

ATTACHMENT 1

EMERGENCY PERMIT

23EMP-00015



Coastal Zone:
Subject to the requirements of Section 35-171.2 of the Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance and the policies of the Coastal Land Use Plan.

Case Name: Emergency Permit – Santa Maria River Debris Removal -
Guadalupe

Case Number: 23EMP-00015

Location: Flood Control Easement Area along the Santa Maria
River west of Guadalupe

APN: 113-020-016, 113-020-018, 113-030-002, 113-030-008,
113-030-009, 113-030-010, 113-030-027

Applicant/Agent Name: Santa Barbara County Flood Control District

Owner Name: Santa Barbara County Flood Control District

ZONING PERMIT
ISSUED
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

PERMIT APPROVAL:

This is to inform you that an Emergency Permit has been approved for:

The project proposes to remove vegetation and siltation debris near the center of the Santa Maria River footprint from State Route 1 towards the Pacific Ocean. The project is approximately 4 miles long, 3.2 miles of which is within the Coastal Zone boundary. Debris removal ranges from 200 to 330 feet in width and 4 to 9 feet in depth along the river. Suitable material that is removed from the river will be placed along the southern and northern margin of the river corridor outside of the ordinary high water mark to create an 8 to 10 foot berm to direct flows into the historic river pathway. The project includes the following components:

- *The first 2.7 miles of the project from the Coastal Zone boundary towards the ocean is un-vegetated and debris removal will occur within an area 300 feet wide and up to 6 feet in depth.*
- *The western 0.5 miles of the project includes the removal of 7 acres of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) riparian vegetation in order to restore the flow pathway. Willows will be cut off at the base to remove vegetation impeding waterflow, while also allowing future regrowth. The debris removal along this section will be 200 feet wide by up to 6 feet in depth and a berm will be created along the south side of the channel. All cut debris will be buried in the berm to allow it to regrow.*
- *The District is developing a habitat restoration plan in coordination with resource agencies, which will be implemented once the debris removal work is complete.*

County Flood Control staff will implement all avoidance and minimization measures described in their October 16, 2023, letter (Attachment C). These measures include but are not limited to the following:

- *District biologists will monitor the project area during equipment work and perform pre-project surveys of vegetation/habitat where special status species may have the potential to occur.*
- *Special-status plant species, if detected, will be clearly marked and excluded from the work area prior to equipment work.*
- *District biologists will survey for and relocate any special status wildlife during operations.*

- ***District biologists will provide an environmental training session for contractors and staff working onsite.***
- ***Work will be performed outside of the nesting bird season.***
- ***No work will occur during rain events or any forecasted river flow events.***
- ***No herbicide will be used during any stage of project operations.***

Access to the project site will be taken off of Highway 1 and West Main Street. The project is located along the Santa Maria River, within Flood Control easement area, in the Fifth Supervisorial District on Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 113-030-010, 113-030-009, 113-030-008, 113-030-027, 113-030-003, 113-030-002, 113-020-016, 113-020-019, 113-020-018.

The project is an emergency because following the significant storms from winter of 2023, sediment build-up caused the Santa Maria River to re-align and erode beyond the southern bank, along a 5-mile stretch between State Route 1 and the Pacific Ocean. The deviated flowing water pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe's wastewater treatment plant, West Main Street, and the road used by the public to access the coast at Guadalupe Dune County Park. In addition, private structures in the area, including homes, are under imminent threat of flooding and property damage with the forecasted El Nino winter season. The Governor of California declared a State of Emergency as a result of severe winter storms related to an atmospheric river event beginning on December 27, 2022. In addition, this project received emergency funding from the County Board of Supervisors in September 2023 to complete the work.

This situation therefore constitutes an emergency in accordance with the applicable Development Code indicated above and immediate action is warranted. As the required findings (listed below) can be made, the emergency work is hereby approved, subject to compliance with the attached conditions of approval. The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(c), which exempts "specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency" (see Attachment B). This permit is not valid until signed by the owner/applicant and subsequently issued by the Department upon verification that all conditions of approval requiring action prior to permit issuance are satisfied.

