

## RECORD OF DECISION

### **American River Watershed Common Features Project Natomas Post-Authorization Change Report Natomas Levee Improvement Program,**

### **Phase 4b Landside Improvements Project Sacramento and Sutter Counties, California**

The Phase 4b Landside Improvements Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/EIR), dated August 2010, and the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated December 30, 2010, address levee improvements for a portion of the existing Natomas Basin perimeter levee system, in the vicinity of the Sacramento, California portion of the American River Watershed. The FEIS/EIR documents the environmental impacts of the Phase 4b alternatives and incorporates prior environmental documentation for Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4a of the Landside Improvement Project. Based on the review by Federal, State and local agencies, input from the public, and the review by my staff, I find the plan recommended by the Chief of Engineers, which does not include the levee raise portion of the Natomas Levee Improvements Program, to be technically feasible, economically justified, in accordance with environmental statutes, and in the public interest. Thus, I approve the plan recommended for construction by the Chief of Engineers. Major features of the plan include:

- Rehabilitation and seepage remediation along the Sacramento River east levee.
- Slope flattening and seepage remediation along the American River north levee.
- Seepage and culvert remediation along the Pleasant Grove Creek Canal (PGCC) west levee.
- Seepage remediation along the Natomas East Main Drain Canal (NEMDC) west levee.
- Bank protection and waterside improvements to the PGCC and NEMDC west levees.
- Bridge remediation at State Route 99 on the Natomas Cross Canal.
- Mitigation for unavoidable environmental impacts consisting of about 275 acres of aquatic habitat, 60 acres of landside woodlands, and native tree planting on approximately 1,600 linear feet of the berm along the NEMDC. A monitoring program to evaluate the success of the mitigation is part of the mitigation plan.

In addition to the no action alternative, alternatives selected for detailed evaluation and consideration were two combinations of various engineering measures to improve the Phase 4b portion of the Natomas Basin perimeter levee system. The two combinations were the Adjacent Levee alternative and the Fix-in-Place alternative. The Adjacent Levee alternative provided the most cost effective flood risk management plan. It is the environmentally preferable plan and the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

All practicable means to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse effects on environmental resources were incorporated into the recommended plan. Several types of permanent unavoidable adverse effects are associated with the proposed project, including loss of farmland, impacts to cultural resources and loss of vegetation on the existing levees. Additionally, the project will have short term impacts to woodlands, wildlife corridors, noise levels, traffic flows, recreation resources and socioeconomic factors.

The technical, environmental, economic and risk criteria set forth in the Water Resource Council's Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies were used in the formulation of alternative plans. All applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders, guidelines and local governmental plans were considered in evaluating the alternatives. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the public interest would best be served by implementing the recommended plan. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act Process.

*May 18, 2011*  
Date

*Jo-Ellen Darcy*  
Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
(Civil Works)