



SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

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Santa Ana River Watershed
In-Lieu Fee Program 6th Amendment
Western Riverside County, CA

Public Notice/Application No.: SPL-2009-00143-JEM

Project: Santa Ana River Watershed In-Lieu Fee Program 2009 (formerly RCRCO ILF)

Comment Period: April 28, 2021 through May 19, 2021

Project Manager: Nicole Cammisa; (213) 280-6653; Nicole.Cammisa@usace.army.mil

Applicant

Shelli Lamb
SRMA
4500 Glenwood Drive
Riverside, California 92501-3042

Contact

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Location

The location of the proposed Santa Ana River Watershed In-Lieu Fee Project (ILF Project; the ILF Program's proposed 6th Amendment) is in the Santa Ana River mainstem area within the Santa Ana River watershed in the western portion of Riverside County, California (see attached Figures 1 and 2). The property is generally located in the City of Eastvale.

Activity

The review of the Southwest Resource Management Association (SRMA) Development, Interim Management and Long-Term Management Plans (ILF Project Plans) in the Santa Ana River mainstem area and Amendment to the Santa Ana River Watershed ILF Instrument. For more information see page 3 of this notice.

Interested parties are hereby notified that the ILF Project Plans have been received to establish an ILF Project to comply with the framework of the established Santa Ana River Watershed ILF Program. Interested parties are invited to provide their views on the proposed ILF Project Plans, which will become a part of the record and will be considered in the decision to authorize or not authorize the ILF Project. Comments should be mailed to:

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ATTN: NICOLE CAMMISA
915 WILSHIRE BLVD, SUITE 630
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017-3445

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: Nicole.Cammisa@usace.army.mil

Evaluation Factors

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. The District Engineer (DE) will review the comments received in response to this notice and make a written initial evaluation as to the potential of the proposed ILF Project to provide compensatory mitigation. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. In addition, all comments will be distributed to the members of the Inter-agency Review Team (IRT) and the sponsor within 15 days of the close of the comment period. The DE and the IRT members will also have the opportunity to comment to the sponsor. After considering comments from the DE, the IRT, and the public, if SRMA chooses to proceed with the ILF Project, SRMA will prepare a draft amendment to the Santa Ana River Watershed ILF Instrument and submit it to the DE.

Background

On April 10, 2008, the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency published the Final Rule on Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources ("Mitigation Rule"), which went into effect June 9, 2008. The rule replaced most previous guidance concerning compensatory mitigation, including the previous ILF guidance of 2000. The new rule includes requirements that prospective ILF program providers meet substantially the same standards as mitigation banks and undergo the same Interagency Review Team review and approval process as mitigation banks.

SRMA is a California non-profit benefit corporation established for the purposes of: (1) preservation, protection and enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, or open-space condition or use; (2) promoting the economically and ecologically sustainable use and development of natural resources; (3) educating the public regarding the sustainable use of natural resources ; and (4) obtaining, purchasing, and/or holding land and conservation easements for the above listed purposes. SRMA, a co-sponsor of the Santa Ana River Watershed In-Lieu Fee Program, wishes to implement an ILF Project consistent with the existing Santa Ana River Watershed ILF Program Instrument, previously reviewed under the Mitigation Rule. The Mitigation Rule allows ILF Projects associated with approved ILF programs and Instruments to provide compensatory mitigation for Department of the Army permits. Consistent with the requirements of the rule at 33 CFR § 332.8(d), SRMA has submitted the ILF Project Plans to the Corps for the purpose of implementing and managing an ILF Project. The Corps seeks comments from interested parties on the ILF Project Plans.

This public notice provides a summary of the ILF Project Plans submitted by SRMA. The full ILF Project Plans may be obtained from the Corps by contacting Nicole Cammisa at (213) 280-6653, or by contacting Shelli Lamb, Chief Executive Officer of SRMA, at (909) 499-4904 or slamb@SRMA-CA.org.

Objectives of the Project and Location

The ILF Project Plans were developed to provide for mitigation on the Altfillisch North property owned and managed by SRMA. ILF Project Plans were developed to comply with the Santa Ana River Watershed In-Lieu Fee Program (formerly known as the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District In-Lieu Fee Program) to be used for the restoration of waters of the United States including, but not limited to, wetland areas within SRMA's Altfillisch North property (the

“Project”) in the Santa Ana River mainstem area of the Santa Ana River Watershed.

