

# **APPENDIX E**

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# **NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE LETTER OF CONCURRENCE**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Region  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

August 27, 2012

In response refer to:  
2012/03258

Randy LaVack  
Acting Senior Environmental Planner  
California Department of Transportation, District 5  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Dear Mr. LaVack,

Thank you for your June 27, 2012, letter requesting initiation of informal consultation with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is now acting as the lead agency for this project as per the agreement with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with Section 6005(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4351 *et seq.*) and all or part of the FHWA Secretary's responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other action required under any environmental law with respect to one or more highway projects within the state. Therefore, Caltrans is now considered the federal action agency for ESA consultations with NMFS for federally funded projects. This letter also serves as consultation under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1934, as amended. The consultation pertains to Caltrans' (in cooperation with Monterey County Department of Public Works), proposed Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement Project over the San Antonio River in southern Monterey County, California. Caltrans has determined the existing one-lane bridge does not meet current design or seismic safety standards and will be replaced to provide a two-lane crossing over the San Antonio River.

The Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge crosses the San Antonio River approximately five miles southwest of the town of Bradley and approximately two miles northwest of the Camp Roberts Army National Guard Training Facility, in rural unincorporated area of southern Monterey County. The San Antonio River flows from San Antonio Reservoir (approximately 2.4 miles upstream of the bridge) to the Salinas River, which discharges to Monterey Bay. Stream flow is present at the project site due to managed stream flow releases from San Antonio Reservoir.

The existing bridge (44C-0009) was constructed in 1921, and consists of a single-lane, 4-span, steel pratt through truss structure approximately 240 feet in length and 20 feet in width. Caltrans proposes to replace the existing bridge with a new, two-span bridge that can accommodate two lanes of traffic each equipped with shoulders, and will be approximately 267 feet long and 32 feet wide. The first span will be 150 feet long and the second span will be 117 feet. The replacement bridge will be constructed adjacent to, and downstream of, the existing bridge. The



bridge will consist of a cast-in-place, post-tensioned, concrete box girder structure supported on one single-column bent, or pier, and two short-seat abutments.

The center pier will have a diameter of approximately 6 or 7 feet and will be supported on a large diameter cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) pile foundation, which will be installed to a depth of approximately 100 feet. The pier will be located outside and to the north of the low-flow channel of the river and above the ordinary high water line (OHWL). The southerly abutment will be supported on two CIDH pile foundations, each with a diameter of approximately 7 feet and will be set to a depth of approximately 75 feet. Excavation for this abutment will be to a depth of approximately five feet. The northerly abutment will be supported on multiple CIDH pile foundations, each with a diameter of approximately 2 feet and set to a depth of approximately 35 feet. Excavation for this abutment will be to a depth of approximately 15 feet. The CIDH piles for the southerly abutment and the center pier will require the installation of permanent steel casings, which will be vibrated in – no impact hammers will be used.

The southern and northern abutments will be constructed outside the 100-year floodplain. However, embankment fill necessary for each abutment will encroach minimally into the 100-year. To prevent erosion of this fill and the abutment structures, rock slope protection (RSP), likely consisting of quarter-ton rocks, will be placed from 5 feet below the toe of each abutment and will extend up to an elevation of 1 foot above the 100-year water surface elevation. The RSP will extend a length of approximately 120 feet along the southerly bank and 80 feet along the northerly bank. The bottom five feet of the RSP will be buried beneath native soils.

Dewatering will not be necessary for this project. However, construction of the bridge superstructure will require the use of a falsework platform which will require supports in the river bed. This will require the installation of gravel pads in the channel. The river channel is approximately 100-110 feet wide at the bridge location. On the southern bank, a gravel pad, consisting of clean washed gravel, will be installed starting from the bank and extending approximately 20-25 feet into the channel. On the northern bank, a similar gravel pad will be installed starting from the bank and extending out approximately 35 feet into the channel. Both pads would be approximately 55 long (length upstream to downstream). This would support a falsework platform approximately 60-65 feet wide and would leave a clear channel width of 50-60 feet for river flow. The gravel will be slowly added starting from the bank, working out into the channel. If necessary, the pads will be left in the river through winter. The design of the falsework was developed based on a hydraulic study conducted for the project. This study modeled various flow events all the way to the 500-year flood at over 2,000 cubic feet per second. New temporary access roads to the river channel will not be necessary, and instead existing roadways will be used. Staging areas are located to the east of the existing bridge and outside of the 100-year floodplain which consist of ruderal vegetation or bare ground.

After the new bridge is constructed, the existing bridge will be completely dismantled and removed. This work will require demolition and removal of large amounts of steel and reinforced concrete material. Per Caltrans standards, the existing piles will be removed down to a minimum of three feet below grade. These piles are all located outside of the low flow channel. Netting and other structures will be installed under both the existing and proposed bridges to preclude debris from falling into the river. Due to work window constraints, the removal of the

existing bridge may not occur during the same year, and therefore the entire project may require two years to complete with a work window of June 15 to October 15.

A small amount of vegetation will be removed or trimmed in order to construct the new bridge and remove the existing bridge. This will include at least three mature valley oaks and a small amount of low-statured willow scrub-shrub vegetation. The three oak trees and the willow scrub shrub habitat are set back from flowing waters and provide little or no shade to the river and their removal will be fully mitigated on-site at the following ratios: valley oak (10:1), willow scrub-shrub (3:1, removal and 2:1 trimming), mule fat riparian scrub (2:1 canopy area), and wetland vegetation (2:1).

