

**Public Notice of the
Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Meetings
on the Natomas Levee Improvement Program
Landside Improvements Project**

Date: September 14, 2007
To: Responsible Agencies and Other Interested Parties
From: John Bassett, Director of Engineering, SAFCA

The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) is pleased to announce the release for public review and comment of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the Natomas Levee Improvement Program (NLIP) Landside Improvements Project. The DEIR analyzes the landside components of the NLIP that are proposed for construction in 2008 through 2010, which include: levee raising and seepage remediation, improvements to irrigation and drainage infrastructure, habitat development, and additional actions to meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements—encroachment management and bridge crossing modifications. The DEIR presents a project-level analysis of the 2008 construction components, and a program-level analysis of the 2009–2010 elements. The DEIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR Title 14, Section 1500 et seq.]).

Project Location

All project construction activities would take place in Sacramento and Sutter Counties within the Natomas Basin, except for the development of a borrow site on Reclamation District (RD) 1001 land northeast of the basin.

Based on an extensive records search, no known hazardous materials sites are located within the specific sites proposed for project-related excavation; however, one site was identified along the Sacramento River east levee with possible contamination issues. As part of the project, mitigation would be implemented to ensure that contaminants are not present at unacceptable levels on this site near the location of project construction activities. Refer to the DEIR for additional details.

Project Description

The project objectives are to (1) provide at least 100-year flood protection as quickly as possible while laying the groundwork to achieve at least urban standard (“200-year”) flood protection over time; (2) use flood control projects in the vicinity of Sacramento International Airport to facilitate changes in the management of Airport lands that reduce hazards to aviation safety; and (3) use flood control projects to enhance habitat values by increasing the extent and connectivity of the lands in Natomas being managed to provide habitat for giant garter snake, Swainson’s hawk, and other special-status species.

To meet these project objectives, SAFCA proposes the following project activities:

2008 construction

- ▶ Along the 5.3-mile Natomas Cross Canal (NCC) south levee, raise the levee to provide additional freeboard; realign the levee to provide a more stable waterside slope and to reduce the need for removal of waterside vegetation, and construct a seepage cutoff wall in the eastern 4.3 miles (approximately) of the levee to reduce the risk of levee failure due to seepage and stability concerns.

- ▶ Along the Sacramento River east levee, construct a raised adjacent setback levee from the NCC to 1,700 feet south of the North Drainage Canal with seepage berms where required to reduce seepage potential, and install woodland plantings.
- ▶ Construct a new canal designed to provide drainage and associated giant garter snake habitat (“GGS/Drainage Canal”) and relocate the Elkhorn Canal between the North Drainage Canal and Elkhorn Reservoir.
- ▶ Recontour the land and create marsh and upland habitat at borrow locations.

2009 and 2010 construction

- ▶ Along the Sacramento River east levee south of the limits of the 2008 improvements, construct an adjacent setback levee (raised where needed to provide adequate freeboard) with seepage berms, relief wells, and cutoff walls as required, and install woodland plantings.
- ▶ Raise and construct seepage berms along the Pleasant Grove Creek Canal (PGCC) west levee.
- ▶ Construct a new GGS/Drainage Canal between Elkhorn Reservoir and the West Drainage Canal, improve the West Drainage Canal, relocate the Riverside Canal and the Elkhorn Canal downstream of Elkhorn Reservoir, and reconstruct the Reclamation District 1000 Pumping Plant No. 2.
- ▶ Recontour the land and create marsh and upland habitat at borrow locations.
- ▶ Remove encroachments from the water side of the Sacramento River east levee as needed to ensure that the levee can be certified as meeting the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers design criteria, and address FEMA requirements for the State Route 99/70 bridge crossing of the NCC.

Significant Environmental Impacts

The DEIR identifies impacts of these proposed activities in the following areas that would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation: geology and soils, hydrology and hydraulics, water quality, fisheries and aquatic resources, terrestrial biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, transportation and circulation, air quality, noise, recreation, visual resources, utilities and service systems, and hazards and hazardous materials.

The following impacts would be reduced with mitigation, but not to a less-than-significant level:

- ▶ Conversion of important farmland to nonagricultural uses (direct and cumulative)
- ▶ Potential construction impacts on known prehistoric resources, discovery of human remains during construction, and damage to or destruction of previously undiscovered cultural resources (direct and cumulative)
- ▶ Temporary increase in traffic on local roadways during construction (direct)
- ▶ Effects on air quality with respect to short-term construction emissions: temporary emissions of ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀ (direct and cumulative), and incremental contributions to greenhouse gas emissions (cumulative)

- ▶ Generation of short-term construction noise, exposure of sensitive receptors to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise, and exposure of residents to increased traffic noise levels from hauling activity (direct and cumulative)
- ▶ Changes in scenic vistas, scenic resources, and existing visual character of the project area (direct and cumulative)

Document Availability

Copies of the DEIR are available for public review at the following locations:

Location	Address
SAFCA	1007 7 th Street, 7 th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814
Sacramento Central Library	828 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
Sutter County Library	750 Forbes Avenue Yuba City, CA 95991

The document may also be viewed at SAFCA’s website: www.safca.org. Printed or CD copies of the DEIR may be requested from SAFCA by emailing BassettJ@SacCounty.net or calling John Bassett at (916) 874-7606.

Public Comment Period

The public comment period for the DEIR begins on September 14, 2007 and closes on October 29, 2007. Please submit written comments on the DEIR **by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 29, 2007** to:

John Bassett/NLIP Landside DEIR Comments
 Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency
 1007 7th Street, 7th Floor
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 Fax: (916) 874-8289
 BassettJ@SacCounty.net

If comments are provided via e-mail, *please include the project title in the subject line, attach comments in MS Word format, and include the commenter’s U.S. Postal Service mailing address.*

Public Meetings

SAFCA will hold one or more public meetings during the comment period—including a meeting to be held during the regular October 18, 2007, meeting of the SAFCA Board—at which it will receive input from agencies and the public on the DEIR. All public meetings will be held at the City of Sacramento Council Chambers, 915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.