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Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: _____

Project Title: ANDRÉE CLARK BIRD REFUGE COASTAL RESTORATION

Lead Agency: CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

Contact Name: MEGAN ARCINIEGA

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Project Location: 1100 E Cabrillo & 1414 Park Place, Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara

City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The project proposes to improve water quality and restore habitat for aquatic and avian wildlife through the replacement of the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge Lagoon weir and weir gate, removal of approximately 23 non-native trees, recontouring portions of the lagoon shoreline, recontouring the mouth of the lagoon on the beach side (adjacent to the volleyball courts), seasonal lowering of the sand berm at the mouth of the lagoon on the beach side, and installation of native plants and rock clusters along the margin of the lake, islands and mouth of the lagoon. Construction of a bio-retention basin would also occur at the Municipal Tennis Center property, located at 1414 Park Place.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

Despite the poor water quality, a number of important wildlife species depend on the Bird Refuge. The federally endangered tidewater goby inhabits the lake and lagoon. The lagoon also provides habitat for the South Western pond turtle, which is designated as a species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Several bird species of federal concern are present at the Bird Refuge including black skimmer, oak titmouse, Alan's hummingbird, yellow warbler, whimbrel, and peregrine falcon. In addition to individual species, the project area also includes a number of sensitive natural communities including coastal brackish marsh, coastal salt marsh, freshwater marsh, arroyo willow scrub, coastal sage scrub, southern foredunes and open water habitat.

The primary environmental impact resulting from the restoration project would consist of short-term (construction) impacts to biological resources described above--namely the potential for construction activities to interfere with breeding or nesting habitat and impact water quality due to grading activities. However, all of these potential impacts are relatively minor and would be less than significant with project construction occurring outside of the breeding/nesting season for most species, and mitigation measures that require pre-construction/maintenance surveys, monitoring by an Onsite Environmental Coordinator, grading best management practices and wetland protective measures such as silt fencing. Long-term effects to these habitats, plants, and wildlife are considered to be beneficial as the project would restore and enhance the biological resources of the area.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Poor water quality conditions and strong odors at the lake have been problematic at the Bird Refuge since the 1920's when it was dredged and disconnected from Sycamore Creek. In the past ten years, the poor water quality (low dissolved oxygen levels, cyanobacteria blooms, poor water clarity, and strong odor) has continued to deteriorate due to the accumulation of nutrients, lack of flushing storm events, and drought conditions, which has become a concern for the community.

But because of the site's characteristics, most of the water quality improvement techniques that often work for small lagoons/lakes would be, or have proven to be, ineffective in the Bird Refuge. In an effort to develop a long-term solution to the deteriorating water quality, wildlife habitat, and periodic odor events, the Creeks Division started intensive water quality monitoring of the Bird Refuge in August of 2012. During this time, the Creeks Division staff also evaluated past efforts for improving water quality and reducing odor events at the Bird Refuge (chemical treatment, supplemental water, mechanical mixing, and microbial augmentation). Staff evaluation concluded that these techniques were either not habitat friendly, cost effective, or successful in the long-run. During 2015-2018, Creeks Division staff continued their efforts to find a solution to the degraded water quality and habitat conditions at the Bird Refuge. A number of potential techniques for improving water quality were evaluated including extensive literature review and coordination with several technical experts. Eight alternatives were identified for preliminary consideration. The alternatives employed different strategic combinations of dredging/filling, aeration, mixing, flushing, probiotics, and hydrologic restoration. During 2017, two of these alternatives were studied by a consultant (Anchor QEA) in more detail. In 2018, through a public and stakeholder review process the proposed restoration design was developed.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

California Coastal Commission
Army Corps of Engineers
California Department of Fish & Wildlife
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board