



PUBLIC NOTICE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

BUILDING STRONG®

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT Big Tujunga Reservoir Sediment Removal Project

Public Notice/Application No.: SPL-2016-00661-GLH

Project: Big Tujunga Reservoir Sediment Removal Project

Comment Period: March 4, 2020 through April 4, 2020

Project Manager: Jerry Hidalgo; (805) 585-2145; Gerardo.L.Hidalgo@usace.army.mil

Applicant

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Contact

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Location

The project is located in the San Gabriel Mountains within the Angeles National Forest, California (Big Tujunga Reservoir: 34.29236°N, -118.18819°W and Maple Canyon Sediment Placement Site 34.28491°N, -118.18573°W). The nearest communities are Sunland and Tujunga which are located about 9 miles south of Tujunga Dam near Big Tujunga Road and the 210 Freeway.

Activity

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) proposes to conduct the Big Tujunga Reservoir Sediment Removal Project to excavate accumulated sediment and debris within the Big Tujunga Reservoir upstream of Big Tujunga Dam, and transport this sediment to an existing deposition site, the Maple Canyon Sediment Placement Site (SPS), which is located 1.8 miles away in Big Tujunga Canyon, Angeles National Forest. For more information see Additional Project Information section below.

Interested parties are hereby notified an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). We invite you to review today's public notice and provide views on the proposed work. By providing substantive, site-specific comments to the Corps Regulatory Division, you provide information that supports the Corps' decision-making process. All comments received during the comment period become part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued, issued with special conditions, or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Comments should be mailed to:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
REGULATORY DIVISION
ATTN: Jerry Hidalgo
60 South California Street, Suite 201
Ventura, California 93001-2598

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: Gerardo.L.Hidalgo@usace.army.mil

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program is to protect the Nation's aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. The Corps evaluates permit applications for essentially all construction activities that occur in the Nation's waters, including wetlands. The Regulatory Program in the Los Angeles District is executed to protect aquatic resources by developing and implementing short- and long-term initiatives to improve regulatory products, processes, program transparency, and customer feedback considering current staffing levels and historical funding trends.

Corps permits are necessary for any work, including construction and dredging, in the Nation's navigable water and their tributary waters. The Corps balances the reasonably foreseeable benefits and detriments of proposed projects, and makes permit decisions that recognize the essential values of the Nation's aquatic ecosystems to the general public, as well as the property rights of private citizens who want to use their land. The Corps strives to make its permit decisions in a timely manner that minimizes impacts to the regulated public.

During the permit process, the Corps considers the views of other Federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and the general public. The results of this careful public interest review are fair and equitable decisions that allow reasonable use of private property, infrastructure development, and growth of the economy, while offsetting the authorized impacts to the waters of the United States. The permit review process serves to first avoid and then minimize adverse effects of projects on aquatic resources to the maximum practicable extent. Any remaining unavoidable adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are offset by compensatory mitigation requirements, which may include restoration, enhancement, establishment, and/or preservation of aquatic ecosystem system functions and services.

Evaluation Factors

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR Part 230) as required by Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts

of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Review of Selected Factors

EIS Determination- A preliminary determination has been made an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

Water Quality- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance.

Coastal Zone Management- This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates it would not affect coastal zone resources. After a review of the comments received on this public notice and in consultation with the California Coastal Commission, the Corps will make a final determination of whether this project affects coastal zone resources.

Essential Fish Habitat- No Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, occurs within the project area and no EFH is affected by the proposed project.

