CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT
RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Project Title: Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project

State Clearinghouse Number: SCH# 2007062030

Project Location: The Portion of the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project that is proposed to be funded by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is located north and east of the City of Ferndale, in Humboldt County, in the Salt River channel.

Description of Project: The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) is requesting $372,250 from the OPC's Proposition 1 Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. The funding would restore 2.5 miles of the Salt River channel and associated riparian floodplain, which would reestablish connectivity to the Williams Creek tributary.

Historically, the Salt River tidally-influenced channel connected to several tributaries, floodplains, and wetlands in the Eel River Delta. The Salt River watershed ecosystem and hydrology have been significantly impacted as a result of land use changes. Steep topography, relatively high rainfall, unstable geological structure, and high rates of tectonic activity combine with highly erodible soils to result in high rates of sediment delivery into the Salt River and its tributaries. The main channel of the Salt River and the lower reaches of its tributaries have become choked with sediment and willows, and have lost nearly all natural hydraulic function. The hydraulic dysfunction of the Salt River causes significant problems related to flooding, and has resulted in a loss of fish passage. The Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project (Project) is a watershed-based, ecosystem-scale project that includes the following components:

- Channel Restoration: Restoration of hydraulic capacity, in-stream fish habitat, riparian vegetation, and improved water quality in the entire Salt River, and lower Francis Creek, plus indirect improvements to Williams, Coffee, and Reas creeks by excavation of the new Salt River channel. The excavation of the new Salt River channel would run from Cutoff slough at Riverside Ranch to approximately 1800 feet upstream of the Williams Creek-Salt River confluence.
- Riverside Ranch Restoration: Restoration of the 444-acre Riverside Ranch property, which has more than 2 miles of Salt River frontage. Portions of the property would be restored to open water, salt marsh, and other wetland types, while nearly 63-acres would continue to be agriculturally managed to create habitat for Aleutian geese.
- Upslope Sediment Reduction: Sediment reduction/erosion control actions in the Williams Creek, Francis Creek, Reas Creeks sub-watersheds, including upslope channel restoration, riparian planting, bank stabilization, livestock fencing, and road drainage upgrades.
- Adaptive Management Plan: Project performance thresholds and acceptable practices would be developed for future adaptive management measures to maintain performance of the overall Project. The adaptive management plan would be most closely associated with the channel restoration, and includes identification of channel dimensions, channel maintenance access points, target habitat conditions, and establishment of maintenance activities.

Of the components discussed above, OPC funds would go towards restoring the last 2.5 miles of the Salt River channel that would reestablish connectivity to Williams Creek. Activities funded would include excavation of the channel and channel enhancement through the installation of 90 instream wood structures and planting of a diverse palette of riparian and wetland species across 47.3 acres. The instream wood structures would prevent erosion and deposition in the Salt River during flood events, and guide logs which would shape the riverbed by creating local scour and deposition. The portion of the Project funded by the OPC would ultimately provide 7.5 miles of unobstructed fish passage from the Pacific Ocean up the Salt River to Williams Creek. OPC funding is not proposed for any activities related to other portions of the Project, therefore these Findings only cover activities included in the funding proposal.

Findings: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(d) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15096(g) and (h), the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), as Responsible Agency, has reviewed and considered the following documents prepared by the Lead Agency (CEQA):

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, *Final Environmental Impact Report: Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project*. SCH 2007062030. February 2011.

Using its independent judgment, the OPC makes the following finding:

> The above listed document: a) adequately addresses the potential impacts of the project and b) is adequate for use by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) for assessing the potential impacts of funding the grant request now before the OPC for approval.

The OPC hereby makes the following findings regarding the significant effects of the proposed project, pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 and Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

1. AIR QUALITY

Impact 3.5.1-1: Conflict with implementation of applicable air quality plans
Excavation of the Salt River channel may contribute to cumulative effects that would prevent the North Coast Air Basin from meeting their particulate matter 10 (PM10) standards. Short-term construction-related PM10 emissions from the Project are estimated to be approximately 98 tons per year for two years. This estimate is for the entire Project, not just the portion funded by the OPC. Over the lifetime of the Project, PM10 emissions are expected to decrease because the Project would reduce the frequency and duration of inundation on pastures adjacent to the Project area. Reduced frequency and duration of inundation on these lands would result in a reduced need to run drainage pumps and to disk and reseed pastures impacted by flooding. Short-term PM10 emission would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the implementation of mitigation measures 3.5.1-1.1 and 3.5.1-1.2, which are summarized below[1]. Implementation of the measures will reduce PM10 emissions from 98 tons per year to approximately 8 tons per year.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

