
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

DATE: September 16, 2022

TO: Responsible Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

SUBJECT: **Bellota Weir Modification Project – San Joaquin County**

The Stockton East Water District (SEWD) is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the proposed Bellota Weir Modification Project (Proposed Project). SEWD has directed the preparation of an Initial Study (IS) Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) in compliance with CEQA.

Project Location: The Project site is located in San Joaquin County on the Calaveras River at the fork of Mormon Slough and the Old Calaveras River, approximately 17 miles downstream of the New Hogan Dam. The Project area is situated north of Escalon-Bellota Road between State Route 26 on the west and East Shelton Road on the southeast.

Project Description: The Bellota Weir Modification Project (Project or proposed Project), a continuation of the Calaveras River Anadromous Fish Protection Project and requirement of the Calaveras River Habitat Conservation Plan (CHCP), is a proposal by the Stockton East Water District (SEWD) to design, permit and install a modern fish screen and related improvements at SEWD's Bellota Intake Structure. Project components include construction of a new screened diversion intake and associated conveyance improvements, construction of "fishways" comprised of a roughened channel and fish ladder to improve upstream anadromous fish migration from Mormon Slough, and construction of a fish exclusion structure on the Old Calaveras River to prevent entrainment of juvenile salmonids. The Project has been developed collaboratively with other interested agencies, including, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to define a final course of action to eliminate known fish passage impediments while improving Bellota Intake Structure operational flexibility. The Project plans continue to be refined in consultation with resource agencies.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts: Potentially significant impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and tribal cultural resources were identified in the Initial Study. All impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of identified mitigation measures.

Hazardous Waste Sites: Pursuant to Section 15087(c)(6) of the Guidelines for California Environmental Quality Act, SEWD acknowledges the non-existence of hazardous waste sites within the Project area reviewed by this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND).

IS/MND Document Review and Availability: The public review and comment period for the Draft IS/MND will extend for 31 days **starting September 16, 2022 and ending October 17, 2022**. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, printed hard copies will not be available to the public. However, the Draft IS/MND can be viewed and/or downloaded from the SEWD website: <https://sewd.net>

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Comments/Questions: Comments and/or questions regarding the IS/MND may be directed to:

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