

USFWS/NOAA RC NEPA Inclusion Analysis

Award Number

I. IDENTIFYING PROJECT INFORMATION

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| Project Name Cosco Busan Eelgrass Restoration in San Francisco Bay | | Project State CA |
| Project Proponent / Applicant Cosco Busan Oil Spill Trustees | | Project Contact Carolyn Marn |

II. OTHER FEDERAL PARTNERS AND LEVEL OF NEPA ANALYSIS

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|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Has another Federal agency completed NEPA? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Agency Name DOC | Type of Analysis? EIS | Title of Completed NEPA Document (if applicable) NOAA Restoration Center, 2015. Final Programmatic EIS for habitat restoration activities implemented throughout the coastal U.S. |
| Is USFWS the lead federal agency for this NEPA analysis? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | | | |

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION / SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES FOR ANALYSIS

Please check one of the following conditions:

- I am analyzing impacts of project planning and design activities, in order to gather all required project information
- I have all information needed to complete the final analysis of impacts for the entire project

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| Has a NEPA review been conducted for prior project activities? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Date of NEPA completion for prior phase N/A |
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Describe the full scope of the project, including historic/ geographic/ ecological context, the type of restoration, and how it will be conducted.

This project is funded by damages from the Cosco Busan natural resource damage assessment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the California State Lands Commission are the designated natural resource trustees for the November 7, 2007, Cosco Busan oil spill in San Francisco Bay. The project, planned for 2025-2026 under a CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit, will transplant eelgrass from authorized donor beds in the Bay to restore 4 acres primarily in Richardson Bay. NOAA will oversee an agreement through NFWF to implement the project. Transplanting will occur between April and July. Eelgrass will be harvested by gleaning rhizomes with intact shoots either by SCUBA diving, or by walking or crawling. This low density harvesting retains a continuous donor bed. The planting program utilizes half-acre plots as well as smaller test plots; plots are located between 0 m MLLW and -1.2 m MLLW. Planting will include the Merkel paper stick planting or the Kiriakopolos bamboo staking. Monitoring (August-April, 2025 and 2026) will include acoustic mapping and tracking, in situ field monitoring, genetic tracing, monitoring eelgrass for presence of herring spawn, and a baywide eelgrass survey.

Describe the proposed action (i.e. the portion of the project that USFWS is funding/approving).

USFWS will be approving funding for the restoration project described above.

Check the types of activities being conducted in this project:

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| Technical Assistance | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education Classes, Programs, Centers, Partnerships and Materials; Training Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning, Feasibility Studies, Design Engineering, and Permitting | | |

Riverine and Coastal Habitat Restoration

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Beach and Dune Restoration | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debris Removal | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dam and Culvert Removal & Replacement | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical and Nature-like Fishways | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Species Control | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Burns/Forest Management | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Species Enhancement | |

NEPA Inclusion Analysis

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Channel Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Restoration and Erosion Reduction | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Conservation and Stream Diversion |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reef Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Levee & Culvert Removal, Modification, Set-back |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish Reef Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Fringing Marsh and Shoreline Stabilization |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Reef Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment Removal |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Road Upgrading/Decommissioning; Trail Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment/Materials Placement |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage and Access Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Planting |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAV Restoration | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Algae Restoration | |

Conservation Transactions

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Acquisition | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Transactions | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration/Conservation Banking |
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IV. PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS

Core Questions

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| 1. Are the activities to be carried out under this project fully described in Section 2.2 of the NOAA RC PEIS? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Are the specific impacts that are likely to result from this project fully described in Section 4.5.2 of the NOAA RC PEIS? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Does the level of adverse impact for the project exceed that described in the NOAA RC PEIS for any resource, including significant adverse impact? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

4. Describe the project impacts to resources (including beneficial impacts) and any mitigating measures being implemented.
 Beneficial impacts are anticipated for eelgrass, herring, and Surf Scoters and other migratory birds that prey on herring spawn. To mitigate for potential impacts to donor beds, the Cosco Busan eelgrass restoration work will be closely coordinated with a similar restoration program established by permit special conditions of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission under which the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) established a restoration fund for habitat restoration projects to mitigate impacts to eelgrass resulting from the SFOBB East Span Seismic Safety Project.

5. Describe any potential cumulative impacts that may result from past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions (beneficial or adverse).
 All of the past and proposed eelgrass restoration efforts are part of a long-term strategy to recreate thriving subtidal habitats in the greater San Francisco Bay area. This project along with other restoration projects, will result in cumulatively beneficial impacts to plants and wildlife and provide additional subtidal habitat to support recovery of this sensitive community and the fish and other wildlife that it supports, including the last commercially viable herring fishery. No long-term adverse impacts are anticipated.

6. Describe the public outreach and/or opportunities for public comment that have taken place to this point. Are any future opportunities for public input anticipated?
 The Trustees sought the public's input on a draft Supplement to the DARP/EA that proposed including additional eelgrass restoration for injuries to Surf Scoters and other diving ducks (i.e., this project). The public comment period was from 6/27/2024 through 7/31/2024; no comments were received. The Draft DARP/EA, dated 9/19/2011, also proposed eelgrass restoration for injuries to herring and eelgrass from the Cosco Busan oil spill. Public review of the Draft DARP/EA occurred between 9/19/2011 and 10/31/2011 and included two public meetings, a press release, an announcement in the Federal Register, an email announcement to over 900 individuals, a two-page newsletter and a 3 ½ minute YouTube video that summarized the Draft DARP/EA. No additional public input is anticipated.

7. Have any public comments raised issues of scientific/environmental controversy? Please describe.
 No comments were received on the Draft Supplement (2024) and no issues of scientific/environmental controversy were raised regarding eelgrass restoration in the Draft DARP/EA (2011).

8. Describe the most common positive and negative public comments on issues other than scientific controversy described above in Question 7.
 The Trustees received two comments on proposed eelgrass restoration for the Draft DARP/EA in 2011. The first comment was to consider addressing the destruction of eelgrass caused by boat moorings and abandoned vessels in Richardson Bay. The Trustees included mooring chain replacement as a project alternative in the Final DARP. The second comment was to include herring monitoring at eelgrass restoration sites. The Trustees clarified language in the Final DARP to address monitoring eelgrass for herring spawn.

NEPA Inclusion Analysis

V. NEPA DETERMINATION

The action is completely covered by the impact analysis within the NOAA RC Programmatic EIS (PEIS). The project and its potential impacts may be limited through terms or conditions placed on the recipient of USFWS funds. It requires no further environmental review. An EIS Inclusion Document will be prepared.

The action analyzed here has unknown impacts. At this time, funding will be limited to those portions of the action and impacts analyzed in the PEIS. These limitations will be described in terms or conditions placed on the recipient of USFWS funds. If all remaining activities and impacts are later determined to be described in the PEIS, this analysis will be documented in the program record and the applicant may then proceed with the project. If all remaining activities and impacts are later determined to not be described in the PEIS, further NEPA review will be required; see below.

The action or its impacts are not covered by the analysis within the PEIS. It will require preparation of an individual EA, a supplemental EIS, adoption of another agency's EA or EIS, or will be covered by a Categorical Exclusion.

Signature _____

Date Signed

Sep 9, 2024 _____