

August 6, 2010

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Intent to Adopt a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the Lancaster Road Side Channel and Floodplain Restoration Project, Stanislaus River, Stanislaus County, CA.

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior

ACTION: Notice of Availability

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is adopting and circulating the Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review and intends to adopt a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the Lancaster Road Side Channel and Floodplain Restoration Project, Stanislaus River, Stanislaus County, CA. Copies of the adopted EA are available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (address below). Preparation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's FONSI on this EA will begin no sooner than 30 days from this notice.

ADDRESSES: All comments and questions should be addressed to J.D. Wikert, Habitat Restoration Coordinator, Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4001 N. Wilson Way, Stockton, CA 95242 (209) 334-2968 ext. 403.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Document Availability

Copies of the EA are available at the following government offices and libraries:

The EA is available at 4001 N. Wilson Way, Stockton, CA 95242 (or via telephone at (209) 334-2968 ext. 403).

A. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared an EA assessing the potential impacts of restoring side-channel and floodplain habitat at the Lancaster Road site on the Stanislaus River, Stanislaus County, California. The Notice of Availability for this EA is being circulated within Stanislaus County. .

The EA presents three alternatives, including a No Action alternative, and the analyses of impacts and the effects of implementing proposed actions for accomplishing the following objective: restore side channel, floodplain and riparian ecosystem processes and critical habitats for juvenile and adult salmonids, in coordination with local communities and stakeholders, to promote the recovery of healthy and diverse Chinook salmon and steelhead populations in the Stanislaus River. The proposed action is based on multi-year studies of juvenile salmonids abundance within the Stanislaus River identifying the need to increase juvenile salmonids survival through restoration of existing rearing habitats for the juvenile life stages. Actions to manage these habitats are necessary because of the ecological damage to salmonid habitat (quality and quantity) occurring from man-made impacts, including the Central Valley Project.