Sincerely,




Lisa Plowman, Director

APPROVAL DATE: Nov 03, 2023


OWNER/APPLICANT AGREEMENT:

The undersigned permittee acknowledges receipt of this permit and agrees to abide by all terms and conditions of approval incorporated herein. The undersigned also acknowledges and agrees that:

- This Emergency Permit provides only temporary authorization for the proposed action and other applicable permits (such as a Conditional Use Permit, Coastal Development Permit, Land Use Permit, Building Permit) are required by law to validate the emergency work as permanent.
- Any evidence or findings contained herein, or upon which this permit relies, shall not constitute any limitation on the authority of the County of Santa Barbara to issue, grant, deny, rescind, or revoke this permit or any future permit(s) required for the activities described herein, or on the authority of the County of Santa Barbara to analyze, mitigate, or condition any future permit(s) required for the activities described herein.
- This permit does not authorize any work or construction activities outside of the scope of the project as indicated in the project description, conditions of approval and approved plans.
- This permit shall not be construed to authorize any violation of County ordinance or policy, or the violation of any State or Federal regulation.

Andrew Raaf		Nov 6, 2023
Print Name	Signature	Date

PERMIT ISSUANCE:

Chris Schmuckal		11/6/23
Print Name	Signature	Date

BACKGROUND:

The project is located along the Santa Maria River west of the Highway 1 towards the Pacific Ocean. The historic winter storms from the winter of 2023 left significant debris within the Santa Maria River channel, which reduced the capacity of the river to move high water flows and caused it to flow outside its southern bank, outside of the 100-year flood plan and historical known path of the river. The deviated flowing water pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe’s wastewater treatment plant, West Main Street, and the road used by the public to access the coast at Guadalupe Dune County Park. In addition, private structures in the area, including homes, are under imminent threat of flooding and property damage with the forecasted El Nino winter season.

The County worked with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to develop a project that included emergency protective measures to re-establish the river course and to prevent future flooding of public infrastructure and private property. Based on the feedback from the State agencies and Flood Control District input, the proposed project was developed, and the County of Santa Barbra Public Works Department received funding from the Board of Supervisors in September 2023 to complete the proposed work.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL:

- 1. The approval of this project shall not be held to permit or to be an approval of a violation of any provision of any County Ordinance or State Law.**

The approval of this Emergency Permit will not permit or approve any violation of County Ordinance or State Law. Condition of Approval No. 2 requires that an application for the required permits necessary to validate the emergency work as permanent be submitted by the applicant no later than 30 days following the issuance of the Emergency Permit. Processing of the required follow-on permit will ensure that the project is completed in compliance with applicable regulations.

- 2. In compliance with Section 35-171.5.2 of the Article II Zoning Ordinance, prior to the approval or conditional approval of an application for an Emergency Permit the Director shall first make all of the following findings, as applicable:**

- a. An emergency exists and requires action more quickly than provided for by the procedures for permit processing, and the action will be completed within 30 days unless otherwise specified by the terms of the permit.*

The project is an emergency because, following the significant storms from winter of 2023, sediment build-up caused the Santa Maria River to re-align and erode beyond the southern bank, along a 5-mile stretch between State Route 1 and the Pacific Ocean. The deviated flowing water pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe’s wastewater treatment plan, West Main Street, and the road used by the public to access the coast at Guadalupe Dune County Park. In addition, private structures in the area, including homes, are under imminent threat of flooding and property damage with the forecasted El Nino winter season. The Governor of California declared a State of Emergency as a result of severe winter storms related to an atmospheric river event beginning on December 27, 2022. This project also received emergency funding from the County Board of Supervisors on September 12, 2023, to complete the work.

b. Public comment on the proposed emergency action has been reviewed.

Mailed notices were sent on October 6, 2023, and 3 noticing placards were placed onsite. No public comments were received. In addition, the emergency action was discussed before the County Board of Supervisors on September 12, 2023.

c. The action proposed is consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Land Use Plan and Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

A summary of applicable Coastal Land Use Plan and Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance policies are included below.

