



PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

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**APPLICATION FOR PERMIT
Randall Road Debris Basin**

Public Notice/Application No.: SPL-2020-00099-CLH

Project: Randall Road Debris Basin

Comment Period: February 14, 2020 through March 16, 2020

Project Manager: Crystal L.M. Huerta; (805) 585-2143; crystal.huerta@usace.army.mil

Applicant

Mr. Seth Shank
Santa Barbara County Flood Control District
130 E. Victoria St., Suite200
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Contact

sshank@cosbpw.net
(805) 568-3443

Location

The proposed project is located within San Ysidro Creek on Randall Road near the intersection of Randall Road and State Route 192, in the community of Montecito, Santa Barbara County, California (lat: 34.39949, long: -119.5298).

Activity

The Santa Barbara Flood Control District (District) proposes to build a new "off channel" debris basin on San Ysidro Creek in the community of Montecito, Santa Barbara County, California. The proposed basin would be approximately 8 acres. San Ysidro Creek would maintain natural sediment transport and fish passage within the range of flows suitable salmonid migration. Approximately 0.60 acres of waters of the U.S. occurs within the proposed project site and would be partially modified by the proposed project. The Creek would be slightly re-aligned as part of the debris basin construction but would remain equivalent in channel length. Channel width is proposed to be widened in some parts on the reach where steep banks would be re-graded to a lower slope, effectively widening the jurisdictional portion of the creek. The general alignment of the creek would be similar to existing conditions. The final dimensions of waters of the U.S. would be enlarged up to 0.73 acres by reducing steep bank slopes, thereby widening the creek channel in some locations. 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: Crystal L.M. Huerta
60 South California Street, Suite 201
Ventura, CA 93001-2598

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: crystal.huerta@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. The District applied for a water quality certification on January 28, 2020.

Coastal Zone Management- This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates it would not affect 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 latest version of the National Register of Historic Places has been consulted and this site is not listed. A Phase 1 pedestrian survey was completed on September 5, 2019. No cultural resources were observed during the survey. This review constitutes the extent of cultural resources investigations by the District Engineer, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources.

Endangered Species- Preliminary determinations indicate the proposed activity may affect federally-listed endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat. The project area was surveyed for California red legged frog (*Rana draytonii*, CRLF). This species was not detected During field surveys and is considered absent from the proposed project site. The Corps has preliminarily determined that the proposed project would have no effect to CRLF

Southern California Coast Steelhead (*O. mykss*) and its critical habitat is designated in San Ysidro Creek. This species was not observed during pre-project surveys but has been observed in San Ysidro Creek and may potentially be present in the watershed under suitable conditions with adequate water depth. The Corps has preliminarily determined that the proposed project may effect steelhead.

No other federally protected wildlife species are known or likely to occur within the proposed project site. Therefore, formal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act would be completed as appropriate.

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). Establishment of the basic project purpose is necessary only when the proposed activity would discharge dredged or fill material into a special aquatic site (e.g., wetlands, pool and riffle complex, mudflats, coral reefs). The entire stretch of creek through the project site would be characterized as a riffle. There are no pools. The creek was completely filled in during the debris flow and was excavated to reestablish the flow path and as such no real variation in the creek bed exists. The basic project purpose for the proposed project is flood hazard reduction.

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 flood hazard reduction and would be accomplished by partially modifying and re-aligning the San Ysidro Creek Channel to build a new "off-channel" debris basin adjacent to San Ysidro Creek.

Additional Project Information

Baseline information- Most of the upper San Ysidro Creek watershed was burned in December 2017 as part of the regional Thomas Fire. On the morning of January 9, 2018, concentrated heavy rainfall in the Montecito area resulted in a flash flood and massive debris flows, resulting in 23 deaths. San Ysidro Creek (including the project site) was affected by these debris flows, including movement of fluvial sediments to the adjacent floodplain, and erosion-related entrenchment of the flow channel. The entire project site was covered by sediments transported by floodwaters from upstream. Natural woody debris and structural debris (destroyed residences) was stockpiled on the project site in 2018, then mostly removed along with deposited sediment. The project area (Randall Road/SR 192) was one of the most impacted areas during the January 2018 debris flow within the community of Montecito.

San Ysidro Creek through the project area is a perennial stream. Native vegetation and habitat along San Ysidro Creek at the project site was removed by debris flows and sediment deposition. Recovery of native vegetation is ongoing, but is hampered by remnant debris piles, sediment accumulation (southeastern portion of site) and lack of soil development within the creek channel. Many of the coast live oak on the home sites have died as a result of the fire and/or debris flow.

Project description- The proposed basin would be approximately 8 acres and "off-channel", in that San Ysidro Creek would maintain natural sediment transport and fish passage within the range of flows suitable salmonid migration. Total excavation to create the basin is estimated at approximately 97,000 cubic yards, most of which would occur in uplands not regulated by the Corps. Of that excavation, approximately 2,000 cubic yards would be comprised of re-graded excavation and/or fill within the existing stream channel. The existing stream channel is approximately 27 feet wide, 970

feet long and 2 feet deep. This material would be partially excavated, re-graded, contoured, and restored to create new stream bed and banks.

Approximately 0.60 acres of waters of the U.S. occur within the project site and would be partially modified by the proposed project. The San Ysidro Creek channel would be modified by the proposed project. The San Ysidro Creek channel would be slightly re-aligned as part of debris basin construction but would remain equivalent in channel length. Channel width would be widened in some parts of the reach where steep banks would be re-graded to a lower slope, effectively widening the OHWM. Excavated material would include top soil, residual debris-flow material comprised of mixed grade sediment and bedrock.