[1] Please note that the mitigation measures included in the findings are summarized. For the full text of the mitigation measures, please see exhibit E.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.5.1-1.1)	The HCRCD shall utilize best management practices to minimize fugitive dust generation and assure compliance with the North Coast Air Quality Management District rules for particulates. Selected Best Management Practices include the following: • All active construction areas shall be watered at a rate sufficient to keep soil moist and prevent formation of wind-blown dust. • All trucks hauling soil, and other loose materials, shall be covered, or all trucks shall be required to maintain at least 2 feet of freeboard. • All unpaved access roads, parking areas, and construction staging areas shall be paved, watered daily, or treated with non-toxic soil stabilizers during construction. • Exposed stockpiles of dirt, sand, and similar material shall be enclosed, covered, watered daily, or treated with non-toxic soil binders. • Sandbags, hay bales, or other erosion control measures shall be installed to prevent silt runoff to public roadways. • Vegetation in disturbed areas shall be replanted as quickly as possible. • Outdoor dust-producing activities shall be suspended when high winds (>15 mph) create visible dust plumes in spite of control measures. Construction activities associated with the Project shall comply with AQMD Rule 420 (Particulate Matter) and Rule 430 (Fugitive Dust Emissions), or succeeding AQMD rules that carry out the AQMD's management program for particulate matter.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.5.1-1.2)	Contractors shall be required to: 1) Minimize idling time to 5 minutes for all trucks; and 2) maintain properly tuned equipment.

Impact 3.5.1-2 Violate air quality standards or substantially contribute to an existing air quality violation through the release of particulate matter during construction
As noted above, construction activities associated with the Project may create a source of fugitive dust, which may violate PM10 air quality standards. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the implementation of mitigation measure 3.5.1-1.2, which is summarized in the table above, under impact 3.5.1-1.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measure listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.5.1-3: Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations
Construction activities associated with the project could expose schoolchildren and sensitive residents adjacent to the project area to substantial concentrations of fugitive dust, ozone, and NO_2. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of mitigation measures 3.5.1-1.1 and 3.5.1-1.2, which are summarized in the table above, under impact 3.5.1-1.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measures listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.5.1-4: Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.
As noted above, activities associated with the project represent a potential source of fugitive dust, which may violate PM10 air quality standards or substantially contribute to nonattainment of the PM10 standard for the County. The extent of the impact is reduced by the relatively short duration of construction (approximately 6 months per year over two years) and the location of the project in an area of low population density. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of mitigation measures 3.5.1-1.1 and 3.5.1-1.2, which are summarized in the table above under impact 3.5.1-1.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measures listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.5.1-5: Expose workers or the public to hazardous toxic emissions or substantial pollutant concentrations
Construction activities associated with the project could expose construction workers and residents adjacent to the project area to substantial concentrations of diesel particulate matter, which is considered a hazardous toxic emission. This impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of mitigation measure 3.5.1-1.2, which is summarized in the table above under impact 3.5.1-1.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measure listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.5.1-8: Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases
A short-term increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emission would occur during construction, but due to the wetland restoration portion of the Project, a net increase in carbon storage is expected to occur over the life of the Project. Therefore the Project would not conflict with any plans, policies, or regulations aimed at reducing GHG emissions. Short-term GHG emissions would be minimized by implementing mitigation measure 3.5.1-1.2, which is summarized in the table above under impact 3.5.1-1. Implementation of mitigation measure 3.5.1-1.2 would reduce short-term GHG emissions impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measure listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

2. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: TERRESTRIAL/RIPARIAN

Impact 3.3.1.3: Short-term impacts to wetlands
Construction activities associated with restoration implementation would involve disturbance of wetlands and waters through vegetation clearing activities, grading and installation of restoration features, dewatering activities, and construction and use of access/bypass roads and staging areas for construction equipment, materials and fill. Operation of heavy machinery in or adjacent to wetlands and waters could result in contamination of these habitats with hazardous materials, including fuel, lubricants, coolants, and other fluids, if accidentally released to surface or ground waters due to poor equipment maintenance or an unforeseeable incident. Potential impacts to water quality from hazardous materials would be avoided through mitigation measure 3.1.1-2.3, reducing the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Ground disturbing activities in or adjacent to surface water bodies, such as channel excavation, would present an opportunity for sediment to migrate into the water body through accidental releases. Adverse effects could include increased turbidity and water temperature and reducing DO levels, all of which would potentially exceed water quality standards and impair beneficial uses. Potential impacts to water quality from sediment influx would be avoided and reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of mitigation measure 3.3.1-3.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.3)	The construction contractor shall implement training for the protection of water quality. All contractors that would be performing demolition, construction, grading, or other work that could cause increased water pollution conditions at the site (e.g., dispersal of soils) shall receive training regarding the environmental sensitivity of the site and need to minimize impacts. Contractors also shall be trained in implementation of stormwater BMPs for protection of water quality.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.3.1-3)	The construction contractor shall minimize construction-related disturbance to sensitive habitats. Selected actions include: • The locations of any sensitive habitats to be avoided shall be clearly identified in the contract documents (plans and specifications). • Before clearing and grubbing commences; construction and staging areas shall be flagged to clearly define the limits of the work area. These areas shall be clearly identified on the contract documents (plans and specifications).

	• A qualified biologist shall be on-site to observe construction activities when construction in or adjacent to sensitive habitat such as wetlands occurs. • Restoration activities to restore ecological function and integrity to disturbed habitats, such as revegetation, shall take place as rapidly as possible following habitat disturbance.

Impact 3.3.1-5: Potential increase in noxious weed populations due to site disturbance and changes in tidal influence and light availability (medium- and long-term).
Extensive ground disturbance and creation of new open areas during construction of the Salt River channel could result in the colonization of much of the new riparian habitat by noxious weeds such as Himalayan blackberry, purple loosestrife, and reed canarygrass. Ongoing weed management activities over the lifetime of the project are anticipated to ensure that invasive plants are maintained at minimal levels. Heavy equipment would be required to be cleaned and weed-free before entering the site. Implementation of mitigation measure 3.3.1-5.2 would reduce the potential increase in noxious weed populations due to construction of the Salt River channel to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.3.1-5.2)	The HCRCD shall monitor and remove noxious weeds in restored habitats in the Project area. Levels of noxious weeds in restored riparian habitats shall be monitored after project implementation. Noxious weed removal shall be conducted as part of project maintenance over the lifetime of the project. Noxious weed removal techniques shall be described in the management plans for the Salt River and Riverside Ranch, which shall be prepared in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Impact 3.3.1-7: Construction impacts to breeding or nesting migratory and special status birds
Grassland, riparian forest and scrub, and North Coast coniferous forest in the project area support nesting by state bird species of special concern, as well as numerous species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Construction of the Salt River channel could result in short-term disturbance of breeding or nesting migratory and/or special status birds. Short-term disturbance of breeding or nesting migratory and/or special-status birds would be avoided or minimized and reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementing mitigation measure 3.3.1-7.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.3.1-7)	The construction contractor shall only begin construction activities that may occur during the breeding and nesting season (March 1 – August 15) following pre-construction site-specific surveys by a qualified biologist. Nesting surveys shall be conducted no more than one week prior to the initiation of site preparation. If surveys identify active nests belonging to common migratory bird species, a 100-foot exclusion zone shall be established around each nest to minimize disturbance-related impacts on nesting birds. If surveys identify active nests belonging to special status birds, an interim no-activity zone of 300 feet shall be established around the nest. If surveys identify active nests belonging to raptors, an interim no-activity zone of 500 feet shall be established around the nest. In areas where vegetation is dense and infeasible to adequately survey for willow flycatchers and western yellow-billed cuckoos, vegetation removal will occur between August 15 and November 30 to avoid the nesting season and incidental take for these species.