The purpose of the mitigation is to restore the functions and values of watersheds lost due to impacts from human activities by restoring degraded areas of the Project. The ILF Project Plans consider both the ecological and geomorphologic functions of the mitigation site in order to confirm that the functions of the restoration will equal or exceed those of the existing habitat.

The objective of the ILF Project Plans is to restore the Project area by raising scores of an applied functional assessment (specifically the California Rapid Assessment Method, CRAM) in all of the metrics within the Physical Structure and Biotic Structure attributes. The primary goal is for restored areas to contain stable, self-sustaining populations, communities and ecosystems which will require little or no support once established. This will be fulfilled by using plant materials that have originated from the local Eco region and that will provide improved food, cover, and reproductive opportunities for wildlife.

The proposed service area would continue to be the same as in the approved Santa Ana River Watershed ILF Program, which is generally the Santa Ana Watershed. The Project site is classified as a low-gradient alluvial floodplain wetland (riverine and palustrine) that was developed on alluvium from the river floodplain and from parent material sources upstream. The site is also hydraulically connected to the river as waters of the United States including, but not limited to, wetlands, that formed in linear strips in the floodplain. The site has predominately unidirectional flow of subsurface water, depending upon location, and the hydroperiod ranges from short and damaging during storm events, to long and steady in areas where runoff and treated effluent are currently the only water sources during most of the year. There is a smaller source of surface water provided from nuisance flows above the site originating from residential areas and high water tables associated with wet year rainfall.

The Project site was selected due to its proximity to existing habitat, including the current Altfillisch project being implemented through the Santa Ana River Watershed ILFP, and the potential for large-scale restoration based upon the hydrologic functions, nearby plant communities and soil conditions. Further, the project site is on property owned by SRMA that would benefit from restoration. The proximity and connectivity of aquatic resources that occur upstream and downstream of the site will allow for inflow and outflow of water during flood events and low flow periods.

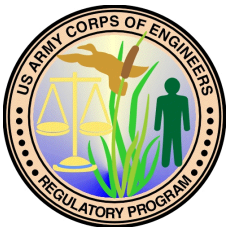
SRMA purchased the Altfillisch North Property on December 21, 2017 (Riverside County Recorder's Office, Instrument No. 2017-0535954). To ensure the long-term protection of the Project area, SRMA will record a Declaration of Restrictive Covenant that will be approved by the USACE in substantially the same form as the template previously agreed to pursuant to the Santa Ana Watershed In-Lieu Fee Instrument (July 2018). SRMA is requesting approximately 30.11 ILF Program rehabilitation credits, 7.08 enhancement credits, and 26.62 re-establishment credits which equates to approximately 63.81 acres of land that would be rehabilitated, 7.08 acres of land that would be enhanced, and 26.62 acres of land that would be re-established.

Qualifications of the Sponsor

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) and SRMA are co-sponsors of the Santa Ana River Watershed ILFP. RCRCD and SRMA have combined staff experience of over 70 years in biology, ecology, fisheries, water conservation and related fields. SRMA manages over 8,000 acres of property in Southern California with numerous listed and rare habitats. RCRCD has worked with over 3,000 landowners on field and technical activities including erosion control, mitigation, restoration, and water management. Additional information about the qualifications of

RCRCD and SRMA were documented in the ILF Program Prospectus, Instrument, and the fifth amendment to the instrument.

For additional information please call Nicole Cammisa of my staff at (213) 280-6653 or via e-mail at Nicole.Cammisa@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



Regulatory Program Goals:

- To provide strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands.
- To ensure the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.
- To enhance the efficiency of the Corps' administration of its regulatory program.

