, above.)

GR-H Flooding

Comments relative to flooding were addressed individually.

GR-I Water Quality: Potential Contamination From Regulated Substances

Concerns have been raised by water users and purveyors regarding potential water quality impacts resulting from release of trapped sediment into the riverine system or placement of these materials into disposal sites. Results of field investigations conducted in 2001 indicate detection of regulated substances including Copper, Nickel, Arsenic and DDT. Preliminary consultation with another water agency indicated that the concentration levels detected were considered within normal background levels and would not usually be associated with adversely impacting water quality. Initial consultation by the Corps has occurred with the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Health Services. Future consultation with the California Department of Health Services and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board will continue during the next more detailed phase (i.e., Preconstruction Engineering and Design phase).

GR-K Erosion/Landslides

Construction operations involved during the demolition of the dam and removal of sediment from the reservoir will take all preventative measures necessary to secure stability to adjacent canyon slopes.

GR-L Slurryline

The slurryline will carry a mixture of water and sediment. The alignment of the slurryline will follow a constructed maintenance road that may be partially be converted to a recreation trail following completion of dam removal. The proposed general alignment is presented in the Real Estate Appendix (Technical Appendix G. Some pumps powered by generators will be necessary along the slurry alignment. The slurry operation is estimated to take 9 months. More detailed design of the slurryline will occur during the next phase.

GR-M Wells

There are numerous groundwater wells that access the water in the Upper Ventura Aquifer and includes floodplains along the mainstem of the Ventura River from Casitas Springs upstream though Meiners Oaks to Camino Cielo Road. Meiners Oaks County Water District (MOCWD) operates 2 wells located approximately 1 mile downstream of Matilija Dam and 2 wells near Meiners Oaks adjacent to Rice Road. Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD) operates three wells located between Meiners Oaks and the Highway 150 crossing. Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company also operates several groundwater wells along the Ventura River, serving agricultural water to approximately 400 acres. The City of Ventura diversion structure is located at Foster Memorial Park.

The infiltration to the Upper Ventura Aquifer occurs primarily through the active channel bed of the Ventura River. The river bottom carries runoff flows and also allows percolation to occur readily due to the bed composition of gravel and cobbles, with some sand and very few fines. The floodplain terraces are less important for aquifer recharge because they are subject only to rainwater and generally have soils with more fines and are therefore less conducive to percolation. The median particle diameter in the bed of the Upper Ventura River is over 4 inches. There is almost no silt or clay in the riverbed. The Upper Ventura River Aquifer is recharged during the wet season as river flows percolate into the aquifer.

There is approximately 6 million yd^3 of sediment behind Matilija Dam. Approximately 2.1 million yd^3 of fine sediment will be transported by slurry line to disposal sites downstream. The remaining 3.9 million yd^3 of sediment stored in the reservoir will be allowed to erode with storm flows and transported downstream carried by natural stream flows. The soil cement revetment in the reservoir will allow graduated erosion of the 3.9 million yd^3.

Of the 3.9 million yd^3 of sediment, approximately 800,000 yd^3 is silt and clay, 1.7 million yd^3 is sand, and 1.4 million yd^3 is gravel and cobble. The silt and clays are mixed in with the coarser material. All sediment transport modeling to date shows that the gradual release of this material will not substantially change the composition of the Ventura River Bed. The silts and clays are primarily suspended in the water column and are discharged to the ocean, and therefore will not deposit onto the riverbed. The majority of material that will deposit on the riverbed is cobble, gravel and some sand sized sediment. Minor amounts of fines will settle on sand bars and the edges of flood terraces as storm flows recede. As a result of intermittent and temporary aggrdational level changes in the riverbed, the impact is considered adverse, but less than significant.

The Ventura River by nature has a large capacity to transport sediment because of its steep slope (over 1%) and high flows. In fact, the Ventura River transported over 4,000,000 yd^3 of sediment in less than 1 month in 1969. Ventura River regularly transports large amounts of sediment during large storms and after fires, with the same result of fines transported to the ocean and coarse materials settling in the bed. The infiltration of water from the Ventura River into the Upper Ventura River Aquifer will continue to occur at present rates after dam removal because neither the amount of water allowed to percolate nor the percolation rates will change with implementation of the project. The recharge to the Upper Ventura River Aquifer is and will continue to be limited by the supply of rainwater.

GR-N Levee Modifications

The levee modifications required as a result of dam removal are considered as permanent features of the project. The permanency of the levees is intended for mitigation of flooding and also accounts for the uncertainty of the effects of long-term channel aggradations changes following dam removal.

GR-O Temporary Channel and Soil Cement Revetment

A 100-foot wide channel will be created through the 3.9 million yd^3 of sediment that remains once the dam has been removed and 2.1 million yd^3 of reservoir sediments are

removed. Under the current design, the sides of the 100-ft wide channel will be stabilized with soil cement revetment. Soil cement is an amalgam of selected local materials mixed with cement to form a concrete-like material that is more friable than that used for most structural foundations. The soil cement will be placed in lifts to form a solid trapezoidal shape, wide at the bottom and narrow at the top, along the edge of the newly created stream channel. Once cured, the cement is inert. After completion of construction, the only visible portion of the soil cement structure is the side slope facing the river and a limited portion of the top. The strength and reliability of soil cement is in its thickness. While it is subject to moderate scouring, the sheer bulk of these structures rarely fail during storm events.

The soil cement structure will be temporary. As the stockpiled materials are eroded by large storm events, the soil cement will be removed in stages until no longer necessary. Details will be added to the Monitoring/Adaptive Management Plan in the next phase.

As part of the detailed design phase of the project, other erosion protection materials that may have less impact to the environment will be explored for use in the reservoir (Reach 7). Native stone, for example, may be used along portions of the stream for erosion protection.

GR-P Water Supply

GR-P1 Loss of Dam

When constructed, Matilija Dam was estimated to have a useful water supply life span of some 34 years. This water supply life span calculation was based upon historic hydrology and conservative sedimentation estimates. Matilija Dam life span has exceeded original estimates. It is now estimated that the Matilija Dam will provide no water supply subsequent to the year 2020, the obsolescence date.

The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project proposes to replace the water supply loss resulting from the dam's removal prior to its obsolescence date. Therefore, the removal of the Matilija Dam diversion and the elimination of the diminishing storage volume will not result in a loss of supply. The replacement of this water supply loss will ensure that those depending on this diminishing volume of supply are "made whole."

The perfected water right that exists at the Matilija Dam is described by the License for Diversion of Use of Water (License 10133) issued to the Casitas Municipal Water District by the State Water Resources Control Board. The license describes Matilija as the point of diversion, the Robles diversion dam as the point of rediversion and Lake Casitas as the place where such water is put to beneficial use. The project proposes to amend the License 10133 to indicate that the Robles diversion dam is a point of diversion and Lake Casitas is a point of storage. The project also proposes that the Casitas Municipal Water District retain License 10133 in perpetuity. As the license will be retained in its current state by CMWD, the proposed project has no impact to the license. (Also see GR-2 Matilija Conduit, below).

GR-P2 Matilija Conduit

The Matilija Conduit, a water distribution pipeline installed subsequent to the dam's construction, is an integral part of the Casitas Municipal Water District's potable water supply system. Potable water, from Lake Casitas' treatment facility, is pumped to the conduit distribution system and serves customers throughout the Ojai area and including the Matilija Hot Springs near the dam. The project proposes to leave the conduit in place and will therefore have no impact on its use as a distribution line by the Casitas Municipal Water District.

GR-P3 Robles Diversion

See GR-P6 below for improvements at Robles Diversion Dam due to the project.

GR-P4 Foster Park

There are two surface diversions at Foster Park operated by the City of Ventura that will be impacted by the release of additional fine sediment following the removal of Matilija Dam. It is important to realize that these are surface diversions and not groundwater wells. As a mitigation for the impact to these surface diversions, there will be two groundwater wells drilled on the floodplain terraces at Foster Park. There will be no net additional extraction of water. Justification for two wells at Foster Park as a project feature is based on potential adverse impacts resulting from potential exceedance of threshold turbidity limits (10 NTUs) to surface water diversion operations. Related discussion is provided in Main Report, Section 3. (Also see GR-D2).

GR-P5 Evapo-Transpiration Reduction due to Removal of Dam

There is some evaporation loss due to the open pool of water of Matilija Reservoir. Matilija Reservoir is approximately 25 acres. Based upon measurements of pan evaporation in the Santa Clara River Basin, adjacent to the Ventura River basin, the evaporation potential is more than 60 inches per year (United Water Conservation District, 2001). The average annual evaporation at Lake Casitas was estimated by Entrix (2002) to be approximately 3.5 ac-ft per acre per year over the 2,700 acres of the lake using data from 1970 to the present. The average direct precipitation on Lake Casitas was estimated to be 1.9 ac-ft per acre per year. The net loss at Lake Casitas is therefore at least 1.6 ac-ft per acre per year. Assuming the same rate of evaporation for the 25-acre Matilija Reservoir, there is approximately 40 ac-ft per year of water lost due to evaporation. When the lake is removed due to project actions or sedimentation under the no action scenario drastically reduces the lake size, evaporative losses due to the lacustrine conditions will be eliminated or reduced, respectively.

In addition to evaporation, water loss occurs through transpiration of vegetation on the Matilija Lake delta. The delta area is approximately 50 additional acres and is densely vegetated with giant cane (*Arundo donax*) and cottonwood trees (*Populus* spp.). Marsh vegetation along the lake edge also uses water through transpiration. As the lake fills with sediment, which in turn is colonized by vegetation, water losses from evaporation will be replaced by transpiration. Quantitative data regarding vegetation water use are not available and therefore, specific losses due to transpiration were not factored into the water budget for the project.

GR-P6 Sediment Bypass

A high flow/sediment bypass will be constructed at Robles Diversion. The high flow/sediment bypass will allow for more flexibility and reliability in water diversions. Currently, flows above approximately 7,000 ft^3/s flow over the top of the existing spillway. Therefore, water elevations cannot be controlled at large flows. The bypass combined with the existing sluice gates will have a combined controlled capacity of 15,000 ft^3/s. (Also see GR-D1 Fisheries/Steelhead – Sediment Bypass Impacts, above.)

GR-P7 Slurry Disposal Site

The 2.1 million yd^3 of slurried reservoir sediment (mostly silts) placed at disposal sites, located just upstream and downstream of Baldwin Road Bridge (Highway 150), will be stabilized and protected so that this sediment is not accessed by flows smaller than the 10-yr flood. Sediment will be placed at or above the 10-yr flood elevations on the river terraces. Flows larger than the 10-yr flood may contact and mobilize some of the sediment, while smaller flows will not. These high flows typically transport very large amounts of sediment and have a large sediment supply. Therefore, sediments eroded from the disposal sites will constitute a small incremental increase in sediment concentrations during these events. When the high flows event captures this slurry sediment, it will not substantially change the overall character of the flow or result in substantial changes to the riverbed composition or configuration. As described previously, the majority of the fines will be carried out to the ocean and the minor amounts deposited in the river will not affect percolation.

The disposal sites will not substantially reduce the percolation of water into the Upper Ventura Aquifer. The potential for fines to migrate into the pore spaces below the slurry site will be limited due to the low permeability of the fine sediment. In addition, the sites will be lined with sand or other filter that will prevent the potential downward movement of fines through soil pores carried by water. Compaction of the lower layers of the deposited fines would actually form a hard pan that would further be another barrier to water passage. In addition, the upper layers of the deposited material will be mixed with and covered with topsoil suitable for planting vegetation. This will reduce the potential for runoff to erode and carry fines into the river.

To minimize potential impacts to wells located near or within the disposal site areas, the wells will be inspected prior to project implementation. Inspection will result in the repair of leaking casings to minimize the potential for fines to infiltrate and damage the wells.

GR-Q Land Rights- Real Estate Requirements

The ecosystem restoration project and the mitigating measures necessitate certain lands, easements, rights of way, and utility relocations. The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study – Main Report (MERFS-MR) Page 4-24, and the Real Estate Plan (Appendix G) describe in detail the Real Estate needs of the project.

GR-Q1 Acquisitions

The project anticipates the potential need for acquisition of easements or rights of way for the identified ecosystem restoration project and the mitigating measures.

The flood mitigation measures potential needs for rights of way were determined in accordance with Corps guidance for certification of existing and proposed mitigating measures. Tools used to determine rights of way needs were "Flood Damage Reduction Analysis (HEC FDA), and a "Risk and Uncertainty"-based analysis. (See MERFS-MR Page 4-7 through 4-17).

The standard policy for right of way acquisition is to exhaust all available means to purchase rights of way before exercising eminent domain procedures. Easements will be considered wherever possible. Values for any rights of way, including easements, fee in title, or eminent domain will be determined based on fair market value. In Final Design, cost of possible easements, or buyout will be prepared by a professional appraiser and appraised using similar housing in the area. Flood protection is the preferred alternative wherever feasible. A more detailed analysis will be done in the future phases to determine if all of the property acquisitions are necessary.

GR-R Coastal Benefits

The results of sediment transport modeling performed for this feasibility study indicate a net increase (above No Action conditions) of approximately 32 percent sand delivery to the ocean over a 50-yr period from the implementation of the Recommended Plan. For finer sediment the net increase is approximately 6 percent. Coastal modeling to assess beneficial and adverse impacts as a result of dam removal was not pursued as part of this feasibility study due to the relatively small with-project net increase in sediment yield to the littoral zone. A qualitative assessment of impacts is provided in the Main Report. The report concludes that detrimental impacts are not considered significant.

GR-W Ventura River Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

Several commenters asked about the relationship of the Ventura River HCP and the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The purpose of the Ventura River Habitat Conservation Plan is to obtain permits under the federal and state endangered species acts for routine facility maintenance activities conducted by a group of local cooperating public agencies (listed below). These local public agencies are pursuing take permits from NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Game. The study area encompasses the facility locations/jurisdictional areas for the participating agencies, which includes the mainstem of the Ventura River from the Pacific Ocean north to Matilija Dam, San Antonio Creek (and tributaries) and northeast to the east end of the Ojai Valley. The focus of the HCP is to develop and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for routine facility maintenance activities to reduce the incidence of take. Examples of BMPs include avoiding clearing of suitable nesting habitat during the bird breeding season and stabilizing soil to minimize turbidity impacts. Other mitigation measures to increase the overall habitat quality for endangered species have been included in the preliminary draft document, such as removal of small barriers to fish passage. At this time, the schedule for the HCP is to present the preliminary draft document to the regulatory agencies in September of 2004 followed by take permit negotiations. No portions of the HCP, proposed covered activities, and mitigation measures have been reviewed and approved by the regulatory agencies.

The HCP was drafted with the knowledge by the cooperating agencies that the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project may move forward. Routine maintenance activities covered by the HCP and HCP take permits have no effect on the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project. The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, as a federal action, cannot be covered by provisions of the HCP process (i.e., section 10 of the Endangered Species Act); federal actions relative to the ESA are covered under Section 7.

GR-X Monitoring & Adaptive Management Plan

Several commenters expressed concern over the lack of specific detail in the Monitoring & Adaptive Management Plan (M&AMP) (Appendix K of the EIS/EIR).

As mentioned in the "Introduction" of the M&AMP, a more detailed Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan will be prepared during the Preconstruction Engineering and Design [PED] phase and will provide more specific monitoring details (e.g., exact monitoring transect locations, reference site locations, more specific performance/success criteria, more specific monitoring protocols, etc...). As suggested by the NMFS in their comment letter, specific transect locations along the Ventura River will also be identified so that monitoring of changes in channel morphology (once more detailed sedimentation analyses are performed in PED) can be made. The M&AMP would identify where channel morphology changes would most likely occur that might adversely affect steelhead (e.g., a temporary blockage) and establish protocols to rectify the situation.

In previous Corps ecosystem restoration studies, during the PED phase the M&AMP of the feasibility study was used as a guide that directed the more detailed PED phase M&AMP. Once more specifics were developed concerning actual deconstruction designs and more detailed hydraulic analyses performed, a more focused and detailed M&AMP was prepared based on that information. The Corps expects that the preparation of the more detailed M&AMP would fully utilize the expertise of the Environmental Working Group that was established during the feasibility study.

Specific Responses to Comments

Arthur, Beverly and Shelly Dawson

Property Owners

1. Comment noted.

Auric, Robert

Property Owner

1. See GR-Q1. The flooding and flood plain inundation mapping will be further refined in subsequent states of the project. If flood proofing of private property is feasible without levees, it will be the preferred alternative.
2. Construction of the new Camino Cielo bridge includes construction of access for all impacted properties. Temporary access during construction will also be

provided. The suspension bridge at Camino Cielo will be studied in more detail in the design phase of the project.
3. Utility relocation will account for visual impacts.
4. There will be no effect to mountain spring. For other sources, See GR-P1 and GR-P2.
5. Property is not being considered for launching (staging area) purposes. The property would only be considered for acquirement due to flood risk. See GR-Q1.
6. See GR-C.
7. Fencing and/or vegetative barriers would be installed where necessary for public safety. Signs will be placed to direct hikers to remain within public areas. See GR-F2.
8. Comment noted.

Baggerly, Russ

President
Environmental Coalition

1. See GR-D1 and GR-P6. Also see response to Pritchett No. 9.
2. See GR-B and GR-P5.
3. See response to Pritchett No. 9.
4. See GR-D1.
5. See GR-P4
6. See GR-D2.
7. See GR-N.
8. See GR-A.

Birosik, Shirley

Staff Environmental Specialist
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region

1. Section 4.2.3 has been revised per comment. The recommendation provided for Section 4.2.3.1 would not provide any new information for the decision-makers and, thus, no changes to the Draft EIS/EIR are required.
2. Fourteen sites were selected and screened. Each site was assessed in terms of availability of land and costs, environmental impacts, constructability, and distance from the dam.
3. Comment noted.

Britt, Butch

Ventura County Public Works Agency
Transportation Department

1. Removing the dam will lower the stream bed at the dam and upstream for a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. Lowering the stream bed may increase the bank erosion along this 1.5-mile reach, which in turn could cause damage to the Highway 33 road embankment. The next phase of work will identify and design appropriate bank protection at locations where erosion damage may occur to Highway 33 due to the removal of Matilija Dam.

Brokaw, John

Property Owner

1. See GR-Q1.
2. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.
3. The project includes specific measures incorporated into the project plan to address potential impacts to groundwater and surface water supplies. These include construction of two groundwater wells at Foster Park and a desilting basin along the Robles-Casitas canal. The Draft EIS/EIR determined that the Recommended Plan, including these measures, would result in adverse, but less than significant impacts to groundwater and surface water supplies. As impacts to groundwater and surface water supplies would be less than significant, no mitigation measures would be required.
4. The existing Camino Cielo bridge will be removed. An improved bridge will be constructed and will provide an all-weather crossing, in accordance with County of Ventura Road Standards. Information is provided in the Main Report, Tables 4-1 and 4-3.

Brubaker, Don

Property Owner

1. Earlier formulation iterations dismissed the gradual enlargement of the notch as this action would compromise the structural integrity of the arch dam, especially considering seismic and larger flow events.

Bryant, Matthew L. (Letter #1)

General Manager
Ventura River County Water District

1. See GR-P7.
2. See GR-I.
3. See GR-M and GR-P7.
4. Other water sources will be further considered during the detailed design phase of the project.
5. See GR-W.
6. See response to 3.

Bryant, Matthew L. (Letter #2)

General Manager
Ventura River County Water District

1. The use of tertiary reclaimed water was considered but would only be acceptable if it was treated by reverse osmosis. This additional level of treatment would be too costly, and therefore this measure was dismissed from further evaluation.

Conrow, Jerry L.

President, Ojai Water Conservation District
President, Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency

1. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.
2. Please refer to Economics Appendix in Technical Appendices volume. Expected damages are based probabilities of occurrence.
3. Comment noted.
4. Figure 2-2 is based on the current Ventura County General Plan, including designations and definitions.

Correa, John K.

General Manager
Ojai Valley Sanitary District

1. Additional risk and uncertainty analyses will be performed at the next phase of the project (detailed design work) to assess necessary flood protection at the Ojai Valley Sanitation District Waste Treatment Facility.
2. EIS/R will be revised with the current 303d list. Reference to Final State of the Watershed Report will be made.
3. Bank protection and/or floodproofing to protect infrastructure will be assessed and incorporated as needed in the detailed design phase.
4. The purpose of the flood mapping was to compare the alternatives and has no bearing on the FEMA floodplain mapping. At all locations where the project was deemed to significantly raise flood elevations, a detailed analysis was performed. At RM 5.9, Casitas Vista Road is lower than the surrounding floodplain and could transmit water further downstream. No significant aggradation was expected at this location and therefore the with-project condition will be similar to the existing condition. However, additional survey work will verify if the project could worsen the flood damages at this location or locations downstream.
   At RM 7.7 to 8.1, mapping along San Antonio Creek was not performed because that is outside of the project area. The modeling shows that the project will not affect the flood elevations along the tributaries of the Ventura River. Under with project conditions, the Casitas Levee will be connected to the stable terrace.
   At RM 9.3, just downstream of Santa Ana Blvd two OVSD structures housing sewer pump facilities were located in the 100-yr according to the feasibility study. OVSD stated that these should not be in 100-yr floodplain and that floors of the

structures were elevated. Future flood maps will reflect that these structures are elevated. Future surveys will determine if additional flood protection is required at this location. At 11.3 to 11.7, the levee along the Burn Dump was assumed functional, but subsequent site visits showed that it was not. Future floodmaps will show this area as being flooded during the 100-yr flood. Any additional flooding at this location will be mitigated.

5. The reach descriptions have been updated in Section 5 of the EIS/EIR. The wastewater treatment plant has been added to the list of developments in the Cañada Larga area.
6. Concur. Sentence will be added to text as stated.

Davis, Don

Utilities Manager
City of San Buenaventura

1. Modeling analysis performed is considered sufficient. Confirmation however will occur during the detailed design phase.
2. Comment noted.

De Silva, Yolanda

Property Owner

1. The removal of the dam provides a watershed-wide opportunity for ecosystem restoration.
2. The dam has outlived its period of useful service. It currently provides a diminished water supply capability, and will cease to do so when the remnant lake is completely filled with sediment –estimated by approximately year 2020. A single large storm event could effectively fill in the remaining capacity even sooner. In its current state, the dam provides very little flood protection. To protect against flooding as a result of the removal of the dam, levee and bridge modifications are included as measures of the preferred plan recommended by this feasibility study.
3. The intent of this project is not impact water supply and water quality, while benefiting steelhead trout and native habitats of the watershed.

Dilks, Eric M.

Property Owner

1. Confirm that additional detail will be included during design phase.
2. Confirmation hydraulic modeling will be conducted in design phase.

Edmonson, Jim

Southern California Manager
California Trout

1. The Corps differs to the National Marine Fisheries Service as the expert in assessing the significance of the proposed restoration alternative on the Southern California ESU. Per the comment letter received from NMFS (see McInnis comment letter, last paragraph), the proposed restoration could "contribute significantly to the endangered Southern California steelhead ESU".

Goad, Matthew

Ranch Manager
Scanstyle USA, INC

1. The 4-foot rise in the Casitas levee will have an insignificant effect on the hydraulic properties in this reach. With the higher levee, it is estimated that the 100-yr flood will be approximately 0.1 foot higher with the higher levee than with the existing levee. The velocities only increase approximately 2 %. These increases are not considered significant and will not alter the flood risk or bank erosion in this area. The small difference is because the current levee blocks practically all the flow from entering the town of Casitas. There is only a small amount of spill over the top of the levee expected. Therefore, blocking the entire flow will not significantly change the local hydraulics through this area.
2. In the detailed phase, further flood study will be conducted in this reach. Appropriate mitigation will be designed if further work shows that project impacts will increase flood risk

Grader, Zeke

Executive Director
Institute of Fisheries Resources

1. The deconstruction of Matilija Dam will be an engineering endeavor. As such, the alternatives necessarily focus on the engineering aspects of deconstruction. Much of the ecosystem is expected to "heal" itself once the dam is removed. Except for the Arundo removal aspect of the proposed restoration alternative, the Environmental Working Group did not feel a need to propose any extensive restoration measures, but rather allow natural fluvial processes to remove the dam-sequestered sediment naturally.

The Corps disagrees that undue attention was paid to flood protection and water supply issues. The proposed restoration plan has impacts on these that need to be mitigated. The attempt to reach a consensus with the affected public on the adequate mitigation of those impacts is difficult. As with any civil works project, without sufficient public support the project is not likely to receive Congressional authorization. Therefore, the mitigation of project impacts (flood control, water supply, noise, etc…) to a level that receives public support is essential for the restoration effort to move forward, and not a priority over the restoration effort.

2. The description of the No Action Alternative provided in Section 3 indicates that, "as the structure becomes less efficient in trapping material during storm events, more sediment will pass over the dam eventually being deposited along the mainstem of the Ventura River and then carried by river flows to the coast." However, this process would occur much more gradually than under the other project alternatives. Per the analysis of impacts to Earth Resources in Section 5.1, it would take approximately 40 years for sand and gravel size sediment to pass over the dam crest and 100 years for the river to reach sediment equilibrium. Likewise, the dam currently provides only negligible flood control function and future significant increases in damages from downstream flooding are not anticipated under the No Action Alternative. Furthermore, the feasibility study assumed that the dam is structurally sound enough to remain intact during the 50-year period of analysis. (Also see the Main Report, "Structural Dam Safety Evaluation" section.)
3. Comment Noted
4. See GR-M and GR-P7.
5. Cost trade-off assessment between slurrying more material downstream and making improvements at CMWD was considered during the formulation of the alternatives. Water is the limiting factor, both from source availability and cost perspective. The use of treated wastewater (tertiary) was not an option unless purified by costly reverse osmosis to avoid contamination to local well extraction operations. Disposal site selection was also limited by capacity, distance from the site (added pipeline infrastructure costs), and real estate costs.
6. Alternative 4 nomenclature in the DEIS/R will be revised to reflect designation in the Main Report, i.e. Full Dam Removal/On-Site Sediment Stabilization: Long-Term (for 4a, or Short-Term for 4b) Transport Period.
7. See GR-N.
8. The Corps' policy for ecosystem restoration (ER-1165-2-501) states that restoration activities should focus on restoration ecosystem structure and functions. (Also see response to Pritchett #3). It states "[t]he Corps will focus its restoration efforts on those initiatives most closely tied to Corps missions and areas of expertise. There may be instances where components of ecosystem restoration problems or opportunities are better addressed by other agencies through their missions and programs." Species or population management of southern California steelhead falls under the purview of State of California (CDF&G) and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Any population management measures for steelhead would be more appropriate coming from those agencies.

9. Nonstructural measures were considered, including trap and truck fish, removal of exotic/invasive species, and recreation trails.
10. See GR-O.
11. See response to 5
12. Additional development will occur during the detailed design phase.
13. Levee costs have been revised. Details will be provided in Final Report.
14. The Executive Summary is intended to provide a brief description of the proposed action, alternatives, and the environmental effects. Thus, it would not be appropriate to include "Alternatives Eliminated From Further Study" and a discussion of the reasons for their elimination. The other suggested revisions have been incorporated in the Final EIS/EIR.
15. List has been revised to include the Institute for Fisheries Resources.
16. The list of bullet items is a list of "project activities" or measures that are proposed to meet the project objectives, which are stated in section 2.2. Also the project activities are in no particular order of priority.
17. Due to with-project increased flood risk, 100-yr level of protection was sought instead of maintaining existing levels.
18. Under current and future without project conditions, the study assumption is that the dam will remain in place in its present configuration for the next 50 years. Continued inspection, monitoring and testing program serves as indicator of remaining life.
19. Justification for the modifications of downstream water supply facilities is provided in the Water Supply section of Chapter 3 of the Main Report.
20. This section is a brief description of the No Action alternative; the impact analysis of the No Action alternative is in section 5 of the EIS/EIR.
21. See response to No. 6.
22. List has been revised to include the Institute for Fisheries Resources.
23. Section 5.2.3 has been revised for clarity.
24. The main body of the DEIS/EIR was written for the understanding of the general public. More detailed, technical information is provided in the technical appendices. We're not sure what is confusing about these two paragraphs, but evidently the commenter is seeking more technical details. A very technical discussion of project-generated turbidly and durations are provided in the Hydrology and Hydraulics Appendix (Appendix D, section 9.2).
25. See revisions to these referenced paragraphs regarding turbidity levels in EIS. Impacts at Foster Park is moot issue due to installation of two wells as mitigation for impacts to surface diversion.
26. EIS/EIR is changed to 7 ft.
27. EIS/EIR is revised to give proper dimensions.
28. See GR- M and GR-P7. EIS/EIR has been revised.
29. See GR- M and GR-P7. EIS/EIR has been revised.
30. See GR-M and GR-P7. EIS/EIR has been revised.
31. Discussion of relative impact is intended to provide for a general comparison between the alternatives. While it is agreed that under certain conditions, the relative level of impact may be more like a different alternative, further analysis of these conditions are not warranted.