Impact 3.3.1-9: Impacts to special status birds associated with grassland habitat
Three special status bird species associated with grassland habitat have been documented as occurring in the project vicinity. The project area contains both nesting and foraging habitat for the Northern Harrier and foraging habitat for the Vaux's swift and White-tailed kite. While short-eared owls (Asio flammeus) and burrowing owls (Athene cunicularia), state species of special concern, have not been documented in the project area, these species have been documented in the Humboldt Bay region and the project area does contain suitable foraging habitat for wintering individuals. Heavy equipment operations and vegetation disturbance on the site during channel excavation could result in short-term impacts to these bird species foraging within the project area, although these impacts would be minor for short-eared owl and burrowing owls, which are only expected to use the Project area in the winter when construction would not be underway. In addition, there may be the potential to significantly impact nesting Northern harrier. Implementation of mitigation measure 3.3.1-7, which is summarized in the table above under impact 3.3.1-7, would minimize and reduce adverse impacts to nesting Northern harriers to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the mitigation measure listed above will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Impact 3.3.1-10: Impacts to special status birds associated with riparian habitat
Three special status bird species associated with riparian habitat are common or have high potential to occur in riparian habitat in the project area. Riparian forest and scrub in the project area provides potential nesting and foraging habitat for yellow warblers, black-capped chickadees, and purple martins. Excavation of the Salt River channel would result in a medium-term significant decrease in mature riparian forest and scrub because of removal of mature riparian forest and scrub vegetation associated with Salt River Channel Restoration. There would be no long term impact to special status riparian birds, due to the restoration of riparian forest and scrub habitat in and adjacent to the channel. Impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementing mitigation measures 3.3.1-2 and 3.3.1-7. Mitigation

measure 3.3.1-7 is summarized in the table above under impact 3.3.1-7. Mitigation measure 3.3.1-2 is summarized in the table below.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure, and the mitigation measure listed above, will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.3.1-2)	A qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys and possibly install nest boxes for nesting birds. Before riparian areas are cleared, a count of mature trees with available cavities shall be taken to roughly estimate the number of cavities being lost. If the survey and an analysis by a qualified individual demonstrates that the project would result in inadequate habitat remaining for cavity nesters, nest boxes shall be erected to match, as closely as possible, the lost value. Should the findings of the surveys result in the conclusion that nest boxes are not necessary, this mitigation measure would not be required.

Impact 3.3.1-12: Impacts to Northern red-legged frogs
Construction activities associated with Salt River channel excavation could result in the mortality of individual red legged frogs. This can occur in many ways, but the most likely mechanism is through frogs being crushed by construction equipment in aquatic habitats, or being excavated from burrows or other refugia in upland habitats during ground disturbing activities. Short-term impacts to red-legged frogs would be minimized and reduced to a less-than-significant level by the implementation of mitigation measure 3.3.1-12.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.3.1-12)	The construction contractor shall limit construction access routes and equipment staging areas and minimize excavation in existing aquatic habitat when eggs and tadpoles are expected to be present and conduct preconstruction surveys for red-legged frog in all suitable habitat that would be disturbed by construction.

3. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: AQUATIC

Impact 3.4.1-1: Impacts to aquatic resources from decreased water quality due to construction/dredging activities
Implementation of the project would require excavating 2.5 miles of Salt River channel. The construction activities, as well as some of the future management and maintenance activities have the potential to dewater existing habitat, and to increase suspended sediments and

turbidity, and introduce contaminants (fuel oils, grease) in the vicinity of the Salt River. Potential water quality changes due to construction of the Salt River channel include changes in suspended sediments, dissolved oxygen (DO), and various contaminants. These water quality changes could impact fish and macroinvertebrates. Impacts to aquatic resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of mitigation measures 3.4.1-1.1 through 3.4.1-9, and 3.1.1-2.1.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.1)	Prior to construction, the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District shall obtain authorization from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. As part of this application process, the applicant shall develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) for controlling soil erosion and the discharge of construction-related contaminants. BMPs shall be monitored as specified in the SWPPP for successful implementation. The SWPPP would specifically address: • Erosion control and maintenance of material stockpiles that remain during the duration of project construction as well as sediment reuse (possibly lasting multiple years). • Erosion and sediment control measures to eliminate or minimize input to surface waters and generation of fugitive dust. • Specify silt fencing or fiber rolls to trap sediments and erosion control blankets on graded slopes and channel banks. • Avoid operating equipment in flowing water by using temporary cofferdams, sheet-piles and/or turbidity curtain and/or other suitable structures to divert flow around the channel and bank construction.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.1)	The HCRDC will develop a SWPPP (see mitigation measure 3.1.1-2.1 above)
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.2)	The contractor will limit initial construction and later maintenance involving earth moving on any of the sites in an area where material may enter or be transferred to a slough shall be limited to an extended dry weather season (June1-October 1) in order to reduce the amount of sediment and contaminants washed into the Salt River.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.3)	The contractor will adhere to site-specific construction plans that minimize the potential for increased delivery of sediment to surface waters.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.4)	The contractor will divert concentrated runoff and discharge away from channel banks (see mitigation measure 3.1.1-2.1 above)

Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.5)	The contractor will minimize removal of and damage to native vegetation during the excavation of the main channel. Contractors will use heavy equipment to excavate plants and shrubs with rootwads and replant in areas designated by the revegetation plan. Native vegetation that is destroyed will be replaced under the revegetation plan at a 3:1 ratio.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.6)	The contractor will install temporary construction fencing to identify work areas that require clearing, grading, revegetation, or recontouring, and minimize the extent of areas to be cleared, graded, recontoured, or otherwise disturbed.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.7)	The contractor will grade and stabilize soil at construction sites. (see mitigation measure 3.5.1-1.1 above)
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.8)	The contractor will avoid operating equipment in flowing water. (see mitigation measure 3.1.1-2.1 above)
Mitigation Measure Number (3.4.1-1.9)	Before any potential de-watering activities begin in any creeks or channels within the project area, the HCRCD shall ensure that native aquatic vertebrates and larger invertebrates are relocated out of the construction area into a flowing channel segment by a qualified fisheries biologist.

4. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Impact 3.11.1-1: Loss of unknown archaeological resources.
The project excavation could inadvertently unearth previously unidentified traditional cultural resources of the Wiyot Tribe or historic-era cultural resources associated with the milling, canning and shipping activities that occurred in the area between the 1860s to early 1900s. Loss of unknown archaeological resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level after the implementation of mitigation measure 3.11.1-1, which is summarized in the table below.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.11.1-1)	If cultural resources, such as chipped or ground stone, historic debris, building foundations, or bone are discovered during ground-disturbance activities, work shall be stopped within 20 meters of the discovery. Work shall not resume until a professional archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, has evaluated the materials and offered recommendations from further actions. If human remains are discovered, work will stop at the discovery location, within 20 meters, and nearby area. The Humboldt County Coroner will be contacted to determine if the cause

	of death. If the coroner determines that the remains are of Native American origin, it is necessary to comply with state laws relating to the disposition of Native American burials, which fall into the jurisdiction of the NAHC.

5. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Impact 3.1.1-2: Short-term impacts on water quality associated with construction
The greatest potential project impacts to water quality would result from sediment mobilization during channel construction and upslope sediment reduction work. Construction activities such as site clearing, grading, excavation, and channel widening/deepening could leave soils exposed to rain or surface water runoff that may carry soil contaminants (e.g., nutrients or other pollutants) into waterways adjacent to the site, degrade water quality, and potentially violate water quality standards for specific chemicals, dissolved oxygen, suspended sediments, or nutrients. Implementation of mitigation measures 3.1.1-2.1 through 3.1.1.2-5, reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation measure 3.1.1-2.1 is summarized in the table above under impact 3.4.1-1. Mitigation measures 3.1.1-2.2 through 3.1.1-2.5 are summarized in the table below.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures, and the mitigation measure listed above, will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.2)	Ponded storm or groundwater in construction areas shall not be dewatered by project contractors directly into adjacent surface waters or to areas where they may flow to surface waters unless authorized by a permit from the North Coast RWQCB. In the absence of a discharge permit, ponded water (or other water removed for construction purposes), shall be pumped into baker tanks or other receptacles, characterized by water quality analysis, and remediated (e.g., filtered) and/or disposed of appropriately based on results of analysis. If determined to be of suitable quality, some of this water may be used on-site for dust control purposes.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.3)	All contractors that would be performing demolition, construction, grading, or other work that could cause increased water pollution conditions at the site (e.g., dispersal of soils) shall receive training regarding the environmental sensitivity of the site and need to minimize impacts. Contractors also shall be trained in implementation of stormwater BMPs for protection of water quality.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.4)	Sites shall not be inundated (connected to tidal water or upstream freshwater sources) until surface soil conditions have been stabilized, all construction debris removed, and all surface soils have been removed from the site.
Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-2.5)	In instances where excavation and/or dredging occurs in an effort to widen/deepen the existing Salt River Channel, in-stream erosion and turbidity control measures shall be implemented. These measures include installation and maintenance of in-stream turbidity curtains and silt-fence along channel banks as specified in project designs, specifications and erosion control plans.

