

Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Project

Construct pile-supported approach slabs
on State Route 180 at the Fresno Slough Bridge

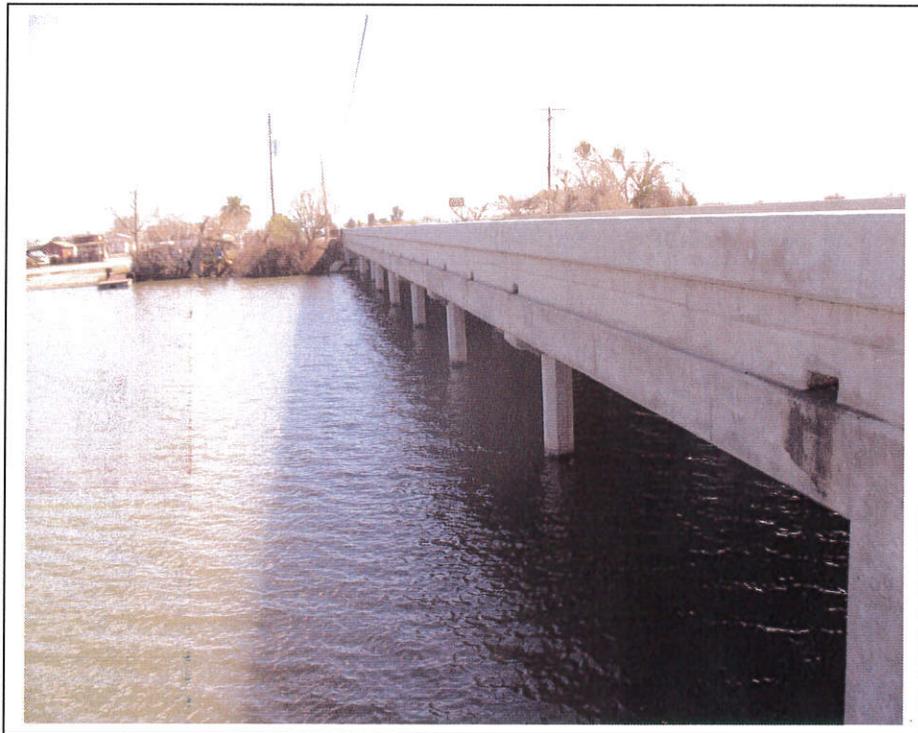
06-FRE-180-PM 26.9

06-13000189

EA 06-0Q510

SCH# 2015121039

Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

April 2016



General Information About This Document

What's in this document?

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration that describes the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts from the project, and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

The draft Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated to the public from December 14, 2015 to January 14, 2016. Comment letters were received on the draft document. Responses to the circulated document are shown in Appendix D, Comments and Responses, which has been added since the draft. Elsewhere throughout this document, a line in the right margin indicates a change made since the draft document circulation.

What happens after this?

The project has completed environmental compliance after the circulation of this document, and filing of the Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research—State Clearinghouse. Once funding is appropriated, the Caltrans can design, acquire right-of-way for, and build all or part of the project.

This document can also be accessed electronically at the following website:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist6/environmental/envdocs/d6/>.

Printing this document: To save paper, this document has been set up for two-sided printing (to print the front and back of a page). Blank pages occur where needed throughout the document to maintain proper layout of the sections and appendices.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Richard Putler, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch, 855 M Street, Suite 200, Fresno, CA 93721; (559) 445-5286 or use the California Relay Service 1(800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1(800) 735-2929 (Voice) or 711.

Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will stabilize the bridge approaches at the Fresno Slough bridge at post mile 26.9 on State Route 180 in Fresno County.

Determination

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons.

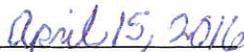
The project will have no effect on: aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems.

In addition, the project will have no significant effect on: hydrology and water quality.

In addition, the project will have no significantly adverse effect on biological resources because the following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will reduce potential effects to insignificance:

- Pre-construction surveys will be conducted for all species of concern potentially present in the project area.
- Reduced speeds through the construction area will lessen the probability that any species would be struck by vehicles and construction equipment.
- A qualified biologist will monitor construction activities. Construction will occur outside of breeding or nesting season.
- Environmentally sensitive areas will be established as needed for all species of concern potentially present in the project area.


Richard Putler, Acting Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation


Date

Construct pile-supported approach slabs on State Route 180 at the Fresno Slough Bridge

**INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

April 15, 2016
Date of Approval

Richard Putler
Richard Putler, Acting Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation

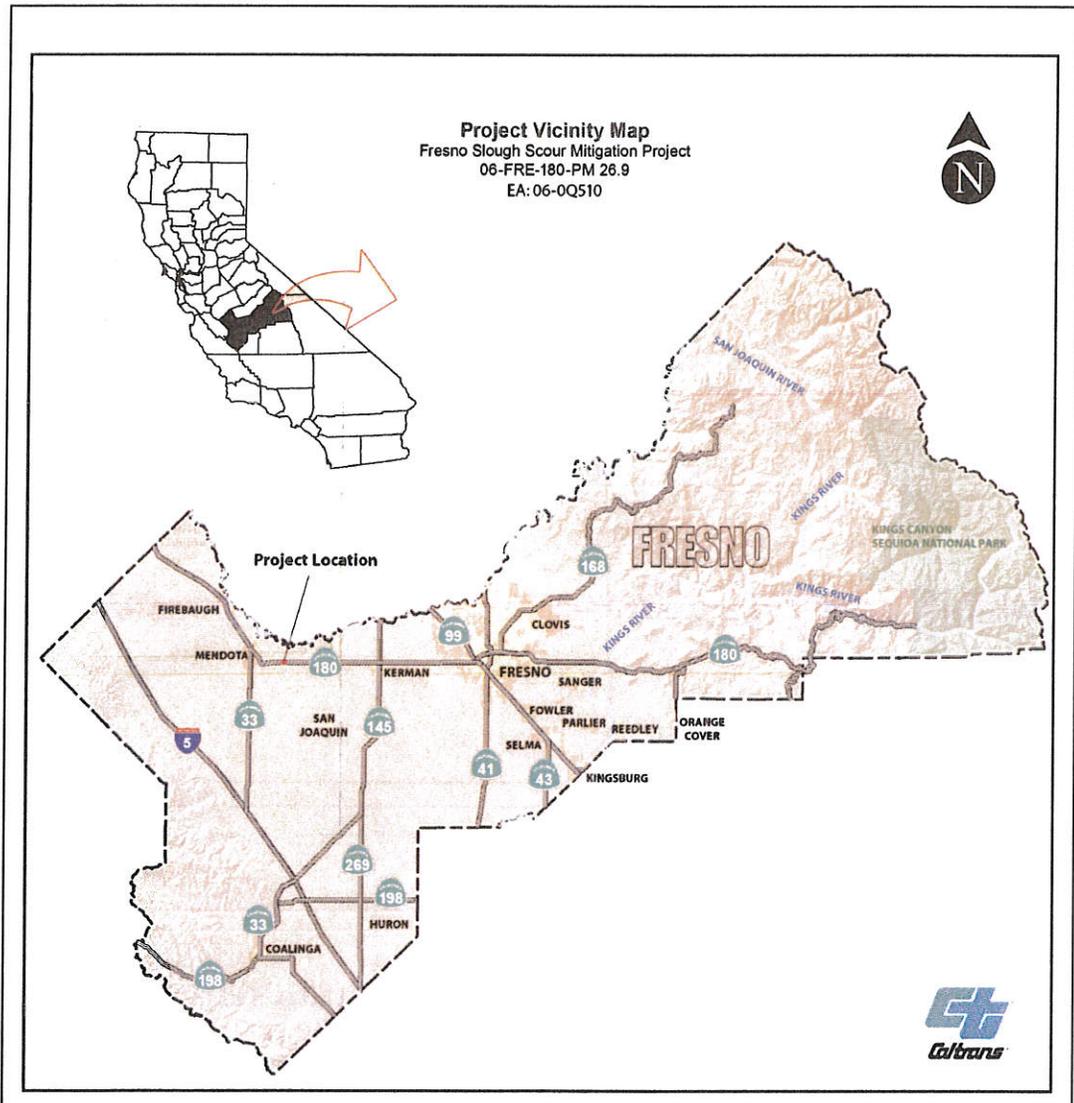
Project Description and Background

Project Title

Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation project.