Cultural Resources- The Area of Potential Effects (APE) includes four resources recorded in a SCCIC Records Search. The project activities proposed would not affect these recorded resources and therefore the Corps has determined the project would result in No Effect to historic properties. While excavation of sediment in the reservoir would disturb subsurface material, the proposed excavation would not extend into native undisturbed material and therefore would not expose new resources of concern. The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be consulted regarding a Sacred Lands File search and list of interested tribal parties. The Corps will initiate tribal consultation with interested tribal parties to seek information regarding any tribal resources that could be affected by the project. The Corps will initiate Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Endangered Species- Based on surveys conducted in 2016, the federally-listed aquatic species Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomous santaanae*) is present within Big Tujunga Creek and critical habitat for Santa Ana sucker along with its primary constituent elements are present downstream of Big Tujunga Dam. The federally-listed species Arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) was not present during surveys, however, it has been known to occur upstream of the reservoir, and least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) was not observed but is known to occur in the area and suitable habitat is present.

Based on this information, the Corps has preliminarily determined that the proposed activities may affect and is likely to adversely affect the Santa Ana sucker and its critical habitat, and may affect but is not likely to adversely affect Arroyo toad and least Bell's vireo. The Corps will initiate Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Public Hearing- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required

Basic Project Purpose- The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the proposed project, and is used by the Corps to determine whether the applicant's project is water dependent (i.e., requires access or proximity to or siting within the special aquatic site to fulfill its basic purpose). Because no fills are proposed within special aquatic sites, identification of the basic project purpose is not necessary. The basic project purpose for the proposed project is flood control maintenance. The project is water dependent.

Overall Project Purpose- The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Corps' 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, and which allows a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose for the proposed project is to restore adequate water holding capacity in the Big Tujunga Reservoir.

Additional Project Information

Baseline information – The Station Fire started on August 26, 2009, in the Angeles National Forest, near the United States Forest Service Ranger Station, on the Angeles Crest Highway and burned over 160,000 acres before containment on October 16, 2009. Approximately, 87 percent of the watershed tributary to Big Tujunga Reservoir was affected. On average, a watershed will take 5 years or more to recover from a forest fire burn. During this time, increased amounts of debris production are expected from the denuded ground surface. Based on the survey following the 2017 storm season, the total amount of accumulated sediment in the Big Tujunga Reservoir was approximately 2.09 million cubic yards (mcy). Due to the extended drought, which followed the fire, significant volumes of debris remain at the bottom of tributary canyons upstream of the reservoir. The drought has also delayed the watershed's recovery, leaving the potential for increased sediment runoff. Due to these factors, heavy storms could still produce an additional 2.3 mcy, totaling 4.4 mcy that could affect Big Tujunga Dam.

As a result of the sediment influx that has occurred and the potential for future deposits, Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works), on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, finds it necessary to conduct a sediment removal project to permanently remove up to 4.4 mcy of sediment from Big Tujunga Reservoir. This project is critical for maintaining flood protection and stormwater capture operations. The project would be completed over a period of 3 to 5 years, and require approximately 1,030 working days for completion. The majority of the work within the reservoir would take place outside the storm season (April 16 to October 14).

Project description – The project would consist of completely dewatering Big Tujunga Reservoir after each storm season during the cleanout through valve releases and mechanical pumping. A surface water diversion plan including a bypass line would allow flows to the reservoir to bypass construction areas and discharge, without increased turbidity, to Big Tujunga Wash to avoid impacts to aquatic species, including the Santa Ana Sucker located downstream of the dam. The proposed cleanout would restore reservoir capacity for both flood protection and water conservation needs of the downstream communities.

Sediment transport to the nearby Maple Canyon Sediment Placement Site (SPS) would be made via trucks. An estimated 20 trucks would cycle between the reservoir and SPS, totaling approximately 400 truck trips per day during sediment removal operations. Prior to beginning any sediment removal, the two existing reservoir access roads would be regraded to allow truck traffic to enter the reservoir. The northern access road would be used by empty trucks entering the reservoir and the southern access road would be used by sediment-filled trucks exiting the reservoir and travelling to the SPS. Trucks would cross Big Tujunga Canyon Road, where traffic control would be implemented. All haul roads are paved, with the exception of the portion of the route across Big Tujunga Reservoir.

