

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

On June 23, 2005, the California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) distributed to public agencies and the general public the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) on the Sacramento River–Chico Landing Subreach Habitat Restoration Project. The Draft EIR was prepared on behalf of CBDA in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines. CBDA is the lead agency for CEQA compliance.

In accordance with Section 15105(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, CBDA provided a 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR that ended on August 8, 2005. CBDA received several comment letters on the Draft EIR. As allowed by Section 15202 of the State CEQA Guidelines, CBDA also held a public meeting on July 25, 2005, at the Hamilton City Fire Department. The meeting provided an opportunity for people to ask questions about different aspects of the project and the Draft EIR and to express comments and concerns.

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088, a lead agency must evaluate comments on environmental issues that it receives from persons who reviewed a Draft EIR on a project, and must prepare written responses to comments that raise significant environmental points. The written responses must describe the disposition of significant environmental issues raised, and there must be good faith, reasoned analysis in the responses. This document has been prepared in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15088 and 15132 to respond to the comments received by CBDA on significant environmental issues related to the Draft EIR.

According to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15089, the lead agency must prepare a Final EIR prior to approving a project. The contents of a Final EIR are specified in Section 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Furthermore, the lead agency may provide an opportunity for review of the Final EIR by the public or by commenting agencies before approving the project. CBDA has prepared the Final EIR in accordance with Sections 15089 and 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

This document and the Draft EIR together comprise the Final EIR for the Sacramento River–Chico Landing Subreach Habitat Restoration Project. The Draft EIR is hereby incorporated into this document by reference.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is divided into five chapters and four attached appendices:

Chapter 1, “Introduction,” describes the purpose of this document and outlines its organization.

Chapter 2, “Comments and Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR,” reproduces the comment letters received by CBDA on the Draft EIR, summarizes the comments provided at the July 25, 2005, public comment meeting and provides responses to the comments. A letter from the State Clearinghouse is included at the end of this chapter acknowledging that CBDA has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents.

Chapter 3, “Responses to Lead Agency Comments and Revisions to the Draft EIR,” primarily addresses other comments provided by CBDA during the public review period that were submitted electronically as in-text comments within the Draft EIR document. Subsequent consultation between CBDA, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) resulted in concurrence that several of these comments warranted further discussion in the Final EIR. These responses to lead agency comments and editorial text revisions are provided as part of this chapter.

Chapter 4, “References,” lists the sources cited in this document.

Chapter 5, “Agency Roles and Report Preparers,” lists the individuals who prepared the Final EIR.

Appendix A, “Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program,” describes mitigation monitoring responsibilities, mitigation timing, and compliance verification responsibility for mitigation measures identified in the EIR. This appendix has been prepared to comply with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15097.

Appendix B, “Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, Good Neighbor Policy,” describes the policy actions adopted by the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCA Forum) Board of Directors on June 19, 2003, that are designed to facilitate open communication between entities with direct interests in resources within the Sacramento River Conservation Area (SRCA), and avoid negative impacts relating to potentially conflicting land uses.

Appendix C, “Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge Mowing Guidelines: Avoiding and Minimizing Impacts to Ground Nesting Birds.”

Appendix D, “Best Management Practices and Mitigation Measures to Minimize Potential Impacts to Giant Garter Snake within the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex.”