Finding of No Significant Impact
For the Salmon Creek Large Wood Structures
and Gilardi Ranch Riparian Planting Project

In September 2010, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Habitat Conservation prepared a Targeted Supplemental Environmental Assessment (TSEA) for a proposed restoration activity. This proposed project will be funded through the NOAA Restoration Center (RC) by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The proposed action is a project entitled "Salmon Creek Large Wood Structures and Gilardi Ranch Riparian Planting Project." The purpose of this project is to increase Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and Steelhead Trout (*O. mykiss*) survival by increasing rearing habitat in Salmon Creek estuary, which drains directly into the Pacific Ocean in coastal central California. The TSEA assesses the adverse impacts to the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii aurora*) and California freshwater shrimp (*Syncharis pacifica*), both of which are species listed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined in their BiOp that this project was likely to adversely affect California Red-legged Frog and the California freshwater shrimp but is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species' or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. An incidental take statement was included in the USFWS BiOp along with reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions to be adhered to. The additional potential impacts to other elements of the human environment for this type of project are analyzed in the February 6, 2002 Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Community-based Restoration Program's Implementation Plan and the June 23, 2006 Supplement (SPEA); the PEA and SPEA and BiOp are incorporated by reference into the TSEA. The TSEA is expressly incorporated by reference in this FONSI.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrative Order 216-6 (May 20, 1999) contains criteria for determining the significance of the impacts of a proposed action. In addition, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 C.F.R. §1508.27 state that the significance of an action should be analyzed both in terms of "context" and "intensity." Each criterion listed below is relevant in making a finding of no significant impact and has been considered individually, as well as in combination with the others. The significance of this action is analyzed based on the NAO 216-6 criteria and CEQ's context and intensity criteria. These include:

1) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to cause substantial damage to the ocean and coastal habitats and/or essential fish habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and identified in FMPs?

> Response: No. Implementation of this project, as all projects funded through the CRP, is designed to enhance or restore coastal habitats, and/or fish habitats that are essential to federally managed fish as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act or identified in FMPs. Salmon Creek is not Essential Fish Habitat and no EFH consultation was initiated.

2) Can the proposed action be expected to have a substantial impact on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function within the affected area (e.g., benthic productivity, predator-prey relationships, etc.)?

Response: There will be no significant impacts on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function. As concluded by the USFWS BiOp for California Red-legged frog and California freshwater shrimp, the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these listed species based on the following: (1) the temporary nature of adverse effects to listed species; (2) the implementation of conservation measures to minimize effects to listed species; and (3) the expected long-term benefits to listed species resulting from the proposed action including increased habitat quality and complexity. The action is expected to have long-term beneficial impacts on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function.

3) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse impact on public health or safety?

Response: This criterion was adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No. Implementation of the CRP is designed to enhance habitat and be beneficial to the environment, as well as public health and safety. Projects that would alter floodplains or modify storm water management structures to prevent erosion or improve water quality, and projects that would remove contaminated sediments to restore habitat would beneficially affect public health and safety. No adverse impacts on public health and safety are expected."

4) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, their critical habitat, marine mammals, or other non-target species?

Response: Yes. NMFS Protected Resources and the USFWS have reviewed any potential effects to species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. USFWS has issued a Biological Opinion that concludes that the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of either California Red-legged frog or California freshwater shrimp or their critical habitat. NMFS has concluded that the proposed action is likely to adversely affect CCC Coho Salmon or its critical habitat, or CCC Steelhead Trout. These impacts are limited to short term, minor, construction related impacts and are consistent with impacts described in the RC's programmatic Biological Opinion (BiOp) for small restoration projects.

5) Are significant social or economic impacts interrelated with natural or physical environmental effects?

Response: This criterion was adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No significant social or economic impacts are expected. CRP-implemented

habitat restoration projects, especially those having an education component, may have a substantial beneficial effect to habitats supporting coastal or marine resources; the projects would likely have a directly related economic and/or social benefit as well. Beneficial impacts would result because education of local citizens and youth about environmental issues in the community and beyond, especially habitat restoration and conservation, would promote environmental understanding of living coastal and marine resources, stewardship, and sustainability of the resources. The sustainability of these resources contributes positively to the long-term economic stability of the affected community."

6) Are the effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?

Response: It is not likely that the effects of this project on the quality of the human environment would be highly controversial. Professional engineers and project planners have designed the habitat structures, riparian planting and the pipeline to facilitate water conservation. The project will be monitored for both its effectiveness at restoring habitat, and for increased fish use of the site. Reports on the project outcome will be required by the NOAA Restoration Center and shared with NMFS Protected Resources and USFWS personnel.

7) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in substantial impacts to unique areas, such as historic or cultural resources, park land, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, essential fish habitat, or ecologically critical areas?