Sediment would be removed from approximately 43 acres of the reservoir using heavy equipment such as excavators and bulldozers. In order to extend the useful life of the remaining capacity of the Maple Canyon SPS, rock/aggregate removed from the reservoir during the first year of the project would be stockpiled at a staging area next to the Big Tujunga Dam entrance gate to be used by Public Works' Road Maintenance or Stormwater Maintenance Divisions within USFS boundaries. Excavation would occur until the remaining capacity of the Maple Canyon SPS has been exhausted or until the final reservoir grade is achieved. Sediment removal and placement operations would primarily occur during the dry season between approximately April 16 and October 14. After October 15, work may continue until the first significant storm is forecasted, which would require the contractor to remove equipment from the reservoir and remove or secure the bypass line until the end of the storm season. Reservoir operations would return to typical operating procedures during the rainy season, approximately from October 15 to April 15.

Maple Canyon SPS was established in 1981 for future cleanouts of the reservoir. The current remaining capacity is at the Maple Canyon SPS is approximately 4.4 mcy. Approximately 3 mcy of sediment was previously placed at the Maple Canyon SPS. Excavated material would be transported approximately 1.8 miles from the reservoir to the Maple Canyon SPS. Bulldozers and other heavy equipment would be operated at the Maple Canyon SPS to spread and compact the sediment. An addition of 4.4 mcy of sediment from this project would cover approximately 32 acres within the SPS of which approximately 10 acres overlap the sediment placement area of previous projects. Areas within the increased fill footprint would be cleared and grubbed prior to the placing of sediment. The Maple Canyon SPS design incorporates underground drainage pipes and surface drainage facilities such as gutters, inlets, and surface drains conveying surface runoff through the Maple Canyon SPS. Debris basins were installed at the upstream end of each underground drainage pipe to catch eroded sediment from the natural drainages. These drainage facilities would be relocated to the top of the new Maple Canyon SPS limits. The Maple Canyon SPS would be revegetated in a manner similar to the Maple Canyon Debris Disposal Site Revegetation Plan used for the previous USFS Special Use Permit (SUP). Public Works is currently renewing a SUP for the SPS.

Proposed impacts – Impacts from implementation of the proposed project would largely result from the removal of sediment from Big Tujunga Reservoir and placement of sediment in the Maple Canyon SPS. The removal of sediment within the reservoir would temporarily impact 43.11 acres of non-wetland waters of the U.S. The discharge of the sediment in the Maple Canyon SPS would permanently impact 1.05 acres of non-wetland waters of the U.S. Transportation of the sediment would occur on existing roads downstream of Big Tujunga Dam. While waters of the U.S. are located adjacent to these roads, no impacts are expected from project activities. During dewatering, the plunge pool below Big Tujunga Dam would be utilized as a desilting basin to reduce turbidity. Best Management Practices such as sandbags at the plunge pool's outlet would ensure acceptable turbidity levels downstream in Big Tujunga Wash. Specifically, the project would temporarily impact 1.56 acres at the plunge pool.

Table 1 below outlines permanent and temporary impacts to non-wetland and wetland waters of the U.S. A graphic depicting proposed project impacts is attached.

Table 1: Potential Impacts to Corps Jurisdiction

Project Areas	USACE non-wetland waters of the U.S.		
	Total Existing (acres)	Proposed Permanent Impact (acres)	Proposed Temporary Impact (acres)
Big Tujunga Reservoir/Upper Big Tujunga Creek	62.79	0.00	43.11
Plunge Pool	1.56	0.00	1.56
Maple Canyon Sediment Placement Site	2.48	1.05	0.00
Total	66.83	1.05	44.67

Proposed Mitigation – The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In consideration of the above, the proposed mitigation sequence (avoidance/minimization/compensation), as applied to the proposed project is summarized below:

Avoidance: The applicant would use a surface diversion system to maintain natural flow rates for the downstream creek by diverting all upstream water flow around the construction area.

