

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. The County of Yolo is the "lead agency" for the project evaluated in this DEIR and, as such, has the primary responsibility for approving the project. The proposed project is the adoption of a Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (CCRMP), the Cache Creek Improvement Program (CCIP), and its implementing ordinances. The Draft CCRMP was released in December 1995, and the Draft CCIP is included in Section 7.3 of this DEIR.

The CCRMP is composed of seven elements, covering the issues of floodway and channel stability, water resources, biological resources, open space and recreation, aggregate resource, and agriculture. Specific goals, objectives, actions and performance standards are set forth for each of the elements, with suggested policies for their implementation. The CCIP was developed by the County as the guidance document for the implementation of the goals, objectives, actions and performance standards in the CCRMP which relate to the stabilization and maintenance of the Cache Creek channel.

A separate program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared for the Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP), which focuses on the potential cumulative impacts of off-channel surface mining and reclamation in the lower Cache Creek area. Once adopted, the CCRMP and OCMP will together comprise the Cache Creek Area Plan.

The County determined that preparation of an EIR was appropriate in light of potentially significant impacts which could be caused by implementing the proposed project. Primary issues of concern identified in the Notice of Preparation included:

- land use and planning;
- geology and soils;
- hydrology and water quality;
- agriculture;
- biological resources;
- air quality;
- traffic and circulation;
- noise;
- aesthetics
- cultural resources;
- hazards; and
- public services and utilities.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND NATURE OF PROJECT

The impetus for the CCRMP came from the 1975 report of the Aggregate Resources Advisory Committee (ARAC), the 1984 report of the Aggregate Technical Advisory Committee (AgTAC), and the June 1994 Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Policies regarding the management of aggregate resources in and adjoining Cache Creek. All of these reports suggested a need for the County to expand its efforts beyond sand and gravel, and to take a comprehensive approach in planning for all of the creek's resources. These documents also recommended that the amount of in-stream mining be reduced, while continuing to maintain 100-year flood protection for adjoining properties.

In a previously approved conceptual workplan which guided development of the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (CCRMP), the County outlined a vision to integrate policies for all of the creek's resources within a comprehensive framework. The workplan emphasized a number of goals, including: the restoration of native habitat, the creation of open space and recreation opportunities, the coordination of surface and groundwater to increase the available water supply, the maintenance of Cache Creek as a dynamic system, and the minimization of flooding.

As presented to, and accepted by, the Board and Planning Commission in a workshop held October 24, 1995, three technical studies regarding various physical components of the Creek have been prepared (they are collectively referred to as the Technical Studies). These studies of creek geomorphology, groundwater resources, and biological resources have been used as the technical basis for the draft CCRMP (the subject of this EIR).

In addition to historic documents in the files, previous direction of the Board, and the Technical Studies, the staff also utilized the following input into the CCRMP and ordinances:

- discussions and interaction with interested citizens, technical consultants, other government agency officials, and representatives of the aggregate industry;
- data and analysis from previous studies of Cache Creek, and generally accepted practices for riparian management; and
- relevant plans and programs from other jurisdictions.

In past actions, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors has recognized that although mining is an important consideration, the creek is integrally bound to the environmental and social resources of the County. As such, development of the CCRMP is based on the key assumption that the creek must be viewed as an integrated system, with an emphasis on the management of all of Cache Creek's resources, rather than a singular focus on the issue of mining. The CCRMP has been prepared as a means to assist in this overall

management, balancing issues and concerns within the overriding vision of enhancing the variety of resource needs for the region.

The CCRMP, and its companion document the Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP), provide the necessary structure and policies for implementing a program to manage the wide variety of resources associated with the creek, including habitat, water resources, aggregate resources, agriculture, and recreation. One of the means for implementing the CCRMP is the adoption of the CCIP which includes programs for channel stabilization, maintenance, hydrologic monitoring, establishment of a "flood watch" program, and flood hazard response procedures. Specific performance standards have been identified within this document for ensuring that the goals and objectives spelled out in the CCIP are achieved. Provisions are also made for establishing an ongoing Technical Advisory Committee, to continue monitoring and studying Cache Creek, as it responds to the programs carried out within the plans. The TAC will make recommendations to the County, as appropriate, to ensure that management is responsive to the dynamic nature of the creek.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EIR

As provided in the CEQA Guidelines, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible. In discharging this duty, the public agency has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social concerns (Section 15021 of the CEQA Guidelines). This EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to inform public agency decision-makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects of the project. Additionally, the EIR identifies possible means to minimize the significant effects and describes reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency is required to consider the information in this EIR, along with any other relevant information, in making its decision on the project (Section 15121 of the CEQA Guidelines). Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines describe the content requirements for the Draft EIR and Final EIR.

The purpose of this DEIR is to: 1) identify the potential significant effects on the environment resulting in the implementation of the CCRMP and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided; and 2) to identify any unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated. The County must consider the information in this document and respond to each identified significant effect. The CEQA requirement is to provide sufficient information concerning the potential environmental effects resulting from the project, so that decision-makers can make an informed decision regarding the efficiency, feasibility, and relative environmental merits of the project.