32. The EIS/EIR has been revised per comment.
33. The statement refers to steelhead numbers. It's reasonable to assume that the habitat continues to decline, but it is speculative as to what would happen to population size. As to the catastrophic failure of the Matilija Dam, in the feasibility study it is assumed that the dam is structurally sound enough to remain intact during the 50-year period of analysis. (Also see the Main Report, "Structural Dam Safety Evaluation" section.)
34. See Response Raysbrook #8.
35. See Response #5 to Word. Also, amphibians are much more hardy than salmonids and were judged to be able to withstand capture and release better than steelhead.
36. The Mitigation Measure was changed to indicate that downstream monitoring of biological resources shall be as detailed in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.
37. See GR-N.
38. Concur. The EIS/EIR has been revised to indicate that the soil revetments will be removed after 20 years, assuming there is adequate evacuation of trapped sediment.
39. See GR-B.
40. Refer to Response to Comment "Word" Response #5.
41. The EIS/EIR has been revised per comment.
42. All biological mitigation measures are summarized in the Executive Summary and are also provided in full in Section 8 and Appendix J of the EIS/EIR.
43. Section 5.5.2 states that under the No Action Alternative, the reservoir would gradually diminish in size and disappear.
44. See GR-N.
45. The explanatory text preceding Table 5.6-1 provided examples but was not meant to list all equipment items that would or would not be powered by diesel engines. Further explanation of the assumptions is provided both in Mitigation Measure A-2 which notes low emission diesel engines are required for cutterhead dredge pump engines; Mitigation Measure A-3, which notes that all stationary engines, except the Dredge engines (which may or may not be "stationary"), would be electric engines; and in Air Quality Appendix Table G.1-9 (Please note that the "note header" on the right side of the page should say "Mitigated Assumes") which notes that dredge engines would not be electrified. The clamshell dredge is also specifically listed as a diesel powered piece of equipment in the off road equipment list provided in Appendix Table G.1-5. These areas of the EIS/R document clearly indicate that the prime movers for the dredges are assumed to be diesel engines. The following stationary engines were included, but not specifically identified in the Air Quality Appendix, as part of the dredging operations in the air quality analysis:

Stationary Engine	HP req.	Number	Days	Hours/day	HP-hrs
Water Pipeline Pump	800	1	270	24	5184000
Water Makeup Pipeline Pumps	900	3	270	24	17496000
Slurry Pipeline Pump	400	1	270	24	2592000
Cutterhead Dredge	715	2	270	24	9266400
Thickener Motor	45	1	270	24	291600
Generator for Lights, etc.	45	1	270	12	145800

It was determined that it would be feasible to electrify all of these engines, except for the cutterhead dredge, to mitigate air quality impacts (Mitigation Measure A-3). The use of electrically powered dredges was determined not to be feasible or safe due to the dredges (clamshell or cutterhead depending on the alternative) needing to be mobile and their being placed on top of barges that would float on top of Matilija Reservoir. Feasible air quality mitigation for the dredges is considered to be the use of EPA Tier 1, 2, or 3 engines. The use of such equipment should minimize odor impacts from the diesel engines to insignificant levels. It is considered more likely that odor impacts could occur from anaerobic decomposition products being emitted during the dredging and slurry disposal operations. However, with proper activity control no significant odor impacts are anticipated.

The electrification mitigation would reduce the total diesel horsepower from the dredging operations by an estimated 3,990 horsepower (by electrifying pumps and other stationary equipment) to a reduced total of 1,430 horsepower; and reduces the estimated dredging equipment NOx emissions from 234 tons to 25.5 tons through electrification and by incorporating the use of low emission diesel engines (Mitigation Measure A-2). While these emissions are a significant fraction of the total project emissions (~25%), they are forecast to be less than the emissions from the channelization activities that would be completed by heavy-duty diesel construction equipment.

Similarly, the noise produced by dredging operations could exceed Ventura County noise standards, but would be less than the hauling and demolition activities associated with channelization that would be completed by construction equipment. All feasible mitigation measures are being incorporated to minimize these impacts, however, the analysis has identified that the noise produced by the project would be significant even after the use of all feasible mitigation.

The analysis has identified that the PM10 emission impacts would be significant even after the use of all feasible mitigation measures. The analysis also determined that the NOx emissions were potentially significant based on the emission thresholds recommended by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD). However, all feasible mitigation measures are being incorporated to minimize these impacts; therefore, per VCAPCD guidance, the mitigated NOx emission impacts are not considered to be significant.

46. As stated in Response 33, above, in the feasibility study, Matilija Dam, is assumed to be structurally sound enough to remain intact during the 50-year

period of analysis. The impacts the commenter suggests for Casitas Water District and its customers are speculative.

47. The local sponsor has no data that suggest or support the statement that the new levees are located in a "low income community". Levees are not expected to adversely affect property values within the study area.
48. Under future without project conditions, areas that are currently flood-prone would continue to be so. Structural and non-structural damages are expected to continue for these areas – throughout the period-of-analysis (See Main Report, "Existing Floodplain Features and Issues")
49. Refer to Response #48 above.
50. This was comparative basis used to assess differences in impacts between No Action and with-project modeling.
51. EIS/EIR has been revised for clarity.
52. The ability of recreation at Lake Casitas to operate under future without project conditions was not considered in the scoping process as an issue that needed analysis in the feasibility study.
53. Existing discussion is adequate and no change is required.
54. No claims are made in the EIS/EIR of increased numbers of steelhead that might result from the deconstruction of Matilija Dam. Claims of beneficial impacts resulting from steelhead angling would be highly speculative.
55. Section 5.12 addresses compliance with all applicable local and state regulations, policies, and standards, including CEQA, Coastal Act, and others.
56. The cited paragraph has been revised.
57. The next sentence indicates that these short-term impacts could be significant.
58. Refer to GR-N.
59. Refer to GR-D2.
60. The page referenced by the comment does not address planning constraints. It is unclear what the comment is asking or commenting on.
61. The downstream flood protection is provided to prevent project-induced damages. Future development within the areas protected as part of the project is highly speculative and, thus, is not addressed in the EIS/EIR.
62. Comment noted. Refer to Response 61.
63. Costs Issues
    1. OMRRR costs for desilting basin are not needed in federal accounting since this feature is a betterment and sponsor borne.
    2. 2, 5-9. Costs will be better refined during detailed design phase.
    3. See Main report (Chap 3) for justification of slurry water costs versus replacement cost.
    4. 7 ft was used as per Main Report alternative description.
64. Our contractor, Entrix, developed their rating system for habitat quality for the evaluation in coordination with the EWG. They preferred to use this system of whole numbers rather than breaking them into fractions between 0 and 1.0. Because the systems were compatible and easily transferable, the EWG approved Entrix's study methodology
65. It's unclear what the commenter is addressing, but the HEP method involves using habitat variables to determine habitat quality. The scores of the variable is

on a 0.1 to 1.0 basis (as mentioned in Appendix E, section 3.A). The score of many variables in HEP are often not linear. For details of the scoring used for the habitat variables – see the Appendices (1, 2, and 3) of the HEP Appendix (Appendix E).

66. All of the habitats within study area along the Ventura River and Matilija Creek were termed "riparian habitat" for the purposes of this report (see Page E-8). The habitats in the study area were deemed important as habitat for all wildlife, regardless of their proximity to water. The habitat values of the palustrine types immediately adjacent to the riverine habitat were included for the habitat value equation for steelhead.
67. The HEP analysis determined the environmental output of the proposed restoration alternatives and the no action alternative. During the plan formulation process the mitigation measures (e.g., flood protection, sedimentation impacts, etc.) were critically evaluated for their effectiveness and impact to environmental outputs. In many cases the HEP analysis was not sensitive enough to detect small incremental changes relative to a mitigation measures. In some instances, it was determined that a mitigation measure was necessary to lessen project-related impacts, and in that case the environmental outputs (through the HEP analysis) were evaluated accordingly. Specifically for the mitigation of sediment at the Robles Diversion structure, the HEP analysis was not sensitive to the nuances of sediment issues at the Robles Diversion. The EWG made general statements regarding the outcome of sediment handling at the diversion. For example, for alternatives where the sediment bypass is installed and it functions, the natural processes component for Reach 5 (and those downstream) received higher values than currently exist. If a proposed mitigation has sediment handling similar to current conditions, these values were not adjusted for with project conditions.
68. The EWG design the shape and dimensions of the channel through Reach 7 (the Matilija reservoir area) sediments by evaluating pre-dam conditions and balancing the space needed for sediment handling for each alternative. The 1947 aerial photograph illustrates Reach 7 as a broad alluvial plain with many braided channels and open vegetation conditions. Channel width varied from 100 to 200 feet with secondary channels this size or slightly smaller in the upstream reaches. In the lower reach near the dam, the channel width averaged just over 100 feet. Within these broad channels, low flow thalwegs meandered. Therefore, the Reach 7 created contours will provide similar conditions and provide fish passage.
69. The discussion on Page E-17 was not meant to imply that the soil cement walls would be left in place. This discussion is for Alternative 1, not 4b. The HEP evaluation only looked at snapshots in time for Target Years 0, 5, 20, and 50. During the time period between Target Year 5 and 20, the soil cement would be removed by Target Year 10 and habitats would have been establishing for about 10 years by Target Year 20.
70. The proposed restoration alternative has potential impacts to the coast (i.e., potential beneficial impacts to the shoreline) and will have significant beneficial impacts to steelhead, a coastal species during part of its life history. Compliance with the Coastal Zone management Act is required.
71. See Response to Word # 5 and Response # 35, above.

72. See Response to 36, above.
73. See GR-A.

Gramckow, Jurgen (Letter #1)

President
Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company

1. See GR-M and GR-P7.
2. See GR-P1.
3. Additional assessment will be conducted during the detailed design phase. Means to protect the infrastructure will be investigated.
4. Means to protect the well will be included in assessed impacts of the slurry disposal site in the design phase.

Gramckow, Jurgen (Letter #2)

Trustee
J&G Family Trust

1. Comment noted.

Greene-Barton, Brooks

Matilija Hot Springs Sanctuary

1. See GR-Q1.

Gutierrez, David A. (Letter #1)

Acting Chief
California Department of Water Resources
Division of Safety of Dams

1. Comment noted.

Gutierrez, David A. (Letter #2)

Acting Chief
California Department of Water Resources
Division of Safety of Dams

1. Comment noted. Detailed removal plans will be prepared during the design and preparation of plans and specifications.

Handley, Richard

Preserve Manager
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

1. See GR-A.
2. See GR-A.

Hanf, Lisa

Manager, Federal Activities Office
EPA

1. The hydraulic analysis utilized storms that occurred from 1991-2001, repeated 5 times, as the most reasonable (likely) scenario to forecast downstream sedimentation effects. Turbidity forecast used both a "wet" and "dry" hydrograph to access downstream turbidity impacts. (See discussion in Appendix C1, section II.B.1.(i) of the EIS/EIR).
2. See GR-A, GR-P7, and Response to Raysbrook Comment #2.

Hauser, Don

Property Owner

1. Measures associated with described plan would have not met screening criteria that were established during the formulation process. Please refer to the Main Report, Chapter 3 for plan formulation discussion, specifically reasons for dismissal of a new fish ladder and for the Pool and Riffle System. Additionally, the benefit of sediment replenishment to the eroded portions of the riverine system and to the coastline that would result from the natural fluvial release of trapped sediment would be significantly delayed under this scenario.

Hebenstreit, Lyn and Maria Blasco

Property Owners

1. Comment noted.

Hillen, Jack

Flying H Ranch

1. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.
2. Utility relocations will not cut off service to users. See also GR-Q1.
3. Continuous access would be provided.

Hocking, Kim

Staff
Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board

1. Concur. The EIS/EIR has been revised to indicate additional studies will be required at Matilija Hot Springs.
2. The EIR/EIS does reflect the fact that Matilija Hot Springs would be adversely affected by the project in the 2nd paragraph on page 5.4-3

3. Concur. Mitigation measure CR-2 has been revised to require that historical architectural and NRHP evaluation will be completed for Matilija Dam, Camino Cielo (Ojala) and Soper's Ranch.
4. See response to Comment 1.
5. See response to Comment 2.
6. See response to Comment 3.
7. Mitigation measures for this project will be developed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). The County would be involved in these discussions as part. CR-2 explains this process.
8. Concur. These two County documents would be reviewed in development of mitigation measures.
9. Concur. The Cultural Heritage Board would be a concurring party to the Section 106 memorandum of Agreement that is developed to detail mitigation measures.
10. The Final EIS/EIR will be made available for public review prior to signature of the Record of Decision.

Howell, F.A. (Rick)

Property Owner

1. See GR-C.

Hysore, John

Property Owner

1. This feasibility study is not considering the removal of Casitas Dam. The recommended plan is to provide ecosystem restoration in the Ventura River Watershed, which also includes the removal of Matilija Dam. Alternative analyses considered various options to dam removal. Impacts to infiltration rates and to local infrastructure were also considered in the analyses.

Jackson, Hannah-Beth

Assemblymember, 35th District
Chair, Natural Resources Committee
California Assembly

1. The California Coastal Sediment Management Plan was added to the list of plans with beach replenishment goals that the proposed restoration plan might assist in achieving those goals. See revision for section 5.10.3.

Jenkin, A. Paul

Coordinator, Matilija Coalition
Surfrider Foundation

1. See GR-N.

2. At Meiners Oaks, confinement by levee at lower (downstream) end necessitates continuation of protection upstream otherwise breakout would occur.
3. Further modeling to be performed during the design phase will confirm areas to be protected.
4. See GR-Q1.
5. Clarification for delivery by Ventura County prior to agreement was made to the Main Report.
6. See GR-D1 and GR-P6.
7. See GR-P4.
8. Adaptive Management period has been extended to 10 years. Main Report revised.
9. See Response to Pritchet's comment #22.
10. See GR-X.
11. See GR-O.
12. See GR-F2.
13. See GR- D1.
14. See GR-R.

Kehoe, Barry

Property Owner

1. See GR-Q1.
2. See GR-P1.
3. The Main Report portion of the feasibility study includes details and costs of recommended plan. During the next phase (Detailed Design), additional modeling will be performed to provide confirmation of parcels that cannot be protected by flood risk as a result of dam removal. Properties considered for acquirement would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Owners of property to be acquired would receive fair compensation.
4. Many measures and alternatives were considered, evaluated and screened prior to developing the final array of alternatives presented in the EIS/R. Please refer to the Main Report of the feasibility study for details, specifically Chapter 3, sections "*Formulation of Measures and Alternative Plans*" and "*Basis for General Characteristics of Alternative Plans*". The rationale for the selection of the recommended plan is developed and described in the remainder of the referenced chapter.

Kehoe, Dorothy

Property Owner

1. The commenter's residence is not categorized as one of the cabins. Cost of buyout, if required, will be appraised using similar housing in the area. See GR-Q1.
2. Considerable brainstorming effort was performed during the formulation of alternatives process. The described plan would not best meet the objectives of this ecosystem restoration study. In addition, tunneling between the North Fork

and Matilija Lake was assessed but was not carried forward as described in the Main Report, Chapter 3, in the section "Formulation of Measures and Alternative Plans".

3. During the next phase of work where additional modeling and a more detailed design will be performed, properties at risk will be further assessed to confirm the necessity of acquirement or whether other options are viable. Coordination with homeowners, including on-site visits and surveys will be pursued as part of this next level of effort.

Knuth, Al

Property Owner

1. See GR-K.
2. See GR-R.
3. The recommended plan is the least expensive alternative and also provides the greatest environmental benefits. Please refer to Main Report. Regarding other dam removal options, earlier formulation iterations dismissed the gradual enlargement of the notch as this action would compromise the structural integrity of the arch dam, especially considering seismic and larger flow events.

Kruse, Suzanne

Property Owner

1. See GR-Q1.

Lalani, Nazir

Deputy Director
County of Ventura Public Works Agency
Traffic, Advance Planning, and Permits Division

1. The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project is not anticipated to result in significant access restrictions to residents along Matilija Canyon Road. The Transportation Management Plan described in Mitigation Measure T-1 would include measures to ensure that emergency access to Matilija Canyon Road residents remains available at all times during project activities. Additionally, the project would not contribute to washouts of Matilija Canyon Road and would likely reduce the danger of washouts during storm events. The Recommended Plan (Alternative 4b) includes the construction of a new channel through the area of the existing reservoir behind Matilija Dam. This channel alignment generally runs through the middle of this portion of Matilija Canyon and would not be located adjacent to Matilija Canyon Road (see Figure 3.6-3 in the EIS/EIR). In fact, through much of this area the proposed channel alignment would direct creek flows further away from Matilija Canyon Road than current conditions. The channel would be stabilized by a soil cement revetment seven feet above the

channel invert and five feet below the invert. For these reasons, implementation of the Recommended Plan would actually help protect the roadway from flood damage in the vicinity of the Matilija reservoir by: (1) directing flows through at stabilized channel; (2) establishing a large buffer area between the channel and the roadway; and (3) constructing stable, engineered fill embankments along each side of the channel which would further protect Matilija Canyon Road.

2. Following are responses to the items listed in the comment regarding the proposed Camino Cielo Bridge removal and Santa Ana Road Bridge replacement:

   - Estimated costs for removal of the Camino Cielo Bridge and replacement of the Santa Ana Road Bridge are presented in the Feasibility Study. These costs would be shared by the Corps of Engineers and the County of Ventura Public Works Agency.
   - The new Santa Ana Road Bridge and all proposed flood protection structures, such as the proposed Camino Cielo floodwall, would be designed to Corps, VCWPD, and FEMA standards, as applicable.
   - The Recommended Plan includes the removal of the Camino Cielo Bridge, but does not include construction of a new bridge. The proposed Santa Ana Road Bridge would be designed to meet all applicable standards, including those of the AASHTO and Ventura County.
   - Under the Recommended Plan, the Camino Cielo Bridge will be removed and a new bridge will be constructed downstream of the existing structure. The new bridge will allow for greater stream flow capacities to pass beneath the structure, while continuing to provide access to Camino Cielo residences. During construction of the new bridge, the existing structure will provide interim normal ingress/egress use. After completion of the new bridge, the existing Camino Cielo bridge will be removed and the original channel width at the current location will be restored. The detailed design of the new bridge will be completed during the Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED) phase of the project
   - Right-of-way requirements for the Santa Ana Road Bridge are discussed in the Feasibility Study and will be refined during the design phase of the project.

3. The impacts of the temporary trips generated during construction are discussed in section 5.9 of the Draft EIS/EIR, including the transport of concrete rubble to Hanson Aggregates and non-recyclable debris Toland Road Landfill. The responses to the following comments (below) address the specific comments related to the proposed project's site-specific and cumulative effects.
4. Based on Ventura County Level of Service standards, which have been adopted as transportation significance criteria, the EIS/EIR discloses that the project would result in significant unmitigable impacts. Although impacts would not be mitigable to less-than-significant levels, Mitigation Measure T-1 (preparation of a Transportation Management Plan [TMP]) is recommended to reduce impacts to the extent feasible. The TMP would need to provide measures acceptable to the Transportation Department for any impacts the project would have on the County local roads and network systems, including those to North Matilija Road, South

Matilija Road, Santa Ana Boulevard, and Toland Road and the truck routes the project would use. However, detailed construction plans that would be necessary to develop site-specific transportation management measures along the haul routes have not yet been completed. Once the draft TMC is completed, Mitigation Measure T-1 requires that the TMP be reviewed and approved by the County before implementation.

Once the construction contractor for the project has been secured and the construction plans are finalized, the TMP would be developed that would define all of the locations along the haul routes that could be temporarily blocked or otherwise impacted, including measures to reduce the impacts that are acceptable to the County. In addition, the TMP would define the use of flag persons, warning signs, lights, barricades, cones, etc., according to standard guidelines outlined in the Caltrans Traffic Manual, the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, and the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH). The TMP would also include procedures to ensure that through access is maintained.

5. Based on the initial analysis presented in the EIS/EIR, the TMP may require the implementation of measures that would serve to mitigate certain transportation-related impacts, possibly including the restriction of employee and truck trips to specific hours, if feasible. However, it is currently not possible to characterize specific transportation-related impacts in detail because detailed construction plans for the project have not yet been developed. The EIS/EIR provides a general characterization of the anticipated impacts and presents a mitigation strategy that ensures that all significant impacts would be mitigated to the extent feasible.
6. In response to Comment 6, Mitigation Measure T-2 has been revised as follows:

   T-2 Road repair from construction activities. If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians occurs, the construction contractor shall coordinate repairs with the affected public agencies to ensure that any impacts are adequately repaired per the applicable agency standards. Roads and/or driveways disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces. Care shall be taken to prevent damage to roadside drainage structures. Roadside drainage structures and road drainage features (e.g., rolling dips) shall be protected by regrading and reconstructing roads to drain properly. The construction contractor shall work with the applicable agencies to document pre-construction conditions of roads features prior to the commencement of construction.
7. Mitigation Measure T-2 has been proposed in the Draft EIS/EIR to address deterioration of roadways surfaces caused by project construction traffic. The costs associated with these types of roadway repairs would be shared by the Corps of Engineers and the County of Ventura. Since the County is the co-proponent for the proposed project, it may not be necessary for the roadway repair funds to be deposited into a trust fund, as is the practice for private project applicants.
8. The trips generated by the proposed project are temporary construction-related trips only. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to long-term increases in average daily traffic on the County's Regional Road Network. Since

the proposed project's trip generation is temporary, the project does not have the potential to contribute to cumulative increases in traffic levels in the same way as projects that generate new vehicle trips on an ongoing basis into the future. As a result, the proposed project's potential to contribute significantly to cumulative increases in average daily traffic levels is very limited.

A determination will need to be made by the County of Ventura Public Works Agency as to whether the Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance is applicable to the proposed project. If the ordinance is applicable, the County would need to pay a portion of the fee as the co-proponent for the proposed project.

9. It is understood that the Transportation Department's comments are limited to the proposed project's impacts to the County's Regional Road Network.
10. The Draft EIS/EIR was made available to appropriate State agencies, including CalTrans, for review and comment.

Lanning, Rex and Heidi

Property Owners

1. Current sediment removal program at the Santa Ana Bridge by Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) will continue even after dam removal. Periodic monitoring of sedimentation levels will also be required as part of the monitoring and adaptive management program that will be in effect for a period of 10 years following dam removal.
2. Levee costs are included in the Final Main Report. Levees would be compacted earthfill with stone side slope protection on the river side.
3. See GR-M. Silt liquefaction would not be a concern as no structures will be built on silt.
4. See GR-L.
5. See GR- F2.

Light, Robert M.

Property Owner

1. Comment noted.

McGlothlin, Russell

Hatch & Parent

1. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.

McInnis, Rodney

National Marine Fisheries Service

1. The quantity of sediment to be slurried is incorrectly written as 1.2 million cubic yards. The correct quantity is 2.1 million cubic yards.

2. The reference to the provision of make-up water to CMWD using the State Water Project, or the installation of new wells in the vicinity of Robles Diversion is not correct. From a federal interest perspective, the need to replenish CMWD with lost water supply is not warranted since the dam deconstruction portion of the project would not likely commence prior to 2009. The current lease agreement that CMWD has with VCWPD for the use of Matilija Dam for water storage ends at the end of 2008. See related text in Main Report, Chapter 4 in paragraph "*Lost Storage*".
3. The Camino Cielo bridge will be replaced.
4. See GR- O.
5. See GR-A
6. See GR-A
7. Comment Noted
8. See GR-X
9. See GR-D1
10. Supply capacity of desilting basin is limited to 60 ac-ft.
11. See GR-P4
12. See GR-D2
13. This is not an element of the Recommended Plan
14. See GR-N
15. The environmental impacts of the levees were evaluated in the EIS/EIR in section 5.3.3 (Under "wildlife Corridors) and considered to be less than significant impacts (ClassIII). Levee impacts to the quality of the habitat were also considered in the habitat evaluation performed for the feasibility study (Appendix E of the EIS/EIR). (see page E-40)
16. Bridge modifications include extension of the Santa Ana bridge to increase flow capacity under the bridge. The channel will be widened at the bridge and for a limited distance upstream. The existing Camino Cielo bridge will be removed and the pre-bridge channel width will be re-established using construction equipment. A new bridge will be placed downstream, approximately 800 feet away. The new bridge will be an all-weather bridge with a 100-yr storm flow capacity.
17. See GR-B; Also see response #1 and #2 to Raysbrook Comment Letter
18. See GR-F1
19. See GR-R

Mower, Benard H.

Property Owner

1. Comment noted.

Murray, Patricia Y and Ann Gist Levin

President and Action Chair, respectively
League of Women Voters of Ventura County

1. Comment noted.

O'Brien, William

Meiners Oaks Resident

1. Chapter 4 (Recommended Plan) in the Main Report has text on basis for levee heights.
2. Water rights are not included as a Corps of Engineers authority for water resource development. The issue is generally dealt with at the state and local level.
3. See GR-M and GR-P7.
4. More discussion of local purveyors will be added to Final Report.
5. See response to Comment 2.
6. See GR-M.
7. Revision will be made to this section.
8. See GR-P4.
9. Pg. 16: The model is now identified as HEC-RAS ver 3.1.1 hydraulic model.
10. Pg. 32: The locations are now describe in the text above the table.
11. Pg. 33: The levee designs account for the aggradation listed in Table 9.

Packard, Monte

Ventura Resident

1. Alternative measures evaluating options to leave the dam in place were evaluated as part of the feasibility study. These measures, including construction of a fish ladder, were dismissed as they did not best meet objectives of the study. Please refer to the Main Report, Chapter 3 for plan formulation discussion, specifically measures addressing fate of dam. Anadromous steelhead require access to the ocean. Resident fish upstream of the dam are not anadromous. Removal of the dam would allow fish migration. Earlier formulation iterations dismissed the gradual enlargement of the notch as this action would compromise the structural integrity of the arch dam, especially considering seismic and larger flow events.

Pearson, Larry

1. See GR-R.

Port, Patricia Sanderson

Regional Environmental Officer
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

1. Comment noted.

Powell, Cheryl L.

IGR/CEQA Program Manager
Caltrans, District 7

1. Comment noted.
2. Comment noted. Also see GR-C
3. The proposed restoration plan is not expected to create any undue burden/ limitations on Caltrans' future actions or maintenance along SR-33. Arundo removal along the Ventura River is, of course, intended to improve riparian habitat and riparian species (birds and mammals) are expected to benefit. The Monitoring and Adaptive Management efforts are expected to identify areas within where biological resources might benefit from adaptive management measures. The Corps and local sponsor will fully coordinate any recommendations concerning any improvements that might assist wildlife movement through the SR-33 corridor with Caltrans.

Pritchett, David A.

Program Director
Southern California Steelhead Coalition

1. In the next planning phase (the Preconstruction Engineering and Design) phase, the Corps and District intends to utilize the expertise of the stakeholders that participated in the feasibility study. Of particular importance will be the Environmental Working Group, as their expertise will be invaluable in assisting the Corps and District in the preparation of the Habitat Restoration Plan and the a more detailed Monitoring & Adaptive Management Plan. (See GR-A and GR-X). Other subgroups will be activated as needed. (Also see additions made to the FEIS at section 1.1).
2. Wholesale changes to the final EIS/EIR were not possible given the schedule constraints. Changes that are reflected in the final EIS/EIR are primarily to make points of clarification, to incorporate new information, or to correct misstatements or errors. The EIS/EIR, however, makes a good-faith attempt at cross-referencing the Appendices so that the more technical reviewer can get more details there. The EIS/EIR had to strike a balance between providing the most pertinent information within the main body of the report and not inundating the general reader with too much technical information.
3. The Corps' definition of "Ecosystem Restoration" is articulated in " The Civil Works Ecosystem Restoration Policy" (Engineer Regulation 1165-2-501). It states that "[t]he purpose of the Civil Works ecosystem restoration is to restore significant ecosystem functions, structures, and dynamic processes that have been degraded." It further states that "the intent of restoration is to partially or fully reestablish the attributes of a naturalistic, functioning, and self-regulating system."

4. An infiltration gallery was considered. See Main Report, Chap 3, under "Mitigation Measures for Diversion Operation Impacts to Robles Diversion Dam and Lake Casitas": Alternate Water Source: Subsurface Diversion."
5. See GR-I
6. Since the Modified Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP) analysis for the feasibility study was developed by the Environmental Working Group using a consensus-based approach, the Corps and District intends that the same approach be used for any revisions or changes to that analysis. As such, this issue of whether there are cost-effective measures to provide quantifiable environmental outputs from exotic predator removals would be an excellent issue for the EWG to pursue during the PED phase.
7. See GR-N
8. See GR-D1
9. An assessment of water supply budget would have to be pursued at the local and state level.
10. See GR- P1.
11. The desilting basin size as proposed for the Recommended Plan is not very large (60 ac-ft). It will require periodic cleaning to maintain capacity.
12. See revised text in the FEIS/EIR on page 5.2-10, 3rd paragraph.
13. See GR-M and GR-P7.
14. See GR-W
15. See GR-B
16. The future without Project Conditions assumes that Matilija Dam would remain for, at least, the 50-year period of analysis (see section 3.2 of the EIS/EIR).
17. See GR-X
18. Comment Noted
19. The expected changes to the river channel from sedimentation are detailed in Appendix C1, section IV.A.2(a). The assessment is essentially the same as what the commenter summarizes.
20. The Payne & Associates studies were cited in Appendices C1 and E (cited as TRP 2003 and TRP 2004). Admittedly, they were not prominent features of the EIS/EIR (they were listed as "available upon request" at Appendix 6 of Appendix E). They are highly technical reports and considered not of compelling interest of the general EIS/EIR reviewer. Nevertheless, the Corps and District appreciates the commenter for reiterating that these reports were the technical support for the contention in the EIS/EIR that some 16-17 miles of good to high quality steelhead habitat exist above the barrier created by Matilija Dam.
21. See Response #5 to comment by Word.
22. Assurances of project completion is included after the final design (including plans and specifications) is complete and a Project Cooperation Agreement is signed between the Corps and the Sponsor.