Minimization: The applicant has proposed a number of general and specific construction-related BMPs, as follows:

General BMPs:

- All construction activities would occur within the designated project footprint.
- To control erosion from exposed topsoil slopes and channels, frequent water checks will be placed on dirt roads, and runoff from steep erodible surfaces will be diverted into stable areas with less erosion potential.

Water quality BMPs:

- Sand/gravel bags, silt fencing, and/or other filtering devices will be placed in a manner to prevent sediment from exiting the plunge pool's outlet into downstream waters.
- The plunge pool will serve as a large sedimentation basin in which waters released from the Dam will be temporarily retained to allow for sediment to drop to the bottom of the pool.
- A surface water diversion plan would be submitted prior to construction activities and surface water inflow would be redirected away from construction areas whenever possible.
- Measures would be designed to prevent or limit the flow of disturbed sediment and particulate matter to downstream areas during the project activities.
- During construction, the contractor would implement the water quality monitoring program required by the RWQCB and comply with the permit conditions imposed by the Corps and RWQCB.

Air quality BMPs:

- Daily hours of work would be scheduled to occur 8 hours per day of equipment activity (approximately 400 round-trip truck trips per workday)
- Road construction fleet would meet the following requirements: (1) Off-road diesel powered construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower (hp) should meet Tier 3 or better off-road emissions standards and (2) on-road diesel haul trucks would have 2010 or newer engines.
- All haul roads shall be paved with the exception of the 0.33 mile portion of the route across Big Tujunga Reservoir.

Endangered Species Act and Critical Habitat BMPs:

- To avoid impacts to Santa Ana sucker present in the downstream plunge pool, fish will be relocated prior to construction and at the beginning of each construction season.
- Each spring following the storm season, water in the downstream plunge pool would be released at an acceptable rate to minimize any effects downstream.
- The worksite would be clearly flagged or staked to avoid potential impacts to adjacent natural habitats or sensitive areas.
- A qualified biologist would conduct field surveys prior to construction to locate present species and habitats and employ onsite avoidance measures recommended by biologists.
- Any non-native fish will be removed.
- Special status plants will be avoided.

Compensation: The applicant has not proposed any compensatory mitigation for the activities with Big Tujunga Reservoir nor those within Maple Canyon SPS.

Proposed Special Conditions

The following list is comprised of proposed Permit Special Conditions, which are required of similar types of projects: None at this time.

