

Subject: CDFW's comments on the DEIR for the Yuba City Boat Ramp Sediment Removal Project (SCH No. 2020060424)
Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 9:17:52 AM Pacific Standard Time
From: Quillman, Gabriele@Wildlife
To: Michael Bessette **Governor's Office of Planning & Research**
CC: Wildlife R2 CEQA, OPR State Clearinghouse
Priority: High **Jan 19 2021**
Attachments: image001.png **STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Dear Mr. Bessette:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Yuba City Boat Ramp Sediment Removal Project (project) [SCH No. 2020060424]. CDFW is responding to the DEIR as a Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources (California Fish and Game Code sections 711.7 and 1802, and the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines section 15386), and as a Responsible Agency regarding any discretionary actions (CEQA Guidelines section 15381), such as the issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (Fish and Game Code sections 1600 *et seq.*) and/or a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Permit for Incidental Take of Endangered, Threatened, and/or Candidate species (Fish and Game Code sections 2080 and 2080.1).

Project Location and Description

The project area includes the confluence of the Feather and Yuba Rivers and the Yuba City Boat Ramp facility comprising Assessor Parcel No. 52-570-006 and the surrounding lands on the west bank of the Feather River, at approximately 39.13017° latitude, -121.598673° longitude.

The project proposes to remove a total of approximately 315,600 cubic yards of sediment from 28 acres of the Feather River/Yuba River confluence in two phases. Dewatering and disposal of Phase 1 dredged material is proposed within wastewater ponds that are proposed for decommissioning at the Marysville Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) located adjacent to the dredging area. Phase 2 dredged material will also be dewatered and disposed of in the wastewater ponds unless funding is not received in time, in which case it may be dewatered in tanks and disposed of in a landfill.

Comments and Recommendations

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations presented below to assist the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency (SBFCA; the CEQA Lead Agency) in adequately identifying and mitigating the project's significant, or potentially significant, impacts on biological resources.

Work Window

- Mitigation Measure FISH-1 proposes to limit dredging operations to a work window of June 15 through October 15 to avoid the most sensitive life stages of listed anadromous fish species. However, emigrating juvenile salmonids may be present in the area through June (per communication with CDFW, fisheries biologist Tracy McReynolds). In addition, adult fall-run salmon (a California Species of Special Concern) begin migrating into these systems in September. Therefore, to minimize potential impacts on special-status salmonids, CDFW recommends that the work window be limited to July 1 through September 1.

Green Sturgeon

The timing of green sturgeon spawning events documented in 2018 and 2019 suggests that larval or early-stage juvenile green sturgeon are likely to be present in the area during the work period (per communication with CDFW, fisheries biologist Marc Beccio). While adult green sturgeon would likely be able to avoid the work area easily, larval and early-stage juvenile green sturgeon are not strong swimmers and may be injured or killed by dredging activities. Green sturgeon are primarily nocturnal during their early life stages, spending daylight hours in interstitial refugia. The type of refugia preferred by young sturgeon is unlikely to be present within the work area, so dredging during the day is much less likely to impact the species than nighttime dredging. Therefore, to minimize potential injury/mortality of green sturgeon, CDFW recommends that dredging at night be avoided or limited as much as possible.

Further Coordination

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR for the Yuba City Boat Ramp Sediment Removal Project (SCH No. 2020060424), and requests that SBFCA address CDFW's comments prior to adopting the DEIR. If you have any questions pertaining to these comments, please contact me at (916) 358-2955 or gabriele.quillman@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

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