Response: No. The impacts of the proposed work will include enhancement of Salmon Creek to improve in-stream habitat, fish survival, riparian cover and to facilitate water conservation on Gilardi Ranch. The site was surveyed for cultural and archaeological resources and no cultural or archaeological resources were found at the site. While the project will have minor permanent effects to in-stream habitat and stream banks and potentially additional minor temporary impacts during construction, the proposed actions are covered under NWP's and appropriate pre-construction notification to the Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District has been completed

8) Are the effects on the human environment likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?

Response: No. Any uncertainty or associated risk will not be significant and will be minimized by sound design, implementation techniques and adaptive project management to address any concerns, should they arise. As noted in the criterion 4 response, the individual BiOp concluded that the project will not jeopardize the continued existence of the two listed species found at the project site.

9) Is the proposed action related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts?

Response: This criterion was adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"The proposed action, when combined with related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will not cause cumulative significant impacts to the human environment. Any impacts caused by the proposed action would generally be temporary, minor to moderate impacts due to ground disturbance or other construction-related activities from implementing specific projects, which then result in net long-term or permanent, moderate to substantial beneficial impacts on the affected communities, resources, and ecosystems of the United States. Due to the CRP's national scope and infrequency of projects occurring within the same geographic areas, the temporary negative impacts related to implementation would only be moderate, and isolated to project locations. Also, these negative impacts can be avoided, minimized or mitigated by best management practices and other measures, as described in the SPEA.

Many other federal, state, and local government agencies and private organizations implement similar beneficial projects across the United States to help restore and maintain natural ecosystems. Consequently, if and when other unrelated projects are planned or identified in a project area with spatially or temporally cumulative adverse impacts, the CRP staff can work with grantees to implement best management practices, and/or require project timing that will avoid cumulative adverse impacts, by using special award conditions as described in the SPEA. The net beneficial impacts resulting from past projects, the proposed actions, and foreseeable future projects would be long-term and beneficial impacts. Overall, the sustainability of resources, especially living coastal and marine resources, would be enhanced." The proposed project with all of its phases and with other restoration projects done within this watershed, when taken together, do not result in cumulatively significant impacts.

10) Is the proposed action likely to adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources?

Response: Review of the proposed action and action area determined that this specific action did not have the potential for adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources and no consultations with SHPO/THPO were initiated. This criterion was therefore adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No. Implementation of the CRP is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts to sites in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. As described in the SPEA, if a project has a potential for adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources, the CRP will conduct an evaluation of the effects and prepare a project-specific historical and cultural resource assessment to determine the impacts. Depending on the level of impact, the CRP will initiate consultation(s) on a project-level basis with either the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), as appropriate. Consultations completed with the SHPO or THPO will ensure that the CRP is implemented in accordance with all applicable cultural and historic resource protection laws and regulations. If project impacts are not described in the SPEA, a targeted supplemental EA or EIS will be completed to ensure compliance with NEPA."

11) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in the introduction or spread of a non-indigenous species?

Response: This criterion was adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. In addition, the general measures presented in the project-specific BiOp call for the use of native species, and these measures will be adhered to as part of the action.

The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No. Implementation of the CRP should not cause or promote the introduction or spread of non-indigenous species, and as described in section 2.2 and 4.1 of the SPEA, some project-specific actions may intentionally be conducted to prevent or avoid the introduction or spread of invasive species, and protect habitat for native species."

12) Is the proposed action likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration?

Response: No. Commitment of funds for this action does not obligate NOAA's involvement in future similar actions. In addition, any future proposed action requires a new BiOp and additional NEPA analysis. Consultation with NMFS Protected Resources or USFWS on this project and any others that may impact species listed under the Endangered Species Act will provide an opportunity to ensure that this action and future actions have no significant adverse effects.

13) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment?

Response: This criterion was adequately considered in the SPEA, which analyzed a broad range of restoration activities. The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No. As described in Section 6.0 of the SPEA, implementation of the CRP will comply with all federal regulatory requirements, and to the extent possible with and state and local laws, and is expected to enhance or restore habitats and the environment that support coastal and marine living resources."

14) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in cumulative adverse effects that could have a substantial effect on the target species or non-target species?

Response: This restoration project will not have significant impacts when analyzed alone or taken together with similar restoration projects done throughout the watershed over time or in neighboring watersheds with the same target or non-target species present.

The response included in the SPEA's associated FONSI states:

"No. As explained in the above response to criterion 9, the proposed action can reasonably be expected to result in cumulative *beneficial* effects on target species (i.e., federally protected or managed species or fisheries). The net cumulative effect could have a positive impact on the target species. The net additive effects resulting from past

projects, the proposed action, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that would affect target species would constitute a long-term beneficial impact to those species."

DETERMINATION

In view of the information presented in this document and the analysis contained in the supporting Targeted Supplemental Environmental Assessment prepared for the Salmon Creek Large Wood Structures and Gilardi Ranch Riparian Planting Project and the BiOp, it is hereby determined that this project will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment as described above and in the TSEA. Moreover, there are not unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources at the project site. In addition, all beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an EIS for this action is not necessary.

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