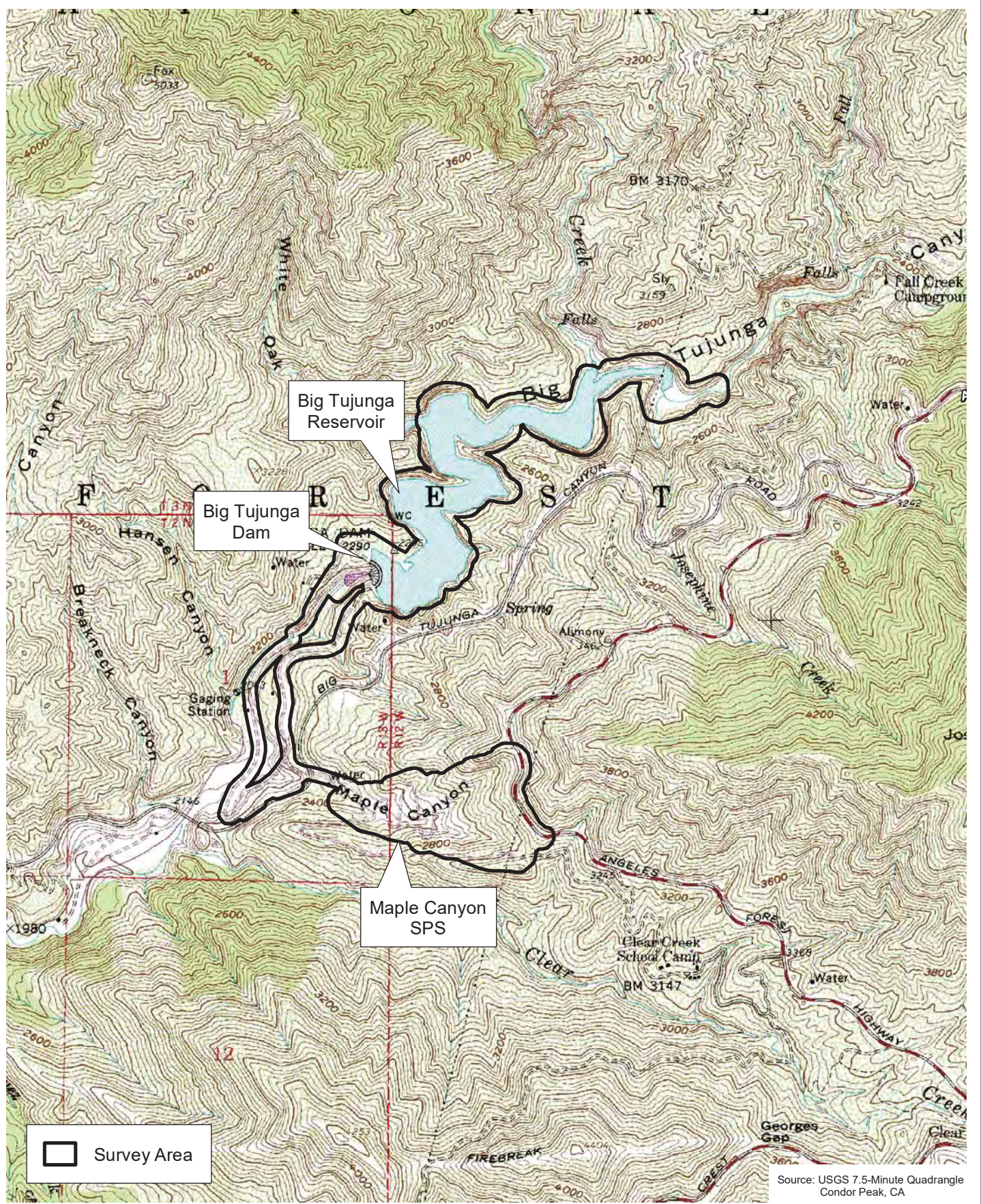
For additional information please call Jerry Hidalgo of my staff at (805) 585-2145 or via e-mail at Gerardo.L.Hidalgo@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
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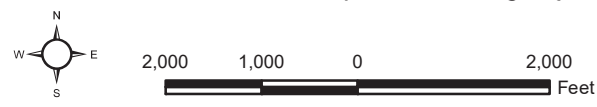


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U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute Quadrangle

Exhibit 2

Jurisdictional Delineation Report for the Big Tujunga Reservoir Sediment Removal Project





Big Tujunga Reservoir

Big Tujunga Dam







Stockpile Area

Maple Canyon SPS

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**BIG TUJUNGA RESERVOIR CLEANOUT
WORK PLAN MAP**

Legend

-  Haul Routes
-  Approximate Limit of Work
-  Approximate Limit of Excavation
-  Approximate SPS Limit of Work
-  Plunge Pool BMP Area
-  Stockpile Area



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, SRTM3+

SCALE
1"=1000'

DATE
6/1/2019

PREPARED BY
A. HO



Maple Canyon SPS
Total Proposed Vegetation
Removal Area
Area: 22 Acres





Maple Canyon SPS
Remaining Fill Area
Area: 32 Acres

Maple Canyon SPS
Haul Route

Maple Canyon SPS
Phase 1 Proposed Vegetation
Removal Area
Area: 10 Acres

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS

**BIG TUJUNGA RESERVOIR
RESTORATION PROJECT
MAPLE CANYON SPS**

-  Potential Haul Route
-  Maple Veg Removal Phase 1
-  Maple Veg Removal Total
-  Maple Fill Footprint



Esri, Digital
USGS, AeroG

SCALE
1"=400'

DATE
7/1/2019

PREPARED BY
A. HO