Appeal of Certification of Consistency

C202110-A2

Step 1 - Appeallant(s) Information

Appellant Representing:	Liberty Island Access
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Step 2 - Covered Action being Appealed

Covered Action ID:	C202110
Covered Action Title:	Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration And Flood Improvement Project
Agency Subject to Appeal:	Department of Water Resources
Contact Person Subject to Appeal:	Ling Chu
Address:	3500 Industrial Blvd.
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Covered Action Description:	The Proposed Project would restore within the Proposed Project Site approximately 3,165 acres of tidal wetland habitat, including habitat that is beneficial to Delta Smelt (Hypomesus transpacificus), and other fish and wildlife species. The Proposed Project was designed to provide multiple benefits, including improved flood conveyance. It would widen a portion of the Yolo Bypass to increase flood storage and conveyance, increase the resilience of levees, and reduce flood risk. Flood improvement elements as proposed are consistent with the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, which calls for multi-benefit projects that expand the Yolo Bypass while incorporating ecosystem-enhancing features. To accomplish this, a new setback levee would be constructed to the east of Duck Slough and south of Liberty Island Road. The Shag Slough Levee would be breached in nine locations to provide tidal inundation to the areas within the Bowlsbey and Liberty Farms Properties. The Vogel Levee would also be breached in two locations to provide tidal inundation to the areas within the Vogel Property. These breaches would also allow food for Delta Smelt that is produced within the new tidal wetland areas to be exported to the waterways of the Cache Slough Complex. The Shag Slough Levee would also be lowered at two locations to allow floodwaters from the Yolo Bypass to be conveyed across and stored within the Proposed Project Site during flood events. The Cache/Hass Slough Levee would undergo a series of improvements, remain in place, and function as a training levee to maintain stage differences between the Proposed Project Site and Cache and Hass Sloughs. Upon completion, the Proposed Project would protect approximately 3,400 acres of open space in perpetuity, including approximately 3,165 acres of tidal marsh and subtidal habitats and 149 acres of seasonal floodplain habitat in Solano County, California, and a very small portion of Yolo County,

California. Restoring these habitats will increase food availability for Delta Smelt, Steelhead – Central Valley Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (Oncorhynchus mykiss), Chinook Salmon – Sacramento River winter-run Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha), Chinook Salmon – Central Valley spring-run ESU, Green Sturgeon – Southern DPS (Acipenser medirostris), and Longfin Smelt (Spirinchus thaleichthys), known hereafter as "Target Protected Fish Species," as well as other native fishes within the Project Site and the surrounding Cache Slough Complex. It will also provide rearing habitat for Delta Smelt and salmonids, provide potential spawning habitat for Delta Smelt, and create habitat conditions for other aquatic and terrestrial wetland-dependent species, such as giant garter snake (Thamnophis gigas), that utilize the combination of Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta habitat interfaces (i.e., Delta-freshwater, aquatic-tidal, marsh-floodplain, seasonal wetland-lowland grassland). Additionally, the Proposed Project would create over 40,000 acre-feet of transitory flood storage at the Delta confluence. The Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project was developed to partially fulfill a requirement under the 2008 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Delta Smelt Biological Opinion on the Coordinated Operations of the federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project (2008 USFWS BiOp) to restore 8,000 acres of tidal habitat. Restoration of tidal habitat also would provide access for salmonid rearing at the Project Site and therefore was expected to be credited toward a restoration requirement in the 2009 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion and Conference Opinion on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project (2009 NMFS BiOp). These restoration requirements in the 2008 USFWS BiOp and 2009 NMFS BiOp were carried forward as baseline conditions in the USFWS Biological Opinion for the Reinitiation of Consultation on the Coordinated Operations of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project (2019 USFWS BiOp) and the NMFS Biological Opinion on Long Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project (2019 NMFS BiOp), which are the currently effective biological opinions governing coordinated operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project. The 8,000-acre tidal restoration requirement also is a condition (Condition 9.1.1) of the Incidental Take Permit for Long-Term Operation of the State Water Project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (2081-2019-066-00) (2020 LTO ITP), issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on March 31, 2020. The 2020 LTO ITP is DWR's California Endangered Species Act authorization to carry out ongoing State Water Project operations. The following names/locations in this project description describe specific areas, as well as levees and sloughs, within and adjacent to the Proposed Project Site: Bowlsbey Property – Approximate 1,644-acre property in the northwestern portion of the Proposed Project Site bounded by Liberty Island Road to the north, Shag Slough to the east, Lookout Slough to the south, and Duck and Hass Sloughs to the west. Liberty Farms Property – Approximate 1,678-acre property in the southeastern portion of the Proposed Project Site bounded by Lookout Slough to the north, Lookout and Cache Sloughs to the west, the cross levee to the south, and Shag Slough to the east. Vogel Property – Approximate 55-acre property in the southwestern portion of the Proposed Project Site bounded by the Bowlsbey Property to the north and Cache Slough to the south, east, and west. Shag Slough Levee – State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) levee on the west side of Shag Slough, which borders the eastern boundaries of the Bowlsbey and Liberty Farms Properties. The Shag Slough Levee is part of the Yolo Bypass West levee system. Cache/Hass Slough Levee – SPFC levee located on the north side of Cache and Hass Sloughs, which borders the southern boundaries of the Bowlsbey and Liberty Farms Properties. The Cache/Hass Slough Levee is part of the Yolo Bypass West levee system. Cache/Hass Slough Training Levee – The Proposed Project includes improvements to the stability of the Cache/Hass Slough Levee and the Cross Levee. The improved levee would function to maintain stage differences between the Proposed Project Site and waters in Cache/Hass Slough during bypass flooding events. The Cache/Hass Slough Training Levee refers to the Cache/Hass Slough Levee and the Cross Levee in their modified post-project state and altered function. Duck Slough Setback Levee – Proposed SPFC setback levee proposed as part of the Yolo Bypass levee system, located on the eastern side of Duck Slough and the southern side of Liberty Island Road.