The preparation, content, and processing of this document are governed by CEQA Guidelines 15168. Under this section, a program EIR may be utilized wherever a series of actions are related in the following manner:

- geographically;
- as logical parts in a chain of contemplated action;
- in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or
- as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The CCRMP constitutes a series of actions affecting properties within the plan boundaries. The standards for projects carried out under the CCRMP were specifically developed for the lower Cache Creek area. The Plan includes maps, goals, objectives, actions and performance standards, that are logical parts in a chain of contemplated action. Each of these components comprises rules, regulations, or general criteria governing the implementation of the Plan. These components would be carried out under the authority of the Plan, as enabled by County approval. Specific projects carried out in a manner consistent with the Plan would have similar environmental impacts which could be mitigated in similar ways.

There are several advantages to a Program EIR. It provides a more thorough consideration of regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other factors that apply to the program as a whole. Program EIRs avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations. They allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at a time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts.

Subsequent projects approved pursuant to a Program EIR may still require additional environmental review. However, Program EIRs allow subsequent environmental documents to focus on issues unique to the site, that were not specifically addressed in the Program EIR. This allows decision makers and interested parties to focus the EIR of a subsequent project on those new effects that have not been considered before. Although they help to streamline the process, Program EIRs and any subsequent focused project-level EIRs do not restrict public participation. They still require circulation of the documents and a comment period, notification of interested parties, and public hearings.

This document is the Program EIR for the CCRMP. The Program EIR has been written such that it is compatible with National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) standards, so that the EIR may be used to support the 404 Permit required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for work within the channel. The Program EIR concentrates on potential environmental impacts in areas such as hydraulics, erosion, wildlife habitat, public infrastructure, ground and surface water, flooding, aesthetics, and the loss of agricultural land. This document is also a project-level EIR for the Cache Creek Improvement Program (CCIP) which is a detailed program for erosion control, channel stabilization, and habitat restoration. The effects of the CCIP are analyzed in this document as specifically and comprehensively as possible to limit or preclude the need for further CEQA compliance.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and circulated for a 30-day period of public review and comment from January 5, 1995 through February 3, 1996. A copy of the NOP and comments received on the NOP are included in this document (Appendix A). A public scoping meeting was held for the CCRMP on January 15, 1996. In preparing this EIR, the County and its consultants considered all written comments on the NOP, as well as the oral comments provided at the scoping meeting. This DEIR was publicly circulated on April 1, 1996 for a 45-day period of review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations. A special Planning Commission hearing on the DEIR will be held on May 1, 1996 at the Planning Commission Chambers at 292 West Beamer Street in Woodland, CA 95695. All comments or questions about the EIR should be addressed to:

Mr. David Morrison, Resource Management Coordinator
Yolo County Community Development Agency
292 West Beamer Street
Woodland, CA 95695
Tel. (916) 666-8020; Fax: (916) 666-8156

The public review period concludes on May 16, 1996. Following public review, a final document will be prepared in response to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at the public hearing. The final Response to Comments document will be available for public review prior to its consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. One or more public hearings will be held by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to consider adoption of the CCRMP. Following their deliberations the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Board regarding the adequacy of the EIR and the desirability of the CCRMP and creek improvement program. The Board must take the final action to certify the EIR as adequate for decision-making purposes, and to approve or deny the CCRMP. Specific Findings of Fact pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081 will be prepared to reflect the final action of the Board.

1.4 MITIGATION MONITORING

The CEQA requires that when a public agency makes findings based on an EIR, the public agency must adopt a report or monitoring plan for those measures which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, AB 3180 [1988]). The reporting or monitoring plan must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6). A Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the CCRMP will be prepared in conjunction with the Responses to Comments for this DEIR, and will be

provided to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration in their deliberations.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This document is organized into the following sections:

Chapter 1.0 - Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction and overview describing intended uses of the DEIR, and the review and certification process.

Chapter 2.0 - Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This chapter summarizes environmental impacts that have been identified as resulting from implementation of the CCRMP (and CCIP) and each of the alternatives, describes proposed mitigation measures, and indicates the projected level of significance of impacts after implementation of proposed mitigation. It also provides the required monitoring plan for implementation of adopted mitigation measures.

Chapter 3.0 - Description of Project and Alternatives

This chapter provides a detailed description of the CCRMP (and CCIP), including plan area, major objectives, project components and characteristics, and required actions; and proposed alternatives examined in the DEIR.

Chapter 4.0 - Environmental Analysis

This chapter contains a program-level analysis of environmental issue areas for the CCRMP, and a project-level analysis of the potential impacts associated with the CCIP. The analysis of each environmental issue contains an introduction and description of the relevant regulatory and physical setting of the planning area, description of impacts of the CCRMP (and CCIP) and alternatives, and recommendations regarding appropriate mitigation measures.

Chapter 5.0 - CEQA Considerations

This chapter describes the cumulative analysis, growth inducing impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes.

Chapter 6.0 - Report Preparation

This chapter lists report authors by section; supporting and reference data used in preparation of this document; and County staff and others assisting in preparation and review of the document.

Chapter 7.0 - Appendices

This chapter includes technical and informational appendices to the document.

<p style="text-align: center;">1.6 SUMMARY OF INITIAL STUDY/NOP CONCLUSIONS; EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT</p>

The County determined that an EIR is clearly required for this project, and therefore opted to conduct no further initial review pursuant to Section 15060(c) of the CEQA Guidelines. Instead the County began work directly on the EIR process as described in Article 7 of the Guidelines, commencing with Section 15080. The County determined that there was no potential for project impact in the areas of population, housing, and energy (please refer to Section 2.5)