

acreage of 24,000 acres that occurred in 1992, to 14,000 acres.

Gregory D. Showalter,
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.
[FR Doc. 96-8390 Filed 4-4-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3710-CR-M

Intent To Prepare a Joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Pine Flat Dam Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Investigation, California

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Kings River Conservation District (KRCD), lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, intend to prepare a joint document to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed habitat restoration in the vicinity of Pine Flat Dam.

The study purpose is environmental restoration. The investigation will analyze several measures evaluated in the reconnaissance phase study, and will identify a feasible fish and wildlife restoration plan. Measures to be evaluated include construction of a multi-level intake structure at Pine Flat Dam, water transfers, and riparian restoration downstream of Pine Flat Dam.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

An issues-scoping meeting for the investigation is scheduled for April 24, 1996, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, 5469 East Olive Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727. Please address any questions regarding the EIS/EIR to Ms. Patricia Roberson, Planning Division, Environmental Resources Branch, Corps of Engineers, 1325 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2922. She can also be reached by telephone at (916) 557-6705.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Project Location

(a) The study area, the Kings River basin, is located in the southeasterly portion of the San Joaquin Valley (see figure 1). The Kings River basin is bounded on the north by the San Joaquin River basin and on the south by the Kaweah River basin. The Kings River originates high in the Sierra Nevada and flows in a southwesterly direction as it leaves the foothills and enters the San Joaquin Valley. Below Pine Flat Dam, the Kings River flows divide into numerous channels which converge into a single channel before bifurcating into Kings River North and Kings River South. Kings River North flows into the San Joaquin River and Kings River South flows into the Tulare Lake.

(b) Pine Flat Dam, completed by the Corps in 1954 and situated about 25 miles east of the City of Fresno, impounds Kings River flows for flood control, water conservation, recreation, and hydroelectric power generation. Pine Flat Lake has a capacity of about one million acre-feet at gross pool. Downstream of Pine Flat Dam, the Corps constructed levees, channel improvements, and weirs to control flood flows.

2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

(a) The Corps and KRCD, the non-Federal sponsor, are conducting a feasibility investigation to identify and evaluate alternative measures to restore fish and wildlife habitat in the vicinity of Pine Flat Dam.

(b) The feasibility report and EIS/EIR will include the alternatives analyzed in the 1994 reconnaissance report and carried forward for analysis in the feasibility phase. These alternatives include the no-action alternative and the following restoration measures: (1) A multi-level intake structure designed to fit over the existing penstock intakes and allow water to be withdrawn from higher reservoir elevations; (2) riparian restoration at a site near the Friant-Kern Canal siphon on the Kings River; and (3) a water transfer plan that would exchange Central Valley Project water

and Pine Flat water to augment instream flows below Pine Flat Dam in late summer and fall.

3. Environmental Consequences

(a) The lead agencies have identified potential environmental effects of the proposed action in the following areas:

- aquatic, wetland, and riparian habitats
- fish and wildlife populations
- esthetics, recreation opportunity and use
- air quality
- water quality
- cultural resources
- threatened and endangered species

4. Scoping Process

a. "Scoping" is a process to identify the actions, alternatives, and effects to be evaluated in an environmental document. The public is invited to assist the lead agencies in scoping this EIS/EIR. The process provides an opportunity for the public to identify significant resources within the study area that may be affected by the project. To facilitate this involvement, a public scoping meeting will be held in Fresno on April 24, 1996 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, 5469 East Olive Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727. A summary of the meeting will be made. Individuals, organizations, and agencies are also encouraged to submit written scoping comments by May 10, 1996.

b. After the draft EIS/EIR is prepared, it will be circulated to all interested parties for review and comment. Public meetings will be held to receive verbal and written comments. All comments will be considered and responded to in the final EIS/EIR.

5. Availability

The draft EIS/EIR is scheduled to be distributed for public review and comment in 1998. All persons interested in receiving the draft document should contact Ms. Trina Farris at 557-6777.

Gregory D. Showalter,
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

BILLING CODE 3710-EZ-M

