

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Dept. of Water Resources
San Luis Field Division 31770
Gonzaga Rd. Gustine, CA 95322

Lead Agency: California Department of Water Resources

Project Title: Routine Maintenance in Los Banos Creek

Project Location City & County: Merced County

Project Location – Specific: The project area is approximately 7 miles southwest of the City of Los Banos, California in U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles Volta and Ortigalita Peak NW (Latitude 36.99332°, Longitude -120.930023°).

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Los Banos Detention Dam is a joint-use facility owned by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and is operated and maintained by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Releases through the dam are made according to flood control criteria specified by the United States Army Corps of Engineers or through scheduled exercising of the flood gates at the outlet works.

Discharges are released through the outlet works and spillway into a ponding basin at the toe of the dam. Dam features are designed to direct water flow away from the dam, allowing water to follow its natural course in the Los Banos Creek channel. Over time, the ponding basin and Creek channel become filled with sediment and vegetation, preventing proper drainage and causing water to back up against the dam. Routine maintenance below the spillway and in the Los Banos Creek channel is necessary to protect the dam. Further downstream, the water is carried under the California Aqueduct/San Luis Canal by barrel culverts. The following work is proposed in Los Banos Creek, including the ponding basin downstream of Los Banos Detention Dam:

At an average excavation depth of 4 feet, up to 75,000 cubic yards of sediment will be removed from the ponding basin and Los Banos Creek channel during the first year of the project. After the first year, up to 15,000 cubic yards of sediment will be removed annually, to keep the channel clear. Removed sediment will be placed in designated spoil areas in upland areas on the north and south sides of the Los Banos Creek channel. Material will be removed using a long-reach excavator, or hand tools where use of the long-reach excavator isn't possible.

Live and dead vegetation, and trash, will be removed from directly below the outlet works and spillway, from the ponding basin, the Creek channel and banks, in the area located between the ponding basin and the area north of the Creek channel, and along various portions of Canyon Road. Removed vegetation will be placed in existing spoil areas located in upland areas north and south of the Los Banos

Creek channel. Trash will be disposed of at an appropriate facility. Vegetation will be removed during the first year of the project, new growth will be removed annually, as needed.

Arundo grass and any other invasive species will be removed and disposed of in compliance with appropriate protocols.

Approximately 250 tons of riprap will be transported from San Luis Field Division’s Basalt Hill. The riprap will be 10-inches in diameter or greater and will be added to the Creek banks and slopes upstream of Canyon Road that already have riprap on them. New riprap will be placed on banks and slopes where no riprap currently exists. Approximately 50 tons of gravel will be placed on an existing road directly north of and adjacent to the Creek channel and approximately 200 tons of aggregate base gravel will be placed on existing access roads around the Creek channel. Existing access roads in the vicinity of the channel and basin will be graded.

All work will be performed annually, as needed. The work will protect the integrity of the dam. State Water Project and Central Valley Project Contractors will benefit.

Exempt/Suspend Status:

- Ministerial (§21080[b][1]; 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Proclamation of a State of Emergency Due to Drought)
- Emergency Project (Public Resources Code §21080[b][4]; California Code of Regulations §15269[c])
- Categorical Exemption: 15301 (Existing Facilities)
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt: Sediment and vegetation removal will occur in the existing outlet works, spillway, ponding basin, and the portions of Los Banos Creek that were configured to pass 1,000 cfs. The project will restore the facilities and portions of the Creek to design capacities, but will not increase the designed capacities.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Water Resources

Contact Person: Irma Clevenger

Telephone:(209) 827-5123

Signature: Valerie Clevenger **Date:** 9/14/2020 **Title:** utility crafts Superintendent

Signed by Lead Agency **Governor’s Office of Planning & Research**

Signed by Applicant

Sep 14 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE