

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

455 MARKET ST, SUITE 300
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F9

Prepared April 6, 2021 (for the April 16, 2021 Hearing)

To: Commissioners and Interested Parties
From: Kate Huckelbridge, Deputy Director
Subject: **Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency Division Deputy Director's Report for April 2021**

The following coastal development permit (CDP) waivers, immaterial CDP amendments, CDP extensions, emergency CDPs, and negative determinations for the Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency Division are being reported to the Commission on April 6, 2021. Pursuant to the Commission's procedures, each item has been appropriately noticed as required, and each item is also available for review at the Commission's office in San Francisco. Staff is asking for the Commission's concurrence on the items in the Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency Division Deputy Director's report, and will report any objections received and any other relevant information on these items to the Commission when it considers the report on April 16, 2021.

With respect to the April 16th hearing, interested persons may sign up to address the Commission on items contained in this report prior to the Commission's consideration of this report. The Commission can overturn staff's noticed determinations for some categories of items subject to certain criteria in each case (see individual notices for specific requirements).

Items being reported on April 6, 2021 (see attached)

Administrative Items for Federal Consistency Matters, Negative Determinations

- ND-0001-21, U. S. Coast Guard, derelict marine railway removal, U.S. Coast Guard Station Humboldt Bay, Samoa, Humboldt County, Action: Concur, 3/26/2021
- ND-0002-21, Department of the Air Force, culverts repair and corrosion prevention at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County, Action: Concur, 3/18/2021

- **ND-0004-21**, U.S. Air Force, test program for the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrence program, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County, Action: Concur 4/01/2021
- **ND-0005-21**, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, installation of temporary surveillance tower, Del Mar, San Diego County, Action: Concur, 3/30/2021
- **ND-0006-21**, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, installation of temporary surveillance tower, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County, Action: Concur, 3/26/2021

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March 26, 2021

Constance Callahan
Chief, Environmental Management Branch
United States Coast Guard
Civil Engineering Unit Oakland
1301 Clay Street, Suite 700N
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Negative Determination ND-0001-21 (Removal of Marine Railway, USCG Station Humboldt Bay, Samoa, Humboldt County)

Dear Ms. Callahan:

The Coastal Commission staff has reviewed the above-referenced negative determination for the United States Coast Guard (USCG) proposal to remove the marine railway at USCG Station Humboldt Bay in Samoa, Humboldt County. Formerly used to transport boats from the station to the water launching, the railway became obsolete in the 1970s with the use of larger steel lifeboats. The railway is in very poor condition, with corroded steel beams and rotting planks and piles. It is deemed unsafe and subject to collapse, thus constituting a safety hazard to station personnel and maritime traffic in the area.

As described in the USCG negative determination, removal of the railway will include the following activities: removal of the steel rails extending from the Station Building into the water; removal of the upper planks of the structure; disassembly of the struts and lateral bracers; removal of approximately 109 12"-diameter wooden piles (between 30 and 40 feet in length) by vibratory hammer operating off a barge; and removal of the upland portion of the railway structure. Disposal of removed materials and debris would occur at an appropriate upland location.

The USCG negative determination states that the proposed project would occur within the typical work window for Humboldt Bay projects, between August 1 and September 30, to avoid impacts to salmonids and green sturgeon. Standard best management practices to minimize water quality impacts will be employed, with a boom placed around the structure to aid in capturing any debris which may fall into the water. There is no eelgrass within the immediate project footprint and no eelgrass would be affected by the project (including anchoring of the barge), although there is eelgrass approximately 200 feet to the north of the project site according to a 2020 eelgrass survey. The USCG states that it will conduct

a pre- and post-construction survey pursuant to the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy to ensure eelgrass is not affected by the project.

The proposed project involves the use of a vibratory hammer to remove pilings, which is anticipated to take approximately a week's time. The noise from this activity could negatively affect marine mammals in the area. To help reduce the potential affect for such an impact, the USCG has agreed to staff's recommendation to employ marine mammal monitors to survey a distance of 500 meters from the proposed project during pile removal activities. If a marine mammal is sited within this distance, work will be halted until the animals depart.

The Marine Railway dates to the early 20th century and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The USCG completed a consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and has agreed to develop a web page documenting the historic design and use of the railway as part of the USCG life-saving mission in Humboldt Bay. The USCG also consulted with the Humboldt County Historical Society and the Humboldt Bay Maritime Museum on the project.

