

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

INTEGRATED LETTER REPORT AND PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Federal Participation in Watercraft Inspection Stations, Decontamination Stations, and Rapid Response for the Russian River Basin, California

May 2024

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The *Integrated Letter Report and Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Federal Participation in Watercraft Inspection Stations, Decontamination Stations and Rapid Response for the Russian River Basin, California (LR/Programmatic EA)*, dated April 2024, considers the effects of continued and expanded watercraft inspection station and monitoring program, new decontamination stations, and rapid response coordination efforts, which address the threat of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), including quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*) and zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), together termed “dreissenids,” in the Russian River Basin (RRB) within the state of California.

The Draft LR/Programmatic EA evaluated two alternatives that could help prevent, postpone, and respond to the spread of AIS within the RRB. The Proposed Action Alternative (Comprehensive Adaptive Improvements) includes a cost-share program for watercraft inspections, decontamination, monitoring, and rapid response coordination. Cost-share activities will be evaluated for consistency with this analysis during the review of a non-Federal sponsor’s annual work plan. Additional analysis under NEPA would be conducted prior to reimbursement if USACE determined a proposed non-Federal action was not addressed within this analysis. USACE anticipates entering into a cost-share agreement with the state of California (or a non-Federal sponsor).

The two alternatives evaluated were Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative (continue the state’s current practice without Federal cost share) and Alternative 2, the Proposed Action Alternative (Comprehensive Adaptive Improvements – participation in the cost-share program to include watercraft inspections, decontamination stations, and rapid response strategy development at Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma). The Proposed Action Alternative is the Preferred Action.

Alternatives considered under NEPA must include, at least, the No Action Alternative (which provides a baseline from which to compare other alternatives) and the Proposed Action Alternative. It is acceptable to limit analysis to only these two alternatives when

the Federal action is a response to an authorization from Congress. Consequently, only the No Action and Proposed Action Alternative were analyzed.

All practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the Proposed Action Alternative. For the Proposed Action Alternative, the potential effects to the following resources are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Proposed Action Alternative.

	Insignificant Effects	Insignificant Effects	Resource unaffected by action
Fisheries/Aquatic Resources (including Threatened and Endangered Species)	☒	-	-
Water Quality	☒	-	-
Wildlife/Terrestrial Resources (including Threatened and Endangered Species)	☒	-	-
Aesthetics/Visual Resources	-	-	☒
Recreation	☒	-	-
Cultural and Historic Resources	-	-	☒
Tribal Trust Resources	-	-	☒
Climate Change	☒	-	-
Vegetation	-	-	☒
Socioeconomics	☒	-	-

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, USACE considered but did not identify any potential significant effects to threatened and endangered species by the proposed expansion of watercraft inspection stations and monitoring for AIS. Most ESA-listed species are not located in close proximity to current and proposed watercraft inspection stations or locations where decontamination could be conducted. In a 2024 Biological Evaluation, USACE determined the proposed action is not likely to affect ESA-listed species or their critical habitat. The measures included in the Proposed Action Alternative support protecting ESA-listed species and habitats from the severe risk of AIS. USACE also determined that the Proposed Action Alternative would result in no take of species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and no disturbance or take of species protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, USACE determined that implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative has no potential to cause effects on historic properties. However, if additional amenities requiring ground-disturbing activities are requested, supplemental NHPA Section 106 review would be required before approval.

Pursuant to Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, USACE determined that implementation of the

Proposed Action Alternative would not result in pollutants discharged into Waters of the United States; therefore, a NPDES permit would not be needed.

Pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, USACE determined that because no fill material would be placed in wetlands, or other Waters of the U.S., a Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation is not required, and therefore, no Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) need be identified.

Technical and environmental criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 *Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies*. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Section 7 of the LR/Programmatic EA discusses how implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative complies with other laws, regulations, and executive orders.

In compliance with NEPA, this Draft FONSI and LR/Programmatic EA are available for a 30-day public review and comment period beginning on or about May 20, 2024, Should no significant impacts be identified during this review, USACE will complete the NEPA process by signing the final FONSI.

Based on these reports, the information in the Draft LR/Programmatic EA, the reviews by other Federal, state and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative (Recommended Plan) would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. USACE will proceed to fund the Comprehensive Adaptive Improvements under the authority of Section 104 of the River and Harbor Act (RHA) of 1958 (33 United States Code [USC] § 610), as amended, when funds are made available for that purpose.

EDWARD E. BELK
Director of Civil Works

Date