

**RECORD OF DECISION  
HAMILTON ARMY AIRFIELD WETLAND RESTORATION  
CALIFORNIA**

I have reviewed the Hamilton Army Airfield Wetland Restoration Project Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (FS/EIS/EIR) dated December 1998, addressing the need for salt marsh and seasonal wetland restoration at the former Hamilton Army Airfield (HAAF) and adjoining State Lands Commission (SLC) parcels in the city of Novato, Marin County, California. Based on this review and the views of other agencies and the public, I find the plan authorized by Congress in Section 101(b)(3) of Public Law 106-53, the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, to be technically feasible, environmentally justified, in accordance with environmental statutes and in the public interest. Thus, I approve the Hamilton Army Airfield Wetland Restoration project for construction. The authorized project consists of the following major features:

- Restoring approximately 990 acres of habitat including over 570 acres of coastal salt marsh and seasonal wetlands, along with about 120 acres of tidal channels and intertidal habitats.
- Constructing about 18,200 feet of perimeter levee, up to 5,800 feet of internal peninsulas, and approximately 2,200 feet of levee to access and protect the Novato Sanitary District pipeline.
- Placing about 2.1 million cubic yards of dredged material to create seasonal wetland and tidal panne habitats, and up to 8.5 million cubic yards of dredged material from San Francisco Bay navigation projects to accelerate formation of tidal marsh.
- Restoring tidal action to the site by lowering and breaching the existing bay front levee in two places, excavating approximately 61,800 cubic yards of material.

Five alternatives were considered: no action, restoration at the HAAF only through natural sedimentation, restoration at both the HAAF and adjoining SLC parcel through natural sedimentation, restoration at the HAAF using dredged material to raise grades for habitat creation, and restoration at both the HAAF and SLC parcels using dredged material. These alternatives are fully discussed in the FS/EIS/EIR.

The authorized project will restore wetlands to the HAAF and SLC parcels using dredged material to create seasonal wetland features and accelerate the formation of tidal marsh. Of the alternative plans considered in detail, the selected plan maximized habitat values and offered the best option for sustaining ecological functions over time.

All practicable means to avoid and/or minimize adverse environmental impacts were included in plan formulation and have been incorporated into the authorized project. No construction will occur within 250 feet of the outboard marsh between February 1 and August 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. A monitoring program will be developed to assess project evolution that will include the implementation of corrective actions where project goals are not progressing. 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 authorized project is the least environmentally damaging alternative, 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 ecosystem restoration benefits gained by construction of the authorized project far outweigh any adverse effects. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process.



Hans A. Van Winkle  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Deputy Commander for  
Civil Works

21 JUL 2000

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Date