In conclusion, the Coastal Commission staff **agrees** that the proposed project would not adversely affect coastal zone resources. We therefore **concur** with your negative determination made pursuant to Section 15 CFR 930.35(d) of the NOAA implementing regulations. Please contact John Weber of the Commission staff at (415) 904-5245 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



(for)

John Ainsworth
Executive Director

Cc: US Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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March 18, 2021

Beatrice L Kephart
Chief, Installation Management Flight
Department of the Air Force
30 CES/CEI
1028 Iceland Avenue
Vandenberg AFB CA 93437-6010

Subject: Negative Determination **ND-0002-21** (Honda Creek Culvert Repair, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County)

Dear Ms. Kephart:

The Coastal Commission staff has received the above-referenced negative determination from the Department of the Air Force (Air Force) for culverts repair and corrosion prevention where Coast Road crosses Honda Creek at Vandenberg Air Force Base (Vandenberg), Santa Barbara County. The Air Force describes Coast Road as “a major, paved artery connecting sites along the western edge of VAFB on South Base”, supporting the missions and operations of the Air Force at Vandenberg. Coast Road was built over two 13-foot (ft) diameter, 330 ft long culverts that are prone to siltation and accumulation of debris. The culverts have bituminous-coated corrugated metal pipes that are corroded and degraded, and collapse is a concern. Only one culvert currently allows for water flow; the other culvert is blocked with silt. The project goals are to repair these existing culverts and to add corrosion prevention to them, thus maintaining the transportation connection along Coast Road.

The Air Force will achieve project goals through the following activities: installation of 11 ft diameter high-density polyurethane liners inside the existing culverts to prevent further corrosion and collapse; construction of an approximately 24 ft wide and 910 linear ft (LF) in length temporary route to provide for construction access; construction of a 4,340 square foot (SF) temporary staging/turnaround area near the culvert outlet and a 2,500 SF turnaround area along an existing unpaved access road; and manually removing 0.5 acres of vegetation, primarily Arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) to ground level.

Prior to culvert repair activities, the Air Force will dewater each culvert separately by diverting the active creek channel through one of the two culverts. Temporary diversion dam structures would be installed under the supervision of a biological monitor, and temporarily impact 20 LF of Honda Creek. Concrete inlet and outlet structures would also be installed to prevent erosion immediately around the inlet and outlet of each culvert, potentially permanently impacting a maximum of 0.5 acres of vegetation, primarily Arroyo willow. To access the outlet side of the culverts, the Air Force would construct a temporary access road using clean compacted fill soil and shale cover. Approximately 4.5 acres of

primarily iceplant and acacia would be temporarily impacted by construction of temporary access roads, turn arounds, and staging areas.

As described in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project, the Air Force will implement environmental protection measures to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects to environmental resources during project implementation. USFWS-approved biological monitors will be present at all times during project activities and will survey for special-status species at the start of every workday. Any native wildlife species encountered would be moved to the nearest suitable habitat to avoid direct impacts. Additionally, the Air Force has designed the project to limit disturbance in the creek and will install erosion control materials such as Durabase rubber mats, silt fences, fiber rolls, and erosion blankets.

Following repair activities, equipment and machinery will be removed and restoration of impacted areas (1.15 acres) will commence. To the extent possible, the site contours and habitat types would be restored to original conditions. All material will be taken from a local borrow pit and transported to the site. Native herbaceous vegetation would be replanted to restore all temporarily disturbed areas.

The Air Force describes the Honda Creek drainage as being heavily impacted by invasive vegetation that damages the natural creek flows and creek ecosystem, including special-status species. Approximately 0.40 acres of native habitat at two sites in the estuary is impacted with iceplant that have formed large mats and is spreading over native vegetation. Approximately 4.51 acres of Honda Creek is surrounded by eucalyptus trees which are stifling the growth of native understory vegetation and negatively impacting the creek's hydrology. To mitigate for permanent impacts to wetland and riparian vegetation, the Air Force proposes to treat 0.40 acres of iceplant in the Honda estuary and 4.51 acres of Eucalyptus trees approximately 0.95 miles upstream of the project using herbicides in accordance with the VAFB Integrated Pest Management Plan. This is part of an ongoing larger effort to enhance portions of Honda Creek through invasive removal. For the past decade, the Air Force has conducted similar invasive removal projects with successful reemergence of native wetland riparian vegetation types post-removal. As summarized in the Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, additional maintenance and monitoring for these areas will continue for 5 years or until removal is accomplished.

Honda Creek provides habitat for the California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) which is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Air Force submitted a project-specific prenotification to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO). The prenotification was approved by the USFWS on September 16, 2020. As described in the draft EA and USFWS Biological Opinion for the project, species-specific minimization and avoidance measures would be implemented to ensure potential adverse effects would be less than significant and would not affect California red-legged frog populations. These measures include: capturing and relocating all individuals to suitable sites within the Honda Creek watershed prior to construction activities, limiting work to daytime hours, implementing a Spill Prevention Plan, and the implementing the USFWS' Declining Amphibian Population Task Force's Code of Practice to prevent the spread of disease during relocations. Commission staff agrees that these measures are adequate to protect these species.

According to the draft EA, there are no adverse impacts expected to cultural resources due to project activities. The State Historic Preservation Officer did not find any adverse effect to cultural resources. Project activities with the potential to disturb cultural resources would be limited to previously disturbed areas such as access roads and parking lots. Previous studies conducted in the areas of direct impact did not find any cultural resources. In the unlikely event that cultural resources are discovered during project-related ground-disturbing activities, work will be halted until the significance of the find is assessed by a qualified archaeologist and the VAFB Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan will be implemented. Recommendations for appropriate treatment of the discovery will be developed in consultation with the VAFB cultural resources manager and a Native American representative.