Flood & Water Quality Policies

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 3-11. All development, including construction, excavation, and grading, except for flood control projects and non-structural agricultural uses, shall be prohibited in the floodway unless off-setting improvements in accordance with HUD regulations are provided. If the proposed development falls within the floodway fringe, development may be permitted, provided creek setback requirements are met and finish floor elevations are above the projected 100-year flood elevation, as specified in the Flood Plain Management Ordinance.

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with this policy because it is a flood control project developed by Santa Barbara County Public Works Flood Control Division in order to alleviate an existing flood hazard, and to protect residents, property, and infrastructure. As noted in the policy, flood control projects are allowed within the floodway.

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 3-12. Permitted development shall not cause or contribute

to flood hazards or lead to expenditure of public funds for flood control works, i.e. dams, stream channelization's, etc.

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with this policy because, based upon review by Flood Control staff, the proposed development will not contribute to or cause flood hazards. Matt Griffin, Engineering Manager for the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, stated that the project *“will improve river flow conveyance capacity, not create any additional flooding risk to the community compared to the pre-project condition and not adversely impact FEMA’s 100-Year Special Flood Hazard Area mapping.”*

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 9-14. *New development adjacent to or in close proximity to wetlands shall be compatible with the continuance of the habitat area and shall not result in a reduction in the biological productivity or water quality of the wetland due to runoff (carrying additional sediment or contaminants), noise, thermal pollution, or other disturbances.*

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with the requirement to not result in a reduction in the biological productivity or water quality of wetland areas because biological protection measures will be implemented during project construction, the project will help restore the natural flow pathway of the river, and the project will include biological restoration. The Santa Maria River is currently full of debris that re-directed the river from its natural flow pathway. The project will remove the debris and allow the river to flow in its historical area to supply the downstream wetland areas with water and naturally flowing sand that supports the Guadalupe Dunes. Reestablishing the historic river flow will benefit biological resources including Southern California Steelhead by decreasing the distance they need to swim and increasing the water depth of the channel. A comprehensive biological restoration plan is also being developed that will compensate for vegetation impacts and will be included as part of the required follow on Coastal Development Permit. Protection measures implemented during construction to protect water quality include performing the work during the dry season and excluding wetted areas, preventing the use of herbicide, stopping work during any forecasted rain event, and limiting removal of vegetation to less than 30% of total riparian vegetation within each reach.

Coastal Act Policy 30231: *The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored though, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.*

Coastal Plan Policy 3-19: Degradation of the water quality of groundwater basins, nearby streams, or wetlands shall not result from development of the site. Pollutants, such as chemicals, fuels, lubricants, raw sewage, and other harmful waste, shall not be discharged into or alongside coastal streams or wetlands either during or after construction.

Coastal Plan Policy 9-41: All permitted construction and grading within stream corridors shall be carried out in such a manner as to minimize impacts from increased runoff, sedimentation, biochemical degradation, or thermal pollution.

Consistent: The proposed project will implement measures that will ensure that the biological quality of coastal waters and streams is protected and that minimizes impacts from runoff. These avoidance and minimization measures include but are not limited to the following: conducting the work during the dry season, limiting vegetation removal to less than 30% of the total riparian vegetation along each reach, conducting special status wildlife species and plant surveys, ongoing biological monitoring, and conducting fueling and storage at least 60 feet from the riparian habitat or water bodies. The full list of all avoidance and minimization measures is included in Attachment C.

Stream Corridor Policies

Coastal Land Use Plan 9-37. The minimum buffer strip for major streams in rural areas, as defined by the land use plan, shall be presumptively 100 feet, and for streams in urban areas, 50 feet. These minimum buffers may be adjusted upward or downward on a case-by-case basis. The buffer shall be established based on an investigation of the following factors and after consultation with the Department of Fish and Game and Regional Water Quality Control Board in order to protect the biological productivity and water quality of streams:

- 1) Soil type and stability of stream corridors;
- 2) How surface water filters into the ground
- 3) Slope of the land on either side of the stream; and
- 4) Location of the 100-year flood plain boundary.

Riparian vegetation shall be protected and shall be included in the buffer. Where riparian vegetation has previously been removed, except for channelization, the buffer shall allow for the reestablishment of riparian vegetation to its prior extent to the greatest degree possible.

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with this policy because flood control projects are permitted within the stream corridor. The project is a flood control project intended to alleviate flood hazards in the area. This project will occur within the stream channel and ESH buffer zone due to the fact that the accumulated debris is located within and along the creek channel. A comprehensive restoration plan is being developed that will

fully compensate for vegetation impacts from the project and will be included as part of the required follow on Coastal Development Permit. Finally, minimization and avoidance measures are being implemented as a part of the project (described in Attachment C), including conducting biological surveys, marking and avoiding sensitive species if found, and conducting bio monitoring throughout construction.

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 9-38. No structures shall be located within the stream corridor except: public trails, dams for necessary water supply projects, flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the flood plain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development; and other development where the primary function is for the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. Culverts, fences, pipelines, and bridges (when support structures are located outside the critical habitat) may be permitted when no alternative route/location is feasible. All development shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible.

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with this policy because no structures are proposed within the stream corridor as a part of the project. In addition, the intent of the proposed project is to protect existing structures adjacent to Santa Maria River by removing accumulated sediment and debris from the stream channel in order to reestablish the historic river flow and more efficiently convey floodwaters associated with future rain events. The project incorporates minimization and avoidance measures (described in Attachment C) including conducting biological surveys, marking and avoiding sensitive species if found, and conducting biological monitoring throughout construction.

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 9-40. All development, including dredging, filling, and grading within stream corridors, shall be limited to activities necessary for the construction of uses specified in Policy 9-38. When such activities require removal of riparian plant species, revegetation with local native plants shall be required except where undesirable for flood control purposes. Minor clearing of vegetation for hiking, biking, and equestrian trails shall be permitted.

Consistent: The proposed project is consistent with this policy because the development activity for the proposed project is used for the construction of a flood control project, which is a use allowed by Policy 9-38 above. The project will include the removal of riparian vegetation, however a comprehensive restoration plan is being developed to fully compensate for the removal of vegetation as part of the required follow on Coastal Development Permit. The restoration plan will include revegetation with local native plants.

Cultural Resource Policies

Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 10-3: When sufficient planning flexibility does not permit avoiding construction on archaeological or other types of cultural sites, adequate mitigation shall be required. Mitigation shall be designed in accord with guidelines of the State Office of Historic Preservation and the State of California Native American Heritage Commission.

Consistent. The proposed project is consistent with the policy requirements to avoid impacts to cultural sites because Condition No. 8 requires monitoring by a Native American monitor during construction, and that work be halted in the event that unanticipated cultural resources are discovered.

3. This action is not subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, statutory exemption for emergency projects.

EMERGENCY PERMIT CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. This Emergency Permit is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, and the conditions of approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations without the above-described approval will constitute a violation of permit approval. If it is determined that project activity is occurring in violation of any or all of the following conditions, the Director of Planning and Development may revoke this permit and all authorization for development. The decision of the Director to revoke the Emergency Permit may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

The project description is as follows:

The project proposes to remove vegetation and siltation debris near the center of the Santa Maria River footprint from State Route 1 towards the Pacific Ocean. The project is approximately 4 miles long, 3.2 miles of which is within the Coastal Zone boundary. Debris removal ranges from 200 to 330 feet in width and 4 to 9 feet in depth along the river. Suitable material that is removed from the river will be placed along the southern and northern margin of the river corridor outside of the ordinary high water mark to create an 8 to 10 foot berm to direct flows into the historic river pathway. The project includes the following components:

- The first 2.7 miles of the project from the Coastal Zone boundary towards the ocean are un-vegetated and debris removal in this area will occur within an area 300 feet wide and up to 6 feet in depth.
- The western 0.5 miles of the project includes the removal of 7 acres of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) riparian vegetation in order to restore the flow pathway. Willows will be cut off at the base to remove vegetation impeding waterflow, while also allowing future

regrowth. The debris removal along this section will be 200 feet wide by up to 6 feet in depth and a berm will be created along the south side of the channel. All cut debris will be buried in the berm to allow it to regrow.