Raysbrook, C.F.

California Department of Fish and Game

1. The removal or control of Giant Cane (Reed) in the study area is considered an essential component of the Matilija Dam ecosystem restoration project. The removal of giant reed from the study area and thereby the prevention of its spread into currently unaffected areas (which is predicted to occur under future without project conditions) were deemed essential for any meaningful restoration of the riparian ecosystem in the study area. As such, giant reed removal is considered part of the proposed ecosystem restoration effort and should not be considered mitigation.

   Because giant reed removal activities may have impacts to biological resources and water quality, a set of Best Management Practices were developed that are mitigation measures to reduce and minimize potential impacts of the removal of giant reed. (See Mitigation measure B-11 in section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR.) Note that the title of the mitigation measure was revised in the Final EIS/EIR to "Best Management Practices used for Giant Reed Control."

2. Table 5.3-1 of the EIS/EIR presents estimates of temporary and permanent impacts to vegetation communities based on preliminary design plans for Alternative 4b. In general, the desiltation basin and levees are considered to be permanent features. The slurry line impacts would be temporary. Restoration of temporary impact areas, including potentially some giant reed removal areas, would be addressed in the proposed Habitat Restoration Program (Mitigation Measure B-13). Overall, direct construction impacts to habitats were considered Class II, III, and IV under CEQA/NEPA. For alternative 4b, approximately 50 acres of habitat would be permanently impacted, most of which comprises degraded habitat in Reach 7, the former lake area. Less than 5 acres of mixed uplands and wetlands may be permanently affected by the levees and desilting basin. The slurry disposal site referred to in Table 5.3-1 is the 94-acre site off Rice Road; the others sites were not quantified in the DEIS/EIR, but are provided in the Final EIS/EIR. (See new Table 5.3.1A in section 5.3 of the EIS/EIR).

   Impacts to habitats caused by project components may change as the project designs are refined. Prior to application for a Streambed Alteration Agreement once the project has been designed, the local sponsor will provide a detailed accounting of habitats affected. Efforts will be made to avoid, reduce, and minimize impacts, especially to sensitive habitats during the design phase. If impacts are substantially greater than that described in the EIS/R or substantial new information is provided, a supplemental EIS/R will be required.

   Mitigation Measure B-13, development of the Habitat Restoration Plan, will include methods to restore habitats on all temporary impact areas, such as preserving and respreading topsoil, specific grading techniques including soil ripping to alleviate compaction, and choosing appropriate plant palettes. Appropriate maintenance and monitoring methods for the revegetated sites to ensure habitat restoration success will be included. These methods will be developed and defined during the project design phase.

Because the permanent impacts to habitats are small and outweighed by the overall, significant beneficial impacts to the entire riparian ecosystem, no specific mitigation ratios have been proposed. Permanent impacts to several acres of habitat is considered offset by the ecological restoration of nearly 2,000 acres of the Matilija and Ventura River watersheds.

3. No biological surveys for the feasibility study specifically targeted primarily nocturnal species, such as ringtails. Page 4.3-43 of the EIS/R, however, acknowledges that ringtails occur in the project area, as documented by USFWS. Because they are known to occur in the area, no additional surveys for this species are needed.

   Equipment staging for project activities will generally occur within the footprints of the work areas. These will be defined more fully during the design phase. Access routes to and from the work sites will occur on primary roadways within the area. Other access, such as the temporary access road will be needed along the slurry pipeline route, will be placed to avoid sensitive habitats to the extent feasible. Once the project has been designed, a detailed accounting of habitats affected will be provided to the Department. Efforts will be made to avoid, reduce, and minimize impacts, especially to sensitive habitats during the design phase.

   The conclusion of the EIS/EIR is that the amount of the area adversely impacted is far outweighed by the significant environmental benefits (outputs) generated. (Also see response #2, above.) If impacts are substantially greater than that described in the EIS/R or substantial new information is provided, a supplemental EIS/R will be required.

4. See GR - X
5. See GR-O
6. See GR-D1
7. See GR-D2
8. Mitigation Measure B-1 was amended to include any "State Protected" and "State Fully Protected" species. Also see response #3, above. As this is an ecosystem restoration project, all efforts will be made to avoid unnecessary adverse effects to <u>any</u> wildlife species during the activities associated with the deconstruction of Matilija Dam.
9. Mitigation Measure B-13 and B-14 address revegetation following project construction. A Habitat Restoration Plan will detail the revegetation of sites within the project area and will include a prescription of oak and walnut planting. Because of the overall ecological restoration goal of the project, planting plans will emphasize native, site appropriate planting palettes. Native plant communities in appropriate site conditions will be emphasized over specific numbers of trees or individual species planted. The Habitat Restoration Plan will be provided to the Department for review and approval prior to implementation.

10. Mitigation Measure B-5 on page 5.3-10 of the EIS/R was revised to read " the Corps of Engineers shall conduct initial clearing of open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitats in Reach 7 outside of the breeding season between September 15 and March 1st. Clearing of riparian and upland vegetation for levee construction shall be conducted between September 15 and March 1st. If nesting birds are determined to have active nests by September 15, clearing will be postponed within 1,000 feet of the nest until chicks are fledged or November 1.
11. The local sponsor, the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, will be responsible for obtaining a streambed alteration agreement per Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code. During project design, details regarding impacts to Department jurisdictional resources per Section 1600 will be documented. As stated previously, efforts will be made to avoid and minimize impacts to jurisdictional resources during the design phase of the project.
12. If impacts are substantially greater than that described in this EIS/R or substantial new information becomes evident during the design phase of the project, a supplemental EIS/R will be required. The supplemental document will be fully noticed and circulated as required under CEQA and NEPA.

Reid, Rich and Gloria

Colors of Nature

1. Comment noted.

Roberts, K.L.

Rancho Matilija Property Owners Association

1. Drainage details, and verification of erosion potential in Rancho Mirage area, including appropriate prevention measures will be included as part of detailed design in the next phase.

Rose, Peggy

Project Manager
Ventura County Resource Conservation District

1. See GR-B.

Sylvester, Stephen and Christine

Property Owner

1. Verification of necessary protection will be performed during the detailed design phase.

Thacher, Anson and Anne

Property Owner

1. See GR- Q1.
2. See GR- F2.
3. See GR-D
4. Considerable brainstorming effort was performed during the formulation of alternatives process. The described plan would not best meet the objectives of this ecosystem restoration study. In addition, tunneling between the North Fork and Matilija Lake was assessed but was not carried forward as described in the Main Report, Chapter 3, in the section "Formulation of Measures and Alternative Plans".
5. Compared to the recommended plan, incremental removal was not found to be as cost effective. Please refer to the Main Report, Chapter 3, which includes discussion on the formulation of measures and alternative plans, evaluation and comparison of the final array of alternatives, and the basis for the selection of the recommended plan.

Thacher, Anson

Property Owner

1. Considerable brainstorming effort was performed during the formulation of alternatives process. The described plan would not best meet the objectives of this ecosystem restoration study. In addition, tunneling between the North Fork and Matilija Lake was assessed but was not carried forward as described in the Main Report, Chapter 3, in the section "Formulation of Measures and Alternative Plans". Trucking options were also evaluated in this section, and except for one, were found to not be feasible and subsequently dismissed. The only trucking option considered in the final array of alternatives was found not to be the most cost effective alternative. Refer to discussions relevant to the selection of recommended plan in Chapter 3 of the Main Report.
2. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.

Thacher, Emily Friend

Friend's Ranches

1. See GR-Q1.
2. The alignment for the slurryline and recreation trail still require more detailed level of design and field verification that will not occur until the next phase of design. This also includes maintenance responsibilities. Additional information is provided under GR- F1 and GR-F2.
3. See response to Comment 2.
4. Flooding impacts are discussed in Technical Appendix D. Additional modeling efforts will be performed in the next phase of design.

Wald, Edwin

1. Considerable brainstorming effort was performed during the formulation of alternatives process. Large diameter tunneling through the dam to allow for flow-through and fish passage was considered as an option in the initial phase. However due to the adverse effects to the structural integrity of the arch dam resulting from such an operation, especially considering seismic and larger flow events, this option was not considered further. Alternately, a smaller diameter tunnel would not be conducive to flow and sediment release as obstruction by larger debris and sediment would likely occur.

Walker, Frank

Property Owner

1. The removal of the dam allows natural replenishment of sediment to the riverine and coastal regimes. The recommended plan removes the majority of the silt trapped behind the dam and slurries it by pipeline to a disposal site. The remainder of the trapped sediment, which is predominately sand, gravel and cobbles, will be transported naturally by surface flows downstream.
2. See GR-E.
3. Restoration of Matilija Dam to provide water supply was not favored by Ventura County Watershed Protection District, and also by the consensus of the well-represented stakeholders group. Refer to discussion in the Main Report, Section 3.
4. The dam has outlived its period of useful service. It currently provides a diminished water supply capability, and will cease to do so when the remnant lake is completely filled with sediment –estimated by approximately year 2020. A single large storm event could effectively fill in the remaining capacity even sooner. Please refer to relevant discussions provided in General Response in P1 and P8.
5. Bed erosion would not be a likely outcome of dam removal as the restored sediment supply will replenish downstream reaches previously subjected to erosion with the dam in place.
6. The selection of the recommended plan was based on the alternative found to be the most effective from both a cost and habitat restoration perspective. Incremental removal of the dam was one of the alternatives considered but found not to be the most cost effective. Please refer to the Main Report for additional discussions on the assessment of alternatives and the selection of the recommended plan.
7. Removal of trapped sediment by truck hauling was one of several alternatives comprising the final array of alternatives to be considered. This alternative however was not recommended due to its significant adverse impacts to the community in terms of truck traffic, as well as cost effectiveness. Please refer to the Main Report for additional discussion.

8. The plan that was recommended for this project was found to be the most cost effective alternative. Though the project would be a very large undertaking, it would provide immense benefits to ecosystem restoration.

Word, James W.

President, Board of Directors
Casitas Municipal Water District

1. The Corps and District considers this latter and the attachment as part of the public comment on the Matilija Dam Ecosystem restoration Feasibility Study.
2. The Corps and District assumes that the 14 points identified here are a summary of comments/issues presented in the Attachment. Responses will be made to comments as they occur in the Attachment.
3. This paragraph acknowledges that there is a "potential for short-term impacts" and " a potential for direct injury" but then asserts unequivocally that "effects include loss of rearing habitat", "effects to rearing and spawning habitat", and concludes that "overall effects on the population would be high". It's unclear how the commenter drew the conclusion that "potential short-term impacts" results in overall "high" effects to the population.
4. The conclusion in the DEIS/EIR, Appendix C1 is that the overall long-term significant benefits of the proposed restoration plan to steelhead outweigh the short-term adverse impacts. The short-term adverse effects (sedimentation and turbidity) are presented in sections IV.A.2 of Appendix C1. The significant long-term beneficial effects to steelhead (and the entire riparian ecosystem) are presented in section IV.A.(c) of Appendix C1.
5. The potential adverse effect of the removal of Matilija Dam on the genetic fitness of steelhead in the feasibility study area was never identified as an issue during the scoping process for the feasibility study. Neither was it identified as an issue anytime during the reconnaissance or feasibility phase by any of the resource agencies responsible for this species (CDF&G or NMFS) or the non-government stakeholders with interest in this species (e.g., CalTrout or Steelhead Coalition). In fact, the federal resource agencies are of the opposite opinion, that is, they have gone on the record stating that the removal of Matilija Dam will provide significant benefits to the southern California steelhead recovery effort. (See CDF&G's Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California, page 204; CDF&G's comment letter [labeled Raysbrook]; NMFS comment letter [labeled McInnis]; and the Draft CAR – Appendix B2).

   Of particular pertinence to this comment is the statement made by the NMFS in their comment letter that cites the recent population genetic study that concludes that there is a significant percentage of native genetic stock above Matilija Dam. (See McInnis comment letter, page 2). NMFS is of the opinion that the "currently land-locked fish may have the potential to contribute to the increase viability of the remnant anadromous runs in the Ventura River." As such, the Corps and District consider this a non-issue that does not need to be addressed in the EIS/EIR.

6. We assume that the commenter is suggesting that steelhead be "trapped-and-trucked" out of harms way in the event that heavy sedimentation should occur when steelhead are migrating. The Corps and District considers that this measure would, at best, be nearly impossible to implement (i.e., locate, and capture the few steelhead that might be present in the Ventura River during high flows) and would, at worst, cause more (additional) harm to the fish by capturing and moving them. This is especially true in light of the fact that southern California steelhead have undoubtedly evolved to migrate under high sediment flows. As such, the Corps and District does not consider this a realistic, implementable mitigation measure. The commenter should note that the Corps is currently undergoing Section 7 (of the Endangered Species Act) consultation with the NMFS. Additional Terms and Conditions will likely be identified to ensure that the short-term adverse effects to steelhead are minimized.
7. See Response to Pritchett #22.
8. See GR-I.
9. The details of facility maintenance will not be available until the next phase of detailed design. Potential storage sites have been identified. Figures are provided in the Main Report. The preferred site is on federally–owned land.
10. See GR-P1 and GR-P2.
11. See GR-X.
12. Section 4.11 of the EIS/R states that recreation at Lake Casitas was not included in the impact analysis because it is geographically separated from the Proposed Action. However, a water line extension (for the slurry) or other project activity may be constructed as part of the project that may impact recreation at Lake Casitas. Background information on the recreation opportunities at Lake Casitas and an analysis of the potential impacts from activities that may occur as part of the Proposed Action have been included in the FEIS/R. (see changes made to EIS/EIR at sections 4.11.1.8; 5.11 , and new Mitigation Measure R-3.)
13. The Biological Opinion of the USFWS and NMFS are required to satisfy the Corps' requirements under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These agencies will provide their "biological opinion" as to whether the proposed restoration plan will "jeopardize the continued existence" of federally listed threatened or endangered species. The Biological Opinion is <u>not</u> required by Corps policy or ESA regulations to be completed prior to the Draft or Final EIS/EIR. We anticipate that the Biological Opinions for this feasibility study will be completed prior to the Chief of Engineer's Report, but must be completed prior to the Record of Decision (ROD).

    Biological Opinions are typically considered public documents. When they are completed for this feasibility study, they will be made available on the study's website (www.matilija.org). Also, NMFS and USFWS typically make them available on their respective websites.
14. The main body of the DEIS/EIR was written for the understanding of the general public. More detailed, technical information is provided in the technical appendices. The discussion presented in section 2.2.2 is considered sufficient for the general reader to understand the issues involved. The points of clarification

raised by the comment are covered more technically in Appendix C1, section III.C. The FEIS/EIR was amended to make a cross-reference to Appendix C1 at this section of the EIS/EIR.

15. See change made in the FEIS/EIR at section 3.10.

Wydzga, Alexsandra M.

Graduate Student Researcher
UC Santa Barbara Department of Geology

1. Downstream impacts to steelhead are expected to be short-term. See detailed analysis in Appendix C1, sections IV.2.(a) and IV..2(c). (Also see response to Comment by Word #4.)
2. The term "natural" is use in the context that is the opposite of the "artificial" regime that is created by Matilija Dam. Once the dam is deconstructed, since there are no (or few) unnatural obstructions above, flow through Reach 7 will be "natural". The HEP analysis (Appendix E of the EIS/EIR) recognizes the low value of the Natural Processes Component in the lower river reaches without the project that are expected to improve slightly with the project (see Tables 1-6, Natural Processes column and Appendix 3 of Appendix E).

Public Meeting Comments

1. See GR-M and GR-P7.
2. Comment noted.
3. Comment noted.
4. See GR-P1, GR-P3, and GR-P6.
5. See GR-P2.
6. See GR-C and GR-G.
7. See GR-M.
8. See GR-O and GR-P1.
9. See GR-N.
10. See GR-F2.
11. See GR-I.
12. See Response to Comment Letter Bryant #1.
13. See GR-C and GR-G.
14. See GR-P1.
15. Comment noted.
16. Comment noted.
17. Comment noted.
18. Comment noted.
19. Comment noted.
20. Comment noted.
21. See GR-L and GR-Q1. Also see Response to Comment Letter "Auric".
22. Comment noted.
23. See GR-O, GR-P1 and Response to Comment Letter "McGlothlin".

24. Information concerning availability of the Draft EIS/EIR and the process for submitting comments was provided at the Public Meeting.
25. See GR-F2 and GR-L.
26. See GR-F1 and GR-Q1
27. See GR-D.
28. Matilija Dam does not currently provide a reliable water source for fire-fighting efforts. There are sufficient nearby sources, including Lake Casitas, to provide water for fire-fighting purposes.
29. See GR-F1 and GR-F2.
30. See GR-B.
31. See GR-Q1.
32. See GR-M.
33. See GR-Q1 and GR-N.
34. Comment noted.
35. Comment noted.
36. See Response to Comment Letter "Wood".

Public Meeting Comment Cards

1. Comment noted.
2. See Response to Public Meeting Comment #28.
3. See GR-B.
4. Comment noted.
5. See Response to Comment Letter "Wald".
6. See GR-Q1.
7. See GR-F2.
8. Comment noted.
9. See GR-B.
10. Comment noted.
11. See GR-M.
12. Comment noted.
13. See GR-U.
14. Comment noted.
15. See GR-Q.

5. Comments and Responses per Ventura County's Environmental Report Review Committee (ERRC) Process

The County of Ventura has written and adopted an Administrative Supplement to the State CEQA Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act. The Supplement states that all draft Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) for both public and private projects must be reviewed for technical adequacy by the Environmental Report Review Committee. This committee comprises interagency staff whose primary purpose is to receive public input on EIRs, to evaluate the technical adequacy of EIRs, and to make advisory determinations as to whether the final EIR is technically adequate and has been completed in compliance with CEQA.

The membership of ERRC includes the Resource Management Agency (RMA) Deputy Director, Planning Division; RMA Deputy Director, Environmental Health Division; Executive Officer, Air Pollution Control District; Agricultural Commissioner; Public Works Agency Director; and Fire Marshall, Fire Protection District. The ERRC Chairman is selected by majority vote of the Committee members and presides over the hearings.

The ERRC reviewed the draft EIR and responses to comments received during the public review period per CEQA. A public hearing was scheduled by the ERRC to review the adequacy of the EIR and responses and hear public testimony specifically regarding the technical adequacy of the document. If ERRC determines that the document is technically adequate, it recommends that the Board of Supervisors certify the document at a subsequent public hearing. The ERRC decisions may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study EIS/EIR ERRC hearing was held on October 13, 2004 and continued to October 20, 2004 so that comments received October 13th could be adequately addressed. (The Public Meeting notice is included in this section.)

Comments received during the ERRC process are presented in this section. Also included are the Responses to testimony that were provided on October 20, 2004 via written memorandum to Mr. Bruce Smith, Chair, and oral presentation to the ERRC. Those written responses are included this section as part of the CEQA record.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

FOR THE

MATILIJA DAM ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

What's Being Done?

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (District), in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), has prepared an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, which proposes to remove Matilija Dam and the accumulated sediment. Removal of Matilija Dam would eliminate a barrier to fish passage on Matilija Creek and facilitate the migration, spawning, and rearing of endangered southern steelhead. Accumulated sediment would be removed or re-configured to improve the Matilija Creek flow regime and ultimately restore Matilija Creek and the Ventura River to a more natural streambed configuration, and provide for beach sand nourishment. Additional project components would provide opportunities for recreation, flood protection, and riparian habitat restoration.

The EIS/EIR addresses potentially adverse impacts to earth resources, hydrology and water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, aesthetics, air quality, noise, transportation, and recreation. The District, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, will act on the EIR. The Corps, as lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will act separately on the EIS.

Public Review

A 45-day public review period for the Draft EIS/EIR was held from July 16, 2004 through August 30, 2004, during which time public comments were received. Comments have been addressed and the document modified where appropriate. The proposed Final EIS/EIR is available for review at the following locations:

1. Ventura County Clerk	800 S. Victoria Ave.	Ventura
2. Watershed Protection District*	800 S. Victoria Ave.	Ventura
3. Meiners Oaks Library	114 N. Padre Juan Ave	Meiners Oaks
4. Ojai Library	111 E. Ojai Ave.	Ojai
5. Avenue Library	606 N. Ventura Ave.	Ventura
6. E.P. Foster Library	651 E. Main	Ventura
7. Matilija Dam Website	http://www.matilijadam.org/	

*Also available at the District are CD versions for public distribution.

How Can You Participate?

As required by the Ventura County Administrative Supplement to the State CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Report Review Committee (ERRC) public meeting will be held to evaluate the technical adequacy of the proposed Final EIS/EIR. You are invited to attend this public meeting on Wednesday, October 13, 2004 at 1:30 pm in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, Ventura County Government Center, Hall of Administration, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura.

Please note that the purpose of this meeting is to evaluate the technical adequacy of the proposed Final EIS/EIR in relation to CEQA. The discussion will focus on the analyses of the project's environmental effects subject to CEQA. Comments on whether to approve or deny the proposed project will not be accepted at this hearing, but will be appropriate at the subsequent public hearing by the District Board of Supervisors that will be held at a later date, likely in December 2004.

Questions?

For more information, you may contact Pam Lindsey, Watershed Ecologist, at 805-654-2036.

Stratton Letter

Ventura County
Air Pollution
Control District

669 County Square Dr
Ventura, California 93003

tel 805/645-1400
fax 805/645-1444
www.vcapcd.org

Michael Villegas
Air Pollution Control Officer

August 30, 2004

Via email: jonathon.d.vivanti@usace.army.mil

VENTURA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
REVIEW COMMITTEE
CASE NO. Matilija
EXHIBIT 1
DATE 10/13/04

Mr. Jon Vivanti
US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Subject: Request for Review of Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report, Ventura County, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. We have reviewed the subject project draft environmental impact statement/report, which is for a proposal to remove the Matilija Dam and accumulated sediment. Removal of the Matilija Dam would eliminate a barrier to fish passage on Matilija Creek and facilitate the migration, spawning, and rearing of endangered southern steelhead. Accumulated sediment would be removed or re-configured to improve the Matilija Creek flow regime and ultimately restore Matilija Creek and the Ventura River to a more natural streambed configuration.

The project is located Northwest of the unincorporated Meiners Oaks community on Ventura County, just over one-half mile from the Matilija Creek confluence with the Ventura River. The study area includes approximately 2,000 acres along the Matilija Creek and the Ventura River mainstem, encompassing unincorporated areas of western Ventura County, the Cities of Ojai and Ventura, and the Los Padres National Forest.

General Comments

The Air Quality discussion, Section 5.6, addresses potential air quality impacts from the different project alternatives. This section did not address the project's potential significance with respect to the new federal eight-hour standard and the California one-hour standard. While the 1995 Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan concludes that the federal one-hour standard would be met by 2005, it should be noted that the federal one-hour standard is being replaced by an eight-hour standard. Ventura County has been officially designated a moderate nonattainment area for this standard, hence the project's significance conclusion also should be analyzed with respect to the new eight-hour standard. Ventura County, including the Ojai Valley, also frequently exceeds the California air quality standards for ozone. Based on estimates of project NOx emissions, the county's nonattainment status with respect to the new federal eight-hour ozone standard and California one-hour ozone standard, all project alternatives will likely have a significant adverse and unmitigable impact on air quality in Ventura County.

1

Stratton Letter, cont.

General Conformity

Page 5.6-4 contains a discussion on General Conformity. This discussion concludes that a comprehensive Air Quality Conformity Analysis will not be required because sufficient NOx offsets would be obtainable to fully mitigate project NOx emissions during all project years with emissions greater than 25 tons per year. This conclusion is not substantiated because such offsets have not been obtained nor has evidence been presented that offsets are available and obtainable. It is therefore possible that a full conformity analysis for this project will be required.

2

If you have any questions, please call me at (805) 645-1426 or email me at alicia@vcapcd.org.

Sincerely,

/s/

Alicia Stratton,
Planning and Monitoring Division

Duvarney Letter

Meiners Oaks County Water District
202 W. El Roblar Dr.
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 646-2114

October 13, 2004

VENTURA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
REVIEW COMMITTEE
CASE NO. Matilija
EXHIBIT A
DATE 10/13/04

VC ERRC
~~Board of Supervisors~~
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: **MATILIJA DAM REMOVAL METHODOLOGY; IMPACT ON WELLS OPERATED BY MEINERS OAKS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT**

This letter is written to inform your Board that the Meiners Oaks County Water District owns and operates two wells, which are located in the Ventura River below the Matilija Dam.

We are in the process of obtaining an expert opinion on the proposed methodology to be used in removal of the Matilija Dam and its potential adverse effects on our wells.

As soon as the expert study is completed, we will submit our findings and may further petition the Board for appropriate action.

1

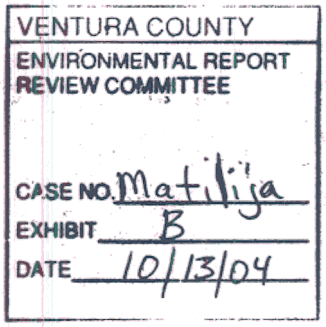
Very Truly Yours,

DAVID DUVARNEY
General Manager,
Meiners Oaks County Water District

Ruch Letter

James B. Ruch **900 Boardman Road, Ojai, CA 93023** **(805) 646-7796**

October 13, 2004



Mr. Jeff Pratt
Director
Ventura County Watershed Protection District
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Matilija Dam Removal EIS/EIR and Final Report

Dear Jeff,

The Ojai Water Conservation District and the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency have both expressed concern about the loss of water rights and the potential loss of water supply from Casitas Municipal Water District that could occur as a result of the Matilija Dam removal project. These agencies support the current discussions between Ventura County and Casitas directed toward a resolution of this issue, however, as has been pointed out to you in a letter from Russell McGlothlin dated October 6, there are additional stakeholders in the Ojai Valley, including these two agencies, who must be considered and consulted. Hopefully a meeting with all these stakeholders will be held as soon as possible. We are concerned that these meetings and discussions, and an appropriate resolution of these issues did not occur prior to the publication of the "Final Report" on the project. 1

In response for your immediate request regarding "technical inadequacies" in the EIS/EIR, I have the following comments.

In the "response to comments" section, under the heading GR-P Water Supply, sub-section GR-P1 Loss of Dam, it is stated that "The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project proposes to replace the water supply loss resulting from the dam's removal prior to its obsolescence date. Therefore, the removal of the Matilija Dam Diversion and the elimination of the diminishing storage volume will not result in a loss of supply." This section also goes on to state that the project proposes that the Matilija water rights license be retained by Casitas in perpetuity. 2

This is a good and positive response, however the commitment to replacing the water supply loss as a result of dam removal is not specifically stated anywhere in either the revised final EIS or in the Project Final Report. Nor does it appear anywhere in the proposed mitigation actions for the project. In fact, the only reference to making up lost water supplies which appeared in the draft EIS appears to have been stricken from the final EIS under the revisions to Page 5.2.9, Groundwater and Surface water Supplies on page 2-10 of the Changes to the Draft EIS/EIR document. Until this is corrected, and the commitment expressed in the Response to Comments is incorporated in the Final EIS/EIR and the Final Report, we believe that the documents are technically inadequate.

Ruch Letter, cont.

There is also a significant issue regarding the amount of water stored behind Matilija Dam. There are several differing references to the amount historically and currently in storage. There are also differing statements regarding the present and future water yield from the dam. What is wrong with these amounts is that they all refer to the open water behind the dam without any reference to the very significant amount of water stored in the sediments behind the dam. Since underground storage of water was one of the original purposes of the Matilija Project, originally as water delivered by gravity flow to the Ojai Valley for such storage in that basin, it should have occurred to the project proponents to measure and consider the amount of water annually stored and available for release into the Ventura River from the sediments behind the dam. This amount of water must be considered in assuring that the full right to Matilija Water be transferred in perpetuity to Casitas, and made up in terms of lost water supply as part of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project. We believe that this is a technical inadequacy in the EIS/EIR and Final Report, which must be corrected.

3

In summary, we appreciate the intent expressed in the Response to Public Comments, and the efforts your agency is making to include all parties in making sure that those who depend upon the water supply from Matilija/Casitas are, "Made Whole" as part of the project. But, we believe it is mandatory that that intent be specifically stated in the EIS/EIR and in the Final Report.