In conclusion, the Coastal Commission staff **agrees** that the proposed project would not adversely affect coastal zone resources. We therefore **concur** with your negative determination made pursuant to 15 CFR Section 930.35 of the NOAA implementing regulations. Please contact Alexis Barrera of the Commission staff at alexis.barrera@coastal.ca.gov if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



(For) HN A NS R H
ecutive Director

cc: CCC - South Central District

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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April 1, 2021

Beatrice L. Kephardt
Chief, Installation Management Flight
30 CES/CEI
1028 Iceland Avenue
Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA 93437

Attn: Samantha Kaisersatt

Re: Negative Determination for the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) Test Program (ND-0004-21), Vandenberg Air Force Base

Dear Ms. Kephardt:

We have received your letter dated February 12, 2021, in which you described the above-referenced project and conducted an analysis of the potential for the project to affect coastal zone resources. The Coastal Commission staff **agrees** that the proposed project would not adversely affect coastal zone resources. We therefore **concur** with your negative determination made pursuant to Section 15 CFR 930.35(d) of the NOAA implementing regulations. Please contact me at (415) 904-5245 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Weber', written over a light blue rectangular background.

John Weber
Energy, Ocean Resources,
and Federal Consistency Division

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March 30, 2021

Paul Enriquez, Director
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Border Patrol Headquarters
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 6.5E Mail Stop 1039
Washington DC 20229

Attention: Ashley Rivero, CBP

Subject: Negative Determination ND-0005-21 (Deployment of Relocatable Autonomous Survey Tower in Del Mar, San Diego County)

Dear Mr. Enriquez:

The Coastal Commission staff has reviewed the above-referenced negative determination, dated March 4, for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposal to deploy a portable/relocatable tower surveillance system at 522 Border Avenue, Del Mar, San Diego County. The CBP proposes a relocatable tower with a maximum height of 33 feet. The site is a privately owned parcel of land, north of the Del Mar Dog Beach.

According to the CBP, the system is intended to detect and track illegal border activities with the goal of facilitating a CBP response and resolution to border incursions with the ability to relocate based on mission needs.

The tower would be towed onto the site and placed on an already-disturbed portion of the site. According to a visual simulation provided with the negative determination, the tower would not affect public views from Del Mar Dog Beach, the North Bluff Preserve, or the Del Mar Dog Park.

No vegetation clearing or excavation will occur as a result of the proposed project, as the project sites are already developed. Thus, no wildlife, habitat, or cultural resource impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

The proposal is for a temporary deployment of the system for up to two years. Should CBP propose to deploy such a system beyond the proposed one year timeframe, CBP would submit a new determination to enable additional Commission review of such a proposal, pursuant to the federal consistency regulations at 15 CFR §930.30 *et seq.*

In conclusion, the Commission staff **agrees** that the proposed project would not adversely affect coastal resources. We therefore **concur** with your negative determination made pursuant to Section 15 CFR §930.35(d) of the NOAA implementing regulations. Please contact John Weber of the Commission staff at (415) 904-5245 should you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,


(for)

John Ainsworth
Executive Director

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March 26, 2021

Paul Enriquez, Director
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Border Patrol Headquarters
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 6.5E Mail Stop 1039
Washington DC 20229

Attention: Michelle Barnes, CBP

Subject: Negative Determination ND-0006-21 (Deployment of Relocatable 14-ft PoLAR Tower at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County)

Dear Mr. Enriquez:

The Coastal Commission staff has reviewed the above-referenced negative determination, dated March 9, for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposal to deploy a portable/relocatable tower surveillance system at a location on Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County. The CBP proposes a trailer-based tower with a height of 14-ft. The proposed site is approximately two miles inland of the shoreline, in the southern portion of the base off of Diosa Road.

According to the CBP, the system is intended to detect and track illegal border activities with the goal of facilitating a CBP response and resolution to border incursions with the ability to relocate based on mission needs. The proposed project would be to demonstrate the ability of this technology to detect and track small ocean vessels at up to 40 nautical miles distance.

The tower would be on a towable trailer, which would be driven to the site for installation and removal, and would connect to base utilities for power. No vegetation clearing is anticipated as part of the project, as the location has already been cleared and would be accessed via existing roads. According to a visual simulation provided with the negative determination, the tower would not affect public views given its inland location.

No vegetation clearing or excavation will occur as a result of the proposed project, as the project sites are already developed. Thus, no wildlife, habitat, or cultural resource impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

The proposal is for a temporary deployment of the system for up to four weeks over a year. Should CBP propose to deploy such a system beyond the proposed one year timeframe,

CBP would submit a new determination to enable additional Commission review of such a proposal, pursuant to the federal consistency regulations at 15 CFR §930.30 *et seq.*

In conclusion, the Commission staff **agrees** that the proposed project would not adversely affect coastal resources. We therefore **concur** with your negative determination made pursuant to Section 15 CFR §930.35(d) of the NOAA implementing regulations. Please contact John Weber of the Commission staff at (415) 904-5245 should you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JA', written in a cursive style.

(for)

John Ainsworth
Executive Director