

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the potential environmental consequences associated with implementation of the proposed update to the Cache Creek Area Plan (referred to hereafter as CCAP Update or proposed Project). The Cache Creek Area Plan (CCAP or Plan) is a rivershed management plan adopted by Yolo County in 1996 for 14.5 miles of Lower Cache Creek, located generally between an area just west of the Capay Dam and the town of Yolo. The CCAP was adopted as a “specific plan” pursuant to Section 65450 et seq. of the California Government Code, and as a part of the County’s General Plan. As a result, changes to the CCAP are regulated as amendments to the 2030 Countywide General Plan. The lead agency for the proposed Project is Yolo County, specifically the Natural Resources Division of the Yolo County Administrator’s Office.

The CCAP consists of two distinct, complementary plans governing different areas of the overall plan area, namely the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (CCRMP) and the Off-Channel Mining Plan (OCMP). The CCRMP is a creek restoration plan that eliminated in-channel commercial mining and includes the Cache Creek Improvement Program (CCIP) for implementing on-going projects to improve, stabilize, and maintain the creek. The OCMP is an aggregate resources management plan that established a policy and regulatory framework that allows for controlled off-channel gravel mining. A number of implementing ordinances were also prepared to regulate activities to be undertaken under the CCAP, as follows.

- Title 10, Chapter 3, Cache Creek In-Channel Maintenance Mining Ordinance (hereafter referred to as the In-Channel Ordinance)
- Title 10, Chapter 4, Off-Channel Surface Mining Ordinance (hereafter referred to as the Mining Ordinance)
- Title 10, Chapter 5, Surface Mining Reclamation Ordinance (hereafter referred to as the Reclamation Ordinance)
- Title 10, Chapter 11, Gravel Mining Fee Ordinance (hereafter referred to as the Fee Ordinance)
- Title 8, Chapter 4, Flood Protection Ordinance (hereafter referred to as the Flood Ordinance)

This EIR is designed to inform County decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the general public of the proposed Project and the potential environmental impacts of Project approval and implementation. In compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, this EIR describes the potential environmental consequences associated with implementation of the CCAP Update.

The CCAP Update will regulate future creek restoration projects and mining uses within the CCAP Project area. The CCAP Update includes an extension of the Plan’s horizon date from 2026 to 2068, and revisions to the CCRMP, OCMP, and implementing ordinances that are logical parts of a chain of contemplated actions governing and mitigating the effects of planned current and future in-channel and off-channel activities and allowed mining activity. The revisions to the CCRMP, OCMP, and ordinances directly revise or establish new requirements,

guidelines, or other general criteria governing implementation of the CCAP. This EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the CCAP Update and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potentially significant physical impacts. This EIR also examines alternatives to the proposed CCAP Update.

This document is a program EIR. The preparation, content, and processing of this EIR are covered primarily by CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. A program EIR is one that may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, and that are related: (1) geographically; (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. Program EIRs help avoid duplicative analysis of CEQA issues associated with initial broad policy considerations. They allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures early in the decision-making process at a time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts. This program EIR also will help facilitate environmental review of subsequent in-channel and off-channel projects occurring within the CCAP Update area within the planning horizon of the CCAP Update.

## **1.1 PROPOSED PROJECT**

The proposed Project is a mandatory update of the Cache Creek Area Plan (CCAP). In June 2015, the County Board of Supervisors approved a work plan for the ten-year review and update of the CCAP to be based on new technical analyses necessary to support the CCAP Update. The 2017 Technical Studies were completed in March of 2017. The CCAP Update is based on the findings of the 2017 Technical Studies (described in Chapter 3.0, Project Description of this EIR) and County experience implementing the program over the past 20 years.

As noted above, the CCAP consists of the CCRMP (including the CCIP) and the OCMP, both adopted in 1996 and both of which would be updated as part of the Project. Proposed changes to the CCRMP that may lead to environmental impacts are to: 1) increase the in-channel material removal limit from 210,000 tons to 690,800 tons, and 2) modify the in-channel boundary and CCRMP boundary based on channel changes. Proposed changes to the OCMP that might result in environmental impacts are: 1) identification of an additional 1,188 acres within the planning area to be rezoned for future aggregate mining, and 2) extension of the horizon year to 2068 to allow for a full 50 years of future program implementation and to be consistent with the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). The CCAP Update also includes revisions to the implementing ordinances related to updating the regulatory framework for the CCRMP and OCMP. Refer to Chapter 3.0, Project Description, for a complete description of the CCAP Update assumptions, specific revisions, and associated approvals.

In 1996, the County prepared program-level EIRs for the CCRMP and OCMP in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The CCRMP was updated by the County in August 2002 for the purpose of securing new general permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The CCRMP was amended and a Supplemental EIR was certified at that time. Additionally, in 2009 the County prepared the 2010 Countywide General Plan and EIR, which included the CCAP, and provided updated technical analyses and goals, policies, and actions for land uses and programs within the County.

These EIRs were prepared as informational documents, the purpose of which was to inform public agency decision-makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects that could be associated with implementation of the CCAP. Additionally, the EIRs identified the means to minimize the significant effects of CCAP implementation, through mitigation measures. As “program level” EIRs, they provided a thorough consideration of regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other factors that apply to the CCAP as a whole, and have been considered as appropriate in the preparation of this EIR.

