Public Notice

Notice of Exemption

Santa Clara Valley Water District

To: Santa Clara County
Clerks Office, Business Division
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose CA 95110

From: Santa Clara Valley Water District
5750 Almaden Expressway
San Jose CA 95118-3686
Telephone (408) 265-2600

Project Title: Bolsa Road Fish Passage Improvement Project

Project Location–Specific: The project site is located on Uvas-Carnadero Creek on APNs 841-32-015, 841-31-007, 841-33-009, 841-31-008, 841-31-009, 841-31-010, and 841-33-007. The project site occurs along the south side of Bolsa Road at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossing.

Project Location-City: Unincorporated (south of Gilroy) **Project Location-County:** Santa Clara

Project Purpose: The project purpose is to eliminate fish passage barriers on Uvas-Carnadero Creek including a UPRR crossing support slab and an existing dysfunctional Denil fish ladder.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Clara Valley Water District

Name of Agency or Person Carrying Out Project: Santa Clara Valley Water District

Exempt Status: (*check one*)

- ☐ Ministerial [Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268];
- ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)];
- ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 21080(b)(c)];
- ☒ Categorical Exemptions [Section 15333; Class 33, "Small Habitat Restoration Projects"]
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions [*State code number*].

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15333:

> "Class 33 consists of projects not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife provided that: (a) There would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to section 15065, (b) There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed, and (c) The project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects."

None of the conditions noted under the CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 would occur.

Description of Project: The project includes installation of a gradually-sloped, stream riffle-pool complex up to the existing UPRR bridge abutment slab (fish barrier) and removal of the existing dysfunctional fish ladder on Uvas-Carnadero Creek. Habitat complexity would be promoted within the channel by constructing pools, runs, and riffles to provide suitable depth and velocity conditions for fish migration, including for South-Central California Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*).

The modified channel would extend approximately 1,700 linear feet downstream of the existing slab. The work area would include an additional 100 feet on each end to allow for adequate space for channel installation. The project footprint would total up to 3.5 acres and include approximately 1.7 acres of modified channel and banks, 1.2 acres of temporary work area, and up to 0.6 acre for construction staging.

Prior to installation of the riffle-pool complex, the site would require clearing and grubbing of existing surface vegetation in the channel and along portions of the banks where stabilization is required. Nine trees, generally

less than 12-inches in diameter at breast height, would be removed. Care would be taken to keep root systems and existing vegetation intact, where possible.

Only minor earth moving and excavation is anticipated as the modified channel would predominantly be constructed at a higher elevation than existing creek grade. The modified channel would include nine riffles and 10 pools. The top and bottom portions of the riffle keys would be constructed out of two- and three-ton rock to hold the riffle in place during high flows. The pools and middle sections of the riffles would be constructed with one-ton and half-ton rock. The pools and riffles would be overlaid with a thin layer of clean gravel to fill the interstitial spaces in the rock. To further secure the riffle at each of the nine locations, a small portion of the bank at the top of the riffle would be excavated and 2-ton rock would be placed and backfilled with soil; riffle locations would be positioned to minimize impacts on mature riparian vegetation. The depth of rock and gravel between the riffle keys forming the riffles and pools would be approximately 2 feet deep and underlaid with clean fill material. In some areas, creek benches (generally 3 to 8 feet wide) would be created to help facilitate establishment of the top of the riffle key. The elevation of the channel would conform to the existing creek grade at the downstream end and the top of the concrete slab at the UPRR crossing on the upstream end. The overall slope of the channel would be approximately 0.5 percent.

Associated bank work would include reshaping of the creek banks to stabilize the north bank just downstream of the concrete slab (approximately 140 linear feet) and the south bank at the downstream end of the riffle-pool complex (approximately 800 linear feet). Depending on location, this may involve recontouring or setting back eroded banks to achieve a stable 1.5:1 slope. In some areas, banks would be rebuilt and supported with half-ton to one-ton rock, generally about 3 to 8 feet below the top of bank. Where rock is placed to support the banks, the rock would be placed around existing trees and root systems (where feasible), and the rock would be buried in a 3-inch layer of soil with soil. Bank recontouring would match pre-project conditions to the extent possible.

To ensure the creek maintains 100-year flood protection, a 130-foot long, 6-foot wide, and 1-foot tall earthen berm would also be installed approximately 500 feet upstream of the UPRR bridge. The berm would be located on the south side of the creek at the edge of the riparian corridor along an agricultural access road and orchard.

Following installation of the riffle-pool complex, site restoration would commence, and disturbed areas would be revegetated with native species. Willows would be planted along the creek benches, blackberry would be planted at the top of reconstructed banks, and the bank slope would be seeded with native herbaceous species. Trash and debris presently in the project area (cars, tires, concrete blocks, and other debris) would be removed.

Project staging area would be located on a vacant lot near the southern end of the project along Bolsa Road and on small disturbed portion of the Christopher Ranch property. Access would be developed from two points along Christopher Ranch, one at the upstream end of the project and one at the downstream end (where the bank would be reconstructed). Equipment anticipated to be utilized includes excavators, loaders, dump trucks, backhoes, jackhammers, water trucks, and pickup trucks.

Work is anticipated to take approximately 16 weeks to complete, between June 1st and October 15th when the creek is anticipated to be dry or at lowest flow. If water is present in the work area during construction, the creek would be diverted around the work area. Proposed working hours would be 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Lead Agency: Santa Clara Valley Water District
Contact Person: Alex Hunt

Area Code/Telephone/Extension
(408) 630-3007

Signature: Vincent Gin

Date: 2/27/2020

Title: Vincent Gin
Deputy Operating Officer

cc: CEQA Administrative Record