

# **Supplemental Environmental Project Description Addressing Nonpoint Source Water Pollution**

**Presented to the Regional Water Quality Control Board**

**Reference Case No. R3-2005-0024, David Pearson**

**Hearing of July 8, 2005**

## **THE SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed Supplemental Environmental Project is a four-pronged approach to reduce erosion and improve water quality within our jurisdictional area. The first element of the project is an erosion control project along the Salinas River, downstream of the Pierson property, within urban and agricultural areas near the community of San Miguel. The second element is an erosion control project within East-West Ranch in Cambria. The third element is the reinitiation of landowner working groups in San Luis Obispo and southeastern Monterey Counties. The fourth element is a television outreach program identifying the need of the public to be good stewards of the land.

Overall Goal of the Supplemental Environmental Project:

- Implement nonpoint source pollution strategies within the planning area of the US-LT RCD.

## **CONSISTENCY OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT WITH THE UPPER SALINAS RIVER WATERSHED ACTION PLAN**

The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (US-LT RCD) has been instrumental in applying erosion control measures throughout San Luis Obispo and southeastern Monterey Counties. In 2004, the US-LT RCD completed the *Upper Salinas River Watershed Action Plan*, a watershed management plan prepared for the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) covering the 2,000 square mile region in San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties. The WAP was accepted by the SWRCB in July 2004. This plan now stands as the primary planning tool for resource protection in the Upper Salinas Watershed.

The US-LT RCD was formed by landowner initiative in 1950 to work with farmers and ranchers to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. During the past 55 years, the US-LT RCD has established itself as one of most effective community-based organizations in the Central Coast in restoring riparian habitat, reducing soil erosion and improving water quality. The US-LT RCD has a very active water quality monitoring program, guided by the SWRCB approved QAPP.

The watersheds within the US-LT RCD comprise approximately 1.5 million acres (2,300 square miles) of the Central Coast, including 1,365,000 acres in San Luis Obispo County (about three-quarters of the county area) and 138,000 acres within Monterey County. The district jurisdiction also encompasses the fragile Carrizo Plain in southeastern San Luis Obispo County. The coast of northern San Luis Obispo County and one-half of the 4,000-square-mile Salinas River Watershed is within the US-LT RCD boundary.

Element 1, Salinas River-San Miguel Area Project: The US-LT RCD will work with the community of San Miguel and the California Conservation Corps to implement riparian restoration and bioengineered bank stabilization projects along the banks of the Salinas River. The US-LT RCD's water quality monitoring data has demonstrated that sediment loads are particularly high in San Miguel. The restoration projects will be designed to include community service opportunities, such as tree plantings, to provide needed public outreach and education about local water quality concerns and the importance of riparian habitat. This site is located downstream of Mr. David Pierson's property in Creston and has been impacted by the sediment from the subject violation site.

The Project's restoration design will be guided by the *Upper Salinas River Watershed Action Plan, July 2004* (WAP). It is endorsed by the local community groups including the San Miguel Community Advisory Council and the San Miguel Resource Connection. In the fall of 2004, the US-LT RCD, in cooperation with the Community, the CCC, and the Planning and Conservation League Foundation created a concept project for the enhancement of four miles of river riparian restoration. If funded, this element of the SEP will implement a part of that dream.

Restoration of riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat enhancement will occur in areas of erosion along the riverbank. The vegetation enhancement will use bioengineering and holistic measures to reduce channel erosion and sediment transportation. Noxious and invasive weeds will also be removed. Trash dumped in the river near the project site will be removed.

- US-LT RCD will design and, with the assistance of the CCC, will implement riparian vegetation restoration for all of these segments of the river and establish workable methods to improve habitat and reduce erosion (reducing sediment loads). The US-LT RCD will monitor the water quality in the Salinas River during and after the project.

Total Area of Riparian and River Bank Restoration: Approximately 1,000 lineal feet of channel.

Total Cost Estimated for Element 1: \$78,100

Element 2, East-West Ranch and Santa Rosa Creek Project Element: The East-West Ranch was purchased two years ago to protect resources in the Cambria area and prevent proposed development of the property. The US-LT RCD will work with North Coast Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to implement beneficial management practices on the East-West Ranch in Cambria. These practices will address severe erosion of gullies near the cliffs along the Pacific Ocean in the southernmost boundary of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Using bioengineering methodology, the US-LT RCD will address the more severe cases of gully erosion. The vegetation enhancement will use bioengineering and holistic measures to reduce future gully erosion and sediment transportation. Noxious and invasive weeds will also be removed within the improvement area.

- US-LT RCD will design and, with the assistance of the CCC and community volunteers, will implement riparian vegetation restoration and reduce erosion (reducing sediment loads).

Total Area of Riparian Restoration: Approximately 150 lineal feet of gully bank

Total Cost Estimated for Element 1: \$14,950

Element 3, Landowner Working Groups Element: Strategy WQPP-16 of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary – Administrative Draft Management Plan calls for the establishment of Watershed-level agricultural landowner working groups (LWG). These industry networks will take the lead in organizing and working with their own members to establish joint projects for nonpoint source management. Activities include identifying priority target regions for joint projects, conducting outreach on nonpoint issues, assisting growers and ranchers in developing and carrying out voluntary site-specific management plans.

The Upper Salinas River Watershed Action Plan strategies call for the development of better lines of communication between stakeholder groups by the creation of landowner working groups. The US-LT RCD helped form three LWG's within the County. Unfortunately, currently there is no funding to continue working groups in San Luis Obispo County.

If funded, the US-LT RCD will facilitate four meetings of LWG's to provide education, stimulate discussion and watershed planning and encourage landowner collaboration to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality.

Total Number of LWG meetings including contacts, coordination and facilitation: Four

Landowners Involved: Estimated 30

Total Cost Estimated for Element 1: \$9,200

Element 4, Outreach-Education Water Quality: The US-LT RCD will use \$3,000 to supplement an existing Public Education Grant (PEG) to create an educational video about resource conservation for broadcast on local, public access television. The video will take a watershed-based approach to conservation, focusing primarily on the Upper Salinas River watershed, in order to raise public awareness about significant resource concerns and conservation initiatives in the region. The video will address riparian restoration, streambank stabilization, water quality monitoring, upland resource management and erosion control.

The US-LT RCD is currently preparing a video program. We have approximately \$18,000 funded and need an additional \$1,600. We will add educational outreach for improving water quality with the added funding.

Television Outreach: Public Access Television program of approximately 30 minute duration.

Total Cost Estimated for Element 1: \$1,600 supplement to existing US-LT RCD funding.