



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
Los Angeles District

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# **Prado Basin Ecosystem Restoration and Water Conservation Study**

## **APPENDIX S**

### **Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board Letter of Support**

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## Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

June 11, 2020

Mr. Eduardo T. DeMesa  
Chief, Planning Division  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 930  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

[Eduardo.T.Demesa@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eduardo.T.Demesa@usace.army.mil)

### **RE: PROPOSED PRADO BASIN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND WATER CONSERVATION PROJECT**

Dear Mr. DeMesa,

On May 21, 2020, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (Santa Ana Water Board) staff had a teleconference with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District (USACE) staff regarding the USACE's application for a Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the proposed Prado Basin Ecosystem Restoration and Water Conservation Project (Project). As discussed in our teleconference, it is my understanding that USACE intends to withdraw the pending application for the proposed Project and will resubmit the application when the Project design is finalized. Based on my initial review of the USACE's description of the Project and barring any significant changes to the Project, I anticipate that the Santa Ana Water Board will issue a Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the Project after the application is resubmitted and evaluated.

The purpose of the Project is to provide ecosystem restoration and increase water conservation. The proposed ecosystem restoration efforts would remove non-native invasive species, enhance habitat for listed species, and restore the ecosystem and flood plain of Chino Creek, a tributary of the Santa Ana River in the Prado Dam Flood Basin. Water conservation would be achieved by increasing the current allowable temporary storage behind Prado Dam and reducing the average non-storm flow release rate from Prado Dam during the non-flood season. These activities would allow downstream water agencies to manage river flows for groundwater recharge more effectively. The Project should also increase the resiliency of the water supply for much of north and west Orange County.

At this time, I am not aware of and do not anticipate any substantive water quality issues that would hinder the Section 401 Water Quality Certification process when the USACE

WILLIAM RUH, CHAIR | HOPE SMYTHE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

resubmits its application. As I understand, the Project will have both temporary and permanent impacts to U.S. waters, though there would be a proposed net gain in the extent of U.S. waters. I anticipate that the Section 401 Water Quality Certification will include best management practices and several environmental measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to water quality and associated beneficial uses, including waters for non-contact water recreation, warm freshwater habitat, wildlife habitat, and rare, threatened, and endangered species. I recommend that the USACE continue to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to assure that the proposed Project will effectively enhance the ecosystem and the beneficial uses of the Project area.

This letter serves an initial assessment of the Project; it is not a Section 401 Water Quality Certification or an approval or waiver of such. The Santa Ana Water Board staff looks forward to receiving the revised application for the Project and to working with the USACE to develop the Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the Project to assure that water quality standards, including beneficial uses, are adequately protected.

If you have any questions, please contact Claudia Tenorio at (951) 782-4963 or at [Claudia.Tenorio@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Claudia.Tenorio@waterboards.ca.gov) or David Woelfel at (951) 782-7960 or [David.Woelfel@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:David.Woelfel@waterboards.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

**Jayne Joy**  Digitally signed by Jayne Joy  
Date: 2020.06.10 17:00:47  
-07'00'  
Water Boards

Hope A. Smythe  
Executive Officer

cc:

Kenneth Wong, CIV CESPL, CESP – [Kenneth.Wong@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kenneth.Wong@usace.army.mil)

Megan T. Wong, CIV – [Megan.T.Wong@usace.army.mil](mailto:Megan.T.Wong@usace.army.mil)