FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE
REACH 9 PHASE 2A EMBANKMENT PROTECTION PROJECT

(GREEN RIVER HOUSING ESTATES AND
UPPER HIGHWAY 91 EMBANKMENT)
SANTA ANA RIVER MAINSTEM PROJECT
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA

I have reviewed the attached Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Addendum for the Reach 9 Phase 2A Embankment Protection Project. This document supplements the 2001 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/EIR (SEIS/EIR) that was prepared for the Prado Basin and Vicinity features of the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project. This SEA/EIR Addendum is written in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and applicable environmental regulations.

This SEA/EIR Addendum provides an update of existing environmental conditions and addresses the environmental impacts associated with design changes that have occurred since 2001. The proposed project includes embankment protection adjacent to the Green River Housing Estates (GRHE) and SR-91 (Upper Highway 91), within Riverside County, California.

Project alternatives have been analyzed in the 2001 SEIS/EIR and this SEA/EIR Addendum. The preferred alternative consists of the construction of embankment protection features adjacent to the GRHE and Upper Highway 91. The preferred alternative is similar to that described in the 2001 SEIS/EIR; however the design of the embankments were modified during the final design. Changes from the 2001 design are documented in the SEA/EIR Addendum. The proposed action will protect the GRHE and the Upper Highway 91 embankment from the potential increased releases from Prado Dam. The approximate 7,400 feet of bank stabilization at the GRHE would consist of 24-inch grouted stone (4,700 feet) with a 5-foot thick derrick stone toe design and a sheet pile wall (2,700 feet). The approximate 2,000 feet of bank protection for the Upper Highway 91 Embankment would consist of a 24-inch thick grouted stone with a 5-foot thick derrick stone toe design. Approximately 260,000 cubic yards (cy) of onsite excavation and approximately 100,000 cy of imported fill would be required. Project construction will take approximately 18 months.

This project has been coordinated with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and will be in compliance with the Act. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would continue to coordinate with the USFWS, CDFG and other agencies to ensure that environmental resources are not significantly affected by the implementation of the

Table 2.2-1 Comparison of Previously Approved Design and the Proposed Action

Previously Approved Design		Proposed Action	
Green River Housing Estates	**Upper Highway 91**	**Green River Housing Estates**	**Upper Highway 91**
27-inch riprap to 15-inch grouted stone	33-inch thick riprap overlay	24-inch grouted stone with a 5-feet thick derrick stone toe design and sheet piles	24-inch thick grouted stone with a 5-feet thick derrick stone toe design
4,500 feet of bank protection	2,000 feet of bank protection	5,400 feet of bank protection (2,300 feet of grouted stone and 3,100 feet of sheet pile)	2,240 feet of bank protection
Construction access would occur off of Green River Road.	Construction vehicles would access the site from Prado Dam and exit at Green River Road.	Construction access would occur off of Green River Road/Prado Road.	Construction vehicles would access the site from Prado Dam and Prado Road off of Green River Road.
--	Culverts would have been extended through the new embankment protection, but further modification was not included.	--	Two culverts located under the SR-91 will be extended approximately 80 feet. One culvert (No. 37) is 72-inches in diameter and the other (No. 38) is a double box situated side by side (Each box is 12 feet wide by 9 feet high). Additional modification is proposed for culvert No. 38 to improve wildlife access, as described below.
Temporary diversion channel north of the housing estates with access from the North Bank.	--	Temporary diversion channel and North Bank access is not included.	--

2.3 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED AND ELIMINATED

No Construction Alternative

The Reach 9 flood control improvements as originally designed for the Upper Highway 91 Embankment and the GRHE have already been approved for construction in the 2001 SEIS/EIR. Thus, not constructing these flood control improvements is not considered an alternative for the Corps. Without flood control improvements, the necessary flood protection for the SR-91, and the lives and properties (homes) of individuals residing in the GRHE, would not be provided. Due to the fact that the flood control improvements as originally designed have been approved, that the No Construction alternative could affect lives and properties (homes) of individuals residing in the project area, and that it does not meet the objectives of the overall flood control project, it has been removed from consideration and thus not carried forward for further analysis.

2.4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES (ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS)

Two alternatives have been carried forward for detailed analysis in this SEA and EIR Addendum. These alternatives are:

- Previously Approved Design Alternative
- Proposed Action

4.2.2 Proposed Action

4.2.2.1 Vegetation and Habitat

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in temporary and permanent effects to riparian and upland vegetation within the project area. In total, the Proposed Action would temporarily disturb approximately 28.02 acres, including 24.60 acres of native habitats and 3.42 acres of non-habitat elements such as existing roads and landscaped residential lots. Approximately 9.33 acres (plus 0.005 acre of aquatic habitat that has not been included in this total due to the relatively minute size as compared to other disturbance) of native vegetation, included within riparian scrub, cottonwood/willow woodland, and upland habitats, would be permanently removed. The riparian plant communities in the proposed project area are considered sensitive habitat types for their role in the ecological function of the SAR corridor. These communities play important roles in the life histories for a high diversity of both common and special-status wildlife species, including Santa Ana sucker and least Bell's vireo. Table 4.2-1 provides a description of the habitat types and acreages subject to temporary and permanent impacts for the proposed action and the originally approved project design.

Table 4.2-1. Vegetation, Habitat and Other Non Habitat Elements

Plant Community	Originally Approved Design			Proposed Project		
	Total Acres	Development Impact		Total Acres	Development Impact	
		Perm Acres	Temp Acres		Perm Acres	Temp Acres
Aquatic	4.06	1.97	2.09	0.33	0.005	0.33*
Coastal Sage Scrub	0.33	0	0.33	0	0	0
Riparian Scrub	10.79	4.51	6.28	5.71	2.30	3.41
Cottonwood/Willow Woodland	21.56	10.43	11.13	13.54	3.37	10.17
Scour	2.29	0.17	2.12	0	0	0
Upland	15.18	6.91	8.27	14.35	3.66	10.69
Disturbed – Bare Ground	1.62	0.33	1.29	0	0	0
Disturbed – Landscaped	5.57	2.51	3.06	4.57	1.15	3.42
TOTAL	61.40	26.83	34.57	38.50	10.48	28.02

* Although the most current project mapping data suggests that 0.33 acres of aquatic habitat would be temporarily disturbed, the construction contractor will be instructed to restrict all construction-related access to the landside of the channel, except by non-motorized boat or foot traffic, as required for inspection. As a result, temporary impacts to aquatic habitat are not expected to occur.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in both direct and indirect effects to riparian and upland vegetation within the Reach 9, Phase 2A Project area. Direct impacts to native plant communities would occur as a result of the removal of vegetation during construction activities. These ground-disturbing construction activities include clearing and grading for bank stabilization, staging areas, and construction site access. Construction may also result in the temporary degradation of the value of adjacent habitat areas due to disturbance, increased human presence, and increased vehicle traffic during construction. Indirect impacts to adjacent vegetation communities could include minor