COPY

Filed Thursday July 15 2021
Nevada County Clerk-Recorder
AM, deputy
File # 20210000023

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:

☒ Office of Planning and Research

U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Street Address: 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113, Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ County Clerk
County of: Nevada
Address: 950 Maidu Ave - Ste 210
Grass Valley, CA 95945

From:
Public Agency: Nevada Irrigation Distict
Address: 1036 West Main Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945
Contact: Neysa King
Phone: 530-271-6733

Lead Agency (if different from above):
Address:
Contact:
Phone:

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2021050237

Project Title: English Meadow Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement Project

Project Applicant: Nevada Irrigation District

Project Location (include county): Nevada and Sierra counties

Project Description:

Refer to the attached page for a summary Project description.

POSTED IN THE NEVADA
COUNTY CLERKS OFFICE
FROM 7/15/21 TO 8/15/21
BY _____ (DEPUTY)

This is to advise that the Nevada Irrigation District (☒ Lead Agency or ☐ Responsible Agency) has approved the above described project on July 14, 2021 (date) and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project.

1. The project [☐ will ☒ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☐ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
   ☒ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures [☒ were ☐ were not] made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [☒ was ☐ was not] adopted for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted for this project.
6. Findings [☒ were ☐ were not] made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the final EIR with comments and responses and record of project approval, or the negative Declaration, is available to the General Public at:
https://www.nidwater.com/english-meadow

Signature (Public Agency): _____ Title: General Manager

Date: 7/15/2021 Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code.
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

Revised 2011

Project Objectives:

The Nevada Irrigation District (NID or District) plans to implement floodplain restoration and forest management activities on 380 acres within the headwaters of the Middle Yuba River in Nevada and Sierra Counties, California. Project activities will take place about 1 mile upstream of Jackson Meadows Reservoir, a critical NID storage facility used for recreation, clean hydroelectric power production and water supply for 25,000 agricultural and drinking water customers in Nevada, Placer and Yuba Counties.

Consistent with the District's land use objectives, the purpose of this Project is to improve watershed/ floodplain function and resilience of English Meadow and the surrounding forest to achieve the following benefits:

- Reduce the transport of bedload and fine sediment from the upper watershed into Jackson Meadows Reservoir (maintain reservoir water storage capacity).
- Increase seasonal retention and release of precipitation in the meadow floodplain aquifer.
- Enhance habitat for meadow-dependent species.
- Improve forest health to reduce wildfire risk through fuels reduction.
- Increase snowpack and surface flow through mechanical thinning of the forest community on surrounding slopes.
- Reduce conifer encroachment into the meadow.

Brief Project Description:

The existing condition of English Meadow and the surrounding forests reflects the complex history of inundation and draining, construction of ditches, grazing, and logging at the site. The rapid draining of water that resulted from the destruction of historic dams at the bottom of the meadow likely initiated the incision of the Middle Yuba River channel, and its subsequent disconnect from the meadow floodplain. The Middle Yuba River in the Project area currently exhibits extreme high and low flows, resulting in erosion of the river's banks as precipitation and snowmelt quickly flow through the meadow and into Jackson Meadows Reservoir, without accessing the floodplain. This, in combination with construction of ditches that have dried the meadow, has resulted in a shift in the proportion of wetland versus upland habitat.

The hydrologic regime in the Project area is highly dynamic, with watershed conditions resulting in short bursts of high flows, typically associated with rain-on-snow events in the spring. The high-velocity flows have resulted in headcutting and channel incision. In functional channel/floodplain systems, the flows overbank every 1.5 to 2 years. However, because of channel incision, Middle Yuba River flows within the Project area are estimated to overbank only every 10 years. The infrequent overbanking of the stream, coupled with the increased rate at which water flows from the meadow due to incision, have altered soil conditions and plant assemblages within the meadow. Restoration/enhancement activities aim to return moisture to soils in the floodplain and increase groundwater hydrologic activity via modified process-assistance based techniques using on-site materials.

The following activities are planned as part of the Project:

- **Mainstem and Floodplain Treatments:** Two of the proposed treatment methods—debris jams and riffles—are intended to reduce headcutting, bank erosion, and channel incision by 1) raising the elevation, or thalweg, of the mainstem channel, thus allowing flows to access the existing meadow floodplain aquifer and 2) slowing the velocity of flows, allowing for the natural

aggradation of bedload material. Other treatments to be implemented within the mainstem channel and/or within the associated floodplain include bank stabilization; fill of erosional features (gullies) and artificial channels (manmade ditches); berm removal; and revegetation of bare areas.

- **Floodplain Vegetation Treatments:** Approximately 200 acres of habitat within the meadow basin will be treated. Treatment methods will include conifer removal (i.e., mastication/mechanical thinning by hand; individual selection and removal of trees) and placement of log barriers to obstruct cattle movement.
- **Forest Treatments:** A 180-acre area of upland conifer forest around the meadow will be thinned to increase water yield (i.e., by increasing accumulated snow load or reducing water resources consumed by trees) and to reduce future conifer encroachment into the meadow, and to decrease the potential for high-intensity wildfire.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** NID has partnered with an interdisciplinary team of restoration experts to collect 4 years of pre-Project baseline data. Post-project implementation monitoring will be performed in Years 3, 4, and 5 of the Project (at a minimum) to evaluate the effectiveness of the channel and floodplain treatments, and to determine whether modifications or additional treatments are necessary.