## 1.2 EIR SCOPE

In May 2017, the County published a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the subject EIR, including an Initial Study (IS), to help identify impacts that could result from implementation of the CCAP Update, as well as potential areas of controversy. The NOP/IS was mailed to public agencies, organizations, and individuals likely to be interested in the Project and its potential impacts. Additionally, a public meeting was held before the County Planning Commission on June 8, 2017, to introduce the CCAP Update and conduct a scoping session for the Draft EIR. The County received comments on the NOP/IS and considered them during preparation of the EIR. Copies of the NOP and the comment letters are included in Appendix A. The Initial Study is included in Appendix B.

The Initial Study was based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G questions and used thresholds in place at the time of issuance. The significance criteria used in this EIR are based on the changes to CEQA, including Appendix G, that were adopted by the California Natural Resources Agency on December 28, 2018.<sup>1</sup>

The following environmental topics are addressed in this EIR:

1. Aesthetics
2. Agricultural and Forestry Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
6. Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy
8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
9. Hydrology and Water Quality
10. Noise and Groundborne Vibration
11. Transportation

Based on the analyses in the Initial Study and review, the following topics were determined to not result in significant impacts and therefore “scoped out” of the EIR: Land Use and Planning;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/> accessed January 9, 2019.

Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; and Utilities and Service Systems. These topics are addressed in Chapter 6.0, Other CEQA Considerations.

### 1.3 INTENDED USE OF THIS EIR

In compliance with CEQA, this EIR discloses the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed CCAP Update. The EIR is designed to fully inform the County decision makers, in addition to other responsible agencies, persons, and the general public, of the potential environmental effects of implementing the CCAP Update.

As encouraged under CEQA, the County intends to use the Program EIR prepared for the CCAP Update to streamline the environmental review and consideration of future in-channel and off-channel activities. The County plans to make full use of existing streamlining provided by CEQA, as well as emerging streamlining techniques that may become available later, as applicable. It is anticipated that in-channel activities will be able to rely entirely on this EIR for CEQA clearance, and that off-channel mining applications will similarly be able to tier from this EIR, but may require additional site-specific CEQA clearance.

Subsequent to adoption of the CCAP Update, applicants may apply for in-channel and off-channel projects pursuant to the revised plans and regulations. Individual applications will be subject to further site-specific environmental review as applicable under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), Use with Later Activities. This section of the guidelines addresses environmental review of projects intended to be addressed in a program for which an EIR was prepared. The County may determine that the environmental impacts of an individual application are adequately addressed in this EIR and that no further environmental review is required, or it may determine that additional environmental review is required including a focused environmental review. Preparation of a site-specific environmental review document would be required if the County determines that the individual application would cause a significant environmental impact that was not examined in the EIR or would substantially increase the severity of a previously identified significant impact under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15168(c).

Under Public Resources Code 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, lead agencies can use EIRs prepared for zoning actions to analyze the impacts of proposed projects that may be approved pursuant to the ordinance, and limit later project-level analysis to only site-specific issues not already examined (if any). Under the above referenced code sections, CEQA analysis for later projects will be limited to issues “peculiar” to the site or new environmental concerns not previously addressed. CEQA Guidelines Section 15183(f) provides that impacts are not “peculiar” to the project if uniformly applied development policies or standards substantially mitigate that environmental effect. The current CCAP, and upon adoption, the proposed CCAP Update meet the definition of a uniformly adopted standard, and compliance with the CCAP plans and ordinances will allow for CEQA streamlining to be used.

### 1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This EIR is organized into the following chapters:

**Chapter 1.0 Introduction:** Discusses the overall EIR purpose, provides a summary of the proposed project, describes the EIR scope, and summarizes the organization of the EIR.

**Chapter 2.0 Summary:** Provides a summary of the impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, describes mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid significant impacts, and describes the alternatives to the proposed project.

**Chapter 3.0 Project Description:** Provides a description of the Project area, the Project objectives, the proposed Project, and uses of this EIR.

**Chapter 4.0 Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures:** Describes the following for each environmental technical topic: existing conditions (setting), potential environmental impacts and their level of significance, and mitigation measures recommended to mitigate identified impacts. Potential adverse impacts are identified by levels of significance, as follows: less-than-significant impact (LTS), significant impact (S), and significant and unavoidable impact (SU). The significance of each impact is categorized before and after implementation of any recommended mitigation measures(s). Cumulative impacts are also addressed.

**Chapter 5.0 Alternatives:** Provides an evaluation of alternatives to the Project in addition to the CEQA-required No Project alternative.

**Chapter 6.0 Other CEQA Considerations:** Provides an analysis of effects found not to be significant, growth-inducing impacts, unavoidable significant environmental impacts, and significant irreversible changes.

**Chapter 7.0 Report Preparation:** Identifies preparers of the EIR, references used, and the persons and organizations contacted.

**Appendices:** The appendices contain the NOP and comment letters on the NOP and the Initial Study (Appendices A and B), technical calculations, and other documentation prepared in conjunction with this EIR.