Cross Levee – SPFC levee on the southern end of the Proposed Project Site, runs roughly west-east between Cache and Hass Sloughs. Vogel Levee – Existing agricultural levee located on the eastern, southern, and western boundaries of the Vogel property. Lookout Slough – Man-made drainage/water control channel that separates the Bowlsbey and Liberty Farms Properties. Lookout Slough is not connected to Cache Slough and is not open to tidal inundation. Duck Slough – Man-made drainage/water control channel that forms the western boundary of the Bowlsbey Property. Duck Slough is not connected to Hass Slough and is not open to tidal inundation. Sycamore Slough – Remnant of a historical slough, which is no longer connected to Hass Slough and is not open to tidal inundation.

Step 3 - Consistency with the Delta Plan

DELTA PLAN CHAPTER 2

a. G P1(b)(2)/Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 5002, subd. (b)(2) - **Mitigation Measures**

G P1(b)(2)/Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 5002, subd. (b)(2) provides that covered actions not exempt from CEQA, must include all applicable feasible mitigation measures adopted and incorporated into the Delta Plan as amended April 26, 2018, (unless the measure(s) are within the exclusive jurisdiction of an agency other than the agency that files the certification of consistency), or substitute mitigation measures that the agency that files the certification of consistency finds are equally or more effective. For more information, see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 5002, and Delta Plan Appendix O, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, which are referenced in this regulatory policy.

Is the covered action inconsistent with this portion of the regulatory policy?

Yes, Inconsistent

Answer Justification:

There are a number of mitigation measures (including 18.1 and 18.2) that DWR ignores in their COC application. In particular, DWR provides no documentation regarding mitigation for the impacts on recreation. Please see the attached LIA_Appeal_Letter_1-2022.pdf (starting at page 5) for a detailed statement of facts. Appendix_A.pdf, LIA_Appeal_letter_1-2022.pdf, Exhibit_H.pdf, Exhibit_I.pdf, Exhibit_J.pdf

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DELTA PLAN CHAPTER 5

DP P2 / Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 5011 - **Respect Local Land Use When Siting Water or Flood Facilities or Restoring Habitats**

Is the covered action inconsistent with this portion of the regulatory policy?

Yes, Inconsistent

Answer Justification:

The Delta Plan stipulates that the Project should “avoid or reduce conflicts with existing uses”. To the contrary, this Project is in direct conflict with the existing recreational uses of Shag Slough and the neighboring (public) lands at LIER. Furthermore, there has been no effort by DWR to avoid or reduce these conflicts. Please see the attached LIA_Appeal_Letter_1-2022.pdf (starting at page 3) for a detailed statement of facts. Appendix_A.pdf, Exhibit_A.pdf, Exhibit_B.xlsx, Exhibit_D.pdf, Exhibit_E.pdf, Exhibit_F1.pdf, Exhibit_F2.pdf, Exhibit_F3.pdf, Exhibit_F4.pdf, Exhibit_F5.pdf, Exhibit_F6.pdf, Exhibit_G.pdf, Exhibit_K.pdf, LIA_Appeal_letter_1-2022.pdf, Exhibit_C.pdf