February 9, 2010

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Scoping Session

For the Lower Walnut Creek General Reevaluation Report

TO: All Interested parties, organizations, and individuals

Project Objectives

The project objectives are to reassess traditional operation and maintenance practices for portions of Walnut Creek in an effort to operate and maintain the flood protection facility in a more cost effective and environmentally sustainable way.

Location of Project

The Walnut Creek watershed is located in Contra Costa County. The limits of the Federal Project encompass approximately 22-miles of US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) constructed facilities; however, the project will focus on the Primary Study Area located in the northern portion of the Walnut Creek watershed consisting of the lowest eight miles of Walnut Creek between the mouth of the creek at Suisun Bay and Monument Boulevard. (Refer to Figure 1). The approximate drainage area of the proposed project and analysis is 180 square miles.

Project Description

The USACE in cooperation with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (CCCFCWCD) will prepare the Lower Walnut Creek General Reevaluation Report (LWCGRR) that will evaluate alternatives—including a locally preferred plan—for providing flood risk management and ecosystem restoration along the northern (downstream) portion of the Walnut Creek watershed. The existing floodway is an engineered trapezoidal earth channel that historically has been desilted in order to maintain design capacity.

The project will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). USACE, in conjunction with the CCCFCWCD, will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) that will address the potential environmental impacts that could result from the actions considered by the LWCGRR. The USACE will serve as lead agency for compliance with NEPA, and the CCCFCWCD will serve as lead agency for compliance with CEQA.

Implementation of a chosen alternative may have project specific and cumulative environmental effects on the following topical areas: hydraulics, wetlands and

other waters of the U.S., vegetation and wildlife resources, special-status species, aesthetics, cultural resources, recreation, land use, fisheries, water quality, air quality, and transportation.

USACE will consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to comply with the Endangered Species Act. USACE is also coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. In addition, the USACE or the CCCFCWCD will need to obtain permits from the California Department of Fish and Game and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Alternatives

Alternatives analyzed during the investigation may include, but are not limited to, a combination of one or more of the following flood risk management measures: modifying the channel cross section and building setback levees along the lower reaches of the creek to recreate a larger floodplain, increasing conveyance by raising levees; widening channels and floodway areas; dredging; and various floodplain management measures. Ecosystem restoration measures may include, but are not limited to, restoring riparian, wetland, and floodplain habitats for habitat restoration and/or providing fish passage.

Agency and Public Comments

The purpose of this NOP is to solicit guidance from agencies and interested parties as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIS/EIR.

Responses to this NOP must be received by March 17, 2010. Please submit responses to: Ms. Jamie LeFevre, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, Attn: Planning Division (CESPK-PD-R), 1325 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. For further information please contact Ms. Jamie LeFevre via telephone at (916) 557-6693, e-mail at Jamie.M.Lefevre@usace.army.mil

Scoping Session

A public scoping meeting will be held to present an overview of the LWCGRR and the EIS/EIR process, and to afford all interested parties with additional opportunity to provide comments regarding the scope and content of environmental analysis and potential alternatives. The public scoping meeting will be held at the Contra Costa County Public Works Department at 255 Glacier Drive in Martinez, CA on February 22, 2010. Staff will be available from 4:00 p.m. to 8 p.m.

A 45-day public review period will be provided for all interested parties, individuals and agencies to review and comment on the draft EIS/EIR. All

interested parties are encouraged to respond to this notice and provide a current address if they wish to be notified of the draft EIS/EIR circulation.

Signature: _____

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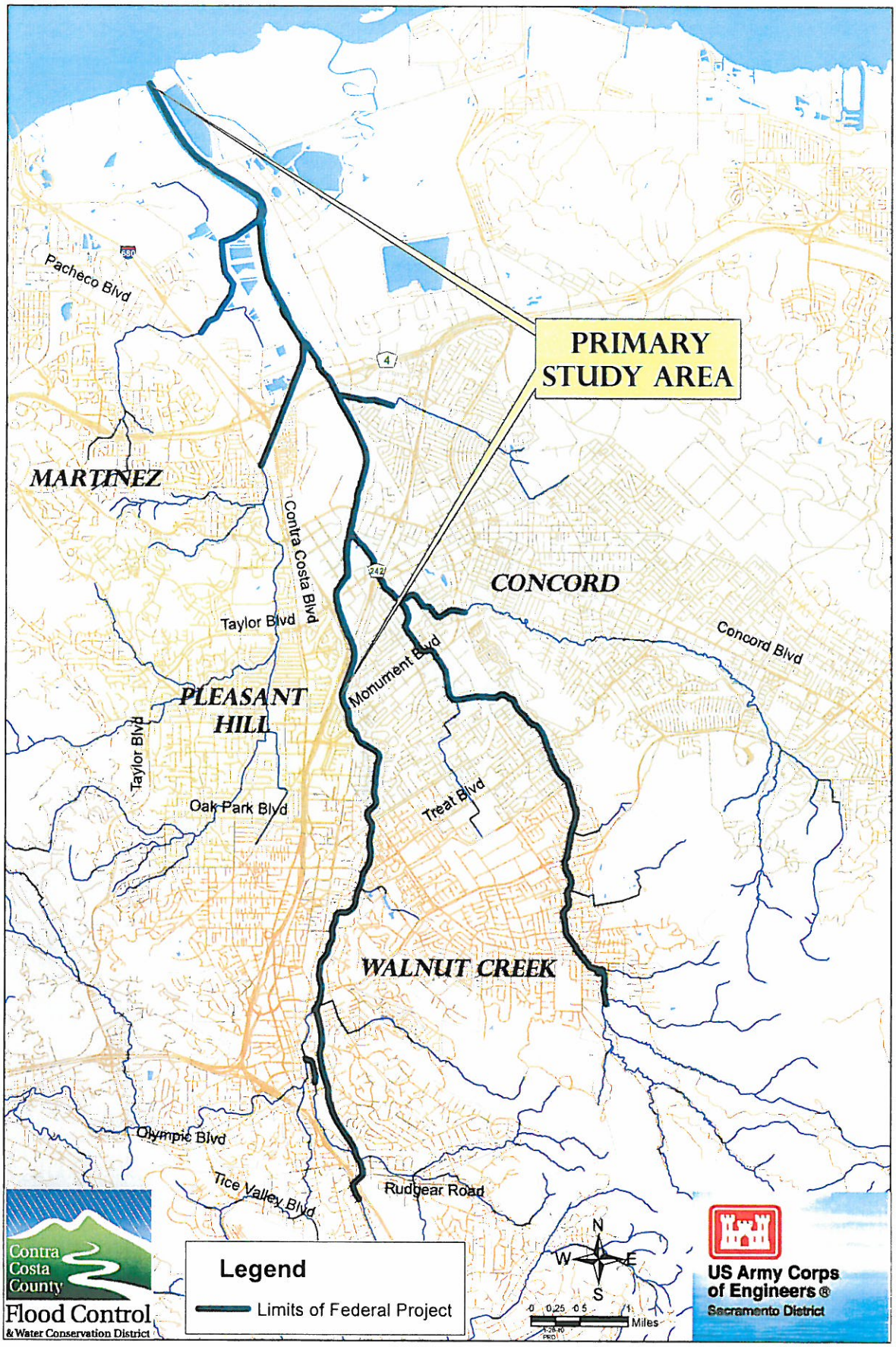
FIGURE 1

Lower Walnut Creek Restoration
USACE General Reevaluation