



RESOLUTION NO. 2021-25

OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

**ADOPTING A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, APPROVING THE PROJECT
AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM –
NID ENGLISH MEADOW FLOODPLAIN
RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Nevada Irrigation District (“District”) has undertaken the review of a project to enhance and restore portions of the Middle Yuba River in English Meadow to improve hydrology, floodplain connectivity and forest health in a restoration project (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (“CEQA”) requires state, local, and other agencies to evaluate or reduce, when feasible, the significant environmental impacts of their respective projects; and

WHEREAS, the District’s environmental resources staff has prepared a Preliminary Review and Initial Study (“Initial Study”) for the proposed Project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA; and

WHEREAS, on May 7, 12 and 13, 2021, a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project was published in the Sierra Sun, The Union and Mountain Messenger newspapers respectively; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Consideration of Adoption of Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project was published in The Sierra Sun newspaper and on the NID website on June 18, 2021, and June 22, 2021 in the Union advising of the time and place of a public hearing on the Project; and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 2021, following a public hearing on the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project, the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District approved the adoption of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project as presented; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District that it does find as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. Based on its review of the whole record before it, including the Initial Study, presentations of Staff and the public comments, both written and oral,

received in response to its Notice of Intent, the Board finds that there is no substantial evidence of record that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the Mitigated Negative Declaration represents the independent judgment and analysis of the District.

3. Mitigation measures are made a condition for approval of the Project and the Board hereby adopts the mitigation measures which it has either required in the Project or made a condition of approval to mitigate or avoid significant environmental impacts.
4. The documents which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision of the Board is based are located at the offices of Nevada Irrigation District, 1036 West Main Street, Grass Valley, California, and the Secretary to the Board is the custodian thereof.
5. The Board of Directors hereby approves the Project.
6. The Board Secretary is hereby authorized to file a Notice of Determination, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 'A', with the Office of the County Clerk, Nevada and Sierra counties and the State Clearinghouse.

* * * * *

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District at a regular meeting held on the 14th day of July, 2021, by the following vote:

AYES:	Directors: Heck, Hull, Johansen, Peters, Bierwagen
NOES:	Directors: None
ABSENT:	Directors: None
ABSTAINS:	Directors: None



President of the Board of Directors

Attest:



Secretary to the Board of Directors

EXHIBIT "A"

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:

Office of Planning and Research
U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
Street Address: 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113 Sacramento, CA 95814

County Clerk
County of:
Address:

From:

Public Agency: Nevada Irrigation District
Address: 1036 West Main Street Grass Valley, CA 95945
Contact: Neysa King
Phone: 530-271-6733

Lead Agency (if different from above):
Address:
Contact:
Phone:

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2021050237

Project Title: English Meadow Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement Project

Project Applicant: Nevada Irrigation District

Project Location (include county): Nevada and Sierra counties

Project Description:

Refer to the attached page for a summary Project description.

This is to advise that the Nevada Irrigation District has approved the above (Lead Agency or Responsible Agency)

described project on July 14, 2021 and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project (date)

- 1. The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan was adopted for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for this project.
6. Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the final EIR with comments and responses and record of project approval, or the negative Declaration, is available to the General Public at:

https://www.nidwater.com/english-meadow

Signature (Public Agency): Chris Bierwag Title: Board President

Date: July 14, 2021 Date Received for filing at OPR:

Project Objectives:

The Nevada Irrigation District (NID or District) plans to implement floodplain restoration and forest management activities on 380 acres within the headwaters of the Middle Yuba River in Nevada and Sierra Counties, California. Project activities will take place about 1 mile upstream of Jackson Meadows Reservoir, a critical NID storage facility used for recreation, clean hydroelectric power production and water supply for 25,000 agricultural and drinking water customers in Nevada, Placer and Yuba Counties.

Consistent with the District's land use objectives, the purpose of this Project is to improve watershed/floodplain function and resilience of English Meadow and the surrounding forest to achieve the following benefits:

- Reduce the transport of bedload and fine sediment from the upper watershed into Jackson Meadows Reservoir (maintain reservoir water storage capacity).
- Increase seasonal retention and release of precipitation in the meadow floodplain aquifer.
- Enhance habitat for meadow-dependent species.
- Improve forest health to reduce wildfire risk through fuels reduction.
- Increase snowpack and surface flow through mechanical thinning of the forest community on surrounding slopes.
- Reduce conifer encroachment into the meadow.

Brief Project Description:

The existing condition of English Meadow and the surrounding forests reflects the complex history of inundation and draining, construction of ditches, grazing, and logging at the site. The rapid draining of water that resulted from the destruction of historic dams at the bottom of the meadow likely initiated the incision of the Middle Yuba River channel, and its subsequent disconnect from the meadow floodplain. The Middle Yuba River in the Project area currently exhibits extreme high and low flows, resulting in erosion of the river's banks as precipitation and snowmelt quickly flow through the meadow and into Jackson Meadows Reservoir, without accessing the floodplain. This, in combination with construction of ditches that have dried the meadow, has resulted in a shift in the proportion of wetland versus upland habitat.

The hydrologic regime in the Project area is highly dynamic, with watershed conditions resulting in short bursts of high flows, typically associated with rain-on-snow events in the spring. The high-velocity flows have resulted in headcutting and channel incision. In functional channel/floodplain systems, the flows overbank every 1.5 to 2 years. However, because of channel incision, Middle Yuba River flows within the Project area are estimated to overbank only every 10 years. The infrequent overbanking of the stream, coupled with the increased rate at which water flows from the meadow due to incision, have altered soil conditions and plant assemblages within the meadow. Restoration/enhancement activities aim to return moisture to soils in the floodplain and increase groundwater hydrologic activity via modified process-assistance based techniques using on-site materials.

The following activities are planned as part of the Project:

- **Mainstem and Floodplain Treatments:** Two of the proposed treatment methods—debris jams and riffles—are intended to reduce headcutting, bank erosion, and channel incision by 1) raising the elevation, or thalweg, of the mainstem channel, thus allowing flows to access the existing meadow floodplain aquifer and 2) slowing the velocity of flows, allowing for the natural

aggradation of bedload material. Other treatments to be implemented within the mainstem channel and/or within the associated floodplain include bank stabilization; fill of erosional features (gullies) and artificial channels (manmade ditches); berm removal; and revegetation of bare areas.

- **Floodplain Vegetation Treatments:** Approximately 200 acres of habitat within the meadow basin will be treated. Treatment methods will include conifer removal (i.e., mastication/mechanical thinning by hand; individual selection and removal of trees) and placement of log barriers to obstruct cattle movement.
- **Forest Treatments:** A 180-acre area of upland conifer forest around the meadow will be thinned to increase water yield (i.e., by increasing accumulated snow load or reducing water resources consumed by trees) and to reduce future conifer encroachment into the meadow, and to decrease the potential for high-intensity wildfire.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** NID has partnered with an interdisciplinary team of restoration experts to collect 4 years of pre-Project baseline data. Post-project implementation monitoring will be performed in Years 3, 4, and 5 of the Project (at a minimum) to evaluate the effectiveness of the channel and floodplain treatments, and to determine whether modifications or additional treatments are necessary.