

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

October 15, 2026

Proposal Name: Central Sonoma Watershed-Matanzas Creek Dam Rehabilitation Project. Final Supplemental Watershed Plan No. 1 Environmental Assessment

Agency Name: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Unique Identification Number: EAXX-005-53-006-1126918456

Unit: NRCS California State Office

Documentation Informing the FONSI

This FONSI is the official decision document for the Final Supplemental Watershed Plan No. 1- Environmental Assessment for the Central Sonoma Watershed- Matanzas Creek Dam Rehabilitation Project. This Finding of No Significant Impact incorporates the Environmental Assessment and relies on documentation in the associated proposal record.

Activities Approved

I have decided to approve the preferred alternative (alternative 3). The Preferred Alternative consists of full rehabilitation of the Matanzas Creek Dam. Rehabilitation includes raising the dam crest by 7.4 feet, raising the auxiliary spillway crest by 11.4 feet, grading the spillway to a uniform 200-foot width, removing accumulated sediment from the inundation area, installing embankment stability buttresses, and extending the primary spillway to accommodate the new buttresses. This alternative is the locally preferred alternative and the PR&G-recommended alternative. Project features were designed to utilize existing features as much as possible to reduce new disturbance and associated construction costs. The Preferred Alternative would meet current NRCS and California Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) regulations and engineering standards associated with a high-hazard dam and ensure the useful life of the structure for at least 50 years. The storage capacity would be increased to route up to the 100-year 24-hour storm event without use of the auxiliary spillway. This alternative meets the purpose and need of the project by providing flood protection and sediment reduction downstream of Matanzas Creek Dam in the most efficient manner.

The process for this project followed procedures outlined in the National Watershed Program Manual Parts 500 through 506, and National Watershed Program Handbook Parts 600 through 606, Guidance for Conducting Analyses Under the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies and Federal Water Resource Investments (USDA 2017), and other NRCS watershed planning policy.

Possible alternatives were developed by the project team based on the ability to address the purpose and need of the project and were formulated in consideration of four criteria:

completeness, effectiveness, efficiency, and acceptability. The project team analyzed three dam rehabilitation alternatives and the No Action Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is described in sections 5.3.4 and 8 of the Plan EA.

The Watershed Plan area associated with the Preferred Alternative is 49,445 acres and is defined as the HUC 12 Upper Santa Rosa Creek (180101100702) and Lower Santa Rose Creek (180101100703) Subwatersheds. The watershed area contains the municipality of the City of Santa Rosa and surrounding rural area. The Preferred Alternative watershed area is shown on project Map B-1 and benefitted areas are shown on Map B-2 in Appendix B.

Determination of No Significant Impacts

I have determined no significant impacts are anticipated for the activities approved based on the below discussion and as informed by other analysis and determinations provided in the “Environmental Consequences” section of the Environmental Assessment. In considering the degree of effects, I considered the tradeoffs of beneficial and adverse short and long-term effects of the proposed action on the environment against the consequences of taking no action.

Effects of the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative is the future-without-federal-investment (FWOFI) conditions and assumes the sponsor would continue to maintain the dam in the same manner that they have been and that no modifications would be made to the dam. The existing deficiencies would remain.

If no action is taken the risk of a dam breach remains higher and watershed flood storage capacity would continue to be limited to routing the 25-year 24-hour storm event without activating the earthen auxiliary spillway. In the event of a dam breach, the flood flows would pass through the City of Santa Rosa to depths up to 5 feet and affect the security of human life and health of 28,680 people. Additionally, 289 acres of cropland would be inundated and 440 structures are within the 100-year flood plain. Buildings, infrastructure, and essential public services could be destroyed or jeopardized.

Flooding can impact land use and directly damage economic facilities such as businesses and social facilities. Funds needed for repairs, disruptions to businesses, and perceived lack of safety after a flood event could have negative economic effects.

Some of the other impacts from a dam failure would also include erosion and sedimentation, sediment load could impact water quality as it is flushed downstream, and damage to riparian areas that would be washed away.