Impact 3.1.1-7: Effects of flows in reconstructed channel on channel erosion
An objective of the channel restoration effort is to optimize sediment transport to the extent possible through the restored channel corridor. Scour and sediment transport would be necessary and healthy attributes of the central and low flow channel, with most stream energy expended on transporting sediment delivered to the Salt River, leaving little excess energy available at eroding channel banks. This distribution of stream energy in the river channel aims at alleviating sediment deposition and associated flooding in adjacent upland pasturelands by restoring balanced sediment dynamics to the main Salt River channel corridor and sustaining the necessary conveyance and channel morphology. It is important to point out that the Salt River channel would behave as a dynamic system that experiences a balance of channel erosion, migration and deposition. The restored river channel and floodplain corridor have been designed to provide adequate room for these natural and desired process to occur without adversely impacting adjacent properties. Mitigation measure 3.1.1-7 would assure that long-term capacity and stability is maintained in the Salt River channel, and would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.1.1-7)	To ensure no long-term adverse impacts, the project includes a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan that would monitor for excessive erosion and sediment accumulation and prescribe remedies in the form of channel adjustments and sediment excavation on an "as-needed" basis. Monitoring shall be conducted pursuant to the long-term monitoring and maintenance plan. Specific criteria will be developed and stipulated in the plan that will trigger the need for adaptive management and/or maintenance activities. If erosion is so great that it causes water quality impairments, improvements such as channel armoring shall be implemented to manage and reduce erosion.

6. NOISE

Impact 3.6.1-1: Construction noise impacts
the project would result in temporary increases in sound and vibration levels near the project site during construction. Construction would involve a high level of equipment, such as scrapers, tractors, clamshell dredgers, haul trucks, service vehicles, and other moderate to heavy-duty equipment and vehicles, so construction noise is expected to range from moderate to high near the project sites. The generated noise would be substantially above the ambient levels during construction at least 120 continuous workdays per year for two consecutive field seasons. Mitigation measure 3.6.1-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.6.1-1)	The contractor shall adhere to the measures summarized below: • Hours of construction for outdoor activities exceeding 50 dBA shall be limited to Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • All equipment shall operate with factory-equipped mufflers, and staging areas shall be located as far from residential uses as is practical. • To the degree feasible, haul trucks shall use haul routes along the existing channel excavation path, or along roadways distant from sensitive receptors. The contractor shall determine the feasibility of developing haul roads along the channel excavation path. Haul road construction shall be designed to minimize impacts. • A haul-truck route plan shall be developed. Hauling shall minimize passing any substantial collection of noise-sensitive land uses (i.e. occupied houses, schools, hospitals), and shall be limited to less than 200 loads per day on any given road. • Larger capacity belly and end-dump trucks as well as double-trailers shall be used whenever feasible.

7. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Impact 3.12.1.1: Impacts due to project-related traffic
Project-related traffic would include vehicles used by construction crews to access the site during construction, trucks being used to transport materials and heavy equipment to the site, and trucks hauling sediment to various locations. Much of the traffic would be internal to the project site using the channel construction corridor and other private lands. Excavated material would both remain on site and be transported on County Roads and public roadways. During project construction, the number of construction-related vehicles in the area would increase substantially. This traffic increase would be noticeable because it would include a high number of large construction vehicles, but it would be temporary (i.e., during the project construction phase). Depending on the timing and distribution of project traffic, the project could potentially significantly affect on street and intersection operations. Implementation of Mitigation measure 3.12.1.1, summarized in the table below, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Finding: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

Facts in Support of the Finding: The OPC concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure Number (3.12.1.1)	As part of the final construction documents, the contractor shall be required to submit a Traffic Control Plan corresponding to a Work Sequencing Schedule for review and approval by the construction manager prior to commencement of work. The Traffic Control Plan shall provide a narrative supported with figures depicting the haul routes anticipated to be utilized throughout the construction period and shall be developed in accordance to the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and applicable County of Humboldt encroachment permit conditions. The Traffic Control Plan shall detail the desired haul routes, public notification, required signage/flagging, potential lane/road closers, detour routes, provisions for providing temporary pedestrian access (if applicable) and provisions for maintaining access to all parcels. The Traffic Control Plan shall be periodically updated throughout the course of the project.

Certification:

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above present the data and information used to support the findings made herein pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15091 or 15096(h), and the facts, statements and information presented herein, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature_____ Date_____

Name Deborah Halberstadt Title Executive Director