Project Location

The project is located on State Route 180 just east of the City of Mendota at the Fresno Slough in rural Fresno County.



Project Vicinity Map



Project Location Map

Project History

The 231-foot-long Fresno Slough Bridge on State Route 180 has experienced substantial scour at the bridge abutments and pavement failures. It was built in 1952 and was widened in 2009 to approximately 44 feet to accommodate one lane in each direction and 8-foot shoulders. The bridge has continuous eight spans on six-column bents and open-end pile abutments. An emergency project was completed in 2014 to temporarily address pavement failure at the west end of the bridge. This segment of State Route 180 is a two-lane conventional highway mostly at grade connecting various towns to Interstate 5 and State Route 99.

Description of Project

The project will repair soil erosion at the Fresno Slough Bridge on State Route 180 in Fresno County east of the city of Mendota at post mile 26.9. The erosion at the open-end pile abutments causes the pavement to fail at the bridge approaches.

The project originally proposed to construct pile-supported approach slabs and a curtain wall approximately 10 feet from the ends of the bridge. In addition, the bridge railing terminal system would have been replaced to meet current standards. One-way reversible traffic control would have been required during construction, using a 24-hour temporary traffic signal. No new right-of-way would have been acquired.

Following the circulation of the draft environmental document, Caltrans' Geotechnical Engineering completed a geotech bridge bore survey analysis. The results of the geotechnical survey recommended a less invasive solution to stabilize the bridge approach slabs. The new scope of work will include an array of injection slurry grout piles to be constructed to stabilize the soil under the bridge approaches. The piles will be located at an approximate 12-foot set back from the beginning and end of the bridge. The large voids behind the abutments at each end of the bridge will also be filled with regular concrete. In addition, the bridge railing terminal systems at all four quadrants will be replaced to meet current standards.

Most of the work would be done at night, and construction is expected to take 70 working days to complete. Construction is anticipated to begin in March 2017. No additional right-of-way is anticipated.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

The project is located in a rural area east of the city of Mendota. A state wildlife management area is located south of the highway on both sides of the slough. A commercial property, Jack's Resort, sits just northeast of the slough, and mostly open land lies to the northwest.

Permits, Licenses, Agreements, and Certificates

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Section 7 informal consultation has been completed.	A Letter of Concurrence was received on April 4, 2016 (see Appendix E of this environmental document).
California Department of Fish & Wildlife	Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement	Will be obtained prior to start of construction if required.

CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects indicated no impacts. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. Where a clarifying discussion is needed, the discussion either follows the applicable section in the checklist or is placed within the body of the environmental document itself. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA—not NEPA—impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project, Forest Legacy Assessment Project, and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III. AIR QUALITY: Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please see the discussion in the *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* section after the checklist.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES: Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS: Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS: Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
- b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

While Caltrans has included this good faith effort in order to provide the public and decision-makers as much information as possible about the project, it is Caltrans' determination that in the absence of further regulatory or scientific information related to greenhouse gas emissions and CEQA significance, it is too speculative to make a significance determination regarding the project's direct and indirect impact with respect to climate change. Caltrans does remain firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce the potential effects of the project.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?
- f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?
- g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY: Would the project:

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(Question IX-f). While no long-term water quality impacts are expected from the project, there could be short-term impacts during construction. Any short-term impacts would be addressed through the implementation of best management practices by the construction contractor (Noise, Air and Water Quality Studies memorandum, November 2013).

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING: Would the project:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XI. MINERAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XII. NOISE: Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING: Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES:

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XV. RECREATION:

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC: Would the project:

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist

IV. Biological Resources (checklist questions a and b)

Species of Special Concern

Affected Environment

The Fresno Slough bridge is located on State Route 180 in a rural area just east of the city of Mendota in western Fresno County. The slough is bordered in the project area by open land, a wildlife management area and a privately owned resort. No special-status plant species or natural communities of concern were identified within the biological study area.

Western Pond Turtle

The western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata* or *Emys marmorata*) is a state species of special concern. The western pond turtle, or Pacific pond turtle, is a small to medium-sized turtle that grows to approximately 8 inches in carapace (shell) length. It is limited to the West Coast of the United States and Mexico, ranging from western Washington State to northern Baja California.

Western pond turtles occur in both permanent and intermittent waters, including marshes, streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. They favor habitats with large numbers of emergent logs or boulders, so that they may bask in the sun. However, they also bask on top of aquatic vegetation.

Two-Striped Garter Snake

The two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*) is a state species of special concern. It is a medium-sized snake with a head barely wider than the neck and keeled dorsal scales. Its length ranges from 18 to 30 inches. This snake is mostly aquatic, diurnal and can be active from January to November depending on the weather. It is found often in rocky areas, oak woodland, chaparral, brushlands, coniferous forest, ponds, cattle tanks and other water sources. The two-striped garter snake is known to eat tadpoles, newt larvae, small frogs and toads, fish, and occasionally worms and fish eggs.

Western Mastiff Bat

The western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*) is a state species of special concern and is also known as the western bonneted bat, the greater mastiff bat, or the greater bonneted bat. It is a member of the free-tailed bat family, Molossidae. It is found in the western United States, Mexico and South America, and is the largest bat native to North America. The subspecies *Eumops perotis californicus* is a species of concern as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The range of this subspecies is mainly southwest desert regions of the United States, along the border with Mexico; however, the range extends as far north on the Pacific Coast to Alameda County, California. The western mastiff bat has a body length of 5.5 to 7.5 inches and a wingspan of over 22 inches.

The western mastiff bat requires at least 9.8 feet of open space under its roosting spot for takeoff. Its echolocationary squeaks, which are inaudible to humans in most cases, can be heard from up to 980 feet away by other species. During the day, they form colonies of less than 100. Unlike most North American bats, they do not undergo either migration or prolonged hibernation, but are periodically active all winter.

Western Red Bat

The western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) is a state species of special concern and is also known as the desert red bat. This bat is from the Vespertilionidae family, which is the largest bat family. The western red bat has been found around North America, ranging from southern Canada, through the western United States, down to Central America and to the northern part of South America. These bats are migratory, similar to birds. They migrate to the southern parts of the Americas when it gets cold, and head north when the weather warms in the northern parts.

They eat moths, flies, true bugs, beetles, and cicadas. The western red bat is a nocturnal animal (active at night) and use echolocation to hunt. While they hunt, they have to be aware of predators, which include owls, blue jays, and opossums.

They roost mostly in trees and less often in shrubs. Roost sites often are in edge habitats next to streams, fields, or urban areas. Preferred roost sites are protected from above, open below, and located above dark ground-cover, and may be from 2-40 feet above ground level. Females and young may roost in higher sites than males however.

Tricolored Blackbird

The tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) is a state species of special concern and is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is found in the coastal areas of the Pacific Coast of North America, from Northern California to upper Baja California in Mexico. This bird is highly social and forms the largest colonies of any North American land bird, with a single breeding colony often consisting of tens of thousands of birds.

Mountain Plover

The mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) is a state species of special concern and is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is a medium-sized ground bird in the plover family. It is misnamed as it lives on level land. It prefers dry habitat with short grass (usually due to grazing) and bare ground.

Environmental Consequences

Western Pond Turtle

No western pond turtles were observed onsite during surveys performed by Caltrans biologists in 2014. The project site contains potentially suitable habitat for this species such as basking rocks and boulders near the water's edge. The most recent occurrence is from 2001, within 1 mile of the project location. The project site contains an appropriate prey base for the western pond turtle. Although no western

pond turtles were observed during recent surveys, there is a potential for this species to occur.

