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Mr. Jon Vivanti, Plan Formulation Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
L.A. District – Planning Division
CESPL-PD-WW
911 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Subject: Comments on the Draft Matilija Dam Baseline Conditions (F3) Report

Dear Mr. Vivanti,

We have reviewed the Draft Matilija Dam Baseline Conditions (F3) Report. Through our participation in the working groups, we are familiar with many of the issues associated with this study. In general, the report contains a comprehensive summary of the baseline condition information. However, much of this information is not presented in a clear manner to be readily understandable to those not familiar with the project. We hope that the following comments will help to enhance the final F3 report.

- The **Executive Summary** should provide a clearer description of the Purpose, Problem Description, and Alternative Measures. These should be carried forward from the body of the report. For instance, the Study Purpose is clearly stated on page 1, and there is a fairly clear statement of the problem on the bottom of page 110.
- Pg i – Some sources cite the height of the dam as 198 ft, and the completion date as 1948. Although the dam was purportedly intended to provide “limited flood control”, details within the body of the report demonstrate that the dam did not provide any flood control benefits, and this fact should be stated here.
- Pg iii The Study: In this section it would be informative to include the flow chart used for the public meeting to describe the phases of the study process.
- Pg iv: Baseline Condition Results – 2nd paragraph ... concerning methane gas. ... the gas will not be a significant issue for potential sediment removal measures. **Add:** *“Therefore methane will be removed as an issue affecting the tradeoffs of alternatives.”*
- Pg v: second sentence should state; *“The HEP analysis concludes that, in general, there is an overall degradation of the value of habitat...”*
- Pg v: Preliminary Alternative Measures – this section should include a brief description of the problems associated with decommissioning the dam (i.e. sediment management, etc)
- Pg 5: Where We Are Going From Here – another issue that should be added

regarding the scope of the studies is groundwater/surface water diversions. Specifically, Robles Diversion presents problems and potential opportunities related to Ecosystem Restoration and Matilija Dam. The potential retrofit or redesign of Robles to provide unrestricted sediment and fish bypass capabilities may enhance the eventual outcome of the Ecosystem Restoration Project.

- Pg 18: Ventura River Watershed – 4th paragraph ... “Matilija Reservoir was also constructed for flood control function.” This sentence needs to be changed so that it is clear that this was always a secondary purpose and that is really never met this objective. The report makes this clear later on, but this should be emphasized in this section. We suggest the following revision ... *While Matilija Reservoir had a secondary purpose of limited flood control, it never achieved that goal due to limited capacity and rapid siltation (see Hydrology, Hydraulics and Sediment Transport Studies (pgs 49-65). Further, there is no incidental flood storage capacity currently available in the reservoir.* This sentence appears on pg 29 under the heading “Matilija Dam” and can be repeated here again to provide additional emphasis.
- Pg 23: Steelhead Populations – Ed Henke and others have documented the historic existence of steelhead for all of the river basin below the naturally occurring impassible barriers that exist in the upper reaches of the watershed.
- Pg 30 – Robles Diversion – Total diversions to Lake Casitas should be included in this discussion – for example average annual diversion from 1959-2002 is 12550 acre-feet
- Pg 31 – Robles Diversion – Quantify the volume of sediment deposition and removal during floods. Also the statement “Robles Diversion does not significantly affect these flows during these events” needs clarification, as it appears to be a contradiction of the previous sentence.
- Pg 33: Beach Sand - Quantify the reduction in fluvial sand supplies, per BEACON. Also, although much of the emphasis is placed upon beach “sand”, cobble is also a valuable product of the river, creating and maintaining the delta upon which considerable public infrastructure lies. The recession of this delta in response to the damming of the river is of primary concern.
- Pg 33: Dam Features – here the dam is stated to be 195 ft high. Other places in the report use 190 ft, and other references state 198 ft.
- Pg 46-48 – Although typical beach replenishment projects use sand, the beach at Surfers Point has been “nourished” with cobble to boulder sized material. Current efforts to restore this beach include cobble placement. Therefore, the cobble content within the delta and upstream areas should not be overlooked (see comments above for Beach Sand).
- Pg 50: Hydrology, Hydraulics and Sediment Transport Studies – Figure 17 (Photo of dam overflowing) is not referenced anywhere in the text.
- Pg 51: Hydrology, Hydraulics and Sediment Transport Studies – Figure 18 (Peak Discharge History) is not referenced anywhere in the text.
- Pg 54: Hydrology, Hydraulics and Sediment Transport Studies - Figures 19 and 20 are not referenced in the text.
- Pg 65: Table 10: Sediment Yield – It would be helpful to compare current sediment yield to potential or historic sediment yield for both coarse and total fractions and convert to cu.yd/year.
- Pg 66: Figure 27 - Historical and Projected Future Deposition in Matilija Reservoir - it is not clear that “Series 6” is the calculated volume estimations.

