



# NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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(530) 273-6185 ~ Fax: (530) 477-2646 ~ Toll Free: (800) 222-4102

**Date:** November 1, 2013  
**To:** Responsible Agencies and Interested Persons  
**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report  
Bear River Restoration at Rollins Reservoir

The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Bear River Restoration at Rollins Reservoir ("proposed project"). NID is requesting input as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be contained in the Draft EIR.

The proposed project would restore and maintain reservoir capacity in Rollins Reservoir on an on-going basis through re-establishment of gravel skimming operations on the Bear River below the confluence with Stepphollow Creek. The proposed gravel skimming operation would utilize Chicago Park Powerhouse Road to haul excavated materials from the Bear River to Interstate 80. A more detailed project description, including location maps, is attached.

The project is located on the Bear River, at the confluence with Stepphollow Creek, roughly between Rollins Reservoir and the Chicago Park Powerhouse. The project site is roughly 6 miles northeast of the City of Colfax and includes land in the counties of Nevada and Placer (approximately 39°10'35" N, 120°53'40" latitude and longitude).

Potentially significant environmental issues include hydrology and water quality, biological resources, cultural resources, air quality, climate change/greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic. The EIR will also examine aesthetics, geology, hazardous materials, public services and utilities and land use.

Because of the time-sensitive nature of the EIR process, please provide your response at the earliest possible date, but not later than **5:00 PM Monday, December 2, 2013** (30 days from the publication of this notice).

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Tim Crough, Assistant General Manager, at (800)222-4102 or (530) 273-6185 or [crough@nidwater.com](mailto:crough@nidwater.com).

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

**Nevada Irrigation District**  
**Re: Bear River Restoration EIR**  
**1006 W. Main Street**  
**Grass Valley, CA 95645**  
**Email: [crough@nidwater.com](mailto:crough@nidwater.com)**

## **Project History**

Following construction of the Rollins Reservoir Dam in 1965, sediments transported from the upper watershed have accumulated in Rollins Reservoir and the Bear River (at and below the confluence with Steephollow Creek). Gravel skimming was employed between 1965 and 2002 to maintain reservoir capacity and allow for recreational use, such as boating and fishing. Suspension of mining activity in 2001/2002 has allowed for accumulation of gravel and sediments.

## **Project Overview**

The proposed project would reestablish gravel skimming on the Bear River between Rollins Reservoir and Steephollow Creek. It would ultimately restore the project area to the original 1965 contours (when the Rollins Reservoir Dam was completed). The project would provide benefits to water storage capacity, river restoration, and recreation.

Skimming would occur annually when water levels are low, to allow for a dry mining operation (material removal would not occur more than 6 inches below water) using graders, excavators and front-end loaders (no dredging). The project area would be isolated from the perennial stream by the construction of a dike system. Mining would occur on the north or south bank. Through the use of the dikes and dry removal, the project would minimize impacts to water quality. Removal efforts would be concentrated during the period of lowest water levels (typically 60-120 days of the year), and the material would be stockpiled in one of two main areas, plus a surge area for additional material. The annual operations time would be from March 15 to November 15 or shorter, depending on the wet season.

Material would be screened, but not otherwise processed, and placed in the primary stockpile. A secondary stockpile and surge area would allow material to be screened, sold, and transported throughout the active project season. Water would only be used on site for dust control.

Temporary bridges crossing Steephollow Creek and/or the Bear River would be placed at the beginning of the project season to allow access between the skimming area and the primary stockpile and staging area (the bridges would be removed at the end of the season). The material would be sold and loaded onto trucks from the primary stockpile, weighed, and transported on Chicago Park Powerhouse Road to Interstate 80. NID would continue to maintain the access road, but widening, resurfacing, or other reconstruction would be limited to safety needs.

Cofferdams will be used in select locations to reduce scouring. Proposed cofferdam areas include below the Chicago Park Powerhouse, where the riverbank has previously been reinforced with gunite, and at the Chicago Park Powerhouse Bridge, where additional protection of the bridge supports would be installed. The historical effects of scouring may increase as material is removed, creating the need for additional protection as part of the project.

Ancillary features of the project include a staging area with fuel storage, office, maintenance shop, equipment storage, truck scales, and restrooms. The area would be lit for security purposes and the proposed additional activity is expected to reduce unauthorized or illegal use of the project site.