- The District is developing a habitat restoration plan in coordination with resource agencies, which will be implemented once the debris removal work is complete.

County Flood Control staff will implement all avoidance and minimization measures described in their October 16, 2023, letter (Attachment C). These measures include but are not limited to the following:

- District biologists will monitor the project area during equipment work and perform pre-project surveys of vegetation/habitat where special status species may have the potential to occur.
- Special-status plant species, if detected, will be clearly marked and excluded from the work area prior to equipment work.
- District biologists will survey for and relocate any special status wildlife during operations.
- District biologists will provide an environmental training session for contractors and staff working onsite.
- Work will be performed outside of the nesting bird season
- No work will occur during rain events or any forecasted river flow events
- No herbicide use during any stage of project operations.

Access to the project site will be taken off of Highway 1 and West Main Street. The project is located along the Santa Maria River, within Flood Control easement area, in the Fifth Supervisorial District on Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 113-030-010, 113-030-009, 113-030-008, 113-030-027, 113-030-003, 113-030-002, 113-020-016, 113-020-019, 113-020-018.

The project is an emergency because, following the significant storms from winter of 2023, sediment build-up caused the Santa Maria River to re-align and erode beyond the southern bank, along a 5-mile stretch between State Route 1 and the Pacific Ocean. The deviated flowing water pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe's wastewater treatment plant, West Main Street, and the road used by the public to access the coast at Guadalupe Dune County Park. In addition, private structures in the area, including homes, are under imminent threat of flooding and property damage with the forecasted El Nino winter season. The Governor of California declared a State of Emergency as a result of severe winter storms related to an atmospheric river event beginning on December 27, 2022. In addition, this project received emergency funding from the County Board of Supervisors in September 2023 to complete the work.

2. An application(s) for the required permits necessary to validate the emergency work as permanent shall be submitted by the applicant to the Planning and Development Department no later than 30 days following the issuance of this Emergency Permit. The permits required for the proposed emergency work include a Coastal Development Permit with a hearing (CDH) pursuant to Section 35-169 of the Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance.
3. Any materials required for a completed application, as identified in the initial review of the original application required pursuant to Condition No. 2 above, shall be submitted within 90 days after written notification of the application deficiencies is provided to the applicant. This time period may be extended by the Director of Planning and Development.
4. Only that emergency work specifically requested and deemed an emergency for the specific property mentioned is authorized. Any additional emergency work requires separate authorization from the Director of Planning and Development. The work authorized by this permit must be commenced within 30 days of the date of issuance of the permit and completed by November 1, 2023. If construction activities are proposed by the applicant to commence after 30 days, separate authorization by the Director of P&D is required.
5. This permit does not preclude the necessity to obtain authorization and/or permits from other County Departments or other agencies.
6. The Director of Planning and Development may order the work authorized under this emergency permit to stop immediately if it is determined that unanticipated and substantial adverse environmental effects may occur with continued construction.
7. **Bio-12 Habitat Restoration.** The Owner/Applicant shall submit for P&D approval a Creek Habitat Restoration Plan prepared by a biologist and designated to restore the creek habitat impacted by the proposed project and including the following components:
 - a. Landscaping shall be with native riparian species.
 - b. Species shall be from locally obtained plants and seed stock.
 - c. Restoration qualities and species type shall be determined based on the project impacts and shall meet the County restoration policy requirements.**TIMING:** Plans shall be submitted prior to the approval of the follow on Coastal Development Permit with hearing.
8. **CulRes-07 Cultural Resource Monitor.** The Owner/Applicant shall have earth disturbances including scarification and placement of fill within the site area monitored by a P&D approved Native American consultant in compliance with the provisions of the County Archaeological Guidelines to the maximum extent feasible. **TIMING:** Prior to issuance of the Emergency Permit the Owner/Applicant shall submit for P&D review and approval, a contract or Letter of Commitment between the Owner/Applicant and the archaeologist, consisting of a project

description and scope of work, and once approved, shall execute the contract. **MONITORING:** County Public Works Flood Control Division monitoring staff and monitoring contractors shall spot check in the field throughout grading.