Caltrans has proposed to implement standard water quality best management practices (BMPs) outlined in the Caltrans Construction Site BMP Manual (2003) and other minimization measures. These include: (1) installing silt fencing to prevent dirt or other materials from entering the river channel; (2) storing debris, sediment, oils, or other construction related materials in a location where it cannot enter into the river by rainfall or runoff; (3) installing netting beneath the existing and proposed bridges to prevent material from entering the river; (4) conducting all fueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles at least 60 feet away from aquatic habitat; (5) implementing on-site compensatory mitigation for vegetation removal (discussed above); and (6) conducting a species education program for all construction personnel by qualified biologist prior to the beginning construction (Caltrans 2012).

### **Endangered Species Act**

In its June 27, 2012 letter, Caltrans asked for concurrence with a finding that the Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement Project would not likely adversely affect threatened South-Central California Coast (S-CCC) steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). Although the project would result in temporary impacts to a small geographic area of designated critical habitat in the San Antonio River, Caltrans has determined these impacts are unlikely to cause destruction or adverse modification that appreciably diminishes the value of critical habitat for S-CCC steelhead.

The life history of steelhead is summarized by Shapovalov and Taft (1954) and Busby *et al.* (1996). Historically, the San Antonio River supported a run of steelhead (Titus *et al.* 2010). However, the construction of San Antonio Dam greatly reduced the available spawning and rearing habitat to steelhead in this drainage. Habitat conditions downstream of the dam and at the project site are poor due primarily to channel's sandy substrate and lack of shade (Becker and Reining 2008). Although monitoring has been very limited (primarily prior to 1980's), steelhead have not been observed in the San Antonio River in recent decades (Titus *et al.* 2010; Jennifer Nelson CDFG, personal communication, April 2012). There are no barriers to migration between the Salinas River confluence and San Antonio Dam and due to their historic contribution to the greater Salinas River steelhead population, NMFS designated the San Antonio River below San Antonio Dam as critical habitat (70 FR 52488).

NMFS considers the possibility of adverse effects to listed S-CCC steelhead and their designated critical habitat during project implementation to be insignificant because: (1) dewatering and fish

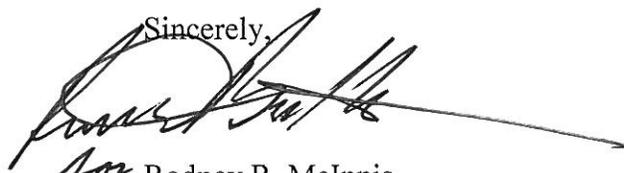
relocation will not be necessary; (2) impact pile driving will not be used to install piles on dry land; (3) BMPs and other measures will be implemented to minimize disturbances and to preclude potential adverse effects to the aquatic environment including steelhead; (4) only small geographic areas of critical habitat at the existing and proposed bridges will be impacted; and (5) although a minimal amount of vegetation will be removed, this vegetation is providing very little or no shade to the river and will be replaced on site.

Based on the best available information, NMFS concurs with Caltrans' determination that threatened S-CCC steelhead are not likely to be adversely affected by the activities proposed for the Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement Project. Regarding designated critical habitat, NMFS has determined the proposed the Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement Project is not likely to adversely affect designated critical habitat for S-CCC steelhead. This concludes informal consultation in accordance with 50 CFR 402.13(a) for the proposed Nacimiento Lake Drive Bridge Replacement Project in Monterey County, California. However, further consultation may be required if: (1) new information reveals effects of the project that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered; (2) current project plans change in a manner that causes an effect to listed species or critical habitat not previously considered; or (3) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the action.

#### **Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act**

The purpose of the FWCA is to ensure wildlife conservation receives equal consideration, and is coordinated with other aspects of water resources development [16 U.S.C. 661]. The FWCA establishes a consultation requirement for Federal departments and agencies that undertake any action that proposes to modify any stream or other body of water for any purpose, including navigation and drainage [16 U.S.C. 662]. Consistent with this consultation requirement, NMFS provides recommendations and comments to Federal action agencies for the purpose of conserving fish and wildlife resources. The FWCA allows the opportunity to offer recommendations for the conservation of species and habitats beyond those currently managed under the ESA. Pursuant to FWCA, NMFS has no comments to provide.

Please contact Mr. Joel Casagrande at (707) 575-6016, or via email at [joel.casagrande@noaa.gov](mailto:joel.casagrande@noaa.gov) should you have any questions concerning this consultation.

Sincerely,  
  
for Rodney R. McInnis  
Regional Administrator

cc: Arturo Adlawan, Monterey County Department of Public Works  
Steve Kirkland, USFWS, Ventura  
Copy to File: ARN: 151422-SWR-2012-SR00328

## Literature Cited

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[http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/Agency\\_data/ReservoirData/CurrentReservoirData/release\\_n.htm](http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/Agency_data/ReservoirData/CurrentReservoirData/release_n.htm)
- Shapovalov, L., and A. C. Taft. 1954. The life histories of the steelhead rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri gairdneri*) and silver salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) with special reference to Waddell Creek, California, and recommendations regarding their management. California Department of Fish and Game Fish Bulletin 98: 375 p.
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