Two-Striped Garter Snake

Protocol-level surveys were not conducted, but a habitat assessment was completed in 2014 and 2015 to assess the potential habitat for this species, onsite foraging, and refugia habitat for giant garter snake presence in the Biological Study Area and Project Impact Area. No two-striped garter snakes were observed onsite during the 2014 and 2015 surveys. The closest occurrence is within 1 mile of the bridge, dated 1990. Two-striped garter snakes have potential to occur in these areas.

Western Mastiff Bat

No signs of the western mastiff bat were observed onsite during surveys completed in 2014. No western mastiff bats were observed onsite during the 2014 surveys. The closest occurrence is less than 1 mile from the bridge, dated 1999. The project site contains potentially suitable habitat for this species. The western mastiff bat has the potential to be present in the area. With use of avoidance and minimization measures, no potential roosting habitat is anticipated to be impacted by construction of the proposed project.

Western Red Bat

No western red bats were observed onsite during surveys completed in 2014. The closest occurrence is less than a mile from the bridge, dated 1999. The trees near the project site contain potentially suitable roosting habitat for this species. The western red bat has potential to be present in the area.

No trees are proposed to be removed. With implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures, no impacts to individual western red bats are anticipated.

Tricolored Blackbird

No tricolored blackbirds were observed onsite during surveys performed by Caltrans biologists in 2014. The most recent occurrence is from 1992 approximately 1 mile south of the bridge. The project site contains suitable habitat such as open water and dense vegetation along the nearby banks of the slough. Tricolored blackbirds can be assumed to be present in the area.

The project site contains suitable nesting habitat for the tricolored blackbird. Although no tricolored blackbirds were observed during recent surveys, avoidance and minimization measures would be put in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species.

No foraging or nesting habitat for the tricolored blackbird will be impacted by the proposed project. However, there is still potential for construction to indirectly impact tricolor blackbirds specifically if construction occurs during the nesting season.

Mountain Plover

No mountain plovers were observed onsite during surveys performed by Caltrans biologists in 2014. The closest occurrence is approximately 12 miles south of the project, dated 2002. The surrounding flatland in the southeast corner of the Biological Study Area could provide nesting habitat. The nearby grassland provides suitable foraging habitat. The project site contains potentially suitable habitat for this species. The mountain plover has potential to be present in the area.

The project site contains suitable foraging and nesting habitat and an appropriate prey base for the mountain plover. Although no mountain plovers were observed during recent surveys, avoidance and minimization measure would be in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species.

No foraging or nesting habitat for the mountain plover will be impacted by the proposed project. However there is still potential for construction to indirectly impact mountain plover specifically if construction occurs during the nesting season.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No compensatory mitigation would be required. Worker environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction is required in addition to the following measures:

Western Pond Turtle

- A biological monitor will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that the species could be run over by vehicles and equipment.

Two-Striped Garter Snake

- Pre-construction surveys within the project area to determine any presence or sign of the species will be conducted prior to the start of construction.
- Construction will occur during the active season of May 1 through October 1.
- A biological monitor will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that the species could be run over by vehicles and equipment.

Western Mastiff Bat

- Pre-construction surveys will be conducted to avoid potential impacts to this species.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- If bats are found, exclusionary measures will be required prior to construction.
- Any lighting used will be aimed directly at the work area and not disturb the surrounding area with additional light pollution.

Western Red Bat

- Pre-construction surveys will be conducted to avoid potential impacts to this species.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Any lighting used will be aimed directly at the work area and not disturb the surrounding area with additional light pollution.

Tricolored Blackbird

- Protocol nesting surveys will be conducted during the season prior to the start of construction to determine if any tricolored blackbirds are nesting in proximity to the project area.
- If nesting tricolored blackbirds are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area. Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine an appropriate no-work buffer around the nest until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young have fledged.
- A qualified biologist will monitor active nests during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction.
- Removal of trees within the project impact area will be done outside of the nesting season (the breeding season can vary widely based on weather conditions; however, standard breeding season dates are February 1 to September 15). No tree removal is proposed at this time.

Mountain Plover

- Protocol nesting surveys will be conducted during the season prior to the start of construction to determine if any mountain plovers are nesting in proximity to the project area.
- If nesting mountain plovers are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area, with a 100-foot radius no-work area around the nest until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young have fledged.
- A qualified biologist will monitor active nests during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction.
- Removal of trees within the project impact area will be done outside of the nesting season. No tree removal is proposed at this time.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Affected Environment

The Fresno Slough bridge is located on State Route 180 in a rural area just east of the city of Mendota in western Fresno County. The slough is bordered in the project area by open land, a wildlife management area and a privately owned resort. No special-

status plant species, natural communities of concern, or critical habitat(s) were identified within the biological study area.

Giant Garter Snake

The giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*) is the largest species of garter snake and is a federally threatened species. The giant garter snake is endemic to the Central Valley wetlands of California and is largely aquatic. It is active when water temperatures are at 68°F (20°C) or more, and is dormant underground when aquatic habitat is below that temperature. Fish and frogs form a large portion of the diet of the giant garter snake.

Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

The blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia silus*) is federal and state listed as endangered. It is a relatively large lizard; it has a long regenerative tail, long and powerful hind legs, and a short blunt snout. Adult males are slightly larger than females, ranging in size from 3.4 to 4.7 inches long, while the females are 3.4 to 4.4 inches long. Breeding occurs from May to June. The lizard is found in semiarid grasslands, alkali flats, and washes. They prefer flat areas with open space and avoid densely vegetated areas.

Swainson's Hawk

The Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) is state listed as threatened and is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This hawk is a summer migrant to the Central Valley and typically winters in South America. The Swainson's hawk is a slender bird with long, pointed wings and dark flight feathers. It occurs in a range of color morphs, with a clean whitish underside and neat dark breast. These hawks forage in grasslands, suitable grain or alfalfa fields, or livestock pastures. They eat mice, gophers, ground squirrels, rabbits, large arthropods, amphibians, reptiles, birds and sometimes fish. These hawks roost in trees, but will roost on the ground if no trees are available. The Swainson's hawk breeds in stands with few trees in juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, and oak savannahs in the Central Valley. Breeding occurs from late March to late August, with peak activity occurring in late May or July. Clutch size is two to four eggs, with an incubation period of 25 to 28 days.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) is federally listed as endangered and state listed as threatened. The San Joaquin kit fox is the smallest canid species in North America. It averages 31 inches long and about 12 inches tall at the shoulder. Kit foxes have a small, slim body, relatively long ears set close together, narrow nose, and a long bushy black-tipped tail. They typically carry their tail low and straight. Coat color varies from buff, tan, grizzled or yellow-grey.

The San Joaquin kit fox is found in the southern half of the state in annual grassland or grassy open stages of vegetation dominated by scattered shrubs and brush. It is primarily carnivorous, feeding on desert cottontails, rodents, insects, reptiles, birds, bird eggs and vegetation. San Joaquin kit foxes dig their own dens in open level areas

with loose-textured soils supporting scattered, shrubby vegetation. They are active all year, mostly nocturnal but occasionally can be seen during the daytime in cool weather. Litters averaging 4 pups are born from February to April.

The vast majority of San Joaquin kit fox habitat has been converted to urban and agricultural development, especially within the San Joaquin Valley. Remaining habitat parcels are isolated and scattered. Predators of the San Joaquin kit fox are primarily large raptors, bobcats, coyotes, and feral or domestic dogs. Rodent control measures such as poisoning and trapping can reduce kit fox prey availability or result in secondary poisoning. In some areas, such as Bakersfield, San Joaquin kit foxes have adapted to urban environments, and they can use human-made structures, including culverts, as burrows. In urban areas, kit foxes run a higher risk of mortality from vehicle collision and encounters with dogs.

