

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The San Luis Obispo Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District), serving as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess the impacts that may result from implementation of the Arroyo Grande Creek Channel Waterway Management Program (WMP; proposed project). The WMP includes the following components:

1. Manage riparian vegetation annually to maintain a composite roughness of 0.040 within the flood control reach, fill existing gaps in the riparian corridor vegetation, and encourage species diversity by planting riparian tree species;
2. Remove sediment to create secondary channels that could be self-maintaining, and monitor annually to evaluate future sediment deposition and the need for annual maintenance of accumulated sediments;
3. Raise levees throughout the flood control channel to achieve channel capacity for up to 10-year flood flows; and
4. Eventually raise levees throughout the flood control channel to achieve channel capacity for up to 20-year flood flows.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The purpose of this EIR is to identify the proposed project's significant impacts on the environment, indicate the manner in which such significant impacts will be mitigated or avoided, and identify alternatives to the proposed project that avoid or reduce these impacts. This EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for use by the County of San Luis Obispo, other responsible agencies, and the general public in their consideration and evaluation of the environmental consequences associated with the implementation of the proposed project. This document is provided to the public and decision-makers for their review and comment as required by CEQA.

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the State and County administrative guidelines established to comply with CEQA, as amended. Section 15151 of the State CEQA *Guidelines* provides the following standards for EIR adequacy:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

Under the CEQA process, an EIR must serve as a full disclosure document that enables the lead and responsible agencies to fully evaluate potential environmental impacts and the consequences of their decision on a proposed project. This EIR has been written to comply with the requirements of CEQA for the analysis of the proposed project, as well as the development and evaluation of alternatives to the proposed project.

1.2 EIR STRUCTURE

Contents of the EIR are outlined below, and the attached appendices contain background and technical information compiled and developed throughout the environmental review process. Contents of the EIR were determined from the results of an Initial Study (IS) prepared by the lead agency, responses from the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR sent to responsible agencies, and comments received during the public scoping process. The IS, the NOP, and comment letters received during the NOP review period are included in Appendix A.

1.2.1 Scoping Process

In compliance with CEQA Guidelines, the County of San Luis Obispo has taken steps to maximize opportunities to participate in the environmental process (refer to Table 1-1). During the environmental determination process, an effort was made to contact various federal, state, regional, and local governmental agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments and inform the public of the proposed project. This included holding a preliminary agency scoping meeting on August 14, 2008, and a public scoping meeting on June 25, 2009. The NOP for the EIR was distributed on June 5, 2009. The proposed project was described, the scope of the environmental review was identified, and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the NOP. The close of the NOP review period was July 10, 2009.

Agencies, organizations, and interested parties not contacted or who did not respond to the request for comments about the project during the preparation of the Draft EIR currently have the opportunity to comment during the 45-day public review period on the Draft EIR.

Table 1-1. Opportunities for Public/Agency Comment

Opportunity	Date(s)	Partial List of Agencies Contacted/Attending
Preliminary Agency Scoping for WMP and EIR	August 14, 2008	USACE, NMFS, USFWS, CDFG, RWQCB, RCD
EIR Notice of Preparation	June 5 – July 10, 2009	Refer to Appendix A
EIR Public Scoping Meeting	June 25, 2009	Refer to Appendix A, plus all landowners in the Assessment District
County Interagency Meeting	November 5, 2009	USFWS, CDFG, NMFS
Submittal of Draft WMP	February 8 – March 22, 2010	USFWS, CDFG, NMFS, RWQCB, CCC, RCD, State Parks
Draft EIR Public Comment Period	June 3 – July 18, 2010	All responsible agencies and interested parties noted above

1.2.2 EIR Contents

The scope of the EIR includes issues identified by the lead agency during the preparation of the NOP for the proposed project, as well as environmental issues raised by agencies and the general public in response to the NOP and at the scoping meeting.

The EIR is divided into the following major sections:

Executive Summary. Provides a brief summary of the project background, description, impacts and mitigation measures, and alternatives.

Introduction. Provides the purpose of an EIR, as well as scope, content, and the use of the document.

Project Description. Provides the general background of the project, objectives, a detailed description of the project characteristics, and a listing of necessary permits and government approvals.