9. **CulRes-09 Stop Work at Encounter.** The Owner/Applicant and/or their agents, representatives or contractors shall stop or redirect work immediately in the event archaeological remains are encountered during grading, construction, landscaping or other construction-related activity. The Owner/Applicant shall immediately contact P&D staff, and retain a P&D approved archaeologist and Native American representative to evaluate the significance of the find in compliance with the provisions of the County Archaeological Guidelines and conduct appropriate mitigation funded by the Owner/Applicant. **MONITORING:** County Public Works Flood Control Division monitoring staff shall spot check in the field throughout grading and construction.
10. **Rules-05 Acceptance of Conditions.** The Applicant acceptance of this permit and/or commencement of use, construction and/or operations under this permit shall be deemed acceptance of all conditions of this permit by the Applicant.
11. **Rules-23 Processing Fees Required.** Prior to issuance of the Permit, the Applicant shall pay all applicable P&D permit processing fees in full as required by County ordinances and resolutions.
12. **Rules-33 Indemnity and Separation.** The Owner/Applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the County or its agents or officers and employees from any claim, action or proceeding against the County or its agents, officers or employees, to attack, set aside, void, or annul, in whole or in part, the County's approval of this project.
13. **Rules-35 Limits-Except DPs.** The approval does not confer legal status on any existing structure(s) or use(s) on the property unless specifically authorized by this approval.

Attachments:

- A. Site Plan
- B. CEQA Exemption
- C. Avoidance and Minimization Measures

cc: P&D Deputy Director
Supervising Planner, P&D
P&D Planner
Coastal Program Analyst, Calif. Coastal Comm., 89 S. California Street, Ventura CA 93001