Environmental Consequences

Giant Garter Snake

Protocol-level surveys were not conducted for giant garter snake, but a habitat assessment was completed in 2014 and 2015 to assess the potential habitat for this species, onsite foraging, and refugia habitat for giant garter snake presence in the Biological Study Area and Project Impact Area. No giant garter snakes were observed onsite during the habitat assessment surveys. The closest occurrence is within 1 mile of the project site, dated 2001. The surrounding dirt patches along the side of the road as well as the bank of the slough may provide suitable upland habitat for this species. In addition, the Fresno Slough also provides suitable aquatic habitat for this species. Giant garter snakes have potential to occur in these areas.

Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

No blunt-nosed leopard lizards were observed onsite during surveys performed by Caltrans biologists in 2014. There is a small area within the Biological Study Area located in the southwest corner that contains a grassy area that may be marginally suitable for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. The most recent occurrence is from 1979, within 1 mile of the project location.

There is a low potential that blunt-nosed leopard lizards would occur within the study area. Habitat where this species may occur will be avoided during construction. No habitat suitable for this species will be impacted by proposed construction activities.

Swainson's Hawk

No Swainson's hawks were observed onsite during surveys performed by Caltrans biologists in 2014. The closest occurrence is less than a mile south from the project, dated 2008. The surrounding trees in the southeast corner of the Biological Study Area could provide sub-optimal nesting habitat. The surrounding riparian habitat along the slough's banks provides breeding habitat for this species. The nearby grassland provides suitable foraging habitat. The project site contains potentially suitable habitat for this species. There is potential for Swainson's hawk to be present in the area.

The project site contains suitable habitat and an appropriate prey base for the Swainson's hawk. Although no Swainson's hawk were observed during recent surveys, avoidance and minimization measures would be in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species.

There is a low potential that Swainson's hawk would forage within the ruderal habitat that will be temporally impacted during construction. However, there is still potential for construction to indirectly impact Swainson's hawk specifically if construction occurs during the nesting season.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

Although the nearby grassland is suitable foraging habitat, no San Joaquin kit foxes have been recently documented as occurring near the project area. There are no small mammal burrows or potential dens within the Biological Study Area. The closest occurrence is less than a mile from the bridge, dated 1947.

This species may occur on the project site in extremely low numbers, as a potential transient forager, but is unlikely to reside within the Biological Study Area due to the continued disturbance from nearby road traffic and commercial operations and the presence of more suitable habitat directly west of the project site.

Habitat within the study area contains suitable San Joaquin kit fox foraging habitat with an appropriate prey base. Construction activity has the potential to disturb individual kit foxes due to associated noise, vibration, dust, and the presence of workers and active equipment. This potential for disturbance would be greater during any work performed at night because the species is primarily nocturnal. However, due to the lack of recent sightings or evidence of occupancy on the project site, the likelihood that San Joaquin kit foxes will be found there is low.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Compensatory mitigation is not proposed. Worker environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction will be required in addition to the following measures:

Giant Garter Snake

- Pre-construction surveys within the project area to determine any presence or sign of the species will be conducted prior to the start of construction. If the species is found, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be contacted to discuss ways to proceed with the project and avoid take to the maximum extent possible.
- Construction will occur during the active season of May 1 through October 1.
- A biological monitor will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that the species could be run over by vehicles and equipment.

Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

- Potential habitat will be identified as an environmentally sensitive area and completely avoided during construction.
- A biological monitor will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that the species could be run over by vehicles and equipment.

Swainson's Hawk

- Protocol nesting surveys will be conducted during the season prior to the start of construction to determine if any Swainson's hawks are nesting in proximity to the project area.
- If nesting Swainson's hawks are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area, with a 600-foot-radius no-work area around the nest until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young have fledged.
- A qualified biologist will monitor active nests during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction.
- Removal of trees within the project impact area will be done outside of the nesting season (at this time no tree removal is proposed).

San Joaquin Kit Fox

- Pre-construction/pre-activity surveys will be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox.
- Surveys will be conducted within the proposed project boundary and a 200-foot area outside the project footprint to identify habitat features.
- If natal/pupping dens are discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the Service will be immediately notified.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- To the extent possible, a biologist will be available on-call during all construction periods when not present onsite.

Riparian Habitat

Affected Environment

The project site intersects the Fresno Slough, which may be a jurisdictional water of the United States; a Jurisdictional Determination has not been completed. The slough is predominantly surrounded by wetland-type vegetation.

Environmental Consequences

Work will take place on the bridge deck, so no impacts to the slough or the wetland vegetation are anticipated to occur during construction of the project. No trees or riparian vegetation are anticipated to be removed.

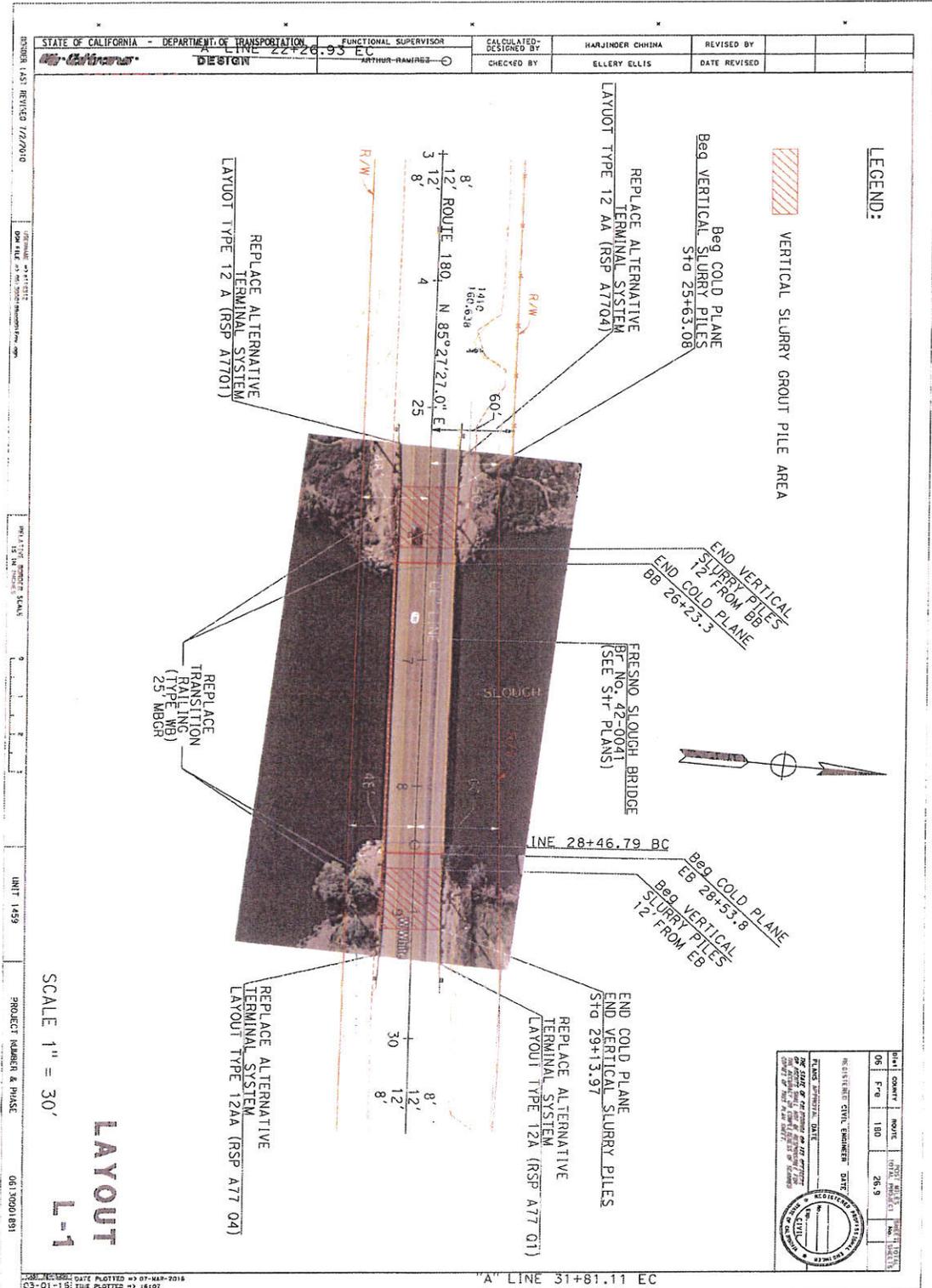
Although Section 404 and 401 permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board would not be necessary, the construction activities could fall within the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement may be required prior to start of construction activities.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

A Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement may be required prior to the start of construction activities and will be determined during the final design phase of the proposed project. Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding any avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures required before, during, and after construction activities.