Sincerely,

James B. Ruch

Copies To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett
Ojai Groundwater Basin Management Agency
Ojai Water Conservation District
Casitas Municipal Water District
Russell McGlothlin

Zirbel Letter

ARNOLD, BLEUEL, LAROCHELLE, MATHEWS & ZIRBEL, LLP

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VENTURA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
REVIEW COMMITTEE
CASE NO. Matilija
EXHIBIT C
DATE 10-13-04

October 13, 2004

Environmental Report Review Committee
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report
(September 2004) Comments by Ojai Valley Sanitary District

This letter is written on behalf of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District ("OVSD"). OVSD owns and operates the Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant ("OVSD Plant"), which discharges tertiary treated wastewater to the Ventura River. The OVSD Plant is located at 6363 North Ventura Avenue, Ventura. It is adjacent to the Ventura River. It is protected from a 100 year flood event by an existing levy which is required pursuant to federal, state and local laws, regulations and permits.

OVSD seeks assurance that the Matilija Dam Project ("Project") will not increase the possibility of storm water damage to the OVSD Plant and OVSD facilities, including collection main lines which run near the existing 100 year floodplain.

Damage to the OVSD Plant or its collection system pipelines would have obvious environmental consequences. The OVSD Plant collects and treats wastewater from the City of Ojai and surrounding unincorporated communities including Meiners Oaks, Mira Monte, Oakview, Live Oak Acres, Casitas Springs, Foster Park, and a portion of the North Ventura Avenue area of the City of Ventura. OVSD serves an estimated population of 23,000 people. The Plant has a dry weather design capacity of 3,000,000 gallons per day. It is currently operating at an average of approximately 2,000,000 gallons per day.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") and the Regional Water Quality Control Board-Los Angeles Region ("RWQCB") have classified discharge from the OVSD Plant as a major discharge. It has a threat to water quality and complexity rating of A-1 pursuant to federal law. In order to meet the stringent requirements of federal and state law, and to address

Zirbel Letter, cont.

the strong environmental concerns of its constituents, OVSD has completed Thirty Five Million Dollars worth of public improvements to provide for a state of the art wastewater treatment facility providing tertiary treatment with ultra-violet disinfection.

If the OVSD Plant or pipelines were inundated or damaged by storm flows, untreated waste water would be discharged to the Ventura River, with obvious detrimental environmental and public health consequences. Both the National and National Environmental Quality Act ("NEPA") and the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") require consideration and discussion of direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment, including relevant specifics of physical changes and alterations to the landscape, health and safety problems caused by physical damage, and other aspects of the resource bas,e such as public services.

The Project referenced Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS/EIR") did not identify the OVSD Plant in its discussion of land use, did not identify the potential environmental consequences of storm water inundation of the OVSD Plant or facilities, and did not provide mitigation measures to address potential environmental impacts. Although the Final EIS/EIR now mentions the Plant, we are still concerned with the adequacy of the evaluation.

The EIS/EIR and its related feasibility study do provide calculations and criteria for flood control protection which indicate that additional flood control protection may be required as a result of the Matilija Dam Project. These findings are discussed in OVSD's August 24, 2004 comment letter which is attached. The response to this comment, found in the September 2004 Final EIS, (excerpt attached) simply provides that additional analysis will be performed to assess necessary flood protection at the OVSD plant at a later phase of the project.

1

We recognize that a project as complex as this will have to be managed in a way that adapts to additional information that becomes available as the final design work is completed. Accordingly, rather than demanding specific improvements or mitigation measures, we suggest that an additional mitigation measure be adopted which generally provides that the final Project, as constructed, include improvements necessary to provide the required 100 year flood event protection to the OVSD Plant and pipelines. This approach allows for further evaluation, but makes it clear that this important public facility must be protected.

2

We propose the following mitigation language:

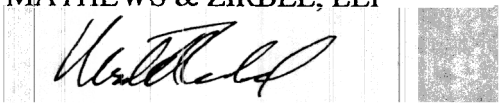
> "Mitigation Measure F-1. The Project shall protect the Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant and associated Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Collection Facilities from flood inundation which would occur as a result of the Project to the same degree, and consistent with the same criteria, as provided by the Project to other affected facilities and residential communities."

Zirbel Letter, cont.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very Truly Yours,

ARNOLD, BLEUEL, LAROCHELLE,
MATHEWS & ZIRBEL, LLP



Mark A. Zirbel

MAZ:ma
Enc.

CORREA

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

A Public Agency

1072 Tico Road, Ojai, California 93023
(805) 646-5548 • FAX (805) 640-0842
www.ojaisan.org

August 24, 2004

Jon Vivanti, US Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

MATILIJA DAM REMOVAL PROJECT EIR, PROJECT REPORT & TECHNICAL APPENDICES

I have reviewed the Matilija Dam Removal Project EIR, Project Report and Technical Appendices. This is a very large and complex document but there are many inconsistencies and errors to be dealt with. In general the documents show a lack of concern for the Ojai Valley Sanitary District's facilities. The impacts of the project will put many of our sewer pipelines and our wastewater treatment plant at risk, which in turn puts the environment at risk. We all can understand that if a sewer line is exposed by a flood and breaks that there will be contaminated water everywhere and an environmental disaster. If our wastewater treatment plant is flooded it will be shut down with millions of gallons of sewage following through it untreated and discharged into the Ventura River causing an environmental disaster.

I request that you seriously review and reevaluate the impacts of the project on the sanitary sewer facilities along the Ventura River. My comments follow:

1 The EIR includes Canada Larga levee but it is not in Project Report. The Canada Larga levee and floodwall appear to have been included in the project earlier and then eliminated. But, the elimination was incomplete; it still appears in the EIR. This levee is a significant issue to the Sanitary District since the project will place our Wastewater Treatment plant at risk. The same criteria used in the flood protection on other areas should apply here.

That criteria is found on page 3-47 of the project Report and can be summarized as follows: The "high level" flood protection, necessary for Alternate 4b, is established by determining the 100 year flood water surface elevation of the river channel based upon the maximum aggradation predicted during a 50 year simulation of the natural erosion, Alternate 2b - worst case downstream aggradation, and adding 8 feet of freeboard in the reaches downstream of Baldwin Road to account for uncertainties.

1

CORREA

After carefully reviewing the documents, I found that the river channel thalweg will rise by about 1.25 feet in the 50 years on the H & H report figure 19-139. If the hydraulic modeling found in Exhibit B6 of the same report uses that thalweg, then the water surface to use is 201.16 at RM 5.11. The flood protection criterion then adds 8 feet to that resulting is a levee or floodwall elevation of 209.16. The elevation of the top of the wall/curb around the wastewater treatment plant at RM 5.11 is 205.01. 1 (cont.)

The Matilija Dam Removal Project is having an impact on the wastewater treatment plant and that the flood protection criteria should be applied to it. A public health and safety facility should be more carefully evaluated in this study than it was. Flooding of the wastewater treatment plant could result in millions of gallons of raw and partially treated sewage being discharged into the river and the resulting environmental disaster.

2. Project Report and EIR used old data.

The documents refer to a 303d list which includes DDT, copper, silver, zinc, selenium, algae (eutrophication) and trash. The current 303d list includes only algae. Use the current list. 2

The references to the Draft State of the Watershed Report from the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board are a few months older than the Final State of the Watershed Report. Use the actual published report rather than a draft.

3. The result of deposition of material from the dam into the Ventura River in the manner proposed results in widening of the floodplains. There are sanitary sewers along the edge of the Ventura River. These were installed in the early 60's and were outside the 100 year floodplains. The widening of the floodplains by the project will place these lines within the floodplain and place them at risk of damage due to erosion and inflows. The deposition of material should be placed to protect banks and sewer facilities from erosion and not to widen the floodplains or the sewer lines should be relocated as elements of the Project. Flooding damage to the pipelines can cause major environmental damage to the river, the fish in it, and the beaches. It would also be a threat to the City of Ventura's water supply. 3

4. Although not the direct concern of the Sanitary District, the hydrology report seems to have been prepared in a "drive by" mode without a site visit. When evaluating our facilities, I investigate the applicable floodplain information; the hydrology study does not fit the conditions I have observed on the ground. The Ojai Burn Dump is an island in many storms, with water around all sides of it, yet the study has it not being an island in the 50, 100, or 500 year floodplains. The FEMA FIRM shows the Burn Dump as an island. Another spot of concern is along Burnham Road where the project floodplain will widen to include sewer lines and the public road. 4

CORREA

This matter is of concern because if you assume the water stays in the channel rather than spreading out, did you error in the water surface calculation down-stream or was some needed flood protection omitted?

4 (cont.)

Some areas that look as though they do not match the actual conditions are: RM 5.9, RM 7.7 to 8.1 and RM 11.3 to 11.7.

5. In this introductory section of both the project report and EIR, much material was copied from the State of the Watershed Report, but a section of the River, the Lower Ventura River, was omitted. I found myself looking for the lower Ventura River section, because that is a common designation, and could not find it and did find a paragraph in the Upper Ventura River section on Casitas Springs, which is in the Lower River section. Later in the EIR you clearly define the river into reaches and should identify what reach or reaches is identified with your terminology. I think reach 2, 2a and 2b together, is the lower river. In the Project Report Introduction the river reaches are identified in Table 1-1 and these designations should have been followed.

5

This problem appears later in the Flood Hazards section of Chapter 5 beginning on page 5-2.7. You identify Reach 6 correctly and then on page 5-2.8, identify Reach 5 incorrectly. This causes a lot of confusion. It appeared that you were setting up to run down the flooding issues on a reach by reach basis. This would have been a good idea.

Once again on page 5-2.9, in the second to last paragraph of the Flood Hazards section, you list the items included in the Canada Larga area and omit the wastewater treatment plant. The Wastewater treatment plant and the sewer pipe-lines along the river seem to have been overlooked altogether. Flooding damage to the plant or pipelines can cause major environmental damage to the river, the animals and fish in it, and the beaches. It would also be a threat to the City of Ventura's water supply

6. In copying material from the State of the Watershed Report, you have not copied a complete section and the reader is left to draw an incorrect conclusion. The Lower Ventura River Groundwater section as copied from the State of the Water-shed Report omits the last sentence of the paragraph. This leaves the reader with the impression that the wastewater treatment plant discharge is the source of the poor quality water. This is false. The deleted sentence reads," Sources of the degradation have included oil field work, including discharges of brines into the river, unlined sumps and poor quality recharge from Canada Larga..." This leaves the reader with a very different impression.

6

John K Correa

John K. Correa
General Manager

Bryant, Matthew L. (Letter #2)

General Manager
Ventura River County Water District

The use of tertiary reclaimed water was considered but would only be acceptable if it was treated by reverse osmosis. This additional level of treatment would be too costly, and therefore this measure was dismissed from further evaluation.

Conrow, Jerry L.

President, Ojai Water Conservation District
President, Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency

See GR-P1 and GR-P2.

2. Please refer to Economics Appendix in Technical Appendices volume. Expected damages are based probabilities of occurrence.
3 Comment noted.
4. Figure 2-2 is based on the current Ventura County General Plan, including designations and definitions.

Correa, John K.

General Manager
Ojai Valley Sanitary District

Additional risk and uncertainty analyses will be performed at the next phase of the project (detailed design work) to assess necessary flood protection at the Ojai Valley Sanitation District Waste Treatment Facility.

2. EIS/R will be revised with the current 303d list. Reference to Final State of the Watershed Report will be made.
3. Bank protection and/or floodproofing to protect infrastructure will be assessed and incorporated as needed in the detailed design phase.
4. The purpose of the flood mapping was to compare the alternatives and has no bearing on the FEMA floodplain mapping. At all locations where the project was deemed to significantly raise flood elevations, a detailed analysis was performed. At RM 5.9, Casitas Vista Road is lower than the surrounding floodplain and could transmit water further downstream. No significant aggradation was expected at this location and therefore the with-project condition will be similar to the existing condition. However, additional survey work will verify if the project could worsen the flood damages at this location or locations downstream.
At RM 7.7 to 8.1, mapping along San Antonio Creek was not performed because that is outside of the project area. The modeling shows that the project will not affect the flood elevations along the tributaries of the Ventura River. Under with project conditions, the Casitas Levee will be connected to the stable terrace.
At RM 9.3, just downstream of Santa Ana Blvd two OVSD structures housing sewer pump facilities were located in the 100-yr according to the feasibility study. OVSD stated that these should not be in 100-yr floodplain and that floors of the

structures were elevated. Future flood maps will reflect that these structures are elevated. Future surveys will determine if additional flood protection is required at this location. At 11.3 to 11.7, the levee along the Burn Dump was assumed functional, but subsequent site visits showed that it was not. Future floodmaps will show this area as being flooded during the 100-yr flood. Any additional flooding at this location will be mitigated.

5. The reach descriptions have been updated in Section 5 of the EIS/EIR. The wastewater treatment plant has been added to the list of developments in the Cañada Larga area.
6. Concur. Sentence will be added to text as stated.

Davis, Don

Utilities Manager
City of San Buenaventura

Modeling analysis performed is considered sufficient. Confirmation however will occur during the detailed design phase.

2. Comment noted.

De Silva, Yolanda

Property Owner

1. The removal of the dam provides a watershed-wide opportunity for ecosystem restoration.
2. The dam has outlived its period of useful service. It currently provides a diminished water supply capability, and will cease to do so when the remnant lake is completely filled with sediment –estimated by approximately year 2020. A single large storm event could effectively fill in the remaining capacity even sooner. In its current state, the dam provides very little flood protection. To protect against flooding as a result of the removal of the dam, levee and bridge modifications are included as measures of the preferred plan recommended by this feasibility study.
3. The intent of this project is not impact water supply and water quality, while benefiting steelhead trout and native habitats of the watershed.

Dilks, Eric M.

Property Owner

1. Confirm that additional detail will be included during design phase.
2. Confirmation hydraulic modeling will be conducted in design phase.

(1)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: TROY WHITTEKER

Address: 946 DEVEREAUX DR
OJAI CA 93023

Phone No. 805-646-1054

Organization: MEINERS OAKS WATER DISTRICT

Agenda Subject/Item Number: _____

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

(2)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: JIM RUCH (ROOSH)

Address: 900 BOARDMAN RD.
OJAI CA 93023

Phone No. (805) 646-7796

Organization: OJAI WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT + OBGMA

Agenda Subject/Item Number: 2

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

SPEAKER CARD

(3)

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: MARK ZIRBEL

Address: 300 Esplanade
Ojai

Phone No. 988 7886

Organization: OJAI VALLEY SAN DIST

Agenda Subject/Item Number: MINUTES

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

SPEAKER CARD

(4)

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: John Correa

Address: 1072 Tico Rd
Ojai

Phone No. 646-5548

Organization: Ojai Valley Sanotary District

Agenda Subject/Item Number:

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

(5)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: MATT BRYANT

Address: 409 OLD BALDWIN Rd

Phone No. (805) 646-3403

Organization: VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Agenda Subject/Item Number: REMOVAL OF MATILIJA DAM / #2

This Information will be entered in the official minutes

(6)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: Harbhajan S. Thind

Address: 2593 Wellington Drive
Duarte, Calif. 91010

Phone No. 626-357-4921

Organization: Proportioner - Meiner Oaks

Agenda Subject/Item Number: General

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

(7)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: Norm DAVIS

Address: 412 N. Rice Rd

Phone No. 805-646-9734

Organization: MEMBER MEINERS OAKS WATER DISTRICT - WELLS

Agenda Subject/Item Number: (2) Matilija Dam

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

(8)

SPEAKER CARD

If you wish to address
THE COUNTY OF VENTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE,
please complete this card and give it to the Secretary.

Name: John Duncan

Address: 8832 NYE AD.
CASITAS SPRINGS

Phone No. 649-3087

Organization: Self

Agenda Subject/Item Number: Dam Removal

This Information will be entered in the official minutes.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE
STATEMENT CARD

Please complete this card and give it the Secretary.

I do not wish to orally address THE COUNTY OF VENTURA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT REVIEW COMMITTEE, but for the record I submit my written statement on the reverse side of this card to express my opinion on the following agenda item:

Name: DAVID DuVARNEY

Address: 202 W El Roblar

Phone No. 646-2114

Organization: MEINERS OAKS County water Dist

Agenda Subject/Item Number: _____

Dickenson Letter

August 30, 2004

Jon Vivanti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Subject: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project / Draft EIS-EIR

Dear Mr. Vivanti:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the subject documents. This is written to provide comments and concerns with the proposed alternative. Please include your consideration of these comments in the final environmental document(s) for the project.

The documents appear to address many of the issues associated with this well intentioned project. However at least one specific flooding issue does not appear to be addressed.

Aggredation of the Ventura River in reach 3 (San Antonio Creek to Foster Park) can be reasonably expected to have significant impacts to flood hazards in Casitas Springs. The affects of aggredation upon the flood levels of tributary creeks needs to be more carefully considered and impacts need to be mitigated.

1

Much of Casitas Springs is drained to Fresno Creek. The Ventura County Watershed Protection District maintains a channel between Highway 33 and the Ventura River. This channel presently suffers from several problems, including depositions at the Ventura River confluence raising the flood waters. At present Ventura River elevations, Fresno Creek has flooded portions of Casitas Springs no less than three times in the past 12 years, even to the extent of closing Highway 33 in 1995 and 1998. Indeed the present Fresno Creek flood stage elevation is above the existing street drains. It is evident that any project alternative that will aggrade the Ventura River near the Fresno Creek confluence will have a dramatic increase of flood risk in Casitas Springs.

To pass any significant portion of the accumulated sediment through Ventura River's reach 3 will necessitate improvements to the capacity of Fresno Creek. I trust that reasonable improvements can be added to eliminate the flooding impacts of the subject project.

Very truly yours,

John M. Dickenson
8305 Edison Drive
Casitas Springs, CA 93001

Ventura County
Watershed Protection District
Water Quality/Environmental Services Division

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 20, 2004

TO: Bruce Smith, Chair
Ventura County Environmental Report Review Committee

FROM: Pam Lindsey, Watershed Ecologist
Jon Vivanti, USACE Project Manager

SUBJECT: Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
Responses to October 13, 2004 ERRC Meeting Comments

The Ventura County Environmental Report Review Committee met Wednesday, October 13, 2004 at 1:30 pm in the Board of Supervisors Room, County of Ventura Government Center, Hall of Administration, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, California. Comments were heard from 9 speakers and four letters were submitted. One additional letter that was not received at the ERRC Hearing but for which we have provided comments is also included for the record.

The comments are addressed below by speaker and letter. The letters are attached for reference.

The contents of this document will be incorporated into the Final EIS/R presented to the Board of Supervisors for certification scheduled for December, 2004. Responses to these comments represent revisions to the Final EIS/R presented to the ERRC for review.

Exhibit 1: Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (Alicia Stratton)

A full written response will be provided to the APCD and ERRC under separate cover.

Exhibit A: Meiners Oaks County Water District (David Duvarney)

Comment 1. The proposed project will incrementally increase the 100-year floodplain limits in some areas of the Ventura River according to the studies conducted for the project

(Main Report, Appendix D). Although, most of the net change occurs within the current regulatory FEMA 100-year floodplain limits.

Two wells located at the margins of the Ventura River floodplain area outside the active channel were identified as impacted by the net change in floodplain limits. However, these wells are currently shown as being part of the current FEMA 100-year floodplain. Therefore, the incremental increase in floodplain and subsequent risk to these two wells is considered a less than significant adverse impact.

The siting of sediment disposal areas will be further refined in the design phase to avoid impacts to existing wells. Meetings between the VCWPD, the Corps, and well stakeholders will occur during this phase to ensure all potential impact issues are resolved.

Exhibit B: James B. Ruch (written submission)

Comment 1: Additional meetings with stakeholders to discuss water rights and water supply will be held during the detailed design phase of the project.

Comment 2: The second paragraph of Response GR-P1 on Page 4-12 of the FEIS/R will be deleted and the following explanation will be added to the remaining text.

The lease between the County of Ventura and the Casitas MWD that allows Casitas to operate Matilija Dam as a diversion facility expires in January of 2009, prior to expected initiation of dam removal. Therefore, Casitas MWD legally does not have rights to the water supply provided by this diversion activity after January of 2009. However, the project technical project team has calculated this amount of water both to determine the significance under CEQA/NEPA to overall water supply of the Ventura River and to explore opportunities to offset losses.

Water supply currently available due to the Matilija Dam reservoir will be lost both with the proposed project and under the No Action alternative. With implementation of the project, the reservoir will be lost 11 years sooner than the No Action alternative. The loss of water is considered an adverse, but less than significant impact (Class III) because it represents a small portion of the overall water supply of the Ventura River Basin, compared to the No Action alternative. Further, the Ventura River Basin is not currently overdrafted. Per the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, a significant impact is defined as the causing the overdrafting of surface water in a basin or further withdrawing water from an already overdrafted basin.

The loss of water refers to the storage capacity of the lake currently managed by Casitas MWD to maximize diversion opportunities. Once the dam is removed or the lake fills completely with sediment (under No Action), water previously trapped by the dam would flow downstream and under many circumstances would be available for diversion

and aquifer recharge, thereby retaining at least a portion of the current beneficial uses and availability.

Casitas MWD currently (2003) diverts an average of 590 ac-ft of water per year by controlling releases of water trapped behind Matilija Dam. This represents about 5% of the average amount (12,500 ac-ft) diverted by Casitas from the Robles facility per year, although water diversions vary from 0 to 45,000 ac-ft depending on the rainfall. The Robles facility provides approximately one-half of the Casitas MWD water supply.

Deconstruction of Matilija Dam is expected to begin in 2009, therefore the potential water losses are calculated beginning with this date. Over the course of 11 years following 2009, the water supply will diminish substantially under the No Action alternative from 2% (estimated for 2009) of the annual diversion to near zero in 2020. Matilija Dam will continue to fill with sediment and the effective storage of the dam will be 230 ac-ft in 2009 and less than 50 ac-ft in by 2020 (Table 5.23, p. 169 of Appendix D of the Main Report, Hydrologic, Hydraulic and Sediment Transport Studies). This assumes that the current trap efficiency is 45% and the trap efficiency decreases with storage capacity and that extreme variability in annual hydrology conditions does not occur during this period.

The total estimated loss of water is 2,200 ac-ft for the time period between 2009 and 2020. The current benefit of Matilija Dam to the diversion capacity at Robles will be unavailable after 2020. The projection of the cumulative benefit, starting in 2003, of Matilija Dam is shown in Figure 2.19 on p. 99 of Main Report Appendix D. To generate this graph, it was assumed that the benefit in 2003 was 590 ac-ft/yr and the benefit was assumed to decrease linearly with the storage capacity of Matilija Reservoir. The storage capacity was taken from Table 5.23. Based on this analysis, the total benefit of Matilija Dam under the Without-Project Conditions is approximately 5,000 ac-ft from 2003 until the reservoir capacity is completely gone, which occurs effectively in 2020. If the total benefit is calculated from 2009, the benefit is approximately 2,200 ac-ft.

To offset the loss of water, estimated to total 2,200 ac-ft, the technical project team is investigating opportunities that would replace the benefits of this water without incurring new and substantial impacts to regional water supplies.

Comment 3: The water trapped in the sediments behind Matilija Dam is not currently utilized as a water supply and do not represent an adverse water supply impact caused by the proposed project compared to the no project alternative.

The original water capacity of Matilija Reservoir was 7,018 ac-ft following construction of the dam in 1947. The original dam crest was at an elevation of 1125 ft. The dam was notched to an elevation of 1,095 ft in 1965 due to safety concerns and the reservoir capacity was reduced to 3,856 ac-ft. Since that time, sediment has filled in the reservoir and reduced its “open water” capacity to 500 ac-ft. The amount of sediment that

would store water could be approximated by subtracting the 500 ac-ft from the 3,856 ac-ft of storage after notching, approximately 3,356 ac-ft.

Tests conducted for the Feasibility Study measured the bulk density of the sediment in the reservoir area to be 72 lb/ft^3. Approximately half of the sediment available to store water can be classified as "reservoir sediment" and half as "delta sediment." The reservoir sediment is 18% sand, 52% silt, and 30% clay. The sediment in the delta area comprises 13 % gravel, 54 % sand, 28 % silt, and 5 % clay. Therefore, of the sediments available to store water approximately 17.5% is clay, 40 % is silt, 36 % is sand, and 6.5 % is gravel. Based upon the data from Morris and Johnson (1967) the average specific yields of gravel, sand, silt and clay are approximately 25%, 25%, 8%, and 3%. This results in a weighted average specific yield of 15%. There is some uncertainty in this estimate, but it is likely that the specific yield would be between 7 % and 25%. Using this range of estimates, the amount of water trapped in the sediment could be between 230 and 840 ac-ft.

Water stored in the sediments was available at one time by a 48-inch diameter outlet structure located in the middle of the dam. This outlet has been inoperable since the 1969 flood events. Casitas Municipal Water District operates the currently serviceable outlet closer to the top of the dam. To access the water within the reservoir sediments, either sediment would have to be excavated from behind the dam to allow water out of the lower outlet, or groundwater wells would have to be installed in the reservoir area. Restoring function to the outlet structure and installing wells would not be cost efficient for the resultant water yield. Neither of these operations to utilize stored water has been conducted by Casitas MWD and therefore, this water was not considered as a current source of water supply. No change in water supply would occur with implementation of the project. Therefore, no adverse or significant impact to water supply would occur with implementation of the project.

Because water stored in the sediments has not been drained via an outlet structure, once filled, this aquifer traps water losing it to evaporation and transpiration near the surface and through cracks in the bedrock below. Therefore, this water is not considered an annual renewable source as stated by Mr. Ruch. After implementation of the project, water will not become trapped behind the dam, resulting in a beneficial impact.

Most of the water currently trapped in the sediments will be utilized during grading and slurry activities in Reach 7. Currently saturated fines will be mixed with additional water during slurry activities. If water draining from the non-slurried sediments is captured during dewatering activities (sump pumps and coffer dams) it will likely be used for on site dust control and compaction. Much of the water will adhere to the sediment particles and not be available for extraction, and will simply be moved with the material during construction.

Exhibit C: Arnold, Bleuel, Larochelle, Mathews & Zirbel, LLP (Zirbel)

Comment 1: More recent studies indicate that the levee protection at Cañada Larga described in the DEIS/R may not be necessary as originally described. However, instead of removing the levee protection at Cañada Larga from the project description, it remains part of the proposed project (4b). Changes to the EIS/R text have been made to provide consistency throughout the document. Revisions were made to the Draft EIS/R text as follows.

Page 3-10. top of page, add bullet:
Cañada Larga- Levee or floodwall to 3.0 feet
Page 3-30 Table 3-7: Alternative 4b, add to Downstream Improvements:
Cañada Larga- Levee or floodwall / Levee-wall 3 ft. avg. for approx 2,300 linear feet

The response to Comment 1 (Page 4-19 FEIS/R) of the August 24, 2004 letter from John Correa has been revised to read "The 3.0 foot levee/floodwall at Canada Larga remains as a feature of Alternative 4b. Additional risk and uncertainty analyses will be performed at the next phase of the project (detailed design work) to further define necessary flood protection at the Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Facility, including ancillary facilities and pipelines."

Text added to page 5.2-7: As a result of the technical analyses conducted for the Feasibility Study, project features were added to Alternative 4b to provide flood protection to residential communities, roads and infrastructure, utility lines, and public works facilities including ancillary facilities and pipelines. Although not all of these facilities have been specifically addressed herein, all will be protected to the same degree and consistent with the same criteria for flood protection caused by the implementation of the project.

Comment 2: Flood protection components are included as project components that reduce the flood hazard impacts to Class III, adverse but less than significant. Text will be added to the Flood Hazards section on page 5.2-7 for clarification. In addition, although mitigation measures are not usually listed for Class III impacts, a mitigation measure will be added to ensure flood protection at the Ojai Valley Sanitary District, as follows.

"Mitigation Measure F-1. The Project shall protect the Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant and associated Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Collection Facilities from flood inundation which would occur as a result of the Project to the same degree, and consistent with the same criteria, as provided by the Project to other affected facilities and residential communities."

Speaker Card 1: Troy Whitteker, Meiners Oaks County Water District

See responses to David Duvarney and Matt Bryant.

Speaker Card 2: Jim Ruch, Ojai Water Conservation District and Ojai Groundwater Basin Management Agency

See response to written comments received in Exhibit B.

Speaker Card 3: Mark Zirbel, representing Ojai Valley Sanitary District

See response to written comments received in Exhibit C.

Speaker Card 4: John Correa, General Manager, Ojai Valley Sanitary District

Mr. Correa was concerned that the additional flood and erosion risk posed by the proposed project was not adequately mitigated in the FEIS/R. See responses to written comments provided in Exhibit C.

Speaker Card 5: Matt Bryant, Ventura River County Water District

Comment 1: Mr. Bryant is concerned about the statement on Page 5.2.9 "The removal of Matilija Dam could potentially deplete groundwater or surface water supplies or interfere with groundwater flow or recharge due to increases in turbidity and sedimentation." The FEIS/R states that impacts caused by the project are adverse, but less than significant (Class III). This conclusion is located on Page 2-11, end of the second paragraph. Text explaining the impact conclusion is provided as clarification on Page 2-10 of the FEIS/R, as well as Page 4-10 GR-M Wells.

Comment 2: Mr. Bryant was also concerned about potential sediment contaminants that could be released as part of the proposed project. The response to this comment is presented below.

