



DWR Approves Modifications to Soil Investigations Project

Update January 2023

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 which was previously approved in July 2020 and February 2021. As part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, DWR also adopted the July 2020 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) as part of the approval of the project modifications.

Before considering the approval of the latest project modifications, DWR prepared a 2022 Addendum to the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the soil investigations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). DWR considered the Final IS/MND (adopted July 2020), the 2021 Addendum, and the 2022 Addendum prior to approving the recent project modifications. The approved project modifications, as evaluated in the 2022 Addendum, include the replacement, moving, and/or deepening of 30 previously approved boreholes or cone penetration tests (CPT), the addition of water quality sampling at 8 previously approved CPT locations, and a proposed 700-ft. angled borehole near Bethany Reservoir. These project modifications equate to no net change in the total number of soils investigations sites that are evaluated.

As identified in the Final IS/MND, the 2021 Addendum, and the 2022 Addendum to the IS/MND, any potentially significant impact will be avoided or otherwise mitigated with implementation of mitigation measures adopted as part of the project approval process. To access a copy of the Final IS/MND (which includes responses to comments and the adopted MMRP, as modified in January 2023), the 2021 Addendum, the 2022 Addendum to the IS/MND, and associated Notices 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 the 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 approved modifications (2021 and 2022 addenda), is anticipated to continue through Fall 2023. However, no soil investigations will be conducted until all relevant permits have been obtained and all mitigation requirements are implemented. 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 in the 2022 Addendum to the Soil Investigations Project were proposed in response to current 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 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 Final IS/MND and project modifications under both the 2021 Addendum and the recent 2022 Addendum. Continued implementation of this MMRP (as modified in January 2023) includes a tracking and documentation process for all mitigation measures that were adopted as part of the project and both project modifications approval.

5. 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: deltaconveyance@water.ca.gov or 1-866-924-9955.