

Attachment 1

Project Report November 9th, 2015

Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project (CRFREE) REF140048

The Monterey County Resource Management Agency (County) and the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, have partnered on the Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project (CRFREE) to improve flood control and to restore native riparian, floodplain habitat, and hydrologic function to a portion of the lower floodplain along the Carmel River. The Proposed Project is located immediately east and west of State Route 1 (SR 1), just south of the Carmel River Bridge on properties owned by the BSLT, California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, and Clint and Margaret Eastwood (APN 243-071-003-000, 243-071-004-000, 243-071-005-000, 243-071-006-000, 243-021-007-000, and 157-121-001-000). Clint and Margaret Eastwood intend to donate land they own to BSLT for the long-term management of the floodplain restoration area. A portion of the land necessary for the right of way for Highway 1 will be donated to the County and will ultimately be transferred to Caltrans. State Parks will also transfer land to Caltrans for the right of way. Staff has been coordinating with the Regional Parks District regarding access to the Palo Corona Park from Highway 1 at the south end of the project area.

The CRFREE Project consists of two interdependent Project components:

1) Floodplain Restoration

The Floodplain Restoration consists of:

- a. removing approximately 1,470 linear feet of non-structural earthen levees on the south side of the Carmel River channel;
- b. grading to elevate approximately 23 acres of existing farmland above the 100-year floodplain elevation to create an agricultural preserve;
- c. grading on approximately 100 acres to restore the site's ecological function as a floodplain by creating the hydro-geomorphic characteristics necessary to support floodplain restoration activities; and,
- d. implementation of a Restoration Management Plan which will restore a mosaic of native habitats across the site.

2) Causeway

The Causeway portion of the CRFREE project consists of replacing a portion of the SR 1 roadway embankment with a 360-foot long causeway section in order to accommodate flood flows that enter into the south overbank area as a function of the removal of portions of the levees as described above and to restore hydrologic connectivity between the Project site and the south arm of Carmel Lagoon.

The completed project will result in the reconnection and restoration of approximately 100 acres of historic floodplain and will serve to reduce the probability of recurring threats to life, property and habitat.

CRFREE Project Milestone Summary:

- Mid 2010 – Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) certified for project
- Late 2010 – Overarching MOU for the purposes of coordinating planning activity of the CRFREE Project signed by Monterey County, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, California State Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Big Sur Land Trust
- Late 2014 – Monterey County begins environmental documentation as CEQA lead
- Early 2016 – Public draft CEQA documents to be released
- Early 2016 – 60% construction design to be complete
- Mid 2017 – 100% construction design to be complete
- Late 2017/Early 2018 – Construction begins
- Mid 2019 – Construction complete

In 2010, an Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was certified for this project. The lead agency was the Monterey County Water Resources Agency. The project falls within the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans required a separate IS/MND and technical studies to be prepared to their standards with the Monterey County RMA as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency.

On July 29, 2014, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved Professional Services Agreement (PSA) No. A-12775 with Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc. (DD&A) to provide environmental documentation, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and regulatory permitting for the CRFREE Project.

Due to unanticipated additional scope, on September 1, 2015, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved Amendment No. 1 to increase value of the PSA with DD&A and extend the term to July 29, 2017 to include this additional scope. The expanded project scope included: Additional coordination meetings with Caltrans and other key agencies to review and clarify existing 2010 CEQA document, Revision of National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) required technical studies to Caltrans formatting standards (includes Natural Environmental Study and Biological Assessment) and, preparation of a complete Water Quality Assessment Report that was not included in the original scope.

County Staff continues to work directly with DD&A to complete the environmental review portion in a timely manner in order to get to the construction phase in 2018. Public draft environmental documents (IS/MND) are anticipated in early 2016 for review and circulation per CEQA guidelines.

Pending approval all environmental reviews and permitting, construction of the CRFREE Project is anticipated to occur over an approximately 12 to 18 month period beginning in early 2018. The causeway component would begin with construction of a temporary bypass road, and would end with removal of said bypass road and of the embankment below the newly constructed causeway. The floodplain restoration component grading work east of the highway would occur concurrently with the highway work, and would entail mass grading; limited utility work; fine grading; and levee removal. The floodplain restoration component grading work west of the highway would begin after removal of the highway bypass road, as construction vehicles and equipment would then be able to safely cross under

the highway. According to our construction schedule, the construction of the CFREE Project will coincide with planned construction of the new jail and juvenile hall projects.

County Staff is currently in the process of drafting agreements with the Big Sur Land Trust and the other partner agencies to clearly define roles and responsibilities with regard to contracts, project management, accounting and other administrative tasks associated with the construction phase of the CRFREE Project. Once drafted, the agreements will be delivered to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors for approval. Staff expects to present the CRFREE partner agreements to the Board of Supervisors in December, 2015.

Project funding has been obtained from several Federal and State Agency grant programs, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Coastal Conservancy (CCC), California Wildlife Conservation Board, and California Department of Water Resources. Local funding match is being provided, in part, by the value of the Eastwood's land donation of a portion of the Project area. As of January 2015, approximately \$12.5 Million has been secured for construction of all Project components. Although there is currently a funding gap of approximately \$10 Million, the RMA is working in partnership with the Big Sur Land Trust to have the additional funds secured by late 2016 to cover all Project components and costs prior to the project going out to bid and construction commencing in 2017. Currently there are three grant solicitations which have been submitted with pending decisions to help fill the approximately \$10 Million funding gap.