Temporary impact areas will be restored to original condition and planted with native vegetation, where appropriate, after construction.

Appendix A Preliminary Design



Fish					
<i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>	delta smelt	FT	Inhabits open waters of bays, tidal rivers, channels, and sloughs in the Sacramento Bay Delta area. It tends to concentrate where salt water and freshwater mix.	No effect.	No suitable aquatic habitat onsite; site is outside known species range; site is not upstream of suitable habitat.
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Central Valley steelhead	FT	Anadromous fish with some spawning runs through the Central Valley.	No effect.	No suitable aquatic habitat onsite; site is outside known species range; site is not upstream of suitable habitat.
Amphibians					
<i>Rana draytonii</i>	California red-legged frog	FT	Found mainly near ponds in humid forests, woodlands, grasslands, and stream sides with plant cover. Most common in lowlands or foothills. Frequently found in woods adjacent to streams. Breeding habitat is in permanent or ephemeral water sources.	No effect.	No humid forest, woodlands present.
Reptiles					
<i>Gambelia (=Crotaphytus) sika</i>	blunt-nosed leopard lizard	FE, SE	Resident of sparsely vegetated alkali and desert scrub habitat, in areas of low topographic relief. Seeks cover in mammal burrows, under shrubs and structures such as a fence post.	May effect, not likely to adversely effect.	Very unlikely to occur onsite.
<i>Thamnophis gigas</i>	giant garter snake	FT	Found primarily in marshes, sloughs, and irrigation ditches, especially around rice fields, and occasionally in slow-moving creeks. Prefers locations with vegetation close to the water for basking.	May effect, not likely to adversely effect.	Very unlikely to occur onsite.

Appendix B Effects Determination

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	General Habitat Description	FESA Determination	Rationale
Plants					
<i>Chloropyron palmatum</i>	palmate-bracted bird's-beak	1B.1, FE	Chenopod scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Usually on Pescadero silty clay which is alkaline, with Distichlis, Frankenia, etc. Elevation: 16-508 feet.	No effect.	No suitable wetlands occur onsite.
<i>Monolopia congdonii</i>	San Joaquin woollythreads	FE	Chenopod scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Often found in sandy soils. Blooming Period: February-May. Elevation: 195-2,625 feet.	No effect.	No suitable wetlands occur onsite.
<i>Acanthointha obovata ssp. duttonii</i>	San Mateo thormmint	FE	Serpentine, chaparral. Blooming period: April – June Elevation: 164-984 feet.	No effect.	No serpentine soils occur onsite.
Invertebrates					
<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	vernal pool fairy shrimp	FT	Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast Mountains, and South Coast Mountains, in seasonal rain-filled pools. Inhabit small, clear-water sandstone-depression pools and grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools.	No effect.	No vernal pools are located onsite.
<i>Branchinecta longiantenna</i>	longhorn fairy shrimp	FE	Inhabit small, clear-water depressions in sandstone and clear-to-turbid clay/grass-bottomed pools in shallow swales.	No effect.	No shallow swales occur onsite.
<i>Desmocercus californicus dimorphus</i>	valley elderberry longhorn beetle	FT	Central Valley of California and surrounding foothills to approximately 3,000 feet; prefers riparian habitat. Exclusively reproduces in the stems of	No effect.	No elderberry bushes located onsite.

Mammals

<p><i>Dipodomys nitratoides exilis</i></p>	<p>Fresno kangaroo rat</p>	<p>FE, SE</p>	<p>Alkali desert scrub, alkali sinks, and herbaceous habitat with scattered shrubs in southwestern San Joaquin Valley at elevations up to 1,800 feet. Prefer nearly flat terrain and sandy loam soils for burrow excavation.</p>	<p>No effect.</p>	<p>Suitable habitat is not present within the Biological Study Area recorded for this species within the vicinity of the project site.</p>
<p><i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i></p>	<p>San Joaquin kit fox</p>	<p>FE, ST</p>	<p>Occurs in open, dry grassland and shrub and open forest habitats on the floor of the San Joaquin Valley and surrounding foothills.</p>	<p>May effect, not likely to adversely effect.</p>	<p>This species may occur on the project site in extremely low numbers, as a potential transient forager, but is unlikely to reside within the Biological Study Area due to the continued disturbance from nearby road traffic and commercial operations.</p>
<p>Key: Absent [A] - no habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present [HP] -habitat is, or may be present. The species may be present. Present [P] - the species is present. Critical Habitat [CH] - project footprint is located within a designated critical habitat unit, but does not necessarily mean that appropriate habitat is present. Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Federal Proposed (FP, FPE, FPT); Federal Candidate (FC), Federal Species of Concern (FSC); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); Fully Protected (FP); State Rare (SR); State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California Native Plant Society (CNPS), etc.</p>					

Appendix C USFWS Species List



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
FEDERAL BUILDING, 2800 COTTAGE WAY, ROOM W-2605
SACRAMENTO, CA 95825
PHONE: (916)414-6600 FAX: (916)414-6713



Consultation Code: 08ESMF00-2015-SLI-1042
Event Code: 08ESMF00-2016-E-02772
Project Name: 06-0Q510

April 15, 2016

Subject: Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the Service under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Please follow the link below to see if your proposed project has the potential to affect other species or their habitats under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service:

http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/protected_species/species_list/species_lists.html

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2)

of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*). Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (<http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm>; <http://www.towerkill.com>; and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment



United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Project name: 06-0Q510

Official Species List

Provided by:

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
FEDERAL BUILDING
2800 COTTAGE WAY, ROOM W-2605
SACRAMENTO, CA 95825
(916) 414-6600

Consultation Code: 08ESMF00-2015-SLI-1042

Event Code: 08ESMF00-2016-E-02772

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Name: 06-0Q510

Project Description: The project proposes to replace the approach slabs at the Fresno Slough Bridge on State Route 180 just east of the City of Mendota in western Fresno County.

Please Note: The FWS office may have modified the Project Name and/or Project Description, so it may be different from what was submitted in your previous request. If the Consultation Code matches, the FWS considers this to be the same project. Contact the office in the 'Provided by' section of your previous Official Species list if you have any questions or concerns.

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>, 04/15/2016 11:47 AM

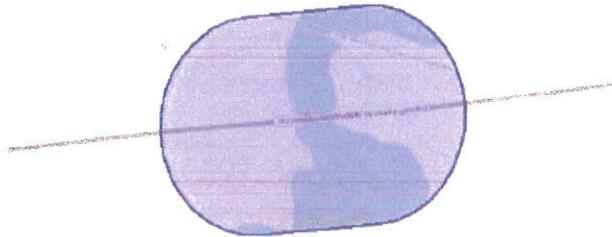
1



United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Project name: 06-0Q510

Project Location Map:



Project Coordinates: The coordinates are too numerous to display here.

