



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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October 4, 2011

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1090
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF A NEGATIVE DECLARATION, IN COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA REQUIREMENTS, FOR THE FELIZ CREEK DAM REMOVAL PROJECT AND IF APPROPRIATE, APPROVE RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION (HOPLAND AREA)

Honorable Board of Supervisors:

On May 24, 2011, the BOS adopted Resolution 11-076, approving Department of Transportation Agreement No. 110042 - a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) for 2011-12 Mill Creek Sediment Release Mitigation by implementation of the Feliz Creek Fish Barrier Removal Project (Hopland Area).

An old 12-foot high concrete dam exists on Feliz Creek approximately four miles upstream from the confluence with the Russian River near Hopland, California. Sediment has accumulated above the dam partially filling the reservoir. The dam inhibits fish passage resulting in the loss of approximately nine miles of anadromous salmonid habitat. The left abutment of the dam is undermined and a catastrophic failure could adversely impact a private residence, downstream property owners, and existing aquatic resources.

This project proposes to remove the dam and restore a free-flowing fluvial ecosystem. Additional project objectives include protecting the slope below a private residence from fluvial erosion, and removal of two deleterious structures (an old metal tank and a previous dam abutment) from the reach below the dam.

Pursuant to CEQA requirements, an Initial Study has been completed for this project. The study supports the adoption of a Negative Declaration. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for October 4, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. to present findings of the Initial Study and to hear and consider any comments or concerns of the public prior to adoption of the applicable Negative Declaration.

Public comment received up to the public hearing date of October 4, 2011 will be provided during the BOS meeting.

The Department of Transportation maintains that based on the Initial Study, it is appropriate for the Board to adopt the proposed Negative Declaration for the project. The proposed dam removal is expected to open up approximately nine miles of anadromous salmonid habitat, and will prevent a catastrophic failure which could adversely impact a private residence, downstream property owners, and existing aquatic resources. Removal of the dam is scheduled to begin in FY 11/12, pending receipt of applicable permits.

Based on the foregoing considerations, I recommend and request adoption of the proposed Negative Declaration and that the Director of Transportation be given authorization and direction to file the applicable Notice of Determination.

A draft Resolution for adoption of the proposed Negative Declaration and related documents are enclosed. Note: Seven copies of the completed Initial Study for the project have been provided to the Clerk of the Board for ready reference.

I will, of course, respond to any questions that the Board may have.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD N. DASHIELL
Director of Transportation

Enclosures

cc: DOT Project File H1101
Board Correspondence File