



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 05/2020)**

Project Information

DIST-CO-RTE: 05-MON-1

PM/PM: 27.2/27.6,29.6/36.8

EA: 05-1N410 **Project Number:** 0521000015 **Federal Aid Project Number:** TBD

Project Description:

Proposed work is to repair and reconstruct damaged highway facilities resulting from debris flows and other rain related damage from the storm of January 27th and 28th on Highway 1 in Monterey County. This project description covers the Rat Creek washout (MON-1-30.2) and other repairs north of Rat Creek. The Governor declared a state of emergency for Monterey County on January 29, 2021 given the extent of damage caused by this rainfall event.

On January 27,2021, an early morning storm began to pass over the Big Sur Coast. The storm front stalled, became an atmospheric river, led to higher than usual rainfall totals for the area, and caused fire debris and surface material to inundate many of the drainage systems that cross the Highway 1. Many cut slopes above the highway had surface material and fire debris that washed down during the rain event.

Severe damage occurred at MON-1-30.2 - Rat Creek, where debris and mud blocked the existing 66" corrugated metal pipe that conveyed the flow under the embankment. Runoff began to pond behind the roadway embankment. The water level rose, overtopped the highway, and eroded the fill on the downstream side. By the morning of January 29th, both lanes had been lost.

The scope of work is for the contractor to clear the mud and debris from the highway, clear culvert inlet areas of debris and mud, clear culverts impacted by debris flows, and allow Caltrans forces to assess the condition of inlets.

The main items of work:

- Clear inlet areas and dispose of the debris and mud,
- Vactor culverts to clear debris and mud,
- Repair and enhance inlet redundancy features,
- Clear debris and mud from the highway,
- Reconstruct the highway embankments,
- Install a new main culvert and overflow culverts in the reconstructed highway embankment,
- Remove Debris from Bridge Bents and Abutments,
- Install inlet protection and redundancy features,
- Install down drains,
- Paving and striping the reconstructed section of highway,
- Repair/Rehab/Replace damaged culverts as needed,
- Develop a borrow site at approximately Post Mile 27.5
- Place erosion control measures, and,
- Provide temporary traffic control.



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Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- Not Applicable - Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
Not Applicable - Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:
X Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

- Categorically Exempt. Class Enter class. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.
Covered by the Common Sense Exemption. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Randy LaVack
Print Name Signature Date
3/19/2021

Project Manager

Berkeley Lindt
Print Name Signature Date
3-19-2021

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

X 23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2019, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- X 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(9i)
23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

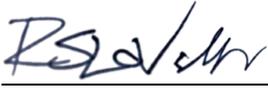
23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by



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Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Randy LaVack		3/19/2021
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Berkeley Lindt		3-19-2021
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: N/A
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 3/19/2021

Avoidance and Minimization Measures:

Biological:

Standard best management practices from Caltrans Standard Specifications 2018 shall be followed. Construction staging, material storage, and layout areas shall be limited to existing pullouts and previously paved areas only. The following avoidance and minimization measures will protect nesting bird species and special-status species that may be present in or near the project impact area:

1. Preconstruction Survey: A Caltrans biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey and be on-site during initial ground disturbances. Should a special-status species be discovered, all work will stop until it is out of harm’s way. Should a State listed species be found, all work will stop and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will be notified. Work may resume if the species leaves the work area or with CDFW permission. In the event that a federal listed species is found during work activities, all work that could affect the species will be stopped, the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified, and work will only resume with their permission. Please contact District 5 Biologist Barrett Holland (805-835-6605) or Paul Holmes (805-459-9634) to arrange a pre-construction survey and to be on-site during initial ground disturbance.

2. Smith’s blue butterfly and Seacliff buckwheat:

Prior to construction, an approved biologist will survey the work site for the presence of Smith’s blue butterfly and its host plant, Seacliff buckwheat. If found within the work activity area, the biologist will be allowed enough time to protect or relocate the Seacliff buckwheat plants before construction activities begin.



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3. Nesting Birds: To comply with the provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CDFG Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5, construction will occur between September 30 and February 1, to the extent possible, to avoid impacts to nesting birds. If construction is proposed for the breeding season, contact District 5 Biologist Paul Holmes (805-459-9634) or Barrett Holland (805-835-6605) to arrange a preconstruction survey at least two weeks prior to project start. If nesting activity is detected, Caltrans will, if possible, establish a buffer around the nest(s). The buffer will be maintained, and construction activities will avoid nest sites until the biologist determines that the young have fledged or nesting activity has ceased. Typical buffers for nests include 250 feet for passerines and 500 feet for raptors.

4. California red-legged frog (CRLF): California red-legged frogs have been observed within the project limits. The likelihood of encountering red legged frogs within the work area is very low, mostly due to the low quality of upland/dispersal habitat. Also, there are currently no sources of deep water and or aquatic features that would be affected by construction activities proposed. In order to avoid adverse affects to red-legged frogs and red legged frog Critical Habitat, avoidance and minimization measures will be recommended as part of this project.

- All construction related work shall occur during the daylight hours.

5. Grubbing: Vegetation at the access point shall be driven over only and no grubbing shall occur.

6. Sediment Removal: Sediment removed shall be disposed in an upland area (i.e., staging area) and/or hauled off site where it cannot re-enter a waterway and will not affect a special-status species habitat.

7. California Condor: All work will cease within 1000 feet of the California condors. The Resident Engineer and Biologist will be notified immediately.

8. Aquatic Resources: Measures shall be taken to avoid direct and indirect impacts to waterways.

a. Standard best management practices shall be enacted to ensure that sediment and run-off do not occur.

b. Vehicles and equipment shall be checked and maintained daily, to prevent leaks of materials that if introduced to water could be deleterious to aquatic life.

c. Vehicles and Equipment shall be refueled at least 100 feet from the drainages within the project area. All refueling and equipment maintenance should be conducted away from waterbodies to avoid accidental contamination.

9. Erosion Control / Vegetation Restoration:



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- Erosion shall be controlled by one or a combination of the following: natural fiber matting and/or rolls, silt fencing, erosion control chain link fencing and incorporating straw, applying a stabilizing emulsion, and seeding as necessary.
- Only locally occurring native plants shall be used for erosion control and restoration.
- Erosion control shall be placed on all disturbed slopes and material disposal sites.

10. Storage Areas: Material and equipment storage is restricted to existing unvegetated pull-outs and paved areas in the State right-of-way. Storage areas proposed by the contractor that are outside of the right-of-way shall be reviewed in advance by District 5 Biologist Barrett Holland (805-835-6605) or Paul Holmes (805-459-9634).

11. Invasive Species: To reduce the spread of invasive non-native plant species, Caltrans will implement the following protection measures to comply with Executive Order (EO) 13112:

a. Invasive plants are known on the project site, therefore any plant materials removed during construction will be contained and treated as trash and disposed of in a permitted landfill.

Cultural:

Pursuant to Stipulation XVI.B (Emergency Situations) of the January 2014 Programmatic Agreement, Caltrans has determined that the emergency undertaking has the potential to affect historic properties. CSO, SHPO, and all Native American tribes that attach religious or cultural significance to the affected properties have been notified. A data recovery process has been implemented. Repair work shall not commence in these areas until data recovery is completed. A narrative report documenting the data recovery efforts shall be provided to Caltrans by August 23, 2021.