



SOAP LAKE FLOODPLAIN PRESERVATION PROJECT

Draft Initial Study and Negative Declaration

Prepared for: Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority

A joint powers authority with representation from:

- County of Monterey
- County of San Benito
- County of Santa Clara
- County of Santa Cruz
- Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- San Benito County Water District
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 7

www.PajaroRiverWatershed.org

September 2004



Raines, Melton and Carella, Inc.

2001 N. Main Street,
Suite 400
Walnut Creek, CA
94596
(925) 299-6733

2290 N. First Street,
Suite 212
San Jose, CA
95131
(408) 943-1501

140 Geary Street,
Suite 900
San Francisco, CA
94108
(415) 321-3400

3320 Data Drive,
Suite 350
Sacramento, CA
95670
(916) 851-0292

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ES-1
1. INTRODUCTION	1-1
1.1 Background	1-1
Legal Authority	1-1
Watershed Setting	1-1
1.2 Project Objectives	1-3
1.3 Pajaro River Watershed Study	1-5
Phase 1 Stream Flow Modeling	1-5
Phase 2 Development of Flood Protection Alternatives	1-8
Phase 3 Selection of Projects and CEQA Analysis	1-8
Phase 4 Preliminary Design of Projects	1-9
1.4 CEQA Process	1-9
Public Outreach and Consensus Building	1-10
1.5 Other Related Projects	1-10
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ALTERNATIVES	2-1
2.1 Preliminary Screening of Alternatives	2-1
2.2 Floodplain Management	2-2
2.2.1 County Policies	2-3
2.3 Soap Lake Floodplain Preservation Project	2-4
2.3.1 Flood Protection	2-6
2.3.2 Other Benefits	2-6
2.3.3 Methods for Preserving Soap Lake	2-7
2.4 Alternatives Considered But Eliminated	2-12
3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM	3-1
3.1 Aesthetics	3-4
3.2 Agriculture Resources	3-5
3.3 Air Quality	3-9
3.4 Biological Resources	3-10
3.5 Cultural Resources	3-15
3.6 Geology and Soils	3-18
3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials	3-20
3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality	3-21
3.9 Land Use and Planning	3-24
3.10 Mineral Resources	3-25
3.11 Noise	3-26
3.12 Population and Housing	3-27
3.13 Public Services	3-28
3.14 Recreation	3-28
3.15 Transportation/Traffic	3-32
3.16 Utilities and Service Systems	3-34
3.17 Mandatory Findings of Significance	3-37
4. REPORT PREPARATION	4-1
4.1 References	4-1
4.2 Consultation and Coordination	4-3
4.3 List of Reviewers and Preparers	4-6

APPENDIX A PHOTOGRAPHS

APPENDIX B COUNTY GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

APPENDIX B-1 SAN BENITO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

APPENDIX B-2 SANTA CLARA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

APPENDIX C CITY OF GILROY AGRICULTURAL MITIGATION POLICY

APPENDIX D CALIFORNIA NATURAL DIVERSITY DATABASE RESULTS

APPENDIX E CULTURAL RESOURCES RECORDS SEARCH

APPENDIX F ARMY CORPS PUBLIC NOTICE – WILDLANDS INC.

FIGURES

Figure		Page
Figure 1-1	Project Location.....	1-1
Figure 1-2	Pajaro River Watershed County Boundaries.....	1-2
Figure 1-3	Pajaro River Watershed Topographic Features.....	1-4
Figure 1-4	100-Year Flood Peak Design Flows on the Lower Pajaro River.....	1-7
Figure 2-1	Soap Lake Floodplain.....	2-5
Figure 2-2	Land Acquisition and Conservation Easements Obtained within the Soap Lake Floodplain.....	2-11
Figure 3-1	Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance.....	3-7
Figure 3-2	Williamson Act Lands.....	3-8
Figure 3-3	Threatened and Endangered Species within the Soap Lake Floodplain.....	3-14
Figure 3-4	Trail Routes within the Soap Lake Floodplain.....	3-30
Figure 3-5	Major Pipelines within the Soap Lake Floodplain.....	3-36

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo		Page
Photo 1-1	Soap Lake Floodplain.....	1-3

TABLES

Table		Page
Table 1-1	Hydraulic Model Peak Flows Based on General Plan Buildout Conditions.....	1-6
Table 3-1	Farmland Classifications.....	3-6
Table 3-2	Special Status Species within the Soap Lake Floodplain.....	3-13
Table 3-3	Recorded Cultural Resource Sites within the 100-year Floodplain.....	3-16
Table 3-4	Facilities Located within the 100-year Floodplain.....	3-33

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Phrase
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ARM	Archaeological Resources Management
Authority	Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
CDMG	California Division of Mines and Geology
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFCP	California Farmland Conservancy Program
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
Corps	Army Corps of Engineers
CRS	Community Rating System
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESU	Evolutionarily Significant Unit
Farmland	Farmland of Statewide Importance
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HAP	Hazardous Air Pollutant
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plans
LPRCD	Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District
MRZs	Mineral Resource Zones
NCCP	Natural Communities Conservation Plans
NED	National Economic Development
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PTE	potential to emit
PVWMA	Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
Reclamation	The Bureau of Reclamation
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
TPY	ton per year
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
VTA	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority