



## CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

### NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SOUTH FORK COTTONWOOD CREEK NONNATIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL PROJECT

Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement Number 1600-2012-0077-R1

Published July 31, 2012

**Project Description:** Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group (CCWG) proposes to remove giant reed, saltcedar, black locust, tree-of-heaven, pampas grass, and scotchbroom from South Fork Cottonwood Creek, Tehama County, using herbicides and manual removal methods. CCWG notified the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) on March 26, 2012 with the intent to modify the bed and banks of Cottonwood Creek in order to implement the proposed Project. DFG is preparing a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement for the proposed Project pursuant to Section 1600 et. seq. of the California Fish and Game Code.

**Project Location:** South Fork Cottonwood Creek from Pettyjohn Road Crossing to the confluence with Mainstem Cottonwood Creek, Tehama County. The Project will take place on private land with the permission of all landowners.

**Comment Period:** DFG is soliciting comments on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) through **August 30, 2012, at 5:00 pm.**

**Document Availability:** The IS/MND is available for review at DFG's Northern Region Office at 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001. Electronic copies may be requested by contacting the IS/MND contact person.

**IS/MND Contact Person:** Brad Henderson; California Department of Fish and Game; 601 Locust Street; Redding, CA 96001; (530) 225-2362 [bhenderson@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:bhenderson@dfg.ca.gov)

**Project Details and Impacts:** Many nonnative plants have been both intentionally and unintentionally introduced into California. Giant reed and saltcedar are very aggressive invasive plants in the Cottonwood Creek watershed. These plants accelerate erosion and loss of topsoil when islands of invasive vegetation redirect flows onto adjacent banks increasing bank cutting and slumping. Spawning beds can be significantly impacted by sediment deposition, for example. The objective of the Project is to permanently control known invasive plant species occurrences in the Project Area and

reduce the spread of these invasive plants in other areas of the Sacramento River watershed.

No permanent roads will be created. Four-wheel drive all terrain vehicles (quads) will be used to transport supplies to treatment crews who will access target areas on foot. It is anticipated that Project work will be initiated in 2012 and will continue for a total of 5 years. Implementation of this proposed action will occur each year between September 1 and October 15. Two control strategies will be used to implement the Project objective.

Manual Control: Small (defined as one-inch or smaller stem diameter) individual nonnative plants may be removed by hand using either a weed wrench or spade. Once nonnative plants are manually removed, soil will be tamped back in place. This work will create very minor soil disturbances.

Herbicide Control: Glyphosate and triclopyr TEA herbicides will be used to treat nonnative plants due to their efficacy in controlling the target species, low toxicity to non-target organisms, and chemical properties that limits potential impacts to the environment. Formulations approved for use near water will be utilized. All treatments will be conducted by certified Applicators in compliance with product labeling and Department of Pesticide Regulation regulations. A nonylphenol polyethoxylate (NPE) surfactant may be tankmixed with the herbicides to increase efficacy. However, most terrestrial glyphosate products contain NPE surfactants as formulation constituents and do not require additional surfactants. The NPE-based surfactants improve foliar coverage and decrease surface tension of the herbicide solution which facilitates herbicide penetration through the leaf's cuticle layer.

Chemical treatment methods will include hand application spot spraying of contact herbicides from backpack sprayers and cut stump treatments in order to minimize exposure to non-target plants. No aerial treatments are proposed.

Project Impacts: The IS/MND has identified the following potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation measures: (1) physical or chemical impacts to elderberry plants potentially supporting valley elderberry longhorn beetle; (2) disturbance-related impacts to foothill yellow-legged frog; (3) disturbance to wildlife, including species that may be denning or nesting at the time of treatments; (4) fuel spills in riparian areas; and (5) exposure of people or structures to unintentionally ignited wildland fires.

CCWG has agreed to implement Mitigation Measures developed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts listed above. Mitigation Measures will be enforced through the Project Streambed Alteration Agreement and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.