The sediments impounded behind Matilija Dam have been derived from a primarily wilderness watershed with no known sources of contamination. The expectation is that these impounded sediments are no different than what is currently being contributed by the watershed. To assure the quality of the impounded sediment, chemistry testing was performed based on geotechnical investigations conducted in 2001 for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. A total of 81 analyses were tested for in the sampled sediments from 15 boreholes drilled in the reservoir basin. The results of these analyses are presented in the Impounded Sediment Characterization Report, prepared by the Corps of Engineers (dated April 2002). The assessment of the laboratory results state that there is no evidence to support classifying any of the sediments sampled as hazardous materials.

In response to the ERRC inquiry as to the reason for the lack of reference to detected contaminant levels associated with impounded sediments in the comment letter from California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB), received during public review of the EIS/EIR document. On 15 October 2004, Jon Vivanti (Corps) had a follow-up conversation with Shirley Birosik of CRWQCB to discuss that agency's position on the issue. Ms. Birosik stated that the contaminant level raw data was supportive of typical background levels found in California. An email statement dated 18 October 2004 from Ms. Birosik has been provided as supporting documentation for this query.

With regard to testing for uranium in the impounded sediment, the 2001 geotechnical field investigations did not specifically test for this element. No evidence has been presented indicating a likely presence of uranium. Therefore, the presence of uranium is considered speculative. The Corps' Impounded Sediment Characterization Report indicates that a uranium-bearing mineral known as torbernite [hydrated copper-uranyl phosphate) was found in a local mining prospect; however based on a location map of the prospect, the site was determined by the Corps not to be within the contributing watershed to this study. In any case, to test for the presence of uranium in the impounded sediment, testing for copper, an element associated with torbernite (though not exclusively) was conducted. The results of the analyses indicate that copper was not substantially elevated in any samples; in only three samples, copper concentrations slightly exceeded National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ERL (Effects Range-Low) levels. In a 19 October 2004 response to a follow-up email from Jon Vivanti to Ms. Birosik regarding uranium, Ms. Birosik indicated that she had no particular reason to suspect that uranium will be a problem (based on the laboratory results), however specific testing for the element should be performed if there is a potential concern. The email from Ms. Birosik has been provided as supporting documentation for this query.

For this feasibility study, the Corps' position is that a satisfactory level of assessment of potential contaminants in the impounded sediments has been established. During the design phase of the project, additional confirmatory testing and consultation with CRWQCB will occur. Follow-up actions, as deemed appropriate, resulting from these consultations will be pursued by the Corps and Ventura County Watershed Protection District.

Comment 3: Mr. Bryant recommended that tertiary treated water from Ojai Valley Sanitary District should be used for the slurry line instead of potable, treated water from Lake Casitas or like sources. This comment is repeated from his August 25th, 2004 correspondence to Jon Vivanti (Bryant #2). The response to Comment 1 on page 4-19 of the FEIS/R will be changed as follows to further address this issue.

1. Tertiary treated water will remain as a potential water source option for the project. However, it was initially dismissed for the following reasons.

- Water is available from Lake Casitas without significant impacts to water supply resources.
- It would be more costly to pump water from OVSD, which is much further downstream and the pipeline could cause additional environmental impacts.
- Diversion of water releases from the lower Ventura River would adversely impact beneficial uses of the water in that area.
- The water could only be utilized if it met the LARWQCB standards for the upper Ventura River Basin. Reverse osmosis treatment would guarantee the water would meet these standards. Additional study would be needed to determine if the OVSD water could be released in the upper watershed.

Speaker Card 6: Harlehajan S. Thind

No response needed.

Speaker Card 7: Norm Davis, Meiners Oaks Water District

See responses to Bryant and Duvarney, above.

Speaker Card 8: John Duncan

Mr. Duncan's primary concern regards potential contamination of the water supply. This comment is addressed in Bryant, above, regarding potential contaminants.

ERRC Question 1: Potential Slurry Line Water Source Impacts

ERRC asked that we address potential impacts to the water supply source used to supply the slurry line. According to Don Davis, City of Ventura, the water is available for the slurry activities without adversely impacting water supplies, as described below.

According to the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, thresholds of significance for the impacts to groundwater are summarized as follows:
Impacts would be considered significant if the project causes a:

- direct or indirect decreases in net quantity of water in an overdrafted basin;
- basin to become overdrafted;
- result in an increase in extraction from a basin without reliable data; and/or
- in the Fox Canyon Basin, any activities that do not comply with the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency Ordinance.

The City of Ventura obtains water from three sources: Lake Casitas, Fox Canyon Groundwater Basin, and the Santa Paula Groundwater Basin. Each of these sources is currently underutilized by the City, leaving water balances available for the Matilija Dam project needs, specifically the 4,800 ac-ft needed for the slurry line.

The City currently maintains an annual 8,000 ac-ft allocation from Lake Casitas, but presently uses only 6,000 ac-ft. In Fox Canyon, the City has 30,000 ac-ft in reserves, which represents water they have been allocated but have not utilized in the past years. Allocations in the Santa Paula Basin include 3,000 ac-ft each year, with only 1,500 ac-ft withdrawn annually.

The scenario proposed by the City for providing the water entails 4,800 ac-ft from Lake Casitas to be directed to the Matilija Project, leaving approximately 3,000 ac-ft for the City to use. The remaining 3,000 ac-ft that the City needs would be made up by utilizing the remaining 1,500 ac-ft from the Santa Paula Basin and withdrawing reserves from the Fox Canyon Basin.

Because the City is allocated more water than it needs each year and maintains reserves, providing the water to the Matilija Project would not result in significant impacts to these water sources. In an average water year impacts to the Lake Casitas, Fox Canyon, and Santa Paula water supplies would not result in overdrafts of groundwater resources. Drought conditions may change allocations, but likely not to the extent that these water supplies would become unavailable for project use.

John Dickenson Letter dated August 30th, 2004

Comment 1: Fresno Drain collects and conveys water from the lower Casitas Springs area westward in a concrete-lined channel through the existing Casitas Springs Levee. Flooding at the Fresno Drain is expected to increase due to the potential for the flood water elevation in the Ventura River to be approximately two feet higher than present. Water cannot drain effectively from the Fresno Drain into the Ventura River when the river has high flows, resulting in flooding at the confluence. During the design phase, as part of the proposed improvements to the Casitas Levee, the increase in flood risk associated with the project will be mitigated via the appropriate improvements.

The canal for the Fresno Drain through Casitas Springs has a bottom elevation of about 259 ft. The walls of the canal are estimated to be 4 feet high to bring the top of walls of the canal to an elevation of 263 ft. The top of the Casitas levee at this location is approximately 266 ft. Therefore, the walls of the Fresno Drain through Casitas Springs are approximately 3 feet lower than the Casitas Levee.

The 100-yr flood in the Ventura River has an elevation of about 265 ft and therefore the water from the Ventura River can enter into the Fresno Drain and cause about 2 feet of flooding under current conditions. Based on our analysis, the project will increase the elevations about 2 feet in this area to approximately 267 ft. Therefore, the walls on either side of the Fresno Drain through Casitas Springs would have to be raised at least 2 feet to mitigate impacts caused by the project. Floodwalls approximately 4 feet higher would be

required to solve both the existing flooding problem and that caused by the proposed project during 100-yr flood conditions.

Per input from Aspen Environ. Corp (11/3/04) after contact with Alicia Stratton, APCD

Response to VCAPCD Comments:

General Comment – 8-hour Ozone Significance Determination

The following provides clarification regarding the potential for project impacts due to the newly designated 8-hour ozone standard. Ventura County was designated as a moderate 8-hour ozone nonattainment area, which became effective June 15, 2004. The project's ozone significance determination was performed using the standard CEQA checklist criteria and the VCAPCD CEQA guidelines.

Checklist Criteria

Two standard CEQA checklist criteria used in the DEIR that apply to the ozone impact comment are as follows:

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the VCAPCD Air Quality Management Plan.
- Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, whether solely or cumulatively[1].

The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the VCAPCD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The AQMP addresses attainment with the federal 1-hour ozone standard, which is forecast for attainment in 2005 some two or more years prior to the major project work tasks, but does not address the 8-hour ozone standard. The project cannot be shown to conflict or obstruct with a non-existent plan. However, the main project activities are currently forecast to be completed prior to the maximum attainment date of 2010, and so could not conflict with attainment at the time of the maximum attainment date.

The comment noted that all project alternatives would likely have a significant adverse and unmitigable impact on air quality in Ventura County, with some emphasis on the Ojai Valley where exceedances of the State 1-hour standard and Federal 8-hour standard still occur. While it is conceded that the project would cause emissions of ozone precursors, it was concluded based on the significance criteria being evaluated that the project emissions would not contribute *substantially* to an existing or projected 1-hour or 8-hour ozone air quality violation.

[1] This is a NEPA and CEQA significance threshold when assessing the potential to violate NAAQS, but only a CEQA significance threshold when assessing the potential to violate CAAQS.

VCAPCD Significance Criteria

The VCAPCD guidelines (p. 5-3,4) state:

> *Construction-related emissions (including portable engines and portable engine-driven equipment subject to the ARB's Statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program, and used for construction operations or repair and maintenance activities) of ROC and NOx are not counted towards the two significance thresholds, since these emissions are temporary. However, construction-related emissions should be mitigated if estimates of ROC and NOx emissions from the heavy-duty construction equipment anticipated to be used for a particular project exceed the 5 pounds per day threshold in the Ojai Planning Area, or the 25 pounds per day threshold in the remainder of the county.*

The DEIS addresses all potential ozone impacts, whether they are 1-hour or 8-hour impacts. Our findings for this *temporary construction* project are that it would be mitigated to the extent feasible consistent with the VCAPCD CEQA Guidelines and that the project's operating emissions are less than the VCAPCD CEQA significance threshold. Therefore the project's ozone precursor emissions do not result in significant impacts based on this specific significance criterion.

The VCAPCD Guidelines also provide two other significance criteria for ozone impacts based on AQMP consistency, specifically related to population growth assumptions used in the AQMP. The project is not a land use development project and would not result in any increases in population. Therefore, the project is not inconsistent with the growth forecasts in the AQMP and would not result in significant impacts related to these two significance criteria.

General Conformity

The following provides clarification and additional information regarding the project's general conformity determination.

Appendix G-2 of the DEIS presents the conformity analysis and provides evidence that offsets are available from the District (Page G.2-6 notes that 240 tons of NOx ERCs are currently available, more than three times the project need for the selected project alternative) and notes that there are other methods available to create new emission reductions in the case that insufficient NOx ERCs can be leased for the duration of the project years that will exceed the NOx *de minimus* threshold. The available NOx ERCs were determined through the review of the District's online offset bank at the time of the preparation of the conformity analyis[2]. Since the project has only to lease credits for a year or two, not buy them from the current holders, it is reasonable to assume that many of the current ERC holders that do not have definitive plans to use their ERCs

[2] The District's online offset bank can be found through link provided on the upper left of the following webpage… http://www.vcapcd.org/permits.htm.

during the two year window that the project may need ERCs would be willing to lease those ERCs. Additionally, the project's need for offsets will not occur until 2007 at the earliest, so there is ample time to obtain ERC leases or create new offsets if they are in fact necessary. Mitigation Measure A-5 specifies the requirement to obtain the NOx emission offsets, if necessary, and the future Mitigation Monitoring Plan will identify the specific requirements and timelines to implement this mitigation measure.

However, it is important to realize that, as noted by the VCAPCD in their "General Comment", the 8-hour ozone attainment designation has been completed and Ventura County has been designated as Moderate Nonattainment. As noted in the DEIS (p. 5.6-1) this means that conformity determinations will be based on the 8-hour ozone designation as of July 15, 2005. This should result in the *de minimus* emission thresholds being revised to 100 tons/year for NOx and ROC. Therefore, while a conformity analysis was performed as recommended by EPA guidance using the current *de minimus* emission thresholds it is understood that the revised requirements will eliminate the need for offsets from the selected project alternative, and that a revised conformity analysis will be prepared sometime after July 15, 2005.

As noted in 40 CFR Part 93.153 (i) "when the total of direct and indirect emissions of any pollutant from a Federal action does not equal or exceed the rates specified in paragraph (b) of this section, but represents 10 percent or more of a nonattainment or maintenance area's total emissions of that pollutant, the action is defined as a regionally significant action and the requirements of § 93.150 and §§ 93.155 through 93.160 shall apply for the Federal action." The project's worst case daily NOx emissions are somewhat less than one ton per day, while the federally approved VCAPCD Air Quality Management Plan indicates NOx emissions of 42.1 tons/day. Therefore, it can be clearly seen that the project's emissions are well less than the 10% threshold of 40 CFR Part 93.153 (i).

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APPENDIX A

MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
Earth Resources			
ER-1	**Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs).** An erosion control and sediment transport control plan shall be prepared in association with the SWPPP and the revegetation plan. This plan shall be prepared in accordance with RWQCB guidelines and other applicable BMPs. Implementation of the plan will help to reduce erosion and sediment degradation. The plan will designate BMPs that will be followed during construction activities. Erosion-minimizing efforts may include measures such as avoiding excessive disturbance of steep slopes; using drainage control structures (e.g., coir rolls or silt fences) to direct surface runoff away from disturbed areas; strictly controlling vehicular traffic; implementing a dust-control program during construction; restricting access to sensitive areas; using vehicle mats in wet areas; and revegetating disturbed areas following construction.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
ER-2	**Reduce off-site erosion.** During excessive wet and muddy site conditions, the contractor shall implement wheel washing strategies and street cleaning in the project vicinity to reduce off-site erosion from construction vehicles leaving the sites.	Construction contractor	During construction
ER-3	**Observe exposed soil.** During trenching, grading, or excavation work for the project, the contractor shall observe the exposed soil for visual evidence of contamination. If visual contamination indicators are observed during construction, the contractor shall stop work until the material is properly characterized and appropriate measures are taken to protect human health and the environment. The contractor shall comply with all local, State, and federal requirements for sampling and testing, and subsequent removal, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials. In the event that evidence of contamination is observed, the contractor shall document the exact location of the contamination and shall immediately notify the Corps of Engineers' construction manager. The Corps shall be responsible for formulating and implementing plans to characterize and remediate any contamination encountered during construction. These plans shall specify procedures for monitoring, identifying, handling, and disposing of hazardous waste in accordance with federal and State regulations.	Corps of Engineers and construction contractor	During construction
ER-4	**Hazardous substance control.** The Corps of Engineers, or its construction contractor, shall prepare a Hazardous Substance Control and Emergency Response Plan that will include preparations for quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The Plan will prescribe hazardous-materials handling procedures to reduce the potential for a spill during construction, and will include an emergency response program to ensure quick and safe cleanup of accidental spills. The plan will identify areas where refueling and vehicle-maintenance activities and storage of hazardous materials, if any, will be permitted.	Corps of Engineers or construction contractor	Prior to construction
Biological Resources			
B-1	**Pre-Construction biological surveys.** The Corps of Engineers shall conduct pre-construction protocol-level surveys for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. In addition, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted for sensitive birds, active nests or roosts in riparian areas that would be subject to project disturbance. For non-endangered or non-threatened bird species, if active nests are located, birds shall be flushed prior to construction activities or nests shall be avoided until the young have fledged. In addition, surveys shall be conducted for any State Protected and State Fully Protected species. Qualified biologists familiar with species known to inhabit the Ventura River shall be utilized to conduct the surveys. [Note: Monitoring to document the beneficial impacts to fish and wildlife are addressed in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan (M&AMP) included in the EIS/EIR as Appendix K, Section VI.]	Corps of Engineers (implemented by a qualified biologist)	Prior to construction
B-2	**Pre-Construction plant surveys.** The Corps shall conduct pre-construction surveys for special-status plant species within all areas subject to project disturbance.	Corps of Engineers (implemented by a qualified biologist)	Prior to construction
B-3	**Capture and relocate.** The Corps of Engineers shall design and implement a capture and relocation program for California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle, and two-striped garter snake, and native fish prior to construction activities in Matilija Lake, Matilija Creek, and the Ventura River.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
B-4	**Agency coordination.** The Corps shall immediately contact the appropriate regulatory agencies (Corps, VCWPD, CDFG, and USFWS) if federally- or State-listed or otherwise sensitive flora and fauna are identified during pre-construction surveys. The Corps shall coordinate with the appropriate agencies to develop and institute avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures prior to proceeding with project construction.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
B-5	**Restricted initial clearing.** The Corps of Engineers shall conduct initial clearing of open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitats in Reach 7 outside of the breeding season (September 15 through March 1 March 15). If breeding birds, including white-tailed kites, are detected by September 15, the riparian clearing within 1,000 feet of the nest shall be postponed until November 1. Clearing of riparian vegetation for levee construction shall be conducted between September 15 and March 15.	Corps of Engineers	Between September 15 and March 15

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
B-6	**Fueling.** The construction contractor shall conduct all fueling and maintenance activities outside of riparian and wetland habitats, a minimum of 100 feet, and in areas where accidental fuel spills may not flow into waters of the state.	Construction contractor	During construction
B-7	**Construction monitoring.** The Corps shall have a qualified biologist present when conducting clearing and grading operations at Matilija Lake, slurry disposal sites, levee locations, and during the removal of giant reed in riparian habitat. The monitor shall move or flush non-sensitive wildlife away from project construction to the extent practicable.	Corps of Engineers (implemented by a qualified biologist)	During construction
B-8	**Downstream monitoring.** Monitoring of biological resources downstream of the dam shall occur as identified in the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.	Corps of Engineers	During construction
B-9	**Worker training and Best Management Practices.** The USACE shall conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Plan (WEAP) prior to construction and implement related best management practices (BMPs) to reduce downstream impacts from sediment-laden water. The WEAP shall identify any sensitive biological or cultural resources known to occur in the project area, the appropriate BMPs required to reduce water quality impacts, and appropriate trash disposal and maintenance locations.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
B-10	**Trash removal.** The Contractor shall ensure that food and trash are stored in sealed containers and removed from the job site on a weekly basis.	Construction contractor	During construction
B-11	**BMPs for Giant Reed Control.** The Corps of Engineers shall develop and execute a giant reed control program that includes monitoring during post deconstruction restoration activities. Control efforts shall begin prior to the dam removal in Reach 7, 8, and 9, continuing throughout the downstream reaches immediately afterwards. The Giant Reed Control Plan shall be submitted to the CDFG and USFWS for review and comment prior to implementation. The plan shall include measures to prevent permanent or temporary impacts to wetlands and associated sensitive vegetation and wildlife during herbicide treatments of giant reed. The plan shall ensure that all activities requiring herbicide treatment would: • Ensure that herbicides are not applied aquatically during the wet season (November 1st to April 15th) to avoid potential impacts to downstream vegetation where feasible, and to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife species. • Ensure that only water-safe with approved surfactants are used. Treatments shall use a glyphosate-based herbicide including Rodeo® and/or Aquamaster®, both of which are labeled for use within water. • Ensure that herbicides are applied at concentrations that are considered safe for biological resources within and adjacent to the project area. • Ensure that herbicides are mixed with a non-toxic, water soluble dye of low toxicity that highlights treated areas. • Minimize overspray of herbicides onto non-target species by restricting herbicide spraying when wind velocities exceed six mph. • Minimize trampling of native vegetation by establishing marked trails prior to project implementation. • Remove dead giant reed material that was foliar treated and left in place to avoid fire hazard potential prior to the beginning of the fire season. Material shall be removed when spring access is permitted and before the ensuing fire season begins (between April 15 and the beginning of the fire season). • Have a licensed professional conduct or oversee herbicides applications.	Corps of Engineers (herbicide applications shall be implemented by a licensed professional)	Prior to, during, and after construction
B-12	**Predator control plan.** The Corps of Engineers shall develop and implement a predator control plan in consultation with the CDFG and USFWS. The plan shall include specific measures to reduce the number of aquatic predators in Matilija Reservoir and minimize the potential for release of these species downstream during dam removal.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to and during construction
B-13	**Restoration plan.** The Corps shall develop and implement a Habitat Restoration Program for all areas disturbed by project construction including giant reed removal. This mitigation measure shall include methods to restore habitats on all temporary impact areas, such as preserving and respreading topsoil, specific grading techniques including soil ripping to alleviate compaction, and choosing appropriate plant palettes. Appropriate maintenance and monitoring methods for the revegetated sites to ensure habitat restoration success shall be included. These methods shall be developed and defined during the project design phase.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to, during, and after construction
B-14	**Oak and walnut replanting.** The Contractor shall replace any native oaks or California black walnut trees removed during project construction. These species shall be integrated into the Restoration Plan described in Mitigation Measure B-13 to maximize habitat restoration success.	Construction contractor	During and after construction
B-15	**Pre-Construction bat surveys.** The Corps shall conduct pre-construction surveys for sensitive bats at the Santa Ana Bridge and any other structures that may house suitable roosting habitat for this species. If bats are located in the structure, construction would be scheduled to occur outside of the breeding season.	Corps of Engineers (implemented by a qualified biologist)	Prior to construction
B-16	**Development of an Operations and Maintenance Program.** The Corps shall develop and execute an Operation and Maintenance Program	Corps of Engineers	Prior, during,

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
	limiting the potential of long-term and short-term impacts to sensitive flora and fauna. The Maintenance Program would be submitted to the CDFG and USFWS for review and comment prior to implementation. At a minimum, the following items shall be included in the maintenance program: • Utilize existing access roads and ramps for all maintenance activities unless by foot or authorized by the appropriate regulatory agencies. • Ensure that only water-safe and surfactant-free herbicides are used. Treatments would use a glyphosate-based herbicide including Rodeo® and/or Aquamaster®, both of which are labeled for use within water. • Ensure that herbicides are applied at concentrations that are considered safe for biological resources within and adjacent to the project area. • Ensure that herbicides are mixed with a non-toxic water soluble dye of low toxicity that highlights treated areas. • Minimize overspray of herbicides onto non-target species by restricting herbicide spraying when wind velocities exceed six mph. • Have a licensed professional conduct or oversee herbicides applications. • Ensure that herbicides are not applied to ponded features within the 15-feet width to avoid potential impacts to fish and wildlife species. • Remove trash and debris cleared from culverts from the streambed to avoid potential direct impacts from debris being dislodged and carried downstream or by creating water quality impacts for aquatic species. • Maintain access roads outside of breeding season when repair areas are within 300-feet of known breeding pairs of least Bell's vireo, southwestern flycatcher, California gnatcatcher or other sensitive nesting species. • Use proper BMPs when maintaining access roads and ramps including regrading and repaving. • Inspect levees, roads, and ramps on a regular basis and repair small problems to limit the possibly of a large failure that would require extensive repair and potential damage to sensitive habitat.		and after construction
Cultural Resources			
CR-1	**Survey for historic or prehistoric resources.** A field survey of the slurry line, disposal site, levee sites, bridge removal locations, and other previously unsurveyed features will be conducted. If any historic or prehistoric resources are found, additional National Register of Historic Places evaluations will be made.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
CR-2	**National Register of Historic Places Evaluation.** A test excavation and National Register of Historic Places evaluation shall be conducted of historic/prehistoric site COE#1, COE#2, and others that may be identified by additional surveys. If any are evaluated, and determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, mitigation measures shall be developed and agreed to in a memorandum of agreement. This document would be developed between the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the Corps and local sponsors. Federally Recognized Tribes and interested Native American groups would be invited to participate as concurring parties to the agreement. These procedures shall follow the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic preservation Act, as implemented by 36 CFR 800. A historical architectural and NRHP evaluation shall be completed for Matilija Dam, Camino Cielo (Ojala) and Soper's Ranch.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
CR-3	**Develop discovery plan for previously unknown resources.** A discovery plan shall be developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13(b) to treat previously unknown resources found during implementation of the project. It shall include procedures to monitor and treat cultural resources discovered during mechanical and natural removal of sediment behind Matilija Dam. It would also include procedures for discoveries made during grading and earth moving activities.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
CR-4	**Consultation with Native American Tribes.** Consultation shall be conducted with Native American Tribes and groups to obtain their concerns with the potential to impact Traditional Cultural Places, and other resources of importance to them.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction
Aesthetics			
AE-1	**Adjust alignment of levees and floodwalls to allow vegetative screening of flood control improvements.** Final levee and floodwall alignments along residential properties at Meiners Oaks and along SR 33 at Camino Cielo shall be designed to be set back from the properties and road ROW to allow vegetation to screen views of the flood control improvements. The distance of the setback would be determined at each location based on site feasibility, but shall be such that views of the levees and floodwalls are partially to completely obscured by intervening vegetation.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to construction

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
AE-2	**Screen levees and floodwalls with vegetation planting.** Levees and floodwalls adjacent to SR 33 at Camino Cielo and the Rice Canyon Trail in Meiners Oaks shall be screened from view by the planting of native vegetation. Vegetation selected for screening shall consist native species appropriate to the location and approved by a qualified biologist familiar with species known to inhabit the Ventura River. Species selected must be chosen and maintained to achieve a height as tall or taller than the levee/floodwall height at maturity. Planting of screening vegetation shall be initiated as soon as possible during levee/floodwall construction and shall achieve a minimum of 50% screening of the levee/floodwall within 10 years of project initiation. The goal of the screening should be to maintain the natural character of the remaining area and to screen the levees and floodwalls to the maximum feasible extent. An aesthetic screening plan would be submitted to the Corps by the construction contractor at least 90 days prior to construction and would include, but not be limited to: • A list of proposed tree and shrub species and sizes and a discussion of the suitability of the plants for the site conditions and mitigation objectives; • Maintenance procedures, including any needed irrigation; and • A procedure for replacing unsuccessful plantings.	Construction contractor	Prior to and during construction
AE-3	**Create trails over the Rice Road slurry disposal site following re-vegetation of site.** Prior to completion of slurry disposal activities and re-vegetation of the site, the Corps shall design a system of trails over the completed, re-vegetated site along with a re-vegetation plan for the site. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy shall be consulted on appropriate trail routes to replace the trails covered by the slurry. Final trail designs and re-vegetation plans shall be submitted to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy for approval at least 60 days prior to commencement of revegetation activities. Trail route construction shall commence in tandem with revegetation activities and shall be completed to the same level of quality as currently exist on the site or better.	Corps of Engineers	During and after construction
AE-4	**Reduce visibility of project activities and equipment.** If visible from nearby residences, roadways, or recreation facilities, project construction sites, as well as all staging, material, and equipment storage areas shall be visually screened with temporary screening fencing. Fencing shall be of an appropriate design and color for each specific location. All evidence of project activities, including ground disturbance due to staging or storage areas, shall be removed and all disturbed areas shall be returned to an original or improved condition upon completion of project activities including the replacement of any vegetation or paving removed during construction.	Corps of Engineers	During and after construction
Air Quality			
A-1	**Limit engine idling.** Prohibit private vehicle engine idling in excess of two minutes, restrict diesel engine idle time, to the extent practical, to no more than 10 minutes.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-2	**Low-emission diesel engines.** Require the use of certified low emission diesel engines (i.e., CARB/EPA Tier 1, 2, 3, or 4 certified off-road equipment) for diesel off-road equipment and cutterhead dredge pump engines, with the minimum requirement being CARB/EPA Tier 1 engines.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-3	**Limit use of internal combustion engines.** Utilize electrical power from the grid rather than internal combustion engines or internal combustion electric power generators for all stationary equipment, such as, the stationary water pumps, and slurry pumps (except the dredge engines).	Construction contractor	During construction
A-4	**Low-emission vehicles.** Utilize low-emission on-road construction fleet vehicles, if available.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-5	**NOx emission offset.** Provide NOx emission offset to fully offset the project emissions when they are predicted to be more than 25 tons per year.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-6	**Watering areas to reduce dust.** Pre-grading/excavation activities shall include watering the area to be graded or excavated before commencement of grading or excavation operations. Application of water (preferably reclaimed, if available) should penetrate sufficiently to minimize fugitive dust during grading activities.	Construction contractor	During pre-grading/ excavation activities (prior to construction)