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Figure 1. Location Map

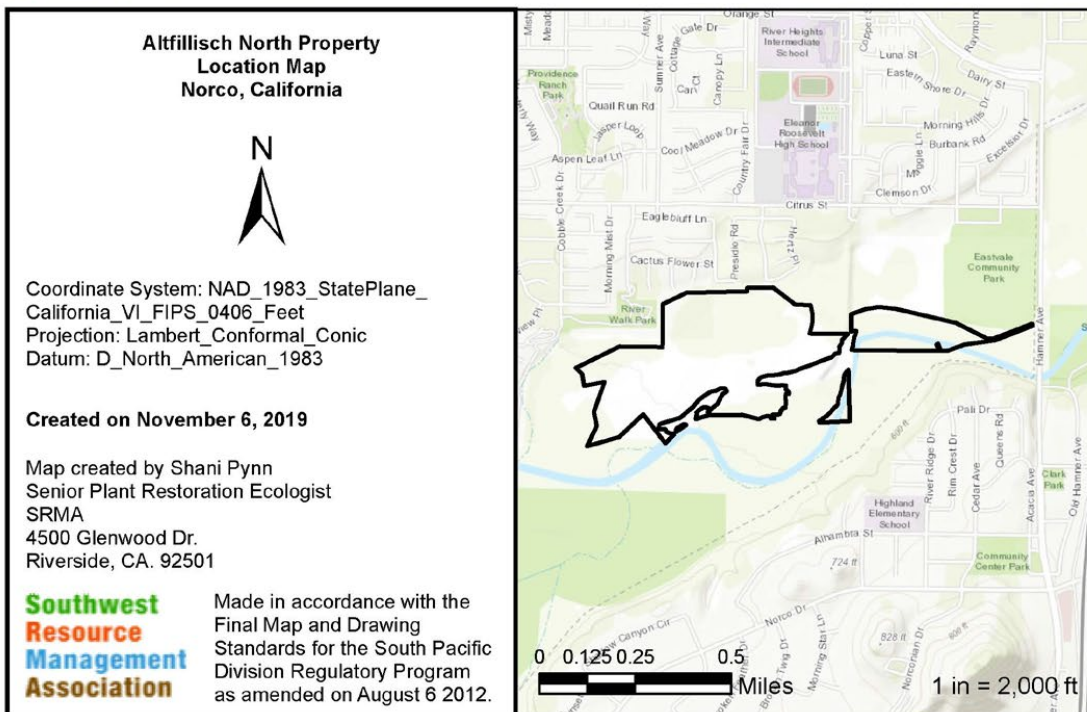
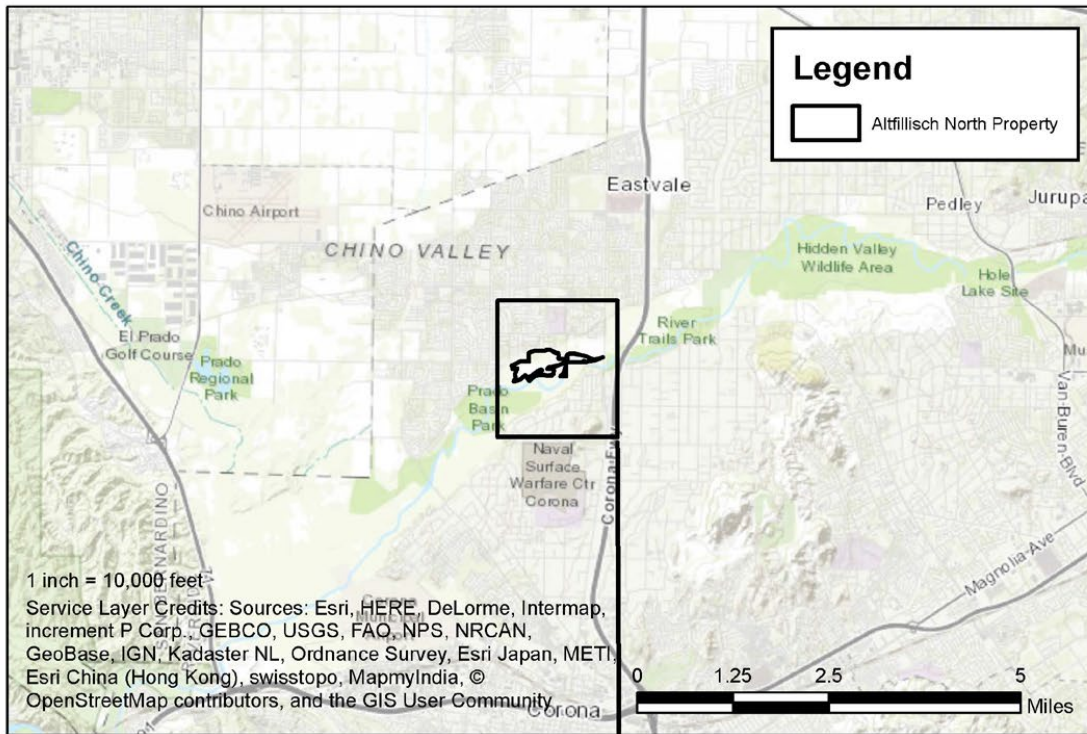


Figure 2. Conceptual Plan