Proposed Mitigation—The District is not proposing mitigation for the proposed project. 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 nature of the project is to enhance the existing stream corridor associated with the new flood-control basin. The proposed flood control facility would be located within and adjacent to waters of the U.S., and therefore total avoidance is not possible. In order to meet the objectives of the project, construction within and adjacent to waters of the U.S. cannot be fully avoided.

Impacts to the active water column would be avoided by dewatering the channel prior to excavation. While construction activities would take place within waters of the U.S., select areas of the creek channel and banks that already meet the designed channel morphology would be avoided as much as feasible during construction.

Minimization: Minimization measures would be implemented to ensure the amount and duration of impacts are limited and that no indirect impacts would occur. The integrity and function of the waters of the U.S. would be protected and enhanced. Minimization measures would be implemented prior, during, and after the proposed activity. The District proposes the following Minimization Measures:

- The project will be implemented during the dry season to avoid high flows and wildlife breeding seasons.
- Flowing water will be impounded and diverted through the project area via a temporary coffer dam and gravity diversion pipe to retain downstream flow during construction.
- Aquatic wildlife will be relocated out of the work area prior to construction.
- Turbidity control measures, such as straw wattle, silt fence, and filter fabric, will be installed as needed to prevent sediment from entering flowing water.
- Onsite construction monitoring, including pre-project surveys, will be implemented to minimize incidental effects on aquatic resources.

Compensation: The project as proposed would incorporate native planting and habitat restoration berms along Randall Road and SR 192 would be planted with a blend of native shrubs and trees as screening and wildlife habitat. Approximately 0.9 acres would be planted with native vegetation and managed by the District. Natural recolonization with vegetation would occur within the basin itself. This vegetation would be allowed to persist between maintenance events, which increases the amount and extent of riparian habitat compared to the existing suburban parcels. No additional compensation is proposed.

Proposed Special Conditions

The following list is comprised of proposed Permit Special Conditions, which are required of similar types of projects:

1. The Permittee shall provide a copy of this permit to all field staff, contractors, subcontractors, and equipment operators. Copies of the permit shall be readily available at the work site at all times during periods of active work, and shall be presented to any Corps personnel upon request.
2. A post-construction report shall be prepared and submitted to the Corps within 30 days of project completion. The report shall summarize all activities in waters of the U.S. and the start and end dates of work in waters of the U.S.
3. Staging, storage, fueling and maintenance of equipment, and materials, shall be located at least 100 feet from waters of the U.S.
4. Any equipment or vehicles operated within or adjacent to the stream shall be checked and maintained daily to monitor for and prevent leaks of fluids that could be harmful if introduced to the stream.
5. Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. section 800.13, in the event of any discoveries during construction of either human remains, archeological deposits, or any other type of historic property, the Permittee shall notify the Corps' Regulatory Project Manager (Crystal Huerta at 805-585-2143) and the Corps 'Archeology Staff within 24 hours (Danielle Storey at 213-452-3855 OR Meg McDonald at 213-452-3849). The Permittee shall immediately suspend all work in any area(s) where potential cultural resources are discovered. The Permittee shall not resume construction in the area surrounding the potential cultural resources until the Corps Regulatory Division reauthorizes project construction, per 36 C.F.R. section 800.13.

For additional information please call Crystal L.M. Huerta of my staff at (805) 585-2143 or via e-mail at crystal.huerta@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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Ventura, CA 93001-2598

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PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
RANDALL ROAD DEBRIS BASIN
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

30% PLANS

IN THE MONTECITO AREA
OF
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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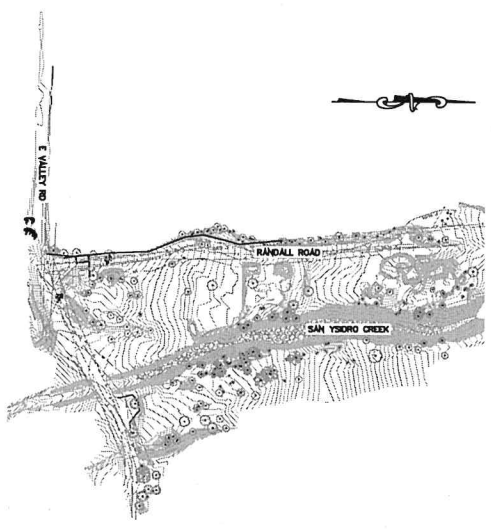
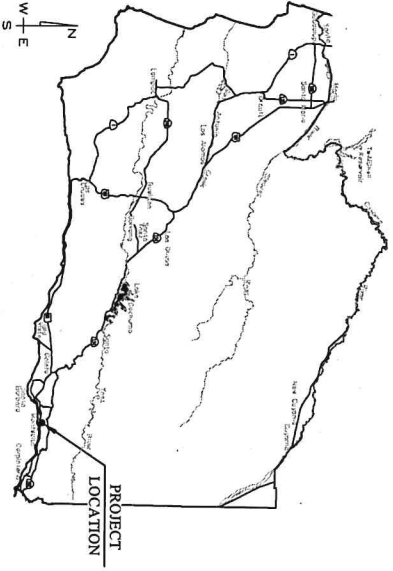
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- FIRST DISTRICT: Das Williams
- SECOND DISTRICT, CHAIR: Gregg Hart
- THIRD DISTRICT: Joan Hartmann
- FOURTH DISTRICT: Peter Adam
- FIFTH DISTRICT: Steve Lavagnino

CHAIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Gregg Hart

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PLANS

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