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
A-7	**Controlling fugitive dust.** Fugitive dust produced during grading, excavation, and construction activities shall be controlled by the following activities: • All trucks shall be required to cover their loads as required by California Vehicle Code §23114. • Sweep streets at the end of the day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public paved roads (recommend water sweepers with reclaimed water) • Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto paved roads, or wash off trucks and any equipment leaving the site each trip • Pave construction roads that have a traffic volume of more than 50 daily trips by construction equipment, 150 daily trips for all vehicles • Pave all construction access roads for at least 100 feet from the main road to the project site • Pave construction roads that have a daily traffic volume of less than 50 vehicular trips • All graded and excavated material, exposed soil areas, and active portions of the construction site, including unpaved on-site roadways, shall be treated to prevent fugitive dust. Treatment shall include, but no necessarily be limited to, periodic watering, application of environmentally-safe soil stabilization materials, and/or roll-compaction as appropriate. Watering shall be done as often as necessary and reclaimed water shall be used whenever possible.	Construction contractor	During pre-grading/ excavation, and construction activities
A-8	**Dust stabilization.** Graded and/or excavated inactive areas of the construction site shall be monitored by the construction contractor at least weekly for dust stabilization. Soil stabilization methods, such as water and roll-compaction, and environmentally safe dust control materials, shall be periodically applied to portions of the construction site that are inactive for over four days. If no further grading or excavation operations are planned for the area, the area should be seeded and watered until grass growth is evident, or periodically treated with environmentally-safe dust suppressants, to prevent excessive fugitive dust.	Construction contractor	During and after construction
A-9	**Traffic signs.** Signs shall be posted onsite that limit traffic to 15 miles per hour or less.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-10	**Excessive winds.** During period of high winds (i.e., wind speed sufficient to cause fugitive dust to impacts adjacent properties), all clearing, grading, earth moving, and excavation operations shall be curtailed to the degree necessary to prevent fugitive dust created by on-site activities and operations from being a nuisance or hazard, either off-site or on-site activities and operations from being a nuisance or hazard, either off-site or on-site. The site superintendent/supervisor shall use his/her discretion in conjunction with the APCD in determining when winds are excessive.	Site superintendent/ supervisor	During construction
A-11	**Street sweeping.** Adjacent streets and roads shall be swept at least once per day, preferably at the end of the day, if visible soil material is carried over to adjacent streets and roads.	Construction contractor	During construction
A-12	**Respiratory protection.** Personnel involved in grading operations, including contractors and subcontractors, should be advised to wear respiratory protection in accordance with California Division of Occupational Safety and Health regulations.	Construction contractor	During construction
Noise			
N-1	**Limit hours of hand-held equipment use.** Use of loud hand-held construction equipment, such as chain saws, heavy-duty construction equipment, and trucks shall not occur between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., except for dredging, slurrying, and associated water conveyance activities, which are planned to occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-2	**Limit hours of heavy-duty equipment use.** Within the City of Ojai, use of heavy-duty construction equipment or trucks shall not occur between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-3	**Use of muffler equipment.** Construction equipment shall be operated with standard factory silencer and/or muffler equipment. Equipment engine covers shall be in place and mufflers shall be in proper working order.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-4	**Locate haul routes away from sensitive receptors.** Haul routes, staging areas, and construction activities shall be located to avoid noise impacts to sensitive receptors (schools, hospitals, residential areas, etc.), whenever possible. If necessary, noise curtains or shields shall be implemented to reduce noise levels to the extent feasible.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-5	**Use of electric motors.** The construction contractor shall use electric motors to the extent feasible for all stationary equipment (i.e., pumps). Stationary equipment located at Lake Casitas shall be enclosed to limit impacts to recreational users.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-6	**Controlled blasts.** All blasts at Matilija Dam shall be controlled. Records detailing each individual blast shall be maintained and available onsite.	Construction contractor	During construction
N-7	**Use of hearing protection.** Hearing protection shall be provided to all worksite personnel during blasting operations, and as needed for	Construction	During

Number	Mitigation Measures	Responsibility	Timing
	general construction activities to meet the requirements of OSHA standards (29 CFR 1910.95, Subpart G) and U.S. EPA standards. In the event of complaints by worksite personnel, a Noise Monitoring Program shall be implemented as discussed in OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Subpart G, Appendix G.	contractor	construction
N-8	**Public notice of construction.** The construction contractor shall provide advance notice of the start of construction for the project to all residences within one mile of the main construction area (i.e., Matilija Dam), and those residences adjacent to the downstream flood protection improvements (levees, floodwalls, and bridges). The announcement shall state specifically where and when construction will occur and provide contact information for public questions or comments. The construction contractor shall serve as the contact person in the event that noise levels during construction become disruptive to local residents. A sign shall be posted at the various sites with the contact phone number, and include general contact information for public questions or comments.	Construction contractor	Prior to and during construction
N-9	**Noise monitoring.** In the event of complaints by local residents, the construction contractor shall monitor noise from construction activity. Noise shall be measured at the exterior wall(s) of those residents filing a complaint or a representative location. In the event that construction noise exceeds the specified limits (1-hour Leq of 55 dBA), the responsible construction activity shall cease until appropriate measures are implemented to reduce noise levels to the extent feasible.	Construction contractor	During construction
Transportation			
T-1	**Transportation Management Plan.** The construction contractor shall submit a Transportation Management Plan to the County of Ventura's Public Works Department and to Caltrans for review and approval that demonstrates practices and safety precautions designed to minimize temporary construction traffic impacts. The detailed traffic study shall be performed by a registered civil engineer (or registered traffic engineer) who is qualified to perform traffic engineering studies and is familiar with Ventura County. The Transportation Management Plan shall cover all aspects of construction under the Proposed Action and shall include traffic control measures and other procedures that may be necessary during construction of the project. All recommendations of the Transportation Management Plan shall be incorporated into the description of the Proposed Action.	Construction contractor (traffic study performed by registered civil or traffic engineer)	Prior to construction
T-2	**Road repair from construction activities.** If damage to roads, sidewalks, and/or medians occurs, the construction contractor shall coordinate repairs with the affected public agencies to ensure that any impacts are adequately repaired per the applicable agency standards. Roads and/or driveways disturbed by construction activities or construction vehicles shall be properly restored to ensure long-term protection of road surfaces. Care shall be taken to prevent damage to roadside drainage structures. Roadside drainage structures and road drainage features (e.g., rolling dips) shall be protected by regrading and reconstructing roads to drain properly. The construction contractor shall work with the applicable agencies to document pre-construction conditions of roads features prior to the commencement of construction.	Construction contractor	After construction
Recreation			
R-1	**Construct a ramp to provide access over the Meiners Oaks flood protection.** The Corps shall design and construct a ramp from Meyer Road on the east side of the Meiners Oaks flood protection over to the trails on the west side of the flood protection. The OVLC shall be consulted on the design of the ramp. This ramp shall be constructed in conjunction with construction of the Meiners Oaks levee and floodwall. The ramp shall be designed to ensure that pedestrians and equestrians can continue to utilize the Rice Canyon Trail, but designs may also include measures to ensure that the levee itself is not used as a recreation trail.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to and during construction
R-2	**Parks agency coordination, notification, and signage.** All construction activities, including temporary trail closures, affecting parklands or trail systems along the project route shall coordinate with the respective jurisdictional agency at least 30 days before construction begins in these areas. Signs directing vehicles to alternative park access and parking shall be posted in the event construction temporarily obstructs parking areas near trailheads. The Corps shall also post signs alerting park users to construction activities at least a week in advance of construction near recreation facilities. Signs advising recreation users of construction activities and directing them to alternative trails or bikeways will be posted on both sides of all trail intersections or as determined through Corps coordination with the respective jurisdictional agencies.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to and during construction
R-3	**Casitas Municipal Water District Recreation Agreement.** During design of the slurry intake or any project component in the vicinity of the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, Casitas will be consulted to determine the best placement and design of the component that feasibly minimizes impacts to recreation. An agreement with Casitas and the Corps/District will be executed that fairly compensates Casitas with restoration of recreation facilities and potentially fees for lost recreation revenues, if project components cannot be placed such that impacts to recreation are avoided.	Corps of Engineers	Prior to and during construction

APPENDIX B – VENTURA COUNTY INITIAL STUDY ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

This Initial Study has been prepared to address the issues listed in Ventura County's Initial Study Checklist for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (proposed project), which has been proposed by the Ventura County Public Works Agency, Watershed Protection District (VCWPD), and which is also the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency. As it was anticipated that the proposed project would result in significant impacts to the environment, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the federal lead agency for the project, and the VCWPD chose to prepare the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to analyze the impacts resulting from the project and comply with CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states that when a lead agency determines that an EIR will clearly be required, an Initial Study (IS) "is not required but may still be desirable." This document has been prepared for the EIS/EIR to ensure the project complies fully with the Ventura County CEQA Initial Study Assessment Guidelines by addressing all issues listed in the Ventura County Initial Study Checklist.

To reduce repetition between the EIS/EIR and the Initial Study, the impact analyses presented makes reference to sections and figures within the Draft and Final EIS/EIR documents where possible.

1.2 PROJECT PROPONENT

Ventura County Watershed Protection District
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Contact: Jeff Pratt (805/654-2040)

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION

Refer to Section 1.3 Study Area Location, page 1-8 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and corresponding changes described in the Final EIS/EIR.

1.4 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Refer to Section 2.1 Purpose and Need, page 2-1 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and corresponding changes described in the Final EIS/EIR.

1.5 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Refer to Section 2.2 Project Objectives, page 2-6 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and corresponding changes described in the Final EIS/EIR.

1.6 PREPARERS OF THE INITIAL STUDY

This document was prepared for the VCWPD by the following staff of Aspen Environmental Group:

Hedy Born	Tatiana Inouye
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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Refer to Section 3.0 Alternatives, pages 3-1 through 3-47 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and corresponding changes described in the Final EIS/EIR.

2.2 PROJECT COMPONENTS

Refer to Section 3.0 Alternatives, pages 3-1 through 3-47 of the Draft EIS/EIR, and corresponding changes described in the Final EIS/EIR.

3.0 INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

The Initial Study Checklist was prepared following the format adopted by the County of Ventura (2000).

Issue		Project Impact Degree of Effect *				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect *			
		N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
GENERAL:	1. General Plan Environmental Goals and Policies:	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
LAND USE:	2. Land Use:								
	a. Community Character	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Housing	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Growth Inducement	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	
RESOURCES:	3. Air Quality:								
	a. Regional	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	b. Local	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒
	4. Water Resources:								
	a. Groundwater Quantity	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Groundwater Quality	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Surface Water Quantity	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d. Surface Water Quality	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	5. Mineral Resources:								
	a. Aggregate	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Petroleum	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	6. Biological Resources:								
	a. Endangered, Threatened, or Rare species	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒
	b. Wetland Habitat	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒
	c. Coastal Habitat	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d. Migration corridors	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☒	☐	☐
	e. Locally Important Species/ Communities	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	7. Agricultural Resources:								

Issue		Project Impact Degree of Effect *				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect *			
		N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
	a. Soils	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Water	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Air Quality/Micro-Climate	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d. Pests/Diseases	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	e. Land Use Incompatibility	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	8. Visual Resources:								
	a. Scenic Highway	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	b. Scenic Area/Feature	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	9. Paleontological Resources:	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	10. Cultural Resources:								
	a. Archaeological	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Historical	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Ethnic, Social, or Religious	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	11. Energy Resources:	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	12. Coastal Beaches & Sand Dunes:	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
HAZARDS:	13. Seismic Hazards:								
	a. Fault Rupture	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Ground-shaking	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Tsunami	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d. Seiche	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	e. Liquefaction	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	14. Geologic Hazards:								
	a. Subsidence	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Expansive Soils	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Landslides/Mudslides	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	15. Hydraulic Hazards:								
	a. Erosion/Siltation	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Flooding	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	16. Aviation Hazards:	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	17. Fire Hazards:	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	18. Hazardous Materials/Waste:								
	a. Above-Ground Hazardous Materials	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Below-Ground Hazardous Materials	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	c. Hazardous Waste	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	19. Noise and Vibration:	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☒	☐	☐
	20. Glare:	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	21. Public Health:	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SERVICES	22. Transportation/Circulation								
	a. Public Roads and Highways:								
	(1) Level of Service	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒
	(2) Safety/Design	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(3) Tactical Access	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	b. Private Roads and Driveways								
	(1) Safety/Design	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	(2) Tactical Access	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	c. Pedestrian/Bicycle								
	(1) Public Facilities	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Issue		Project Impact Degree of Effect *				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect *			
		N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
	(2) Private Facilities	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	d. Parking	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	e. Bus Transit	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	f. Railroads	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	g. Airports	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	h. Harbors	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	i. Pipelines	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	23. Water Supply								
	a. Quality	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Quantity	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Fire Flow	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	24. Waste Treatment/Disposal								
	a. Individual Sewage Disposal System	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	b. Sewage Collection/Treatment Facilities	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	c. Solid Waste Management	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	d. Solid Waste Facilities	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	25. Utilities								
	a. Electric	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	b. Gas	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	c. Communications	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	26. Flood Control/Drainage								
	a. FCD Facility	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Other Facilities	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	27.Law Enforcement/Emergency Svs.								
	a. Personnel/Equipment	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	b. Facilities	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	28 Fire Protection								
	a. Distance/Response Time	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Personnel/Equipment/Facilities	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	29. Education								
	a. Schools	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Libraries	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	30. Recreation								
	a. Local Parks/Facilities	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	b. Regional Parks/Facilities	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	c. Regional Trails/Corridors	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

*Explanation: Degree of Effect
N = No Effect
LS = Less Than Significant Effect
PS-M = Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation is Incorporated
PS = Potentially Significant Impact

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

		Yes/Maybe	No
1.	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☒	☐
2.	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one that occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future).	☐	☒
3.	Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effect of other current projects, and the effect of probable future projects. (Several projects may have relatively small individual impacts on two or more resources, but the total of those impacts on the environment is significant).	☒	☐
4.	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☒	☐

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Initial Study examines and describes the anticipated environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (the proposed project). The impact analysis has been divided into subsections addressing individual environmental topics per the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines Checklist. The potential environmental impacts are evaluated based on significance criteria presented at the beginning of the impact analysis for each environmental topic. In determining the significance of impacts, the ability of existing regulations and other public agency requirements to reduce potential impacts is taken into consideration. If an adverse impact is potentially significant despite existing regulations and requirements, mitigation measures are proposed to reduce or avoid the impact, where feasible.

In the environmental impact analysis, impacts are classified as either "beneficial," "less than significant," "significant but mitigable," or "significant and unavoidable." These classifications are based on the significance criteria presented for each environmental topic and take into consideration mitigation measures proposed to reduce the significance of impacts. The following classification system is used to describe the potential effects of the proposed project:

- Class I: Significant Unavoidable Impact. Class I impacts are significant adverse effects that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Class I impacts are significant and unavoidable.
- Class II: Significant but Mitigable Impact. A Class II impact is a significant adverse effect that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures presented in the EIS/EIR.
- Class III: Less-than-Significant Impact. A Class III impact is a minor change or effect on the environment that does not meet or exceed the criteria established to gauge significance. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- Class IV: Beneficial Impact. Class IV impacts represent beneficial effects that would result from project implementation.

Where no impact would occur as a result of the project, no classification is given to the impact.

4.2 GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICIES

Significance Thresholds. According to the County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact if it would be inconsistent with a specific environmental policy established in the Ventura County General Plan. Since the proposed project extends through the Cities of Ojai and San Buenaventura (Ventura) and is located in its entirety within Ventura County, California, consistency with the policies of the City of Ojai General Plan (City of Ojai, 1997), City of San Buenaventura General Plan (City of San Buenaventura, 1995) and Ventura County General Plan (County of Ventura, 1988) were used as significance thresholds.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plans, regulations, or policies nor would it be inconsistent with an environmental goal of the Ventura County General Plan. The proposed project would not only be consistent with local plans, but could also contribute to the long-term achievement of beach

replenishment goals set in the Ventura County General Plan, Ventura County Coastal Area Plan, and the City of San Buenaventura Comprehensive Plan Update to the Year 2010. In addition to sand and sediment from the headwaters of Matilija Creek, which could enter the Ventura River and contribute to beach nourishment under the proposed project, the stabilization of sediment in a manner allowing controlled natural erosion during storm events would also add to beach nourishment. This is considered a beneficial impact (Class IV) resulting from the project. No negative impacts would occur.

4.3 LAND USE (PLANNING)

4.3.1 Community Character

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact to community character if it would disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community.

Impacts. As presented in Section 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, proposed project activities associated with the dam removal and restoration in the reservoir area are not expected to disrupt or divide communities. Excavation and stabilization of earth material from behind the dam and slurrying of materials to the proposed disposal site downstream, an open space area alongside the Ventura River off of Rice Road, would not disrupt or divide communities.

Implementation of the high-level flood protection measures proposed by the project, however, may have the potential to adversely affect downstream communities. Flood control protection measures call for the purchase and removal of the Matilija Hot Springs retreat center and up to 11 residences along Camino Cielo and the relocation of the occupants. As these structures are dispersed through the Camino Cielo area and relatively isolated from other development, the removal of these structures would not constitute the division of a community. As all relocations would comply with both the State (California Government Code 33410–33418) and Federal (49 CFR Part 24) Uniform Relocation Act Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Guidelines, this would be considered a disruption, but would be a less-than-significant impact (Class III).

As described in Section 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, any divisions or disruptions to communities caused by the construction or improvements of the levees and floodwalls could be adverse, but would be less than significant (Class III). Modifications to water supply facilities at Foster Park and Robles Diversion and the construction of the locally preferred desilting basin would occur in conjunction with or in the vicinity of existing water facilities in these locations. As these facilities are outside of established communities on the Ventura River, construction of these facilities would not disrupt or divide any nearby communities.

4.3.2 Housing

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact on housing if it would remove existing low-income rental housing units (or moderate-income rental housing units in a coastal area) or create substantial demand for new housing.

Impacts. The majority of activities associated with the proposed project would be located behind Matilija Dam. However, construction of downstream flood protection measures could potentially require the purchase and removal of Matilija Hot Springs and up to 11 structures near the Ventura River along Camino Cielo. The Matilija Hot Springs retreat center includes private residences on its property and the majority of the structures to be removed along Camino Cielo

are also residences. All relocations would comply with both the State (California Government Code 33410–33418) and Federal (49 CFR Part 24) Uniform Relocation Act Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Guidelines. According to Ventura County Public Works Agency Real Estate Services, while some of the structures that may be purchased and removed are rental housing units, none are low-income housing (County of Ventura Real Estate Services, 2004). No housing units would be removed within a coastal zone. Compliance with these guidelines would ensure the displacement of Matilija Hot Springs and any commercial and residential properties along Camino Cielo would not result in significant impacts (Class III).

In addition, given the nature of the project, demand for permanent housing due to project operation would be minimal. Because few, if any, workers are expected to relocate to the area, no new housing would be needed for the project, no housing would be displaced due to demand by the work force, and no new competition for existing housing would be likely to occur. Temporary accommodations may be needed during construction. However, the numerous hotels and motels in the area would accommodate this need and impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.3.3 Growth Inducement

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would induce substantial growth. The project would have the potential to induce substantial growth if it would eliminate or remove an impediment to growth in the area. This includes both physical impediments (lack of roads, flood control facilities, sewers, water lines, etc.) and policy impediments (e.g., existing land use and zoning designations, General Plan policies, etc.).

Impacts. As discussed in Section 11 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not include residential units; therefore, it would not directly increase population levels. However, the proposed project could facilitate growth in the project area by indirectly inducing growth through increased development of recreational resources and improving flood protection, which could result in future development of mixed uses downstream.

While the project would not directly induce growth, the removal of Matilija Dam and restoration of the Ventura River ecosystem could indirectly induce growth through the creation of new recreation trails, connection to existing trails, and accommodation of future development of recreational resources through the replenishment of sediment to downstream beaches. Restoration of the Ventura River watershed to a more natural condition could increase the aesthetic value of the area, which may lead to increased development of recreational resources. Additional recreational resources may then lead to increased tourism or demand for housing in a highly valued area.

Improving flood protection downstream would accommodate future development of mixed uses (e.g., agriculture, residential, commercial, recreation). Most of the development surrounding the project site has occurred in the cities of Ojai and San Buenaventura. While the proposed project could facilitate growth in the area by reducing a potential development constraint (flood hazard), the resultant growth would have to be consistent with the land use policies of the applicable general plans for this area. Therefore, growth-inducing impacts would be adverse but less than significant (Class III).

4.4 AIR QUALITY

Significance Thresholds. In accordance with the Ventura County General Plan and the Ventura County Administrative Supplement to the CEQA Guidelines, all County agencies, departments and special districts shall utilize the air quality assessment guidelines as adopted and periodically updated by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

Impacts. In order to evaluate air quality impacts in the study area, the EIS/EIR used the thresholds of significance from CEQA guidelines, in addition to regional and local thresholds from Ventura County, which included specific thresholds for the Ojai Planning Area. The more stringent of the two sets of thresholds were used for the analysis. The significance criteria that are listed in the Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines are presented below, in addition to a discussion of how these thresholds were analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIR/EIS and the resulting impact classification:

- **Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.** This significance criterion was analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR and discussed in the Response to Comments. The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the VCAPCD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Although temporary construction from the project would cause emissions of ozone precursors, project emissions would not contribute substantially to an existing or projected 1-hour or 8-hour ozone air quality violation. Additionally, because the project would result in any increases in population, it would not be inconsistent with the growth forecasts in the AQMP. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact to the Ventura County region and the Ojai Planning Area (Class III).
- **Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.** This significance criterion was analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR, and was found to have a local PM10 ambient air quality impact to the Ojai Planning Area that was significant and unavoidable (Class I). In order to reduce fugitive dust emissions to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement Mitigation Measures A-1 through A-4 and A-6 through A-11. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the above impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations. Significant regional impacts resulting from PM10 emissions were not identified. The annual NOx emissions would exceed the General Conformity *de minimis* thresholds, but with Mitigation Measure A-5 which would require the purchase of NOx offsets, impacts would be less than significant (Class II)
- **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the above region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.** This significance criterion was analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR. The analysis found that impacts from ROC and NOx emissions within the Ventura County region would be less-than-significant after implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1 through A-5 (Class II). No specific impacts to the Ojai Planning Area would occur.
- **Expose the public (especially schools, day care centers, hospitals, retirement homes, convalescence facilities, and residences) to substantial pollutant concentrations.** This significance criterion was analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR. The analysis found that local impacts to project workers and sensitive receptors near the project site would be less-than-significant after implementation of mitigation measure A-12 (Class II). Impacts to the Ventura County region would not occur.
- **Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.** This significance criterion was analyzed in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR, and was found to have a local impact to project workers or sensitive receptors near the project site that was less-than-significant (Class III). Impacts to the Ventura County region would not occur.

4.5 WATER RESOURCES

4.5.1 Groundwater Quantity

Significance Thresholds. A land use or activity, which could cause a significant adverse impact upon groundwater resources in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Any land use that will directly or indirectly decrease, either individually or cumulatively, the net quantity of groundwater in a basin that is overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
- In groundwater basins that are not overdrafted, or are not in hydrologic continuity with an overdrafted basin, net groundwater extraction that will individually or cumulatively cause the basin(s) to become overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
- In areas where the basin condition is not known and there is evidence of overdraft due to declining water levels in a well or wells, it shall be assumed that any net increase in groundwater extraction may potentially cause a significant impact until such time as reliable studies determine otherwise.
- Notwithstanding the above, any project which would result in 0.15 acre-feet, or less, of net annual increase in groundwater extraction is not considered to have a significant project or cumulative impact.
- The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) is in itself mitigation for water used within the FCGMA boundary, provided there is compliance with FCGMA Ordinances. (These ordinances may require a significant penalty for exceeding an established allocation.)

Impacts. The proposed project would not include land use or activities that would directly or indirectly decrease the net quantity of groundwater in a basin that is overdrafted or would result in net groundwater extraction that will cause a basin to become overdrafted. However, the removal of Matilija Dam could interfere with groundwater flow or recharge due to increases in turbidity and sedimentation. As described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, it is estimated that project-related turbidity increases would cause surface diversions from existing facilities at Foster Park to be reduced by approximately 470 acre feet the first year after construction of the dam, diminishing to no reduction in diversions after six years. The first year reduction amounts to approximately seven percent of total yearly diversion. Total reduction in diversions over the six-year period is estimated at 1,600 acre-feet, which represents approximately four percent of the six-year diversion total. The proposed project would include the construction of two groundwater wells at Foster Park to offset the possible reduction. With the inclusion of these wells, the impacts to groundwater quantity would be considered adverse, but less than significant (Class III).

The groundwater extracted from the Foster Park wells would be limited to no more than the amount of surface water the City would divert from the Ventura River to offset this loss diversion resulting from Matilija sediment-generated turbidity. As such, no net increase of water is expected to be lost from the Foster Park area. No overall impact to aquatic or riparian resources are expected as the total groundwater and surface water amount is expected to be unaffected. (Class III).

Approximately 4,800 acre-feet would be directed from Lake Casitas to the proposed project. The City of Ventura maintains an annual 8,000 acre-feet allocation from Lake Casitas, but presently only uses 6,000 acre-feet. In Fox Canyon, the City has 30,000 acre-feet in reserves, which represents water they have been allocated but have not utilized in the past years.

Allocations in the Santa Paula Basin include 3,000 acre-feet each year, with only 1,500 acre-feet withdrawn annual. The proposed project's use of 4,800 acre-feet from Lake Casitas would leave approximately 3,000 acre-feet for the City of Ventura to use. The remaining 3,000 acre-feet needed by the City of Ventura would be made up by utilizing the remaining 1,500 acre-feet from the Santa Paula Basin and withdrawing reserves from the Fox Canyon Basin. Because the City of Ventura is allocated more water than it needs each year and maintains reserves, providing the water to the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to these water sources and would not result in overdrafts of groundwater resources. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.5.2 Groundwater Quality

Significance Thresholds. A land use, or activity, which could cause a significant impact upon groundwater quality in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Any land use proposal that will individually or cumulatively degrade the quality of groundwater and cause groundwater to fail to meet groundwater quality objectives set by the LARWQCB shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
- In cases where the proposed land use impact upon the quality of groundwater is unknown, and there is evidence that the proposed land use could cause the quality of groundwater to fail to meet the groundwater quality objectives set by the LARWQCB, the project shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact until such time as reliable studies determine otherwise.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 5.2.3 in the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not involve the discharge of wastes into groundwater such that the project could violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade water quality. Results of field investigations conducted in 2001 indicate detection of regulated substances including copper, nickel, arsenic and DDT. Preliminary consultation with another water agency indicated that the concentration levels detected were considered within normal background levels and would not usually be associated with adversely impacting water quality. Initial consultation by the Corps has occurred with the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Health Services. Future consultation with the California Department of Health Services and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board will continue during the next more detailed phase of work (Preconstruction, Engineering and Design phase). Therefore, impacts to groundwater quality would be less than significant (Class III).

4.5.3 Surface Water Quantity

Significance Thresholds. A land use or activity that could cause a significant adverse impact upon surface water resources in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Any use that will increase the net utilization of surface water in a hydrologic unit that is overdrafted or adversely impacts an overdrafted hydrologic unit is a significant adverse impact.
- In hydrologic units that are not overdrafted or that do not impact an overdrafted hydrologic unit, water use that will individually or cumulatively cause the hydrologic unit to become overdrafted is a significant adverse impact.
- In areas where the hydrologic unit condition is not known, it must be assumed that any net increase in surface water use may potentially cause a significant impact unless a reliable study determines otherwise.

Impacts. The proposed project would not involve any use that will increase the net utilization of surface water in a hydrological unit that has is overdrafted. As described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIS, the proposed project would remove Matilija dam, which would result in a decrease of water supply. Casitas Metropolitan Water District (MWD) has a lease with Ventura County to use stored water at Matilija Dam until 2009, when the current lease expires. Matilija Dam provides an average of 590 acre-feet/year of water for Robles diversions under current operating criteria. The construction timeframe for the project is not anticipated to begin until 2008 at the earliest. The first year of construction will include downstream features such as bridge modifications, levee construction and slurry pipeline and disposal site construction. The slurry of fines and dam deconstruction will not begin until the second year of construction, in 2009. Therefore, the CMWD lease with the VCWPD will expire prior to any construction activities that may impact the Matilija Dam water supply. Additionally, as sediment accumulates behind the dam, the capacity of the Lake Matilija as a water supply would have been lost with or without the project. Any impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.5.4 Surface Water Quality

Significance Thresholds. A land use or activity that could cause a significant adverse impact upon surface water resources in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Any land use proposal that will degrade the quality of surface water and cause it to fail to meet surface water quality objectives for a hydrologic unit defined in the 4A, 3 or 5D Plans is a significant adverse impact.
- In cases where the proposed land use impact upon the quality of surface water is unknown or the quality of surface water in a hydrologic unit is unknown, the impact is unknown and must be determined by additional investigation.

Impacts. As described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, Matilija Dam currently acts as a sediment trap, blocking watershed-generated sediments, including fines, from being transported downstream of the dam. The proposed project would remove Matilija dam, which would result in short-term increases in downstream turbidity in the form of water-borne silts and clays. Temporary increases would result from construction activities disturbing sediment within the flow of Matilija Creek. Removal of the dam, however, which currently inhibits watershed-generated sediment from being transported downstream, would allow erosion and transport of sediments that have been deposited behind the dam over the years. Potential areas of impact include all of Matilija Creek downstream of the dam, all of the Ventura River downstream of the confluence with Matilija Creek, Robles Diversion, the Foster Park Diversion, and Lake Casitas. The Robles Diversion is located approximately two miles downstream of the dam and feeds Lake Casitas by a diversion and canal for the Casitas Municipal Water District (MWD). The Foster Park Diversion is a combination of surface diversion and subsurface wells approximately ten miles downstream of the dam. These wells divert surface water and ground water for use by the City of Ventura. The proposed project includes measures to minimize the effect of increased turbidity through: (1) removal of accumulated sediments behind the dam through slurry to a disposal area downstream of the dam; (2) construction of a low-flow channel (ten-year flood capacity) protected with soil cement from erosion through the excavated area behind the dam; and (3) a desilting basin along the Robles-Casitas canal for the purpose of trapping fine sediments prior to their reaching Lake Casitas.

