

**RECORD OF DECISION**  
**Bel Marin Keys Unit V Expansion of the**  
**Hamilton Army Airfield Wetland Restoration Project, California**

I have reviewed the Final General Reevaluation Report and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/EIR) for the Bel Marin Keys Unit V (BMKV) Expansion of the Hamilton Army Airfield Wetland Restoration Project, both dated April 2003. These reports address the potential for incorporating the 1600-acre BMKV property into the Hamilton Airfield, California, project authorized in Section 101(b)(3) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. Based upon this review and the views of other agencies and the public, I find the plan recommended for authorization by the Chief of Engineers to be technically feasible, economically justified, environmentally acceptable, and in the public interest.

The expansion would restore about 900 acres of tidal wetlands and about 680 acres of non-tidal and freshwater wetlands as well as upland, subtidal, and non-tidal habitats through the following major features:

- Construction of approximately 21,000 feet of new levees, 36,400 feet of improved levees, 19,200 feet of phased containment levees, and 18,200 feet of intertidal berms.
- Placement of about 13.8 million cubic yards of dredged material to raise elevations suitable to a variety of habitats.
- Anchoring of an electric or diesel hydraulic offloader in San Pablo Bay to pipe the dredged material from barges to the placement site.
- Excavation of some existing levees and creation of two tidal inlet channels.
- Provision of limited recreation features.

Three alternatives in addition to no action were considered in detail: restoration of the BMKV site beneficially reusing dredged material and slightly enlarging Pacheco Pond, restoration of the BMKV site beneficially reusing dredged material with seasonal wetlands and substantially expanding Pacheco Pond, and restoration by way of natural sedimentation. These alternatives are fully discussed in the SEIS/EIR.

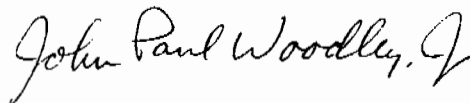
The recommended plan is Revised Alternative 2, which will restore wetlands to BMKV parcel using dredged material to create seasonal wetland, freshwater emergent wetland and upland habitats and accelerate the formation of tidal marsh. Of the alternatives considered in detail, the recommended plan provides the greatest diversity of habitat, allows for the beneficial reuse of the greatest quantity of dredged material, creates habitat for endangered species in the shortest amount of time, and restores the greatest amount of seasonal wetland.

All practicable means to avoid and/or minimize adverse environmental impacts were included in plan formulation and have been incorporated into the recommended plan. Where adverse impacts could not be avoided, mitigation measures have also been included in the recommended plan: No construction will occur within 250 feet of the outboard marsh between February 1 and July 31 to avoid disturbance to the California clapper rail during nesting season, and surveys will be conducted before construction to locate active nests of burrowing owls and San Pablo Bay song sparrows. Details of all mitigation measures are in the report. A monitoring program will be developed to assess project evolution and to implement corrective actions where project goals are not progressing.

The project has been extensively coordinated with the public and with resource agencies and, for this stage of development, is in compliance with all environmental requirements, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act. Final compliance with these requirements will occur prior to implementation of the project. Comments on the Final Supplemental EIS did not raise any questions not previously addressed.

A study has been initiated to explore the use of a temporary aquatic transfer facility in San Pablo Bay to handle and deliver dredged material to the project more efficiently than the offloader. This study, scheduled for completion in 2007, will have its own environmental analysis and documentation.

Technical and economic criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's *Principles and Guidelines*. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local plans were considered in evaluating the alternatives. The recommended plan is the environmentally preferable alternative, and incorporates features to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental and social effects. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the benefits gained by implementation of the recommended plan far outweigh any adverse effects. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.



John Paul Woodley, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
(Civil Works)

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Date