Project Counties: Fresno, CA

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>, 04/15/2016 11:47 AM



United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Project name: 06-0Q510

Endangered Species Act Species List

There are a total of 10 threatened or endangered species on your species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. Critical habitats listed under the **Has Critical Habitat** column may or may not lie within your project area. See the **Critical habitats within your project area** section further below for critical habitat that lies within your project. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

Amphibians	Status	Has Critical Habitat	Condition(s)
California red-legged frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>) Population: Entire	Threatened	Final designated	
Crustaceans			
Vernal Pool fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>) Population: Entire	Threatened	Final designated	
Fishes			
Delta smelt (<i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>) Population: Entire	Threatened	Final designated	
steelhead (<i>Oncorhynchus (=salmo) mykiss</i>) Population: Northern California DPS	Threatened	Final designated	
Flowering Plants			
Palmate-Bracted bird's beak (<i>Cordylanthus palmatus</i>)	Endangered		
San Joaquin woolly-thread	Endangered		

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>, 04/15/2016 11:47 AM



United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Project name: 06-0Q510

<i>(Monolopia (=Iembertia) conglonii)</i>			
Mammals:			
Fresno kangaroo rat (<i>Dipodomys</i> <i>deserti</i>) Population: Entire	Endangered	Final designated	
San Joaquin Kit fox (<i>Taxidea</i> <i>macrotis</i>) Population: wherever found	Endangered		
Reptiles:			
Blunt-Nosed Leopard lizard (<i>Gambusia</i> <i>silus</i>) Population: Entire	Endangered		
Grant Garter snake (<i>Thamnophis</i> <i>gigax</i>) Population: Entire	Threatened		

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>, 04/15/2016 11:47 AM



United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Project name: 06-0Q510

Critical habitats that lie within your project area

There are no critical habitats within your project area.

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>, 04/15/2016 11:47 AM

5

Appendix D **Comments and Responses**

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from December 14, 2015 to January 14, 2016. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented.

Comment from the State Clearinghouse



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Ken Alex
Director

January 13, 2016

Michelle Ray
California Department of Transportation, District 6
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Fresno Slough Pile Supported Approach Slabs
SCH#: 2015121039

Dear Michelle Ray:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Mitigated Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Document Details Report please note that the Clearinghouse has listed the state agencies that reviewed your document. The review period closed on January 11, 2016, and the comments from the responding agency (ies) is (are) enclosed. If this comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Please refer to the project's ten-digit State Clearinghouse number in future correspondence so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104(c) of the California Public Resources Code states that:

"A responsible or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation."

These comments are forwarded for use in preparing your final environmental document. Should you need more information or clarification of the enclosed comments, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency directly.

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures
cc: Resources Agency

1400 TENTH STREET P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044
TEL (916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2015121039
Project Title Fresno Slough Pile Supported Approach Slabs
Lead Agency Caltrans #6

Type MND Mitigated Negative Declaration
Description The project proposes to repair soil erosion at the Fresno Slough Bridge on Route 180 in Fresno County east to the City of Mendota at Post mile 26.9. The erosion at the open end pile abutments causes the pavement to fail at the bridge.
 Pile supported approach slabs and a curtain wall approx. 10 feet from the ends to the bridge would be constructed. In addition, the bridge railing terminal system would be replaced to meet current standards. One-way reversible traffic control would be required during construction, using a 24-hour temporary traffic signal. No new right of way would be acquired.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Michelle Ray
Agency California Department of Transportation, District 6
Phone 559-445-5286 **Fax**
email
Address 855 M Street, Suite 200
City Fresno **State** CA **Zip** 93721

Project Location

County Fresno
City Mendota
Region
Lat / Long
Cross Streets SR 180 at Fresno Slough Bridge (PM 26.9)
Parcel No.
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways 180
Airports Mendota
Railways SJ Valley
Waterways Fresno Slough
Schools
Land Use State Highway

Project Issues Biological Resources; Wetland/Riparian

Reviewing Agencies Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 1; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 4; Department of Parks and Recreation; Central Valley Flood Protection Board; Office of Emergency Services, California; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 6; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Bd., Region 5 (Fresno); Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission

Date Received 12/11/2015 **Start of Review** 12/11/2015 **End of Review** 01/11/2016

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Response to Comment from the State Clearinghouse

Thank you for your letter. The packet from the State Clearinghouse included the letter from the State Lands Commission, which was also sent to Caltrans separately and is included beginning on page 48.

The letter acknowledges that Caltrans has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Comment from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., GOVERNOR

CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION BOARD

3310 El Camino Ave., Rm. 151
SACRAMENTO, CA 95821
(916) 574-0609 FAX: (916) 574-0682



December 22, 2015

Ms. Michelle Ray
Department of Transportation
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, California 93721

Subject: CEQA Comments: Fresno Slough Pile Supported Approach Slabs
Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration, SCH No.: 2015121039

Location: Fresno County

Dear Ms. Ray:

Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Board) staff has reviewed the subject document and provides the following comments:

The proposed project crosses the Fresno Slough, a regulated stream under Board jurisdiction, and may require a Board permit prior to construction.

The Board's jurisdiction covers the entire Central Valley including all tributaries and distributaries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, and the Tulare and Buena Vista basins.

Under authorities granted by California Water Code and Public Resources Code statutes, the Board enforces its Title 23, California Code of Regulations (Title 23) for the construction, maintenance, and protection of adopted plans of flood control that protect the public from floods. Adopted plans of flood control include the federal-State facilities of the State Plan of Flood Control, regulated streams, and designated floodways.

Pursuant to Title 23, Section 6 a Board permit is required prior to working within the Board's jurisdiction for the placement, construction, reconstruction, removal, or abandonment of any landscaping, culvert, bridge, conduit, fence, projection, fill, embankment, building, structure, obstruction, encroachment, excavation, the planting, or removal of vegetation, and any repair or maintenance that involves cutting into the levee.

Permits may also be required to bring existing works that predate permitting into compliance with Title 23, or where it is necessary to establish the conditions normally imposed by permitting. The circumstances include those where responsibility for the works has not been clearly established or ownership and use have been revised.

Other federal (including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 10 and 404 regulatory permits), State and local agency permits may be required and are the applicant's responsibility to obtain.

Board permit applications and Title 23 regulations are available on our website at <http://www.cvfpb.ca.gov/>. Maps of the Board's jurisdiction are also available from the California Department of Water Resources website at <http://gis.bam.water.ca.gov/bam/>.

Ms Michelle Ray
December 22, 2015
Page 2 of 2

Should you have any questions, you may contact Mr. James Herota by phone at (916) 574-0651, or via email at james.herota@water.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Eric Butler
Supervising Engineer
Projects and Environmental Branch

cc: Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, California 95814

Response to Comment from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Thank you for your letter commenting on the project. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with Board staff during final design. Caltrans will obtain any required permits prior to construction.

Comment from the State Lands Commission

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202



Established in 1938

JENNIFER LUCCHESI, Executive Officer
(916) 574-1800 Fax (916) 574-1810
California Relay Service TDD Phone 1-800-735-2929
from Voice Phone 1-800-735-2922

Contact Phone: (916) 574-1890
Contact FAX: (916) 574-1885

January 11, 2016

File Ref: SCH # 2015121039

Michelle Ray
California Department of Transportation, Central Region/District 6
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Fresno Slough Pile Supported Approach Slabs, Fresno County

Dear Ms. Ray:

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) staff has reviewed the subject MND for the Fresno Slough Pile Supported Approach Slabs Project (Project), which is being prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans, as a public agency proposing to carry out a project, is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.). The CSLC is a trustee agency for projects that could directly or indirectly affect sovereign lands and their accompanying Public Trust resources or uses. Additionally, because the Project involves work over sovereign lands, the CSLC will act as a responsible agency.

CSLC Jurisdiction and Public Trust Lands

The CSLC has jurisdiction and management authority over all ungranted tidelands, submerged lands, and the beds of navigable lakes and waterways. The CSLC also has certain residual and review authority for tidelands and submerged lands legislatively granted in trust to local jurisdictions (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 6009, subd. (c), 6301, 6306). All tidelands and submerged lands, granted or ungranted, as well as navigable lakes and waterways, are subject to the protections of the Common Law Public Trust.

As general background, the State of California acquired sovereign ownership of all tidelands and submerged lands and beds of navigable lakes and waterways upon its admission to the United States in 1850. The State holds these lands for the benefit of all people of the State for statewide Public Trust purposes, which include but are not limited to waterborne commerce, navigation, fisheries, water-related recreation, habitat preservation, and open space. On tidal waterways, the State's sovereign fee ownership extends landward to the mean high tide line, except for areas of fill or artificial accretion or where the boundary has been fixed by agreement or a court. On navigable non-tidal

waterways, including lakes, the State holds fee ownership of the bed of the waterway landward to the ordinary low water mark and a Public Trust easement landward to the ordinary high water mark, except where the boundary has been fixed by agreement or a court. Such boundaries may not be readily apparent from present day site inspections.

After review of the information contained in the MND, CSLC staff has determined that Fresno Slough, over which the proposed Project will extend, includes State-owned sovereign land, as specified above. Currently, the CSLC does not have an accepted map on file for the existing structure. Proposed work over and on the bed of Fresno Slough below the ordinary low water mark requires a lease and formal authorization from the CSLC. Pursuant to California Streets and Highways Code (§ 101.5), Caltrans may submit an application for the approval of an acceptable map by the CSLC. Please contact Sandra Kreutzburg, Public Land Management Specialist (see contact information below), for further information on the extent of the CSLC's jurisdiction and application requirements.

Project Description

Caltrans proposes to repair soil erosion at the Fresno Slough Bridge on Route 180 in Fresno County east of the city of Mendota at post mile 26.9, as illustrated in Appendix A of the MND. The purpose of the Project appears to be for maintenance and repair work. CSLC staff understands that all earth disturbance work would occur along the bank and upland portions of the Project area, with no proposed work expected to affect the bed of Fresno Slough. The Project meets Caltrans' objectives and needs as follows:

- Erosion at the open end pile abutments causes the pavement to fail at the bridge approaches; and
- The existing bridge railing terminal system does not meet current standards.

From the Project Description, CSLC staff understands the Project would include the following components:

- Pile supported approach slabs on the east and west sides of the Route 180 bridge are proposed for construction;
- A curtain wall is also proposed for construction at both ends of the bridge along the bank of Fresno Slough; and
- Replacement of the bridge railing system above the existing deck of the bridge.

Environmental Review

As a responsible agency for the Project, CSLC staff requests that Caltrans consider the following comments.

Project Description

1. Please include more narrative detail and construction drawings illustrating topographic elevations of proposed work for the curtain wall along the banks of the Fresno Slough. To the extent possible, identify the ordinary low water mark

elevation on construction drawings to illustrate that all proposed earth disturbance will occur above this elevation.

Cultural Resources

2. The MND indicates that the existing bridge is over 50 years old, and has had some previous alterations to maintain the structural integrity of the bridge. Please include a discussion in the cultural resources section explaining why the existing bridge does not possess qualities of historical significance, any consultations with qualified sources, and how Caltrans determined that proposed work on the bridge would have no impact on historic resources.

Recreation/Public Access

3. Although the Project does not appear to be subject to California Streets and Highways Code (§ 84.5) requirements regarding preparation of a report on feasibility of providing public access to the waterway, please consider any opportunities to provide, enhance, or improve the public's ability to access Fresno Slough at the Project area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the MND for the Project. As a responsible and trustee agency, the CSLC will need to rely on the Final MND for the issuance of a lease as specified above; and therefore, we request that you consider our comments prior to adopting the MND.

Please send copies of future Project-related documents, including electronic copies of the Final MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and Notice of Determination (NOD) when they become available. Please refer questions concerning environmental review to Jason Ramos, Senior Environmental Scientist, at (916) 574-1814 or via e-mail at jason.ramos@slc.ca.gov. For questions concerning CSLC leasing jurisdiction, please contact Sandra Kreutzburg, Public Land Management Specialist, at (916) 574-0282, or via e-mail at sandra.kreutzburg@slc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Cy R. Oggins, Chief
Division of Environmental Planning
and Management

cc: Office of Planning and Research
J. Ramos, CSLC
S. Kreutzburg, CSLC
S. Haaf

Response to Comment from the State Lands Commission

Thank you for your comments regarding the project. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the Commission during project approval and final design. Further responses are keyed to the numbering in the comment letter:

1. The scope of the project has changed as described on page 5 (Description of Project) of this Initial Study; Caltrans will coordinate with the Commission during final design.
2. The highway bridge crossing Fresno Slough was evaluated by professionally qualified staff for potential eligibility as a historic property during a statewide survey of Caltrans bridges in 1987, and was found not to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at that time. The bridge was then widened to meet current standards in 2007. The original bridge railings were also replaced. The bridge now retains little of its original appearance.
3. The project is right next to the Mendota Wildlife Management Area, which is open to the public. The public is able to access the Fresno Slough directly from the wildlife management area. Project construction will not affect public access to the slough.

Appendix E Letter of Concurrence from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



In Reply Refer to:
08ESMF00-
2016-1-0380

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825-1846



MAR 29 2016

Dena Gonzalez
Chief, Central Region Biology Branch
California Department of Transportation, District 6
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, California 93721

Subject: Informal Consultation on the Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Project, Fresno County, California (California Department of Transportation 06-FRE-180-PM 26.9; EA 06 0Q510)

Dear Ms. Gonzalez:

This letter is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) response to the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) letter requesting the initiation of informal consultation on its action to construct the proposed Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Project (project) in Fresno County, California.

Caltrans has assumed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for section 7 consultation per the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act) in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 327 and as described in the NEPA assignment Memorandum of Understanding between the FHWA and Caltrans (effective October 1, 2012).

Pursuant to 50 CFR 402.12(j), you submitted a biological assessment for our review along with your November 30, 2015 letter, which we received in this office on December 1, 2015; you requested concurrence with the findings presented therein. These findings concluded that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the federally listed as endangered San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) and blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*), or the federally-listed as threatened giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*). Following further discussion with us, you submitted a revised biological assessment on February 17, 2016, which we received in this office on February 18, 2016. On March 15, 2016, you informed us of changes in the design of the project.

In considering your request, we based our evaluation on the following: (1) Caltrans' November 30, 2015 letter and its supporting *Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Biological Assessment*, dated November 2015; (2) email correspondence between the Service and Caltrans; (3) Caltrans' February 18, 2016 *Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Revised Biological Assessment*, dated February 2016; and (4) other information available to the Service.

Description of the Action

Caltrans proposes to repair damage due to scour and soil erosion at the Fresno Slough Bridge on SR 180, which is located approximately 3-miles (mi) southeast of the City of Mendota in Fresno County at postmile 26.9. The erosion at the open end pile abutments has caused the pavement to fail at the bridge approaches. Originally built in 1952, the bridge is 231-feet (ft.) long and approximately 44-ft wide; it was widened in 2009 to accommodate one lane in each direction and 8 ft. shoulders. The bridge has continuous eight spans on six column bents and open end pile abutments.

In 2014, Caltrans completed an emergency project that temporarily addressed pavement failure at the west end of the bridge. The purpose of the current project is to construct an array of injection slurry grout piles to stabilize the soil under the bridge approaches. These piles will be located in an area set back approximately 10 ft. from either end of the bridge. Caltrans also will replace the bridge railing terminal system in all four quadrants in order to meet current design standards.

No off-pavement work or vegetation removal will take place. One-way traffic control will be implemented during construction. No temporary k-rail barriers will be necessary during construction.

Scheduling

Caltrans tentatively anticipates starting construction in March 2017 and completing construction in December 2017. There will be an approximate total of 70 working nights/days and the majority of activities will be conducted at night.