In the short term, during and shortly after construction, demolition of the dam and the mechanical removal of sediment would introduce fine sediment into the river system. The fine sediment concentrations are estimated to be between two and ten times higher from the beginning of dam demolition until the first storm passes through the reservoir area. It would be conservatively assumed that concentrations and turbidity would increase by a factor of ten until the first storm passes.

Under the proposed project, the long-term increase in turbidity after construction is completed should only occur during high flow events. The modeling studies for the project show an increase in turbidity levels by up to a factor of two to three times baseline conditions for the first few higher flow events (greater than ten-year recurrence), decreasing to levels not exceeding 50 percent after a few years. The sediment concentration during these events is already high and it is expected that the increase in turbidity may be within natural variability. After a period of five to ten years, turbidity levels for high flows would return to baseline levels. For storms less than ten-year events, the flows would not contain any fine sediment eroded from the trapped materials due to the protection offered by the soil cement revetment in the channel.

Because turbidity impacts, and thus surface water quality impacts, are temporary or confined to high flow events of ten-year recurrence interval or greater, and because the proposed project includes structures to minimize turbidity impacts, impacts to water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or water quality are considered adverse, but less than significant (Class III). No mitigation is required.

4.6 MINERAL RESOURCES

4.6.1 Aggregate Resources

Significance Thresholds. Any project that would directly or indirectly use aggregate products or by-products would have an impact on the demand for aggregate resources; however, no project would have a significant impact because "there is a sufficient amount of aggregate resources to meet local demand for the next 50 years (Resources Appendix of the General Plan)."

Additionally, the project would have a significant impact if it would hamper extraction or access to aggregate resources, by being located in or immediately adjacent to any known aggregate resource area, or adjacent to a principal access road to an existing aggregate production facility.

Impacts. According to the California Geological Survey, aggregate resources are not known to exist at the project site, nor is the project site located adjacent to known deposits of aggregate resources or aggregate resource extraction facilities. The nearest aggregate resource area, zoned as Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2), is located along the Santa Clara River (California Geologic Survey, 2004). The proposed project would not hamper the extraction or access of aggregate resources, nor would it directly or indirectly use aggregate products or by-products. Further, the proposed project would utilize aggregate from behind the Matilija Dam for levees, soil cement, and other components to the greatest extent feasible. Use of aggregate from behind the dam will reduce or preclude the use of aggregate from other sources. Any impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.6.2 Petroleum Resources

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would hamper extraction or access to petroleum resources, by being located in or immediately adjacent to any known petroleum resource area, or adjacent to a principal access road to an existing petroleum production facility.

Impacts. According to Steve Mulqueen, Field Engineer for the Department of Conservation, although the project area along the Ventura River includes petroleum resource areas and production facilities, project activities would not occur adjacent to active petroleum resource areas or petroleum production facilities (California Department of Conservation, 2004). Identified petroleum resource areas, extraction, and production facilities are over 12 miles downstream from the dam and are not adjacent to any project activities. Modeling by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation indicates that increased risk of flooding resulting from the project at this point downstream would not be substantially different than existing flood risk (BOR, 2004). It is not anticipated that project activities or effects resulting from the project would hamper extraction or access to petroleum resources under the proposed project. Construction activities associated with project improvements would only use a minor amount of petroleum products for fueling and lubrication, and would not affect the supply of petroleum in the County. In addition, the proposed project improvements would not create a barrier to the extraction of petroleum resources, if discovered at or adjacent to the project site. Therefore, there would be no impact to petroleum resources.

4.7 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4.7.1 Endangered, Threatened, or Rare Species

Significance Thresholds. A significant impact to such species would occur if a project would directly or indirectly:

- Reduce species population.
- Reduce species habitat.
- Restrict reproductive capacity.

Impacts. The significance thresholds listed above were analyzed in Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR, in which the project was found to have the following impacts:

- **Reduce species populations.** The proposed project was found to have an overall beneficial impact to native and terrestrial species populations in Matilija Creek and the Ventura River (Class IV). Specific effects to populations resulting from construction activities and human disturbance would create temporary, less-than-significant impacts after implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1 through B-15 (Class II). The project was also found to have a short-term impact to steelhead that was potentially significant and unavoidable (Class I). In order to reduce this temporary Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure B-16. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.
- **Reduce species habitat.** The proposed project was found to have an overall beneficial impact to increasing the habitat value and function of existing and restored habitats within the Ventura River (Class IV). Specific effects resulting from the temporary loss of riparian woodland and the permanent loss of lacustrine habitat would result in less-than-significant impacts after implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1, B-5, B-11, and B-12 (Class II). The project was also found to have a potentially significant and unavoidable effect to habitats adjacent to the area (Class I). In order to

reduce this temporary Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure B-16. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- **Restrict reproductive capacity.** The proposed project was found to have an overall beneficial impact to restoring permanent and temporary ponds that provide suitable breeding pools for species such as the California red-legged frog (Class IV). Specific effects resulting from the potential loss of breeding habitat for migratory birds would result in a less-than-significant impact after implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1 and B-5 (Class II).

4.7.2 Wetland Habitat

Significance Thresholds. A significant impact would result from the direct reduction of, or a substantial indirect impact to, a significant Wetland Habitat. All wetlands are potentially significant; therefore, a qualified biologist must make a determination of significance in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game during Initial Consultation.

Impacts. Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the project would permanently remove approximately 46 acres of open water and emergent wetland habitat artificially created by development of the Matilija Reservoir, which would result in a significant and unavoidable impact to wetlands (Class I). In order to reduce this Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure B-16. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

4.7.3 Coastal Habitat

Significance Thresholds. According to the State Coastal Act and the County's Local Coastal Program, virtually any direct reduction of, or indirect impact to, a Coastal Habitat could be considered significant.

Impacts. Although project activities would not be located in or adjacent to a coastal habitat, Section 5.1.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the project would potentially provide an overall beneficial impact to local beaches by permitting sediments to migrate downstream and contribute to future beach replenishment (Class IV). In Section 5.3.3, potential impacts to species that inhabit the Ventura estuary, such as the western snowy plover and the California least tern, were found to be less-than-significant (Class III).

4.7.4 Migration Corridors

Significance Thresholds. A significant impact to a migration corridor would result if a project would substantially interfere with the use of said area by fish or wildlife. This could occur through elimination of native vegetation, erection of physical barriers, or intimidation of fish or wildlife via introduction of noise, light, development or increased human presence.

Impacts. Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the proposed project would have an overall beneficial impact to restoring wildlife movement through the Matilija Reservoir (Class IV). However, the temporary disruption of wildlife movement in Matilija Canyon and along the Matilija Reservoir resulting from dam and sediment removal activities would create a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I). In order to reduce this temporary Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure B-16. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

4.7.5 Locally Important Species/Communities

Significance Thresholds. Since this group of species/communities is so diverse, determination of significance must be made by a qualified biologist on a case-by-case basis.

Impacts. Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the proposed project would have an overall beneficial impact to locally important species such as steelhead (Class IV). The specific effects of construction activities to the habitat of native flora and fauna would result in a less-than-significant impact after implementation of Mitigation Measures B-1, B-3, B-5, B-7 through B-9, and B-11 through B-15 (Class II).

4.8 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

4.8.1 Agricultural Soils

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would either directly or indirectly result in the loss of important agricultural soils.

Impacts. As described in Section 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, the majority of the components of the proposed project would be sited on open space, floodplain, or Los Padres National Forest land; therefore, the potential for the proposed project to directly or indirectly result in the loss of important agricultural soils is low.

There are no agricultural lands in the vicinity of the project upstream of Matilija Dam, so reservoir material excavation and stockpiling and dam removal activities would not result in the loss of any agricultural soil. Improvements to levees and floodwalls downstream would occur either to existing levees and floodwalls, or in the case of the Cañada Larga levee, the Meiners Oaks levees and floodwall, and the Live Oaks extension, would be constructed alongside the floodplain outside of agricultural areas. Two of the three slurry disposal sites downstream are open space areas consisting of degraded scrub, so activities at these disposal sites would not result in any farmland conversion. The North of Baldwin Road disposal site, which is also one of the potential desilting basin sites, would be located on a portion of agricultural land. The area is dry farmed, but is not under Williamson Act contract, a Greenbelt Policy or considered to be Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Because of the conditions of the land and because the proposed project would not be located on Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance, agricultural impacts could be considered adverse, but less than significant (Class III).

4.8.2 Agricultural Water Supply

Significance Thresholds. The project would have an impact if it would affect the quantity or quality of water used for agricultural production. Impacts to agricultural water supply would be considered significant if the project would cause:

- The quality of agricultural water supply sources would be worsened to a level of greater than 1,200 milligrams per liter (mg/l) of total dissolved solids (TDS), or,
- A net decrease in the amount of water supply available to agricultural resources.

Impacts. Dam removal and restoration are anticipated to use a substantial amount of water for a variety of activities, including slurrying sediments downstream and watering construction areas to reduce dust. Additionally, as described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, removal of the dam would reduce water deliveries from stored water behind the dam. However, the proposed

project would include the purchase of water from the California State Water Project or other sources and installation of two groundwater wells at Foster Park to offset reductions in water quality and supply. Consequently, impacts to water resources used for agriculture would be less than significant (Class III).

4.8.3 Air Quality/Micro-Climate

Significance Thresholds. The project could impair the productivity of adjacent agricultural areas if it altered local air quality/micro-climate. The impact of the project to agricultural productivity would be considered significant if the project caused:

- A 10 percent or greater increase in dust deposition on adjacent agricultural areas;
- A 10 percent or greater decrease in incident solar energy on adjacent agricultural areas;
- The removal of any row(s) of trees, or;
- A substantial adverse change to the air quality/micro-climate of adjacent agricultural areas not related to dust, solar energy, and tree rows.

Impacts. Although proposed project activities would result in fugitive dust emissions, it is not anticipated that this would result in a 10 percent or greater increase in dust deposition on adjacent agricultural areas. As presented in Section 5.6.3 of the EIS/EIR, Mitigation Measures A-6 through A-11 would be implemented to minimize impacts resulting from fugitive dust emissions. With the implementation of these measures, impacts would be less than significant (Class II)

No structures related to the project would be installed adjacent to agricultural areas that would reduce the incident solar energy and it is not anticipated that any project activities associated with dam removal or restoration would affect the amount of solar energy reaching nearby agricultural areas. No impacts are expected to occur.

Although, as described in Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would result in the clearing and grading of some California black walnut and oak woodland stands, the project would not remove any row trees planted to provide protection from wind or frost. No impacts would occur.

The elimination of Lake Matilija, removal of the dam, and restoration of the reservoir area could potentially affect the air quality/micro-climate of its immediate surroundings. As agricultural areas adjacent to the project are minimal, however, any impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.8.4 Pests/Diseases

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would cause the introduction of or a substantial increase in pest density and/or disease severity or frequency in nearby agricultural areas.

Impacts. The proposed project would include the removal of invasive species, and revegetation of native species. Invasive species removal, specifically giant reed removal, would include the use of mechanical and glyphosate-based herbicide. It is currently anticipated that either Rodeo® or Aquamaster® would be used, both of which are labeled for use within water and have the same formulations: glyphosate (53.8 percent) and water (46.2 percent). Rodeo®

and Aquamaster® are currently approved, and in use by the CDFG and USFS for the removal of giant reed in riparian habitats throughout southern California.

Because the proposed project would replace invasive species with native vegetation, the potential of introducing or substantially increasing pest density and/or disease severity would be negligible. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.8.5 Land Use Incompatibility

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would pose substantial land use incompatibilities with adjacent property currently in or suitable for agricultural production.

Impacts. As described above in Section 4.6.1 of the Initial Study and Section 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, the majority of the components of the proposed project would be sited on open space, floodplain, or Los Padres National Forest land; therefore, the proposed project would not pose land use incompatibilities with adjacent property currently in or suitable for agricultural production. There are no agricultural lands in the vicinity of the project upstream of Matilija Dam. Improvements to levees and floodwalls downstream would occur either to existing levees and floodwalls, or would be constructed alongside the floodplain outside of agricultural areas.

As discussed in Section 5.10.3 in the EIS/EIR, one of the potential sites being considered for the slurry disposal site or the desilting basin would be located on a portion of agricultural land north of Baldwin Road, which would pose substantial land use incompatibilities. As described above, the area is dry farmed, but is not under Williamson Act contract or a Greenbelt Policy, nor is it considered to be Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Consequently, impacts due to land use incompatibility would be considered less than significant (Class III).

4.9 VISUAL RESOURCES

4.9.1 Scenic Highways

Significance Thresholds. In accordance with Policy 1.7.2.4 of the Ventura County General Plan, the project would have a significant impact if it would “degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views.”

Impacts. Within the project area, Scenic Highway Areas depicted on Ventura County’s Resource Protection Map include State Route (SR) 33, from milepost 17.5 to the Santa Barbara County line. As discussed in Section 5.5.3 of the EIS/EIR, no views of scenic resources from eligible or designated scenic highways, such as portions of SR 33, would be affected by the proposed project. The majority of activities associated with this project would not obstruct or degrade views of ridgelines from scenic highways. Similarly, project activities above Matilija Dam would not interfere with views of shorelines along beaches or rivers. Downstream flood protection measures, such as the 968-foot floodwall on the west side of SR 33, which would range in height from 4.1 feet to 10.6 feet, would result in impacts to visual resources along the Ventura River and its banks. Construction of the floodwall just west of SR 33 would introduce a large, man-made feature into a dominantly natural area. This would be considered a significant impact, but could be reduced to a less-than-significant (Class II) level through implementation of Mitigation Measures AE-1 and AE-2 in the EIS/EIR.

4.9.2 Scenic Areas/Features

Significance Thresholds. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines states that a project would have a significant impact on the environment if it would "have a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic affect." The Ventura County General Plan states that a project would have a significant impact if it would "degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views."

Impacts. As discussed in Section 5.5.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would result in the elimination of Lake Matilija, which is an area designated as a scenic resource on the Resource Protection Map of the County of Ventura's General Plan. Although the lake is designated as a scenic resource, which would be eliminated by the proposed project, the proposed project behind the dam in the reservoir area would serve to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the Matilija Canyon. The excavation of material from behind the reservoir, removal of Matilija Dam, re-vegetation of the reservoir area, and creation of a naturally flowing stream channel would return the lake to a more natural, canyon-like landscape than the wide floodplain currently emptying into the reservoir. Additionally, the removal of giant reed, which has established on the growing banks of Lake Matilija, as part of the proposed project and the re-vegetation of the area with native species, would improve views of the Matilija Canyon by creating a more natural landscape for viewers. Although Lake Matilija would be eliminated, the improvement to the scenic value of Matilija Canyon would be a considerable aesthetic benefit to the area, especially considering that the lake will continue to decrease in size under current conditions. Any impacts would be less than significant (Class III)

4.10 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would result in the loss of or damage to important paleontological resources. Paleontological resources are important if they are well preserved, identifiable, type/topotypic specimens, age diagnostic, useful in environmental reconstruction, represent rare and or endemic taxa, represent a diverse assemblage, or represent associated marine or non-marine taxa.

Impacts. According to the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) *Hydraulics, Hydrology and Sediment Studies of Alternatives for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, Ventura CA* (July 31, 2003), the drainage watershed of Matilija Dam is primarily composed of Tertiary marine sandstone and shale of the Juncal Formation, Matilija Sandstone, and Cozy Dell Shale with small areas of unnamed Cretaceous marine strata. Matilija Dam is founded in the Matilija Sandstone and the reservoir area is predominantly underlain by Juncal Formation with a smaller area of Matilija Sandstone. Downstream of the dam the river canyon is cut in Matilija Sandstone. The river valley widens downstream where it flows through Cozy Dell Shale.

Based on the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, Juncal, Matilija, and Cozy Dell geologic formations are all listed as having a low paleontological importance. Therefore, significance does not have to be determined by a qualified paleontological consultant and no additional assessment is necessary. Consequently, no impact to paleontological resources would occur.

4.11 CULTURAL RESOURCES

4.11.1 Archeological Resources

Significance Thresholds. The project would result in a significant impact if it would result in the loss or destruction of unique archeological resources. An archeological resource is considered unique when it:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there is demonstrable public interest in that information;
- Has a special and particular quality such as the oldest of its type of best available example of its type, or;
- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

Impacts. As Discussed in Section 4.4.1 of the EIS/EIR, twenty-five prehistoric archeological sites are known to be present within the study area boundary. Four isolated artifacts have also been recorded. These sites include village and small campsites, shell midden, and other resource processing sites. In addition, the record search also revealed the presence of twenty-one historic archeological sites. These include features such as the ruins of the Mission Period San Miguel Chapel, remains of historic adobes, and other miscellaneous evidence of historic period settlement and activities.

Section 5.4.3 of the EIS/EIR discusses potential impacts to archaeological resources with the proposed project. The downstream disposal site and slurry line have yet to be surveyed for the presence of historic or prehistoric cultural resources. If any resources are found, and determined to be eligible for the NRHP, the first step would be to try to redesign the project to avoid these sites. For both the slurry line and disposal sites, this would be relatively easy. If redesign were not feasible, these sites would likely be adversely affected by these activities. However, subsurface archeological sites might possibly be protected and preserved by burial under sediment placed at the disposal site. This would require a detailed and comprehensive plan to ensure that it is implemented in a manner that minimizes damage. Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires pre-construction surveys of these locations and NHRP evaluations, if necessary. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1, impacts to potential NRHP sites would be less than significant (Class II).

Historic/prehistoric sites COE#1 and COE#2 are located at the margin of sediment removal activities. These sites have not formally been evaluated and determined to be NRHP eligible. However, based on survey information, they could contain information important in history and prehistory, and hence are NRHP eligible. Erosion after removal of sediment at the margin may undermine the stability of the sites, and damage any cultural deposits present. Also, portions of them may be buried under sediment behind the dam. Additional studies would be necessary to evaluate these sites for the NRHP and determine their horizontal and vertical extent. If they are determined to be NRHP eligible, and would be affected by sediment removal, mitigation measures would be necessary. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2 from the EIS/EIR would ensure that sites COE#1 and COE#2 are evaluated and that proper procedures are followed if the these sites are determined to be potentially NRHP eligible, thereby reducing this impact to a less-than-significant level (Class II).

Undiscovered buried historic and prehistoric resources may be present beneath sediment behind Matilija Dam. Removal of sediment by natural and mechanical means would have an

adverse effect on any buried resource eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It would be very difficult to stabilize buried cultural deposits as sediment is removed without disturbing their integrity. Mitigation Measure CR-3 requires development of a discovery plan to treat previously unknown resources found during implementation of the project. It would include procedures to monitor and treat cultural resources discovered during mechanical and natural removal of sediment behind Matilija Dam. It would also include procedures for discoveries made during grading and earth-moving activities. Mitigation Measure CR-4 requires consultation with potentially affected Native American Tribes or other groups or individuals with a cultural interest in areas construction could affect. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-3 and CR-4 would reduce any potentially significant impacts associated with the discovery of buried resources to a less-than-significant level (Class II).

4.11.2 Historical Resources

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would alter, move, relocate, or disturb historical resources such that the resources would lose any historically significant characteristics.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 4.4.1 of the EIS/EIR, the record search revealed the presence of several historic buildings dating from 1782 through the 1950s within the study area. The present status of the buildings is based on records search information only. Some of these structures may no longer exist. A field examination would be conducted to verify their current status during the Pre-Construction Engineering and Design phase.

Section 5.4.3 of the EIS/EIR discusses potential impacts to historic resources with the recommended plan. As Matilija Dam itself is not considered to be eligible for the NRHP, there would not be an adverse effect from its removal and demolition. Potentially NRHP-eligible Matilija Hot Springs, which is located just downstream of Matilija Dam, would be acquired and removed. Additional investigation of the significance of Matilija Hot Springs would need to be performed. If this site is determined to be NRHP eligible there would be an adverse effect from its removal and demolition, or damage from flooding and neglect. The NRHP eligibility of the site is subject to concurrence by the California State Historic Preservation Officer. As discussed above under Section 4.9.1, Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-4 would reduce any potentially significant impacts to historic resources to less than significant levels (Class II).

4.11.3 Ethnic, Social, and Religious Resources

Significance Thresholds. The significance of impacts to these types of resources are determined on a case-by case basis.

Impacts. Section 4.4.1 of the EIS/EIR discusses Native American coordination and concerns. Section 5.4.3 of the EIS/EIR describes potential impacts of the recommended plan to archaeological and historic resources, which includes those with ethnic, social, and religious importance. Mitigation Measure CR-4 specifically requires consultation with potentially affected Native American Tribes or other groups or individuals with a cultural interest in areas that construction could affect. Mitigation Measure CR-4, in addition to Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-3, as discussed under Section 4.9.1 of the Initial Study and in Section 5.4.3 of the EIS/EIR, would reduce any potentially significant impacts to ethnic, social, and religious resources to less than significant levels (Class II).

4.12 ENERGY RESOURCES

Significance Thresholds. The Ventura County Initial Assessment Guidelines states that no individual project would have a significant impact because solar, wind and hydraulic energy sources are renewable, and petroleum resources are addressed separately (see Section 4.5).

Impacts. The project would involve the use of fuel during the dam demolition and restoration activities, but would not impact any energy generated by solar, wind, or hydraulic sources. The Matilija Dam is not an electricity generating dam, so its removal would not affect any power supply from hydraulic generation. No impacts to energy resources would occur.

4.13 COASTAL BEACHES AND SAND DUNES

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would be inconsistent with goals and policies of the Ventura County General Plan or the Sand Dune Protection Policy of the City's Local Coastal Program. Potential impacts may include any direct impacts (i.e., physical removal or modification) or indirect impacts (i.e., creation of barriers to sand replenishment or disturbance of dune vegetation) of a project on these resources should be fully mitigated. Otherwise, a significant impact would occur.

Impacts. As discussed in Sections 5.1.3, 5.2.3, and 5.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would return sediment to the Ventura River and to beaches downstream. The project would contribute to the long-term achievement of beach replenishment goals set in the Ventura County General Plan, Ventura County Coastal Area Plan, and the City of San Buenaventura Comprehensive Plan Update to the Year 2010. The project would result in no negative impacts to coastal beaches and sand dunes and would be a beneficial impact (Class IV) to these resources.

4.14 SEISMIC HAZARDS

4.14.1 Fault Rupture

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would place persons or property at risk of loss of life or damage due to fault rupture.

Impacts. The seismic and geologic setting is described in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR. The Ventura Basin is seismically active with the Oak Ridge fault and several other major faults, such as the San Cayetano fault, in the local area. However, the proposed action would remove the dam infrastructure thereby eliminating its potential for damage or failure in the event of an earthquake. Therefore, the project would result in seismic improvements overall. In addition, the construction of all structures, including the flood control improvements would adhere to the federal, State, and local regulations discussed in Section 4.1.3 of the EIS/EIR. Less-than-significant impacts are anticipated to result from fault rupture (Class III).

4.14.2 Ground-shaking

Significance Thresholds. Impacts from ground-shaking hazards are considered less than significant for projects of ordinary type and construction subject to the provisions of the Ventura County Building Code. Significant impacts from ground-shaking hazards would result for projects involving high-rise structures, critical facilities, and projects of unique design not covered by ordinary provisions of the Uniform Building Code (UBC). Such projects may subject

persons and property to greater risk of loss of life or substantial damage during strong ground-shaking events.

Impacts. As described above, the seismic and geologic setting is described in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR. The Ventura Basin is seismically active with the Oak Ridge fault and several other major faults, such as the San Cayetano fault, in the local area and has the potential for strong ground shaking. However, the proposed action would remove the dam infrastructure thereby eliminating its potential for damage or failure in the event of an earthquake. Therefore, the project would result in seismic improvements overall. In addition, the construction of all structures, including the flood control improvements would adhere to the federal, State, and local regulations presented in Section 4.1.3 of the EIS/EIR. Less-than-significant impacts are anticipated to result from ground shaking (Class III).

4.14.3 Tsunami and Seiche

Significance Thresholds. Projects that would be located within an unmitigable tsunami or seiche hazard zone would have a significant impact.

Impacts. The seismic and geologic setting is described in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR. The project is not located in an unmitigable tsunami hazard zone on the County General Plan maps and FIRM maps. For most areas, tsunami hazards do not exist inland further than 50 feet from the beach. In addition, the removal of the Matilija dam with the recommended plan would eliminate Lake Matilija and thereby eliminate any potential seiche hazard. Potential impacts from tsunamis and seiches would be less than significant (Class III).

4.14.4 Liquefaction

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if liquefaction hazards would subject persons or property to loss of life or substantial injury or damage.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR, a liquefaction threat may exist in the vicinity of the Ventura River and Matilija Creek. However, the proposed action would remove the dam infrastructure thereby eliminating its potential for hazards or failure to occur from liquefaction. Soil borings have been performed for sediment trappings and the results are included in the *Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Geotechnical Field Investigations* prepared by BOR based on fieldwork completed between July 30 and September 15, 2001. Potential hazards from liquefaction hazards are less than significant (Class III).

4.15 GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

4.15.1 Subsidence

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would cause or be subjected to a subsidence hazard that cannot be mitigated.

Impacts. Although the proposed project would require the use of approximately 4,800 acre-feet of water for project activities, this water would be drawn from Lake Casitas. As discussed above in Initial Study Section 4.5.1, this would require the City of Ventura to draw on water allocations from the Santa Paula and Fox Canyon Basins to make up for Lake Casitas water used by the project. The withdrawal of 1,500 acre-feet of water from the Santa Paula Basin is within the City of Ventura's water allocation and would not substantially affect the basin. Similarly, the withdrawal of approximately 1,500 acre-feet from Fox Canyon Basin is out of the City of

Ventura's 30,000 acre-feet reserves there and would not affect Fox Canyon Basin. Consequently, the withdrawal of this water would not substantially affect the basins in a manner that would result in subsidence. Impacts related to subsidence would be less than significant (Class III).

4.15.2 Expansive Soils

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would construct unique structures that are especially susceptible to soil expansion in an area with highly expansive soils (i.e., with an expansion index greater than 20 are present).

Impacts. As discussed in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR, expansive soils have caused substantial damage in Ventura County and areas around the Ojai Valley have some high risk for soil expansion. However, the proposed project would remove the dam infrastructure thereby eliminating its potential for hazards to occur from the shrinking and swelling of expansive soils. Soil borings have been performed for sediment trappings and the results are included in the *Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Geotechnical Field Investigations* prepared by BOR based on fieldwork completed between July 30 and September 15, 2001. In addition, the construction of all structures, including the flood control improvements would be built according to the federal, State, and local regulations discussed in Section 4.1.3 of the EIS/EIR. Potential hazards from expansive soils would be less than significant (Class III).

4.15.3 Landslides/Mudslides

Significance Thresholds. A project would have a significant impact if the project site would be affected by a landslide/mudflow hazard that could not be mitigated.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 4.1.1 of the EIS/EIR, landsliding has not occurred in such a widespread manner in northern Ventura County as to be classified as a significant hazard. However, the region is extremely mountainous with steep lopes and high local relief. Faulting and tilting of the bedrock is common. The area around the Ventura River and Matilija Creek has a moderate to high landslide potential risk. The proposed project would not contribute to factors that produce landslides, such as earthquake groundshaking, brush fires, and changes to groundwater levels. Although the project would result in erosion in of temporarily stockpiled sediment upstream of the Matilija Dam site, revetment and channel protection have been designed to minimize the risk of landslide of this material.

In addition, removal of the dam would occur in accordance with the Department of Water Resources' Division of Safety of Dams (CDSD) best management practices and the reduction of off-site erosion would be implemented with Mitigation Measures ER-1 and ER-2 in Section 5.1.3 of the EIS/EIR. The construction of all structures, including the flood control improvements would be built according to the federal, State, and local regulations discussed in Section 4.1.3 of the EIS/EIR. Therefore, impacts resulting from landslide/mudflow hazards would be considered less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

4.16 HYDRAULIC HAZARDS

4.16.1 Erosion/Siltation

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would cause substantial erosion or siltation.

Impacts. Erosion and siltation are discussed under both the Section 4.1.3 and Section 4.2.3 of the EIS/EIR. Implementation of the proposed project would result in erosion occurring along the waterways downstream of the dam. However, lateral migration is a natural process and the river is naturally braided in many sections. Additional bank protection and/or grade control would degrade the current habitat over time and over-constriction of the river by bank protection could cause bed coarsening and decrease the connectivity of the river with the flood plain. Grade control may also induce scour downstream of the structures and impede fish passage. Thus, these measures are not recommended, except where it has been determined that bank protection is necessary to protect property and structures.

Section 5.1.3 of the EIS/EIR states that with the construction of the soil-cement slope protection, monitoring of sediment degradation, and implementation of Mitigation Measures ER-1 and ER-2, erosion impacts associated with the proposed project would be less than significant (Class II). In addition, the restoration of the pre-dam topography and replenishment of sediment to the Ventura River would be considered beneficial impacts. With the temporary stabilization of sediments, sediment could be transported downstream under this project, providing beneficial impacts to local beaches.