- Pg 69: Table 12 (Average Sediment Yield in the Ventura River Watershed) It is not clear from this table what the actual sediment yield is for the watershed, or what the various watershed components mean related to this study (i.e with/without Matilija Dam). It would be helpful to include another column for gross yield for the watersheds (i.e. acre-feet/yr) and perhaps more useful to convert this to cu yd/yr as this relates to sediment volumes. It would also be useful in this table to provide data on the coarse fraction of the sediment yield, since this is of primary concern to stream bed and beach restoration.
- Pg 79: in Table 13, “Birds” needs to be capitalized and “bolded”
- Pg 84: Ventura River - Steelhead Habitat – while a fish ladder is planned for Robles, there exists uncertainty with the construction and ultimate functionality of this structure. The natural processes component (i.e. restored sediment regime) will continue to be impaired even with the construction of a fish ladder. For this reason, we recommend that the scope of the project include potential modifications to Robles Diversion in order to provide for BOTH fish and sediment transport to enhance the attainment of both of these project objectives.
- Pg 85: Table 14 is not referenced in the text. A description of this data and what it means in relation to the habitat discussion would be helpful.
- Pg 91 – Sand delivery to the coast is quantified here, and should be related to the fluvial delivery quantities presented in Table 10. Also, coarse sediment delivery should be quantified as mentioned above.
- Pg 93 – Recreation – this should be expanded to include the value of coastal resources and recreational beaches to the local economy. (see Dept of Boating and Waterways, 2002) Recreation should also be discussed elsewhere in the document, since on pg 1 it states “Enhancement of recreational use along the Ventura River and Matilija Creek ... will also be considered.” The increased recreation potential of the area also provides for public education about ecosystem restoration, conservation and protection, that will ultimately lead to enhanced funding opportunities and local stewardship of the restored resource.
- Pg 95 – “Assess practicality of using cobble and non-suitable sediments” – cobble would be a benefit to the river delta area as mentioned above. What does “non-suitable sediments” mean?
- Pg 100 ALTERNATIVE MEASURES – This section does not present a clear description of the need for, or development of, the Alternative Measures.
- Pg 101: Formulation of Preliminary Alternative Measures – There is no general description of the alternatives, or a clear formulation of how the alternatives were developed in relation to the project objectives.
- Pg 102: Conveyor – under constraints, did not mention the bends required and how the conveyor can leak at these bends.
- Pg 113: There is no intro to the alternatives presented on pp 114-120.
- Pg 114: Slurry A cost of \$100M is the cost of the slurry system only (i.e., Granite’s cost). The total cost of the whole program would be significantly higher; for example, other costs include removing the concrete, environmental permitting/mitigation, and overhead. If all the options are considered in the same manner, then there should be some comment on what the fixed “other” costs will amount to. This option would require access throughout system as mentioned for the conveyor.
- Pg 115: Conveyor. Same comment as for slurry.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Matilija Dam Baseline Conditions (F3) Report. We hope these comments are helpful in completing the Final F3 report.

Sincerely,

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cc: Jeff Pratt, VCFCD