



DWR Approves Modifications to Soil Investigations Project

Update February 2021

The Soil Investigations Project includes data collection, soil samples and surveys in support of the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) efforts to better understand the region's geology to support the future evaluation of potential activities, including the proposed Delta Conveyance Project. Consistent with the need to evaluate the alternatives in the Delta Conveyance Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR), DWR has approved modifications to the Soil Investigations Project that was originally approved in July of 2020.

Before considering the approval of the modifications, DWR prepared an addendum to the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the modified soil investigations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). DWR considered both the Final IS/MND that was adopted in July 2020 and the Addendum prior to approving the project modifications. As part of the CEQA process, DWR also adopted the July 2020 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) as part of the approval of the project modifications.

As identified in the Final IS/MND and Addendum, any potential significant impact will be avoided or otherwise mitigated with implementation of mitigation adopted as part of the project approval process. To access a copy of the Notice of Determination and Final IS/MND, which includes responses to comments and the adopted MMRP, and the Addendum and associated Notice of Determination, visit the [Delta Conveyance Environmental Planning page](#) on DWR's website.

Soil Investigations Project IS/MND: Q&A

1. What is the purpose of this work and how does the Soils Investigation Project (and IS/MND) relate to other Delta environmental planning activities, including the proposed Delta Conveyance Project?

Collecting data on soil conditions will help determine the composition, location and geotechnical properties of soil materials commonly found in the Delta. This information will contribute to DWR's overall understanding of Delta geology and inform the ongoing development of alternatives, environmental analysis and preliminary design for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project to support preparation of the Delta Conveyance Project EIR. Preparation of the IS/MND is a separate standalone CEQA process—the soils investigations project is independent from the Delta Conveyance Project and the IS/MND is separate from the preparation of the EIR for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project currently underway.

2. When are the soil investigations scheduled to begin?

Soil investigation work began in Fall 2020 and this project, along with the recently approved modifications (as supported by the Final IS/MND and Addendum), are anticipated to continue in Spring 2021. However, no soil investigations will be conducted until all relevant permits have been obtained and all mitigation requirements are implemented. DWR is continuing to pursue permits and/or permit amendments for sites that fall under the jurisdiction of the federal Clean Water Act (Section 401 and Section 404), federal Rivers and Harbors Act (Section 408) and California Fish and Game Code (Section 1602). Those sites are not expected to be included in the Fiscal Year 2020/2021 efforts. Also, investigations at any given site will not occur until property owners have been notified.

3. Why did DWR modify the originally planned soil investigations and are future changes anticipated?

The recently approved modifications to the Soil Investigations Project were proposed in response to current engineering considerations of alternative alignments for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project. The approval of the modifications better aligns the soil investigations with the needs of the ongoing Delta Conveyance Project CEQA review process. While DWR does not anticipate any more changes to the Soil Investigations Project and data collection activities at this time, if new information becomes available or conditions change, warranting additional modifications, DWR will evaluate these changes consistent with CEQA requirements, including preparation and publication of associated disclosure documentation.

4. How did DWR consider comments received on the 2019 Draft IS/MND for the Soil Investigations Project?

Prior to deciding whether to adopt the Final IS/MND and approve the Soil Investigations for Data Collection in the Delta in July 2020, DWR considered the Final IS/MND together with each comment received, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15074, subdivision (b). Although not required, DWR included the response to comments as an Appendix to the Final IS/MND to promote transparency and responsiveness (see *State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15073*). Prior to approving the project modifications, DWR considered the Final IS/MND along with all appendices and the Addendum.

5. How will DWR track implementation of the adopted mitigation measures?

In addition to the adoption of the Final IS/MND and approval of the project, DWR adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) that is included as an Appendix to the Final IS/MND. The MMRP was adopted as part of the approval of the project modifications as well.

Implementation of this MMRP includes a tracking and documentation process for all mitigation measures that were adopted as part of the project and project modifications approval.

6. Who do I contact for additional information about the Final IS/MND and Addendum or ongoing soil investigations?

For more information about anything related to the Soil Investigations Project, corresponding CEQA process and associated specific soil investigation activities, please contact: Delta_Soil_ISMND@water.ca.gov or 866-924-9955.