4.16.2 Flooding

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would be substantially affected by flooding or if it would increase flooding hazard at upstream or downstream locations. FEMA considers a flood elevation increase of 1 foot during a 100-year storm to be significant.

Impacts. As described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would result in a potential change of flow rate, and thus increase in flood hazards, primarily through sediment deposition that would reduce channel and levee capacity, reduce bridge capacity, and raise flood water surface elevations. Effects would be most notable where aggradation is greatest. The potential purchase and vacation of the Matilja Hot Springs Facility and up to 11 Camino Cielo structures, replacement of the Camino Cielo Bridge, improvement of existing and construction of new levees and floodwalls, and replacement of the Santa Ana Bridge as a part of the project would ensure that impacts due to flood hazards would be reduced to less than significant levels (Class III).

4.17 AVIATION HAZARDS

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would be incompatible with the safe operation of aviation facilities. Projects located within two miles of an airport are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Impacts. The closest airports to the proposed project area are Santa Paula Airport and the Oxnard Airport, located more than 17 miles east-southeast and more than 20 miles south-southeast of Matilija Dam, respectively (AirNav.Com, 2004). The Camarillo Airport is approximately 22.5 miles southeast of the project area. Therefore, the proposed project is more than two miles away from the Oxnard and Camarillo Airports, and would thus present no aviation safety hazards. No impacts would occur.

4.18 FIRE HAZARDS

Significance Thresholds. The Ventura Building Code, Article IV Section of Uniform Building Code 1601 identifies high fire hazard areas as any area within 500 feet of uncultivated brush, grass, or forest covered land wherein an authorized representative of the Fire District determines that a potential fire hazard exists due to the presence of such flammable growth. Projects located in a high fire hazard area may have a significant impact if fire prevention measures such as brush clearance are not implemented.

Impacts. According to Section 4.10.3 of the EIS/EIR, while the Ventura River, Matilija Dam, and Matilija Creek are all designated Open Space or Floodplain under different applicable General Plans, the land use designations for adjacent lands vary widely, ranging from rural to residential to industrial. The vegetation in the area is discussed in Section 4.3.1 of the EIS/EIR. Although there is undeveloped open space and forestland in the vicinity of the proposed project and in Los Padres National Forest, the proposed project involves dam removal and flood protection that require no permanent onsite operational personnel. Therefore, no significant impacts are expected due to exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death attributable to wildland fires. Any impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.19 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/WASTE

4.19.1 Above-Ground or Below-Ground Hazardous Materials

Significance Thresholds. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project would have a significant impact if it would create a public health hazard, expose people to a potential health hazard, or pose a threat to the environment. The County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines indicate the significance of hazardous materials impacts of a project shall be determined on a case-by-case basis considering the following parameters:

- Individual or cumulative physical hazard of material or materials.
- Amounts of materials on-site, either in use or storage.
- Proximity of hazardous materials to populated areas and compatibility of materials with neighboring facilities.
- Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances governing storage and use of hazardous materials.
- Potential for spill or release.
- Proximity of hazardous materials to receiving waters or other significant environmental resources.

Impacts. As discussed in Section 5.1.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not result in any substantial soil contamination or involve activities that would mobilize contaminants. Initial soil samples performed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in March 2002 and included in the *Geotechnical Field Investigations of the Feasibility Study* indicated that sediments stored behind the dam are not toxic (BOR, 2002). However, it is possible that unexpected soil and/or groundwater contamination could be encountered during grading or excavation. Additional tests would be conducted in later stages of the planning process to ensure that no undiscovered contaminates are exposed during construction. Mitigation Measures ER-3 and ER-4 in Section 5.1.3 would ensure that potentially significant impacts are reduced to less-than-significant levels. Significant impacts from previously unknown contamination that could be encountered

during construction would be avoided with the implementation of Mitigation Measure ER-3. Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

During construction operations, hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, oils, and other vehicle maintenance fluids would be used and stored in construction staging yards. Spills of hazardous materials and during construction activities could potentially cause soil or groundwater contamination. Improperly maintained equipment could leak fluids during construction operation and while parked, resulting in soil contamination. Mitigation Measure ER-4 would ensure that any accidental spills associated with construction equipment would be properly contained and that potentially significant impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. The proposed project would not generate any hazardous materials or expose workers to conditions that exceed permissible levels. Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

Potential indirect impacts to biological resources may also occur from construction related activity including fuel, lubricant, or spills of construction waste. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures B-3, B-6, and B-7 in Section 5.3.3 of the EIS/EIR, as well as proper implementation of required water quality and construction best management practices, direct impacts to biological resources could be minimized or completely avoided. With the implementation of mitigation, impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level (Class II).

4.19.2 Hazardous Waste

Significance Thresholds. The storage, handling and disposal of all potentially hazardous materials shall be in conformance with the requirements set forth in the following regulations:

- California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5.
- California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5.
- Ventura County Ordinance Chapter 5 (Hazardous Substances), Article 1, (Certified Unified Program Agency).

Impacts. As discussed in Section 5.1.3 of the EIS/EIR and above in Section 4.17.1 of the Initial Study, the proposed project would not generate any hazardous materials or expose workers to conditions that exceed permissible levels. Therefore, the storage, handling and disposal of all potentially hazardous materials would be in conformance with the requirements set forth in County and State regulations, and potential hazardous waste impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.20 NOISE AND VIBRATION

Significance Thresholds. The General Plan (Section 2.16.2-1 of the Goals, Policies and Programs) establishes the following threshold criteria; above which significant noise impacts would be anticipated:

- Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near highways, truck routes, heavy industrial activities and other relatively continuous noise sources shall incorporate noise control measures so that:
  - Indoor noise levels in habitable rooms do not exceed CNEL 45.
  - Outdoor noise levels do not exceed CNEL 60 or Leq1H of 65 dB(A) during any hour.
- Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near railroads shall incorporate noise control measures so that:

- Guidelines a and b above are adhered to.
- Outdoor noise levels do not exceed L10 of 60 dB(A).

- Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near airports:
  - Shall be prohibited if they are in a CNEL 65 or greater, noise contour.
  - Shall be permitted in the CNEL 60 to CNEL 65 noise contour area only if means will be taken to ensure interior noise levels of CNEL 45 or less.
- Noise generators proposed to be located near any noise sensitive use shall incorporate noise control measures so that outdoor noise levels at the noise receptor do not exceed:
  - Leq1H of 55 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
  - Leq1H of 50 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
  - Leq1H of 45 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

  This standard is not applicable to increased traffic noise along any of the roads identified within the 2010 Regional Roadway Network (Figure 4.2.3) of the Public Facilities Appendix of the Ventura County General Plan. In addition, State and federal highways, all railroad line operations, aircraft in flight, and public utility facilities are noise generators having Federal and State regulations that preempt local regulations.
- Discretionary development which would be impacted by noise or generate project related noise which cannot be reduced to meet the above standards, shall be prohibited. This policy does not apply to noise generated during the construction phase of a project if a statement of overriding considerations is adopted by the decision-making body in conjunction with the certification of a final Environmental Impact Report.

Impacts. Because the proposed project would not create a noise sensitive use, significance thresholds for these uses were not discussed in the EIS/EIR. In order to evaluate impacts to sensitive uses from noise generators, the EIS/EIR used the Ventura County and the City of Ojai significance thresholds for noise. Section 5.7.3 of the EIS/EIR found that construction, trucking, and giant reed removal activities, as well as operation and maintenance activities, would be expected to cause a significant and unavoidable impact (Class I). In order to reduce this temporary Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement Mitigation Measures N-1 through N-9. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

4.21 GLARE

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would involve:

- Any light source in excess of 150 watts which directly illuminated adjacent properties;
- Indirect illumination of adjacent properties on excess of 0.5 foot candles;
- Pedestrian lighting with a point of overlap of greater than 7 feet, and;
- Lighting intensity exceeding 7-foot candles.

Impacts. Most construction activity would only occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. to limit noise impacts (per Mitigation Measure N-1 in Section 5.7.3 of the EIS/EIR), except for dredging, slurrying, and associated water conveyance activities, which are planned to occur 24 hours a

day, 7 days a week. Although there would be some limited construction activity during nighttime hours that would require lighting, this impact would be temporary in nature occurring only during the construction period (approximately 24 months). As project activities would largely occur away from residences or businesses, illumination of adjacent properties is unlikely to result in any substantial impacts. Additionally, no permanent operational lighting would be installed as a part of the project. Therefore, impacts from glare would be less than significant (Class III).

Section 5.3.3, Biological Resources also addresses construction lighting and its impact on wildlife. Since most construction activities would occur during daylight hours, wildlife would have access past these areas during the night when many species are commonly active. However, breeding behavior could also be disrupted due to construction lighting. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures B-3 and B-7, direct impacts to wildlife in the area could be minimized or completely avoided. Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II)

4.22 PUBLIC HEALTH

Significance Thresholds. Significance for public health related impacts must be determined on a case-by-case basis, and is related to project type, location, and other environmental factors.

Impacts. The EIS/EIR found that the project would have the following potential impacts to public health:

- Section 5.2 of the EIS/EIR found that the construction of floodwalls and levees would reduce any potential flood hazards resulting from increased sediment deposition in Matilija Creek to a less-than-significant level (Class III).
- Section 5.1 of the EIS/EIR found that potential impacts from accidental spills of hazardous materials would be less-than-significant after implementation of mitigation measure ER-4 (Class II).
- Section 5.6 of the EIS/EIR found that potential Valley Fever impacts from earthmoving projects would be less-than-significant after implementation of mitigation measure A-13 (Class II).
- Section 5.6 of the EIS/EIR found that the potential for exposing sensitive receptors or project workers to substantial pollutant concentrations would be less-than-significant after implementation of mitigation measure A-12 (Class II).

4.23 TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

4.23.1 Public Roads and Highways

Significance Thresholds. The minimum acceptable level of service for all County maintained local roads is LOS C. The project would have a significant impact on public roads and highways if 10 percent or more of project-generated traffic would occur during peak hours on roadways and generate an unacceptable level of service.

Level of Service

Impacts. In order to evaluate transportation impacts, the EIS/EIR used the Ventura County LOS standards. Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR found that impacts to road or highway LOS associated with worker commutes would be less-than-significant (Class III). However, the daily and a.m. peak hour trips estimated for heavy-duty vehicles would violate the County LOS

standards, which would create a significant and unavoidable traffic impact (Class I). In order to reduce this temporary Class I impact to the best extent feasible, the proposed project would implement mitigation measure T-1. The numerous project benefits that outweigh the Class I impact would be listed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Safety/Design

Impacts. In order to evaluate impacts to transportation safety and design, the EIS/EIR used the County Road Standards. Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the potential for heavy vehicles and equipment to unexpectedly damage public roads, sidewalks, or mediums would be less-than-significant after implementation of mitigation measure T-2 (Class II).

Tactical Access

Impacts. Tactical access would be maintained at all times on public roads and highways used by construction equipment and adjacent to project activities. Although the Santa Ana Bridge would be closed for its replacement, a temporary road over the Ventura River is proposed to maintain traffic capacity. The removal of the Camino Cielo Bridge would not occur until a new bridge is constructed to replace it. Implementation of mitigation measure T-1 would ensure that impacts to tactical access would be reduced to less than significant levels (Class III).

4.23.2 Private Roads and Driveways

Significance Thresholds. A project would have a significant impact to private roads or driveways if it would create a temporary or permanent impediment to access, or create a public road or driveway that is not consistent with the traffic and circulation policies adopted by the County of Ventura or the Cities of Ojai and San Buenaventura.

Safety/Design

Impacts. Because the project would not create private roads or driveways, road design was not addressed in the EIS/EIR. There would be no impact to safety or design of private roads.

Tactical Access

Impacts. Because the project would not create private roads or driveways, tactical access was not addressed in the EIS/EIR. Although the Camino Cielo bridge would be removed under the proposed project, potentially affecting access to private roads and driveways in the Camino Cielo area, the bridge would not be removed until a replacement bridge had been constructed downstream. Consequently, there would be no impact to tactical access.

4.23.3 Pedestrian/Bicycle

Significance Thresholds. A project that would cause actual or potential barriers to existing or planned pedestrian/bicycle facilities may have a significant impact. Projects that generate or attract pedestrian/bicycle traffic volumes meeting requirements for protected highway crossings or pedestrian and bicycle facilities may have a significant impact. Pedestrian overcrossings, traffic signals, and bikeways are examples of these types of facilities.

Public Facilities

Impacts. Section 5.11.3 of the EIS/EIR found that the project would disrupt access to the Rice Canyon Trail, eliminate portions of the East/West River Bottom Loop/Trails, and block access to other trails. These pedestrian impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level after implementation of Mitigation Measures R-1 and AE-3 (Class II). The project would also create new trails and ultimately link trails in Matilija Canyon, resulting in beneficial impacts.

Private Facilities

Impacts. Because the project would not create actual or potential barriers to private pedestrian/bicycle facilities, impacts to these facilities were not addressed in the EIS/EIR. No impacts would occur.

4.23.4 Railroads

Significance Thresholds. A project would normally have a significant impact on a railroad if it would substantially interfere with an existing railroad's facilities or operations.

Impacts. Although portions of the project area run adjacent or are crossed by railroads, project activities would not interfere with railroad facilities or operations. The proposed project would not impact railroads. Consequently, impacts to railroads were not addressed in the EIS/EIR.

4.23.5 Other Facilities

Significance Thresholds. A project would normally have a significant impact on parking, bus transit, airports, harbors, or pipelines if it would substantially interfere with these existing facilities or operations.

Impacts. Because the proposed project activities would not be located adjacent to, nor would it result in any impacts to other transportation facilities including parking, bus transit, airports, harbors, or pipelines, these impacts were not addressed in the EIS/EIR.

4.24 WATER SUPPLY

4.24.1 Domestic Water Quality

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would result in the use of domestic water that does not meet applicable State Drinking water standards as described in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.

Impacts. Domestic water, as defined by the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, is a supply of potable water used for human consumption or connected to domestic plumbing fixtures in which the supply is obtained from an approved individual water supply system or a public water system operating with an unrevoked permit from the Ventura County Environmental Health Division or the California State Department of Health and Services.

The proposed project would not directly require a domestic water supply nor would it directly provide domestic water to development. However, concerns have been raised by water users and purveyors regarding potential water quality impacts resulting from release of trapped sediment into the riverine system or placement of these materials into disposal sites. Results of field investigations conducted in 2001 indicate detection of regulated substances including copper, nickel, arsenic and DDT, but at concentrations considered within normal background levels. Initial consultation has occurred between the Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Health Services. Future consultation with the

California Department of Health Services and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board will continue during the Preconstruction Engineering and Design phase. Therefore, impacts to domestic water quality would be adverse, but less than significant (Class III).

There are numerous groundwater wells that access the water in the Upper Ventura Aquifer and includes floodplains along the mainstem of the Ventura River from Casitas Springs upstream though Meiners Oaks to Camino Cielo Road. All sediment transport modeling to date shows that the gradual release of this material will not substantially change the composition of the Ventura River Bed and will not change the infiltration of water from the Ventura River into the Upper Ventura River Aquifer. To minimize potential impacts to wells located near or within the sediment disposal site areas, the wells will be inspected prior to project implementation. Inspection will result in the repair of leaking casings to minimize the potential for fines to infiltrate and damage the wells. Impacts to groundwater quality from wells would be less than significant (Class III).

4.24.2 Domestic Water Quantity

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if its demand for domestic water could not be met or if it would result in the withdrawal of groundwater in an overdrafted groundwater basin.

Impacts. The proposed project does not include any components that would increase demand for domestic water, nor would it result in population growth beyond that projected in local general plans.

As described above in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.15.1, the proposed project would require approximately 4,800 acre-feet of water for project activities drawn from Lake Casitas. This would require the City of Ventura to draw on water allocations from the Santa Paula and Fox Canyon Basins to make up for Lake Casitas water used by the project. The withdrawal of replacement water from the Santa Paula and Fox Canyon Basins would come from the City of Ventura's water allocations and reserves and would not overdraft either basin. Consequently, any impacts to water quantity would be less than significant (Class III).

4.24.3 Fire Flow

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if sufficient water flow would not be available to meet the fire fighting needs of the project.

Impacts. The proposed project would remove Matilija Dam and the accumulated sediment, and would restore Matilija Creek to a more natural streambed configuration. It would not involve the construction of flammable structures or buildings. As such, it would not require fire protection services. Furthermore, the proposed project would not affect fire flow use pressures for any other uses. No fire plugs or pipelines used to convey water for fire fighting would be affected by the project. No impacts to fire flow would occur.

4.25 WASTE TREATMENT/DISPOSAL

4.25.1 Individual Sewage Disposal Systems

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would not comply with applicable building codes for the disposal of domestic waste generated by individual residences and businesses in areas without access to the public sewer service.

Impacts. The project would not create any sources of domestic waste generated by residences or businesses and would not create permanent demand for sewage collection or treatment facilities. No impacts with respect to sewage capacity would result from the project.

4.25.2 Sewage Collection/Treatment Facilities

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would individually or cumulatively generate sewage effluent which would be discharged to and exceed the capacity of an existing sewer main or sewage treatment plant. If the project description includes improvements to existing, or construction of new sewer mains and/or sewage treatment plants which would then be capable of serving the project and other cumulative development, there would be a less than significant impact.

Impacts. The project would not result in the long-term generation of sewage, and therefore, would not create permanent demand for sewage collection or treatment facilities. Sewage generated by construction workers would be handled by portable septic facilities. No impacts with respect to sewage capacity would result from the project.

4.25.3 Solid Waste Management

Significance Thresholds. Any project that generates solid waste would have an impact on the demand for solid waste disposal capacity in Ventura County. However, unless the county has reason to believe that there is less than 15 years of disposal capacity available for county disposal, no individual project would have a significant impact on the demand for solid waste capacity.

Impacts. Concrete rubble from the dam would be transported to Hanson Aggregates. The proposed project would require the hauling of 770,000 cubic yards of fine sediment and non-recyclable debris from the demolished dam to the Toland Road Landfill. The Toland Road Landfill has a closure date of 2027 and 20.1 million cubic yards of remaining capacity (CIWMB, 2004). It is not anticipated that the project would substantially affect the closure date of the Toland Road Landfill. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.25.4 Solid Waste Facilities

Significance Thresholds. Solid waste facilities shall be in compliance with the following statutes and regulations and are subject to enforcement by the EHD/LEA:

- California Health and Safety Code
- California Code of Regulations, Title 14
- California Code of Regulations, Title 27
- California Public Resources Code

Impacts. The proposed project does not involve a solid waste operation or facility. No impact would result from the proposed project.

4.26 UTILITIES

Significance Thresholds. Utility providers should be contacted in order to ascertain the project's impacts on or demand for utilities and whether or not these utilities would be significant.

4.26.1 Electricity

Impacts. Power requirements for demolition or restoration activities would largely be provided by an on-site generator, although some activities, such as operation of a construction trailer during demolition and restoration activities would be powered by connection to the local electrical grid. This use would constitute a minor incremental increase in use of local power. Any impacts to electricity service would be less than significant (Class III).

4.26.2 Natural Gas

Impacts. The project would not involve the use of natural gas either during construction or operation phases. As such, no impacts to natural gas service would result.

4.26.3 Communications

Impacts. The project would not involve the establishment of or require the permanent installation of communications lines. As such, no impacts to communications services would result.

4.27 FLOOD CONTROL/DRAINAGE FACILITIES

4.27.1 VCWPD Facility

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would substantially change the flow rate (i.e., increased runoff), velocity, erosion potential, or capacity of flood control channels.

Impacts. As described in Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would result in a potential change of flow rate, and thus increase in flood hazards, primarily through sediment deposition that would reduce channel and levee capacity, reduce bridge capacity, and raise flood water surface elevations. Effects would be most notable where aggradation is greatest. The purchase and vacation of the Matilja Hot Springs Facility and up to 11 Camino Cielo structures, removal of the Camino Cielo Bridge, improvement of existing and construction of new levees and floodwalls, and replacement of the Santa Ana Bridge as a part of the project would ensure that impacts due to flood hazards would be reduced to less than significant levels (Class III).

4.27.2 Other Facilities

Significance Thresholds. The project would have a significant impact if it would substantially change the flow rate (i.e., increased runoff), velocity, erosion potential, or capacity of flood control channels. In reviewing a project for impacts, the following are to be given consideration:

- Deposition of sediment and debris materials within existing channels and allied obstruction of flow.
- Capacity of the channel and the potential for overflow during design storm conditions.
- Increased runoff and the effects on areas of special flood hazard and regulatory channels both on and off site.

Impacts. As described above in Section 4.25.1 of the Initial Study and Section 5.2.3 of the EIS/EIR, the flood control measures included in the proposed project, including the purchase and vacation of the Matilja Hot Springs Facility and up to 11 Camino Cielo structures, removal of the Camino Cielo Bridge, improvement of existing and construction of new levees and

floodwalls, and replacement of the Santa Ana Bridge as a part of the project would ensure that impacts due to flood hazards would be reduced to less than significant levels (Class III).

4.28 LAW ENFORCEMENT/EMERGENCY SERVICES

4.28.1 Personnel/Equipment

Significance Thresholds. As the projected population ratio exceeds the average, additional sworn and support personnel, and equipment will be needed as it relates to the increase in population.

Impacts. As described in Section 5.8.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not result in any increases to population. As such, the proposed project would not require that additional law enforcement or emergency services personnel or equipment be provided. No impacts to these services would result.

4.28.2 Facilities

Significance Thresholds. Patrol facilities in Ventura County are currently, on an average, 19.5 miles apart. Residential projects of ten units or more and all commercial projects greater than 19.5 miles from patrol facilities could result in the need for a new facility.

Impacts. The proposed project is neither a residential nor a commercial project, not would it result in the creation of residential or commercial projects. As such, the proposed project would not require that additional law enforcement or emergency services facilities be provided. No impacts to these services would result.

4.29 FIRE PROTECTION

4.29.1 Distance/Response Time

Significance Thresholds. Project distance from a full-time paid fire department is considered a significant impact if the project is in excess of five miles.

Impacts. Although not all portions of the proposed project are within five miles of a full-time paid fire department, Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR includes Mitigation Measure T-1, the submission of a Transportation Management Plan which would contain traffic control measures to ensure access for emergency vehicles. Any impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

4.29.2 Personnel/Equipment/Facilities

Significance Thresholds. Additional fire personnel become necessary with increases in population due to projects, while equipment and facility concerns become significant when the magnitude of the project or the distance from existing facilities indicates that a new facility or additional equipment would be required within the proposed project.

Impacts. As described above in Section 4.26.1 of the Initial Study and in Section 5.8 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not result in any increases to population. Consequently, the project would not require that additional fire personnel be provided. As described above in Section 4.27.1, not all portions of the proposed project are within five miles of a full-time paid fire department, but Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR includes Mitigation Measure T-1, the submission of a Transportation Management Plan which would contain traffic control measures

to ensure access for emergency vehicles. As such, any impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

4.30 EDUCATION

4.30.1 Schools

Significance Thresholds. A project will normally have a significant impact on school facilities if it would substantially interfere with the operations of an existing school facility, or would put additional demands on a school district which is currently overcrowded.

Impacts. Activities associated with the proposed project are not anticipated to interfere with school facilities. Although project-related traffic may pass schools, Mitigation Measure T-1, Transportation Management Plan in Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR, would ensure that traffic control measures would be implemented to reduce impacts to school facilities to less than significant levels. Additionally, as described in Section 5.8.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not result in any increases to population and so would not place additional demands on overcrowded school districts. Consequently, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to schools with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

4.30.2 Libraries

Significance Thresholds. A project will have a significant impact on public library facilities and services if it would substantially interfere with the operations of an existing public library facility, or would put additional demands on a public library facility which is currently overcrowded.

Impacts. Activities associated with the proposed project are not anticipated to interfere with public library facilities. Although project-related traffic may pass libraries, Mitigation Measure T-1, Transportation Management Plan, as described in Section 5.9.3 of the EIS/EIR, would ensure that traffic control measures would be implemented to reduce impacts to school facilities to less than significant levels. Additionally, as described in Section 5.8.3 of the EIS/EIR, the proposed project would not result in any increases to population and so would not place additional demands on overcrowded library facilities. Consequently, with the implementation of mitigation, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to libraries (Class II).

4.31 RECREATION

4.31.1 Local Parks/Facilities

Significance Thresholds. A project would have a significant impact on recreation if it would cause an increase in the demand for recreation when measured against the following standards:

- Local Parks/ Facilities: 5 acres of developable land (less than 15% slope) per 1000 population.
- Regional Parks/Facilities: 5 acres of developable land per 1000 population.
- Regional Trails/Corridors: 2.5 miles per 1000 population.

A project would have a significant impact on recreation if it would impede future development of Recreation Parks/Facilities and/or Regional Trails/Corridors.

Impacts. The Matilija Dam and reservoir area are closed to public use and so are unavailable for recreational uses. Other portions of the study area, however, experience high levels of

recreational use, from coastal to mountain activities. According to Section 4.11.1 of the EIS/EIR, six public agencies and a non-profit community group maintain recreational facilities in the study area, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture - National Forest Service (USFS), California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks), California Department of Agriculture, County of Ventura, City of San Buenaventura, City of Ojai, and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. Section 5.5.3 of the EIS/EIR concludes that the majority of activities associated with this project would not obstruct or degrade views of ridgelines from scenic resource areas, recreation trails, or scenic highways.

Section 5.11.3 of the EIS/EIR concurs with this conclusion and states that the proposed project would result in no permanent losses, degradations, or displacements of existing local parks and facilities. Project activities at the dam and in the reservoir area would serve to permanently enhance and create recreation facilities. Additionally, the project would enhance beach nourishment and could potentially contribute to improving beach recreation.

The project would include development of a pair of trails that would be used to link SR 33 and the Matilija Wilderness Area and provide a shorter loop trail. Three interpretive areas with comfort stations, shelters, picnic areas, drinking fountains, and interpretive signs and markers would be created: one at the existing dam site, one at Hanging Rock, and one at the northern end of the project area where the proposed trails would converge. The improvement of the Matilija Canyon environment and development of recreation facilities in the canyon would be a beneficial impact.

None of the other components, including the locally preferred desilting basin or purchase of the Camino Cielo structures, would permanently affect existing recreation facilities. The purchase and removal of the Matilija Hot Springs facility would eliminate an established recreational facility. Due to the limited number of users, however, and because the facility is a privately owned business, EIS/EIR Sections 5.8.3 and 5.10.3 concluded that impacts to Matilija Hot Springs would be less than significant (Class III).

Activities associated with the project, including giant reed removal, reservoir material excavation, dam demolition, bridge replacement, installation and improvement of downstream flood protection measures, installation of the locally preferred desilting basin, and modifications to water supply facilities at Robles Diversion and Foster Park could result in the closure of public recreational facilities for the duration of the activity at a specific location. Though temporary, these closures could last up to year.

The project would not result in any increases in population growth, creating an increased demand for recreation. Construction impacts would be extended, but temporary, and would not impede the future development of local parks and facilities in the area. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.31.2 Regional Parks/Facilities

Impacts. As discussed above under Section 4.29.1 of the Initial Study, Section 5.11.3 of the EIS/EIR concludes that the proposed project would result in no permanent losses, degradations, or displacements of existing regional parks and facilities. Project activities at the dam and in the reservoir area would serve to permanently enhance and create recreation facilities. Project components downstream of the dam, however, could result in some

degradation to trails along the Ventura River. The improvement of the Matilija Canyon environment and development of recreation facilities in the canyon would be a beneficial impact.

As described for Section 4.29.1, above, the project would not result in any increases in population growth, creating an increased demand for recreation. While, construction impacts would be extended, they would be temporary, and would not impede the future development of local parks and facilities in the area. Impacts would be less than significant (Class III).

4.31.3 Regional Trails/Corridors

Impacts. As described in Section 5.11.3 of the EIS/EIR, the project would result in major, long-term restrictions of the OVLC Rice Canyon Trail and the potential permanent degradation of OVLC East/West River Bottom Loop Trails.

The levee and floodwall planned for Meiners Oaks, could result in long-term restrictions of access to and conflicts with the OVLC Rice Canyon Trail. In its proposed alignment, the Meiners Oaks flood protection would block street access to a pedestrian trailhead with a barrier up to 17 feet in height. The disruption of access to the Rice Canyon Trail would be considered a significant, but mitigable impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure R-1, which would require the construction of an access ramp over the flood protection, would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Although the placement of the slurry disposal site at the north end of Baldwin Road or Highway 150 locations would not interfere with any recreation areas, use of the Rice Road slurry disposal site would bury OVLC trails on the east side of the Ventura River. Portions of the East/West River Bottom Loop Trails would be buried by up to 15 feet of sediment and access to these and other trails from the Riverview Trailhead would be blocked. The elimination of these trails and blockage of access to other trails would result in loss of trail use and would be considered a significant, but mitigable impact. Mitigation Measure AE-3 in Section 5.5.3 of the EIS/EIR would require that prior to completion of slurry activities and site re-vegetation the Corps, in consultation with the OVLC, shall design a system of trails integrated with a re-vegetation plan to be constructed and implemented after the site has been settled and dewatered. Consequently, impacts to regional trails and corridors would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation (Class II).

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