Environmental Setting. Describes the physical setting and surrounding land uses.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures. Discusses the environmental setting as it relates to the various issue areas, regulatory settings, thresholds of significance, impact assessment and methodology, project-specific impacts and mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and secondary impacts. The EIR analyzes the potentially significant impacts to the following resource areas, as identified during the preparation of the NOP:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Flooding, Hydrology, and Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Circulation

Alternatives. Summarizes the environmental advantages and disadvantages associated with the project and alternatives. As required, the “No Project” alternative is included among the alternatives considered. An “Environmentally Superior Alternative,” is identified.

Environmental Analysis. Identifies growth inducing impact and a discussion of long-term/short-term productivity and irreversible environmental changes.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. This section contains a listing of all mitigation measures contained in the EIR, the requirements of the mitigation measures, the applicant’s responsibility and timing for implementation of these measures, the party responsible for verification, the method of verification, and verification timing.

1.3 AGENCY USE OF THE DOCUMENT

The District, as the CEQA lead agency, is responsible for administering the preparation of the EIR and will be responsible for certifying the Final EIR. Lead agency decision-makers (i.e., the Board of Supervisors) will use the EIR as an informational document to assist in the decision-making process, ultimately resulting in the approval, denial, or assignment of conditions to the project. The following jurisdictions may also use this EIR in reviewing and issuing their respective permits and authorizations (as applicable):

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD)
- City of Arroyo Grande Community Development Department

1.4 PROJECT SPONSORS AND CONTACT PERSONS

Key contact persons are as follows:

Lead Agency: County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Public Works
County Government Center Room 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
Mr. John Farhar, Environmental Resource Specialist

Project Proponent: San Luis Obispo Flood Control and Water Conservation District
County Government Center Room 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
Ms. Jill Ogren, Project Manager

1.5 REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties, as well as all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). The Notice of Completion of the Draft EIR was also distributed as required by CEQA. The 45-day public review period begins on June 3, 2010. During this period the EIR, including technical appendices, is available for review at the following locations:

County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Public Works
County Government Center Room 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

San Luis Obispo City/County Library
995 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

On behalf of the lead agency, comments on the Draft EIR shall be addressed to:

John Farhar
 County of San Luis Obispo
 Department of Public Works
 c/o Mary B. Reents
 Morro Group/SWCA
 1422 Monterey Street, Suite C200
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-2954

The 45-day public review period will end on July 18, 2010. Written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and included as part of the Final EIR and the environmental record for consideration by decision-makers for the project.

1.6 ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are used extensively in the EIR. The acronyms are spelled out the first time they are used in a section or chapter, but are also provided in Table 1-2 below.

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
°F	degrees Fahrenheit
AB	Assembly Bill
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
afy	acre feet per year
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUP	Airport Land Use Plan
asl	above sea level
AST	above-ground storage tanks
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Cal/OSHA	Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAMP	Construction Activities Management Plan
CAP	Clean Air Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAMP	Central Coast Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Program
CCC	California Coastal Commission
CCCP	California Climate Change Portal
CCIC	Central Coast Information Center
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CCSE	Central Coast Salmon Enhancement
CDC	California Department of Conservation
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CH ₄	Methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO ₂	carbon dioxide

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
County	County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CSLOEHS	County of San Luis Obispo Office of Environmental Health Services
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZLUO	Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance
District	San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESHA	Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas
ESU	Evolutionarily Significant Unit
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
HFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
HRER	Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report
IS	Initial Study
LCA	Land Conservation Act
LCC	Land Capability Classification
LNG	liquefied natural gas
LOS	level of service

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
LUFT	Leaking Underground Fuel Tank
LUO	Land Use Ordinance
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAP	National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NHS	National Highway System
NOA	naturally-occurring asbestos
NOAA Fisheries	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OEP	Office of Environmental Protection
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
PFCs	Perfluorocarbons
PM ₁₀	inhalable particulate matter 10 microns or less in size
PM _{2.5}	inhalable particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in size

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
POVE	Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange
Ppt	parts per thousand
RCD	Resource Conservation District
RCRA	Resources Conservation and Recovery Act of 1986
RHC	Reactive Hydrocarbons
ROG	Reactive Organic Gases
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAA	Streambed Alteration Agreement
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986
SF6	sulfur hexafluoride
SLOAPCD	San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
SLOCDA	San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SRA	Sensitive Resource Area
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SSURGO	Soil Survey Geographic
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Board
TDS	total dissolved solids
TMDL	total maximum daily loads
TMP	Transportation Management Plans
UBC	Uniform Building Code

Table 1-2. Acronyms

Acronym	Term
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
Williamson Act	California Land Conservation Act of 1965
WMP	Waterway Management Program
Zone 1/1A	District "Zones 1 and 1A"