Santa Maria River Debris Removal Emergency Project

Attachment A Site Plan

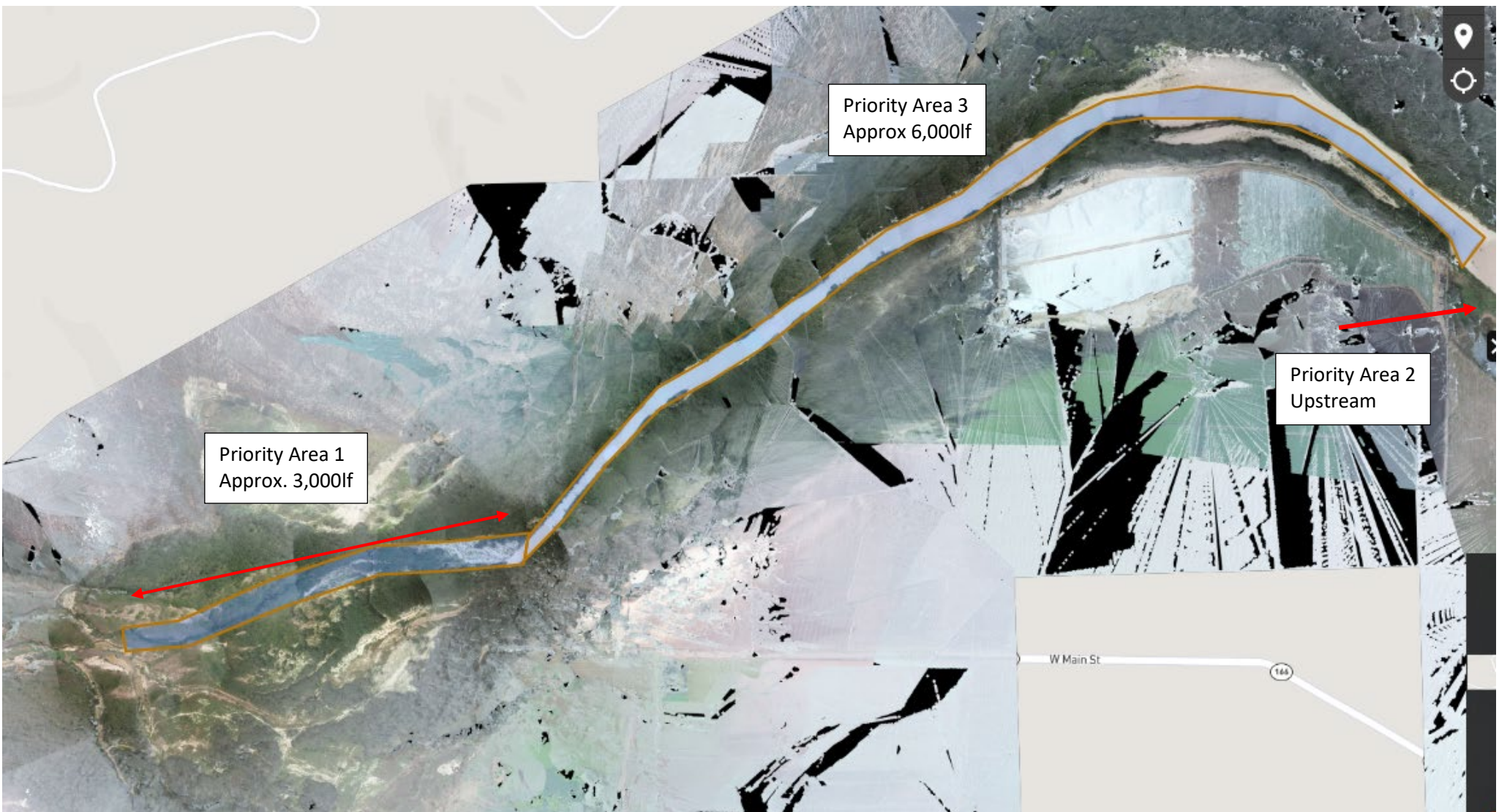


Vicinity map showing extent of entire project approximately 4.1 miles.



Priority Area 2
Approx. 11,600 lf

Priority Area 2.
HWY 1 to lower breakout area will be approximately 300'-400' wide.



Priority Area 1
Approx. 3,000lf

Priority Area 3
Approx 6,000lf

Priority Area 2
Upstream

W Main St

16A

Priority Areas 1 and 3.

Lower breakout area to head cut area will be approximately 200' wide with 200' wide debris/vegetation removal in lower polygon.

**ATTACHMENT B
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Christopher Schmuckal

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

APN's: 113-020-016, 113-020-018, 113-030-002, **Case No.:** 23EMP-00015
113-030-008, 113-030-009, 113-030-010, 113-030-027

Location: Santa Maria River, West of Guadalupe and Highway 1

Project Title: Emergency Permit – Santa Maria River - Guadalupe

Project Applicant: Santa Barbara County Public Works Flood Control Division

Project Description: *The project proposes to remove vegetation and siltation debris near the center of the Santa Maria River footprint from State Route 1 towards the Pacific Ocean. The project is approximately 4 miles long, 3.2 miles of which is within the Coastal Zone boundary. Debris removal ranges from 200 to 330 feet in width and 4 to 9 feet in depth along the river. Suitable material that is removed from the river will be placed along the southern and northern margin of the river corridor outside of the ordinary high water mark to create an 8 to 10 foot berm to direct flows into the historic river pathway. The project includes the following components:*

- *The first 2.7 miles of the project from the Coastal Zone boundary towards the ocean is un-vegetated and debris removal will occur within an area 300 feet wide and up to 6 feet in depth.*
- *The western 0.5 miles of the project includes the removal of 7 acres of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) riparian vegetation in order to restore the flow pathway. Willows will be cut off at the base to remove vegetation impeding waterflow, while also allowing future regrowth. The debris removal along this section will be 200 feet wide by up to 6 feet in depth and a berm will be created along the south side of the channel. All cut debris will be buried in the berm to allow it to regrow.*
- *The District is developing a habitat restoration plan in coordination with resource agencies, which will be implemented once the debris removal work is complete.*

