

Notice of Preparation

To: State Clearinghouse

(Agency)

1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

(Address)

From: Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency

(Agency)

1227 Bridge Street, Suite C
Yuba City, CA 95991

(Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Statements/Environmental Impact Reports for the Sutter Basin Feasibility Study and Feather River West Levee Project

Introduction. Two efforts are presently underway to study flood risk reduction improvements in Sutter and Butte Counties, one known as the Sutter Basin Feasibility Study, sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to determine federal interest in flood risk reduction project(s), and one known as the Feather River West Levee Project (FRWLP), sponsored by the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency (SBFCA) as a locally driven flood risk reduction project.

The two projects are being studied in close coordination because they at least partially overlap in their study areas, purpose, potential improvements, potential effects, and involved parties. Therefore, a joint scoping process is being conducted for the two projects to explain the relationship between the two efforts and obtain public input in a manner that is convenient, efficient, and integrated. It is anticipated that the two planning efforts will result in a separate Environmental Impact Study/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for each project, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Sutter Basin Feasibility Study. USACE initiated the Sutter Basin project in 2001 and is conducting a feasibility study to evaluate flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, and recreation opportunities within the study area. The Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) and SBFCA, in their roles as non-federal local sponsors, are coordinating with USACE on the feasibility study. USACE, acting as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and SBFCA, acting as the state lead agency under CEQA, have determined that an EIS/EIR will be prepared to describe alternatives, potential environmental effects, and mitigation measures.

FRWLP. SBFCA is planning the FRWLP to address levee deficiencies in the west levee of the Feather River from Thermalito Afterbay to the Sutter Bypass confluence to meet federal, state, and local flood protection criteria and goals. In 2010, an assessment district was enacted to provide local funding toward flood management improvements. These funds will be matched with those from the Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 1E) administered by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The purpose of the FRWLP would be to construct improvements as quickly as possible in advance of and compatible with the Sutter Basin Feasibility Study. USACE, acting as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and SBFCA, acting as the state lead agency under the CEQA, have determined that an EIS/EIR will be prepared to describe alternatives, potential environmental effects, and mitigation measures.

Responsible and Trustee Agencies. Responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA may include the CVFPB, Cities of Yuba City, Live Oak, Gridley, and Biggs; Sutter and Butte Counties; California Department of Fish and Game; California Department of Water Resources; California Regional Water Quality Control Board; State Lands Commission; California Air Resources Board; and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Your Input Requested. SBFCA and USACE seek your input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information for these two projects. Comments are requested by July 8, 2011. Please mail or otherwise deliver your comments to:

Ingrid Norgaard, Project Manager Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency c/o ICF International 630 K Street, Suite 400 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-737-3000 Email: inorgaard@icfi.com	Matt Davis, Environmental Resources Branch Sacramento District U.S Army Corps of Engineers 1325 J Street Sacramento, CA 95814 916-557-6708 Email: Matthew.G.Davis@usace.army.mil
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Please provide a name for a contact person in your agency. In addition to or instead of providing written comments, input may also be provided at four public scoping meetings to be held on:

June 27 at 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Veterans Memorial Community Building
1425 Veterans Memorial Circle, Yuba City

June 28 at 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Gridley Veterans Memorial Hall
245 Sycamore Street, Gridley

These meetings will be the same in information presented, so you need only attend one meeting.

Please contact Ingrid Norgaard, via the information in the box above, if you need special assistance or accommodations at the meeting.

Additional information is attached.

Date: May 20, 2011

Signature: William H. Edger
Title: SBFCA Exec. Director
Telephone: (530) 775-9859

Attachment 1

Draft Environmental Impact Statements/Environmental Impact Reports for the Sutter Basin Feasibility Study and Feather River West Levee Project

Background Information

Sutter Basin Feasibility Study. USACE is conducting a feasibility study to evaluate structural and non-structural flood-risk-management measures, including re-operation of existing reservoirs; improvements to existing levees; construction of new levees; and other storage, conveyance, and non-structural options. The Sutter Basin study area covers approximately 285 square miles and is roughly bounded by the Feather River, Sutter Bypass, Wadsworth Canal, Sutter Buttes, and Cherokee Canal. Flood waters potentially threatening the study area originate from the Feather River watershed and/or the upper Sacramento River watershed, above Colusa Weir. The study area is essentially encircled by project levees and the high ground of Sutter Buttes. Geotechnical analysis and historical performance during past floods indicates the project levees are at risk of failure due to underseepage and through-levee seepage. The risk of levee failure coupled with the consequence of deep flooding presents a threat to public safety and property. Considering the collective changes to riparian and aquatic ecosystems brought about by agriculture, urbanization, mining, and flood risk management and water supply infrastructure, and the national concern for environmental quality and protection, every opportunity to restore and protect natural resources should be taken whenever changes in the water management system are being contemplated. Ecosystem restoration measures likely would include restoration of floodplain function and habitat. Recreation measures include those outdoor recreation opportunities associated with sustainable water resource development. The feasibility phase of this project is cost-shared 50% federal, 50% non-federal with the project sponsors, the State of California CVFPB and the SBFCA. The study will focus on alternatives in the study area that comprise flood risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, and recreation management measures. As part of the study, an EIS/EIR will be prepared with USACE as the lead agency under NEPA and SBFCA in cooperation with CVFPB as the lead agency under CEQA. Figure 1 highlights the Sutter Basin study area.