Staging Areas

Caltrans has indicated that the contractor will bring in the required drilling equipment and fill material on a daily/nightly basis, so there will be no long-term staging. All equipment and fill will be kept on the side of the roadway/bridge deck and confined to a currently paved area(s). For the purpose of this project, all staging will occur within the project footprint, as described on pages 3-4 of this document under the **Action Area** heading. Any location the contractor uses for equipment and materials staging that is outside this area will need to be evaluated and may require Caltrans either to revise its informal consultation or initiate formal consultation.

Conservation Measures

Caltrans and its contractor will implement the following measures to reduce the potential for effects to the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and giant garter snake. For the purpose of this consultation, a "qualified biologist," as referenced in this document, refers to an individual who, at a minimum, holds a four-year degree in a relevant biological field and who has demonstrated knowledge of, and experience with, these species.

General

1. A qualified biologist(s) will conduct an environmental awareness training program for all construction personnel covering the status of the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and the giant garter snake; the importance of avoiding impacts to these species; and the penalties for not complying with minimization requirements. New construction

personnel who are added to the project after the training is first conducted also will be required to take the training.

2. A qualified biologist(s) will be present on-site during initial ground disturbing activities. The biologist(s) also will be available on-call when not present on-site.
3. Caltrans will ensure that the speed limit for construction-related traffic within the work zones will be limited to a maximum of 10 mph in order to prevent equipment/vehicle strikes.
4. All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps will be disposed of in closed containers and removed daily from the project site in order to reduce the potential for attracting predator species.
5. No pets or firearms will be allowed on the project site.

San Joaquin kit fox

1. Preconstruction surveys will be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. Surveys for the San Joaquin kit fox and its dens will be performed throughout the project footprint as well as within 200-ft. of the footprint.

Blunt-nosed leopard lizard

1. Caltrans will install environmentally sensitive fencing adjacent to areas of suitable habitat for the species in order to prevent the encroachment of construction equipment and/or personnel in those areas.

Giant garter snake

1. A qualified biologist(s) will conduct preconstruction surveys for the giant garter snake no more than 24 hours prior to the start of ground disturbance. If any sign of the species is found during these surveys, Caltrans will contact the Service to discuss ways to proceed with the project and avoid take.
2. Construction at the bridge site will occur during the active season for the species (approximately May 1 to October 1).
3. Caltrans will install exclusion fencing (of a type that will not entangle the giant garter snake) in each quadrant of the bridge to prevent the species from entering the work areas.

Action Area

The action area is defined in 50 CFR § 402.02, as "all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action." The action area is composed of the project footprint (defined by Caltrans as the approximately 1.0 acre (ac) project impact area where work will occur), which includes an approximately 1,000-ft. segment of the Fresno Slough Bridge and approaches. The action area also includes land extending approximately 200-ft. from the edge of the footprint, which will experience further-reaching effects of construction activities such as noise and visual disturbance.

Effects Analysis

Habitat Description

The project footprint is composed of developed areas, specifically the bridge deck and paved bridge approaches. Land types within 200 ft. of the footprint vary: the northeast quadrant of the bridge consists of development in the form of a campground facility and dirt parking lot, plus several ornamental trees, the southeast quadrant consists of part of the entrance to the Mendota Wildlife Area, plus areas for vehicle parking, the southwest quadrant consists of a portion of the Mendota Wildlife Area, which is composed predominantly of grasses and alkali sink scrub; and the northwest quadrant consists of development in the form of a small, privately owned ranch made up of a single building and miscellaneous equipment - the ranch property is surrounded by alkali sink scrub.

Surveys

According to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB, 2016)¹, there are no records for the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, or giant garter snake within the action area. According to the CNDDB, the closest record for the San Joaquin kit fox is an historical observation from 1947, located approximately 2.5-mi northwest of the bridge site. The closest blunt-nosed leopard lizard records are located approximately 1.2-mi northwest and 2.5-mi east of the bridge, and date from 1979 and 1981, respectively. The closest giant garter snake observations to the bridge site include one record located approximately 1.6 mi southeast (dating from 2001), two located approximately 4.5-mi southeast (dating from 2001 and 1976), and one located approximately 4.3 mi southeast (dating from 2008).

Caltrans biologists conducted a field survey and a San Joaquin kit fox specific survey of the action area on February 27, 2014, a site visit on May 5, 2014 to focus on engineering/design elements with the project development team, and another San Joaquin kit fox survey on April 28, 2015. No San Joaquin kit foxes or associated sign or dens were observed during the surveys. Also, no blunt-nosed leopard lizards or giant garter snakes were observed on-site during any of the surveys and site visits; however, Caltrans did not conduct protocol surveys for either of these species.

Habitat Impacts

All erosion mitigation activities will take place on the existing paved roadway/bridge, so no permanent or temporary effects to habitat are expected. In fact, there is no suitable habitat for any of the species within the project footprint. However, there is some potential habitat present immediately outside of the project footprint (but still within the action area) for all three species. Caltrans identified narrow strips of land situated adjacent to the road shoulder in each quadrant of the bridge (made up of gravel, compacted bare ground, and ruderal vegetation), which could serve as basking areas for the giant garter snake. Caltrans also identified neighboring portions of grassland and alkali sink scrub in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the bridge that could provide foraging and denning opportunities for the San Joaquin kit fox, as well as burrowing habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

Because of the developed nature of the project footprint, Caltrans did not discover any small mammal burrows there; neither did it identify any burrows in the narrow strips of land situated adjacent to the road shoulder in each quadrant of the bridge. Consequently, there is low potential for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and the giant garter snake to occur in these areas given the

¹ California Natural Diversity Database. 2016. Natural Heritage Division, California Department of Fish and Wildlife RareFind 5. Sacramento, California. Accessed March 21, 2016.

absence of suitable habitat in the form of available refugia and burrows. The likelihood that the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and giant garter snake are present in the larger action area also is low given that the occurrences recorded in the vicinity of the project site are historic sightings.

During the April 2015 survey, Caltrans recorded sightings of the California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) and cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus* sp.), so there may be some limited foraging potential for the San Joaquin kit fox in the vicinity of the project footprint. Despite there being some potential habitat present in proximity to the project footprint, the likelihood that the San Joaquin kit fox is present in the action area is low since the action area is not located within a core, satellite, or linkage recovery area for the San Joaquin kit fox (Service, 2010)².

Other Construction Activities

Adverse effects to the San Joaquin kit fox from project-related equipment/vehicle strikes are unlikely to occur given the limited scope of, and nature of, the project, plus the implementation of the proposed conservation measures, such as preconstruction surveys, personnel training, and daily trash removal.

Determinations

The Service concurs with Caltrans' conclusion that the action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, or the giant garter snake because the potential for the action to affect these species is discountable. These conclusions are based on the absence of suitable habitat within the project footprint, the absence of observable sign within the action area, the scope of the proposed construction activities, and the conservation measures proposed to reduce potential effects to the species.

Closing Statement

This concludes the Service's review of Caltrans' action to construct the Fresno Slough Scour Mitigation Project and the Service's consideration of the project's effects on the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and giant garter snake. No further coordination with the Service under the Act is necessary at this time. Note that take of listed species is not exempted from the prohibitions described under section 9 of the Act. If conditions change so that the project may adversely affect listed species, initiation of formal consultation, as provided in 50 CFR § 402.14, is required.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Jen Schofield (jen_schofield@fws.gov) or me (thomas_leeman@fws.gov) at the letterhead address, by email, or at (916) 414-6544.

Sincerely,



Thomas Leeman
Chief, San Joaquin Valley Division

cc:

Craig Bailey, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fresno, California

² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. San Joaquin Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis monstrosus*) 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation. Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, Sacramento, California. 122 pp.

List of Technical Studies

Noise, Air and Water Quality Studies memorandum, November 2013

Cultural Resources Screening memorandum, June 2015

Hazardous Waste Scoping Review memorandum, November 2013

Paleontological Scoping Review memorandum, November 2013

Natural Environment Study, November 2015

