



Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office (SFWO)

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Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment for Rock Creek Meadow Restoration Project

Summary: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Rock Creek Meadow Restoration Project in Shasta County, California. As described in the EA, we have made the preliminary determination that the proposed restoration project will not have significant impacts on the human environment under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321–4347 et seq.), as provided by NEPA implementing regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR 1500.5(k), 1507.3(b)(2), 1508.4), by Department of Interior regulations (43 CFR 46.205, 46.210, 46.215), and by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 3 and 516 DM 8). We issue this notice under the NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321–4347 et seq.; NEPA), and its implementing regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 40 CFR 1500–1508. We request public comments on the proposed restoration project.

Dates: To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by August 31, 2015. We will make our determination no sooner than August 31, 2015.

Document Availability: The Environmental Assessment is available for review at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office at 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-2605, Sacramento, CA 95825, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Northern Region Office at 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001, Fall River Valley Library at 43250 Highway 299 E, Fall River Mills, CA 96028, and Burney Library at 37038 Siskiyou Street, Burney, CA 96013. Electronic copies may be requested by contacting the contact person or online at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/news/pubnotice/>

Addresses: Please address written comments to Josh Hull, Recovery Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, W–2605, Sacramento, CA 95825. Alternatively, you may send comments by facsimile to (916) 414–6713.

Project Description: The Service, in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife(CDFW) and the multi-agency Shasta Crayfish Technical Review Committee and Shasta Crayfish Recovery Implementation Team, are proposing to create refuge habitat for Shasta crayfish in an isolated segment of stream in Shasta County, California, historically occupied by Shasta crayfish. The stream has been separated from Hat Creek and potential invasion by aquatic species from Hat Creek by structures designed to protect the quality of water that supplies the Crystal Lake Fish Hatchery. The objective of the proposed Rock Creek Meadow Restoration Project (Project) is to create a refuge habitat for Shasta crayfish were they will be isolated from invasive aquatic species that are causing their decline. To accomplish this objective the Project would restore a segment (~650 feet) of creek channel to pre-diversion conditions, which will re-create high-quality habitat for Shasta crayfish. Following habitat restoration, Shasta crayfish will be reintroduced to the restored reach and an existing isolated pool thereby establishing a refuge population isolated and protected from invasive species. To fully restore streamflow to the restored reach, it is proposed to move the hatchery diversion and intake approximately 650 feet downstream of its current location. The stream channel above the new diversion would be restored and Shasta crayfish would be reintroduced to the restored and rewatered channel. These activities are intended to help meet the goals of the Shasta Crayfish Recovery Plan.

Project Location: The 6.15-acre Project Area is located along a tributary of Hat Creek approximately seven miles east the town of Burney in Shasta County, California. The tributary is a natural spring-fed drainage approximately 0.9 mile in length. Project activities will take place on lands owned by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). CDFW leases the property for the Crystal Lake Fish Hatchery from PG&E.

Project Details and Impacts: The Project has the potential to impact wetlands, riparian and stream vegetation as well as Shasta crayfish, greater sandhill crane, bald eagle, willow flycatcher, migratory birds, Pit sculpin, and Castlegar hawthorne. With the incorporation of impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, Project impacts would be reduced below a level of significance. Implementation of the Project will help meet the goals of the Shasta Crayfish Recovery Plan. The goals of the Recovery Plan would be met by moving an at-risk population of Shasta crayfish, which has been threatened by the expansion of non-native introduced aquatic species, to suitable habitat within the same watershed that is not occupied by and is protected from invasion by the hatchery water diversion facilities. The Project is designed to prevent the extinction of the Shasta crayfish by providing habitat for up to 1,700 or more individuals.