County Flood Control staff will implement all avoidance and minimization measures described in their October 16, 2023, letter (Attachment C). These measures include but are not limited to the following:

- *District biologists will monitor the project area during equipment work and perform pre-project surveys of vegetation/habitat where special status species may have the potential to occur.*
- *Special-status plant species, if detected, will be clearly marked and excluded from the work area prior to equipment work.*
- *District biologists will survey for and relocate any special status wildlife during operations.*
- *District biologists will provide an environmental training session for contractors and staff working onsite.*
- *Work will be performed outside of the nesting bird season*
- *No work will occur during rain events or any forecasted river flow events*
- *No herbicide will be used during any stage of project operations.*

Access to the project site will be taken off of Highway 1 and West Main Street. The project is located along the Santa Maria River, within Flood Control easement area, in the Fifth Supervisorial District on Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 113-030-010, 113-030-009, 113-030-008, 113-030-027, 113-030-003, 113-030-002, 113-020-016, 113-020-019, 113-020-018.

The project is an emergency because, following the significant storms from winter of 2023, sediment build-up caused the Santa Maria River to re-align and erode beyond the southern bank, along a 5-mile stretch between State Route 1 and the Pacific Ocean. The deviated flowing water pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe's wastewater treatment plant, West Main Street, and the road used by the public to access the coast at Guadalupe Dune County Park. In addition, private structures in the area, including homes, are under imminent threat of flooding and property damage with the forecasted El Nino winter season. The Governor of California declared a State of Emergency as a result of severe winter storms related to an atmospheric river event beginning on December 27, 2022. In addition, this project received emergency funding from the County Board of Supervisors in September 2023 to complete the work.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Barbara County Planning & Development

Name of Person or Entity Carrying Out Project: Santa Barbara County Public Works Flood Control Division

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guidelines Section: Section 15269 Emergency Projects

Reasons to support exemption findings:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15269 exempts “specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency.” Emergency action is warranted in this situation because sediment build-up in the Santa Maria River caused by the significant storms from the winter of 2023, caused the river to re-align and erode beyond its southern bank along a 5-mile stretch between State Route 1 and the Pacific Ocean. The deviated river pathway resulted in flooding and damage to public facilities, including the City of Guadalupe’s wastewater treatment facility, and private neighborhoods. The forecasted El Nino for the upcoming winter season puts these structures under imminent threat of flooding and property damage. An immediate response is necessary to reduce the flood risk for these communities.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Chris Schmuckal

Phone #: 805-568-3510

Department/Division Representative:



Date: 11/3/2023

Acceptance Date: 11/3/2023

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff

Date Filed by County Clerk: _____

ATTACHMENT C
AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

Santa Maria River Emergency Project Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- Existing wetted areas were excluded from the project area. Work performed during the dry season.
- Majority of the work area is bare sandy sediment. Where vegetation is present, vegetation removal is limited to less than 30% of total riparian vegetation within that reach.
- Sediment and vegetation removal maintain the downstream slope of the stream flow line.
- Sediment and debris removal do not impede fish passage or cause fish stranding.
- The activity minimizes impacts to beneficial uses of the water body.
- Environmental awareness training performed by SBCFCD biologist for contractors
- Onsite biomonitoring during operations and prior to work taking place in each Priority area.
- Habitat assessment and special-status wildlife species and plant species inspections performed prior to any operations beginning and onsite during biomonitoring.
- Focused special-status plant surveys prior to disturbance at priority areas as identified in habitat assessments.
- Special-status and general wildlife species surveys performed onsite during biomonitoring
- Work was performed outside of the nesting bird season, biomonitoring for any residual nests or nesting behavior.
- Access routes: number of access routes, size of the staging areas, and the total area of the activity limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goals.
- Trash management: trash and construction-related debris contained in sealed bins and removed from the work site.
- No work during rain events or any forecasted river flow events
- Fuel storage and fueling: at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies, secondary containment, and spill clean-up kits.
- Native plant species mitigation/revegetation planting.
- Post-project monitoring and management of California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) moderate and high rating plant species.
- No herbicide use during any stage of project operations.