FRWLP. SBFCA is proposing a levee project along the Feather River west levee under the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Early Implementation Program (EIP) to expeditiously complete flood-risk reduction measures in advance of the Sutter Basin Project. Known as the Feather River West Levee Project (FRWLP), the project proposes to construct levee improvements between the Thermalito Afterbay and the Feather River/Sutter Bypass confluence. Primary deficiencies of the levee include through-seepage, under-seepage, and embankment instability (e.g., overly steepened slopes). Alternatives considered may include measures such as slurry cutoff walls, seepage berms, stability berms, internal drains, relief wells, sheet-pile walls, slope flattening, and potential new levee alignments. Figure 2 highlights the FRWLP's study area.

As part of the project, an EIS/EIR is being prepared. USACE has authority through the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (as amended) over modifications to federal flood control project levees and any such alterations as proposed by SBFCA are subject to approval by USACE. USACE also has authority through the Clean Water Act over activities involving jurisdictional waters, which are known to be in the project area. Due to these authorities, USACE is acting as the lead agency for the EIS according to NEPA. SBFCA will be acting as the lead agency for the EIR according to CEQA as an agency of the State of California with delegated authority to approve the project.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

The environmental factors checked below would potentially be affected by the proposed project (i.e., the project would involve at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact”).

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|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems |



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Figure 1
Sutter Basin Study Area

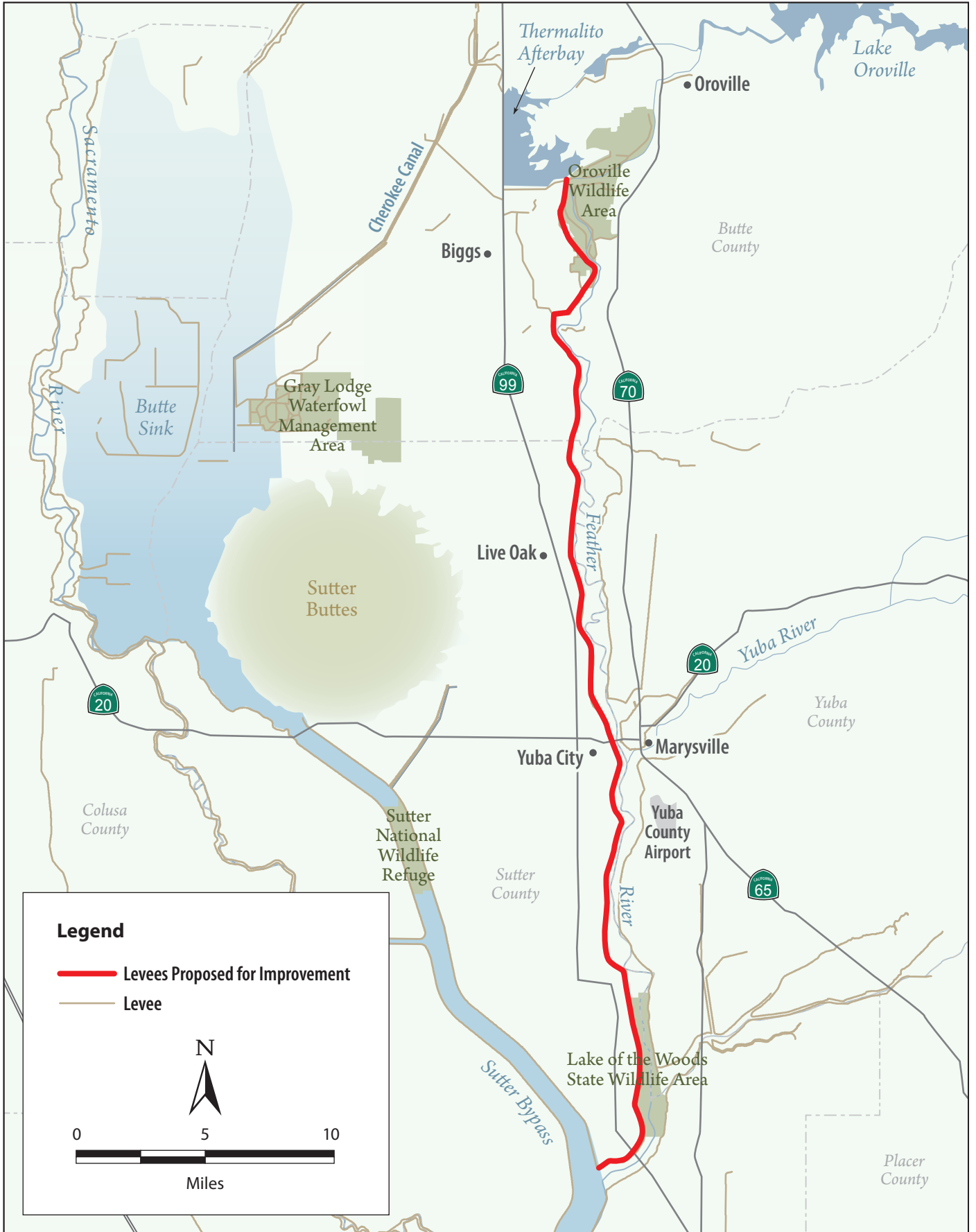


Figure 2
Feather River West Levee Project Study Area