Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Ventura River Watershed Council

April 1, 2021
Purpose of CEQA

- Inform the public about the Project by following the environmental review process.
- Seek input on the scope and content of the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR), including potential environmental issues, mitigation, and alternatives to be analyzed.
Ventura River Watershed
Matilija Dam Built 1947

Upper Ventura River, circa 1920

Matilija Creek (pre-dam construction)
2004 Feasibility Study and EIS/EIR

Partnered with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a Feasibility Study and an EIS/EIR for the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project.

Over 40 government and non-governmental agencies and water purveyors participated in the environmental review process, as well as numerous members of the public.
Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project

Project Objectives:
- Improve Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Along Matilija Creek and Ventura River
- Restore Natural Processes to Support Beach Replenishment
- Enhance Recreational Opportunities
- Restore Fish Passage

Watershed Protection

2004 EIS/EIR
Multiple Project Components
CURRENT CEQA PROCESS

✓ Preparing a Subsequent EIR (SEIR) to analyze proposed modifications to the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project.

✓ Public Scoping Period held 9/14/20 to 10/14/20

✓ Scope in Notice of Preparation:
  1. Evaluate the environmental effects from the revised method for Matilija Dam removal.
  2. Analyze updated design and construction plans for the following downstream components:
     • Camino Cielo Bridge
     • Live Oak Levee
     • Casitas Springs Levee
SCOPING: NOTICING

✓ Mailed notices to parcels within 500 feet of Matilija Dam, Camino Cielo Bridge, Robles Diversion Dam, Meiners Oaks Levee, Live Oak Acres Levee, and Casitas Springs Levee
✓ Notified public agencies and stakeholders
✓ Notices/articles in 7 newspapers + online news banners
✓ Social media announcements
✓ Online platform [www.vcpublicworks.org/wp/mderp/](http://www.vcpublicworks.org/wp/mderp/)
  • Narrated presentations
  • Notice of Preparation
  • Link to submit written comments
✓ Materials provided in Spanish and English
SCOPING: VIRTUAL DATA

✓ 450 total web page views
  • direct searches
  • links from Facebook
✓ MDERP Social Media
  • 2,494 users reached
  • 4,658 impressions
  • 205 link clicks

Overall: potentially more participation than standard public meetings
SCOPING: COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Reminders to comply with many local, state, and federal regulations
- Evaluate sediment impacts to property and water wells; provide mitigation
- Evaluate impacts to traffic, biological resources, and other issues.
- Notch the dam over time to reduce impacts
- Explore non-levee alternatives to the new levee proposed at Meiners Oaks
- Ideas for recreation components near the dam and in the Lower Ventura River
- Include community involvement throughout the dam removal process.
SCOPING: COMMENTS RECEIVED

✓ Received 25 written comment letters
  • 6 from government agencies
  • 3 from stakeholders
  • 16 from individuals

✓ Contributed to Scope change
  ✓ Limiting SEIR to dam removal analyses

☑ All comments applicable to dam removal will be addressed in the SEIR
FUTURE CEQA ANALYSES

- CEQA scoping & documents will be prepared and circulated for:
  - Camino Cielo Bridge
  - Live Oak Acres Levee
  - Casitas Springs Levee
  - Robles Diversion/Meiners Oaks Flood Protection
    - Meiners Oaks levee design undesirable
    - Engineering studies/alternatives in progress
SEIR: Revised Dam Removal Method

- Controlled Natural Sediment Transport
- Most Impacts Short Term
- Cost Effective
- Proven to Work

Diagram of Matilija Dam with 12' Diameter, Elevation 975' (NAVD 88), and Upstream Face Elevation (Not to Scale).
New Matilija Creek Channel

(a). Current condition

(b). Phase I erosion

(c). Phase II erosion

View Upstream of Lake Sediment Erosion
SEIR NEXT STEPS

- Prepare SEIR Public Draft Document
- Notify Public Review Period – 45 days
  - Public/agencies provide written comments
- Comments addressed in Final SEIR
- Notify Public/Commenters of Public Hearing
- Public Hearing- Board of Supervisors
  - Hears public comments on Final SEIR
  - Considers input and certifies Final SEIR (or not)
- Final document filing if certified
SEIR Process

Public Input: 30-day Scoping Period
- Notice of Preparation: September 14 to October 14, 2020

Informational Meeting: VRWC
- In progress

Public Input: 45-Day Comment Period
- Prepare Draft SEIR: In progress
- Publish Draft SEIR: May-June 2021

Respond to Public Comments

Publish Final SEIR

Certify Final SEIR*
- Public Hearing: Public Comments Heard: Fall 2021

*Ventura County Board of Supervisors will consider SEIR analyses and public testimony prior to certifying the SEIR and approving the project. Board may not certify SEIR or approve the project.

Watershed Protection
How to Participate in CEQA Process:

- Contact Pam Lindsey now to be on mailing list: Pam.Lindsey@ventura.org/MDERP@ventura.org
- Watch for newspaper and social media announcements for Draft SEIR public review period
- Visit website to view Draft SEIR
- Prepare your comments and send
  - Details to be provided
- All comments (including personal information) will become public record
For more information, please contact:

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