Benefits of the Preferred Alternative. The benefits of the preferred alternative which include meeting current NRCS and California DSOD regulations and engineering standards, reduced risk of dam breach, reduced risk to public safety, reduced risk of damage to downstream structures and farmland, ensuring the useful life of the structure for at least 50 years, storage capacity increase, and other benefits described in the Plan EA, outweigh the short-term minor impacts of

this alternative. The operation of the facility would continue to benefit water quality downstream of the dam by capturing sediment and debris after storms. The project would increase the flood storage capacity to 2,322 acre-feet, which is sufficient for the dam to route the 100-year 24-hour storm event through the principal spillway without activating the auxiliary spillway.

Various short-term and minor impacts described in the Plan EA will occur or have potential to occur during implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Best management practices and conservation measures explained in the EA will mitigate these impacts. A summary of these impacts include the following:

Air Quality. Emissions calculation estimates for the preferred alternative resulted in emissions that are well below the thresholds set forth under the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's thresholds. These project emissions (equipment & dust emissions) will be minimized by implementation of project conservation measures Air Quality 1-9 and Reclamation 1.

Cultural and Historic Resources. Modification of the Matanzas Creek Dam facility for the Preferred Alternative would not alter the characteristics of the historic district that qualify it for listing on the NRHP; therefore, the NRCS determined that modification of the dam would not result in adverse effects to the historic district. The project will follow requirements of Appendix E2 for any unanticipated discoveries during construction.

Vegetation and Habitat. The Preferred Alternative would disturb approximately 48.2 acres. This includes approximately 6.9 acres of riparian habitat, 5 acres of wetland habitat, and 36.3 acres of grassland and other upland habitats. The habitat acreages will be re-established through a combination of natural revegetation, reseeding, and replanting efforts explained in Reclamation 1 conservation measure and section 6.14.1 of Plan EA. In some areas re-establishment is not possible which will result in permanent loss of approximately 0.62 acres of wetlands, 0.2 acres of Waters of the US, and 0.3 acres of riparian vegetation. These impacts will be permitted through Clean Water Act section 404 permitting from the US Army Corps of Engineers which will identify the required mitigation.

Wildlife. Short term disturbance of up to 48.2 acres of habitat for various species and temporary disturbance to individual animals for up to 2 years could occur. Wildlife Measures 1-6 in Appendix A1, Table A1 will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Any permanent impacts will be addressed through permitting and mitigation.

Red-legged Frog. Specifically, project implementation would cause some noise and visual disturbances, and there is potential that a California red-legged frog could be injured or killed in the unlikely event it is present in the area during construction, or that erosion, sedimentation, or a hazardous materials spill could degrade dispersal habitat for California red-legged frog. However, with implementation of the conservation measures (see Table 5-2), the effects of any action alternative on California red-legged frog would be insignificant or discountable.

Therefore, implementation of any action alternative may affect but would not likely adversely affect California red-legged frog.

Water Quality. There will be short term increased erosion and sedimentation of the disturbed soils and possible discharge of pollutants from equipment into the waters downstream of the disturbance. These impacts would be minimized by implementation of Water Quality Conservation Measures 1 and 2. Reseeding practices would also further reduce erosion and sedimentation. With adherence to the project conservation measures, temporary effects would not adversely affect water quality.

Noise Levels. Implementation of any action alternative would result in a temporary increase in noise levels during construction, which is estimated to be up to 24 months. To address this issue conservation measures Noise 1 and Noise 2 will be followed.

The effects from the actions of the Preferred Alternative are minor and temporary and the conservation measures explained in the environmental assessment will further reduce these minor and temporary effects.

The benefits of the preferred alternative outweigh the minor and short-term impacts that are expected from this alternative. The irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources are minor, negligible, and does not constitute a loss of long-term productivity for the human environment.

The preferred alternative will not have a reasonably foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Based on the analysis and evidence provided in the environmental assessment, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Anticipated Implementation of Authorized Activities

I intend to implement the approved activities following completion of final design and permitting contingent upon funding and permit approvals.

Signature and Authorization Date

Carlos Suarez State Conservationist USDA-NRCS California

**CARLOS SUAREZ
OLIVA**

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