## **Intended Use of the EIR and Responsible Agencies**

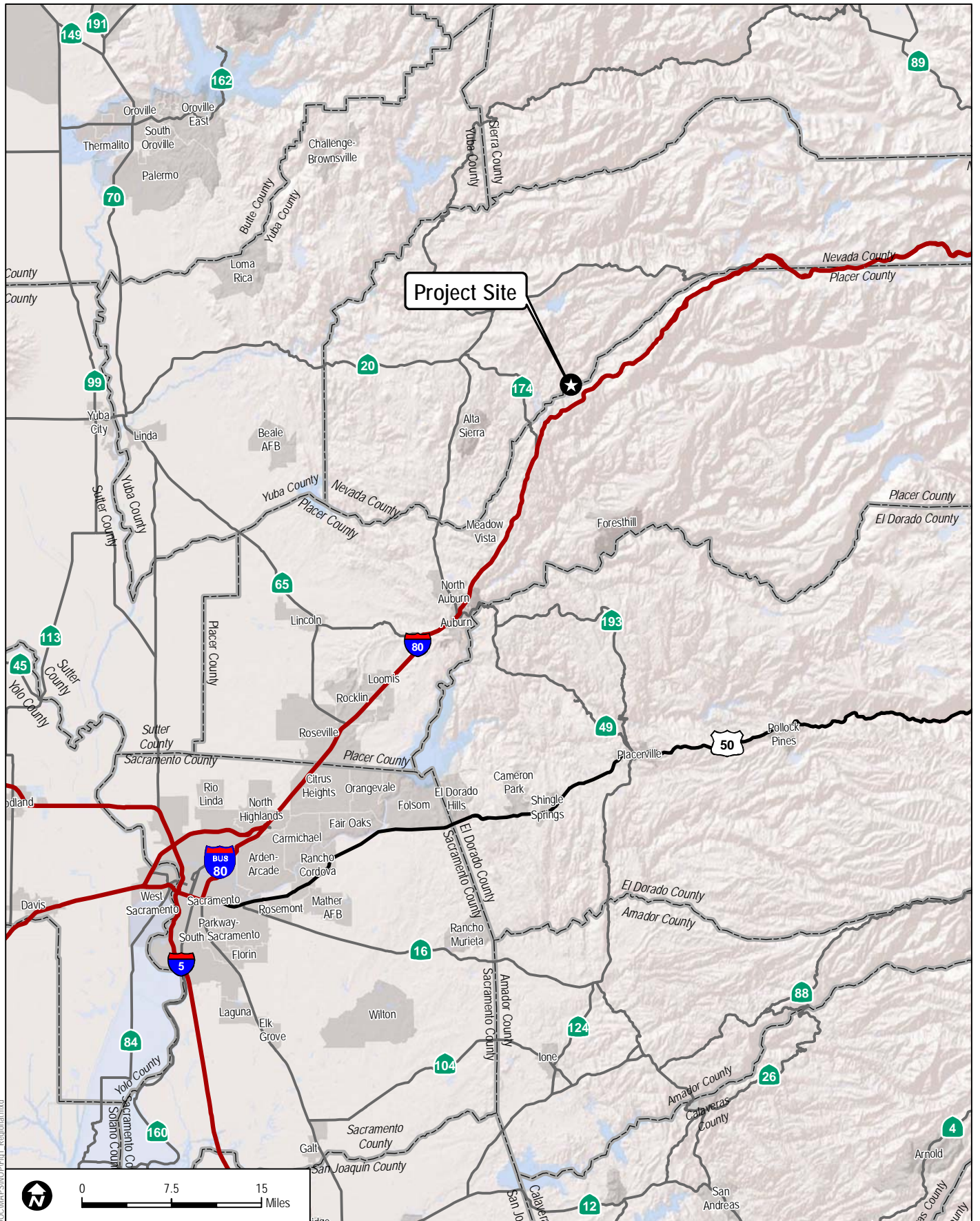
NID has existing mining rights in the project area, and has received confirmation of idle mine status for the historical gravel skimming operation (which includes a 1989 Reclamation Plan approved by the County of Nevada). The EIR will address actions by NID to re-establish gravel removal operations, including establishment of a haul route. The 1989 reclamation plan will be relied upon, but will be updated to reflect proposed operations with a more limited gravel skimming area.

It is anticipated that the EIR will be used by responsible agencies that may have jurisdiction over elements of the Project. State and local agencies that may have jurisdiction over the proposed project include the following:

- Regional Water Quality Control Board – Section 401 Clean Water Act Certification and/or Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) – Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Permit
- Nevada County – Hazardous Waste Business Plan and/or Spill Prevention and Control Plan
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District – review of emissions for activities on the south side of Bear River, including screening, storage, and loading
- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District – if necessary, review for activities on the north side of Bear River, including gravel skimming and haul route.

Federal agencies that may have jurisdiction over the proposed project include:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit
- Bureau of Land Management – if necessary, for modification of existing leases



Project Site

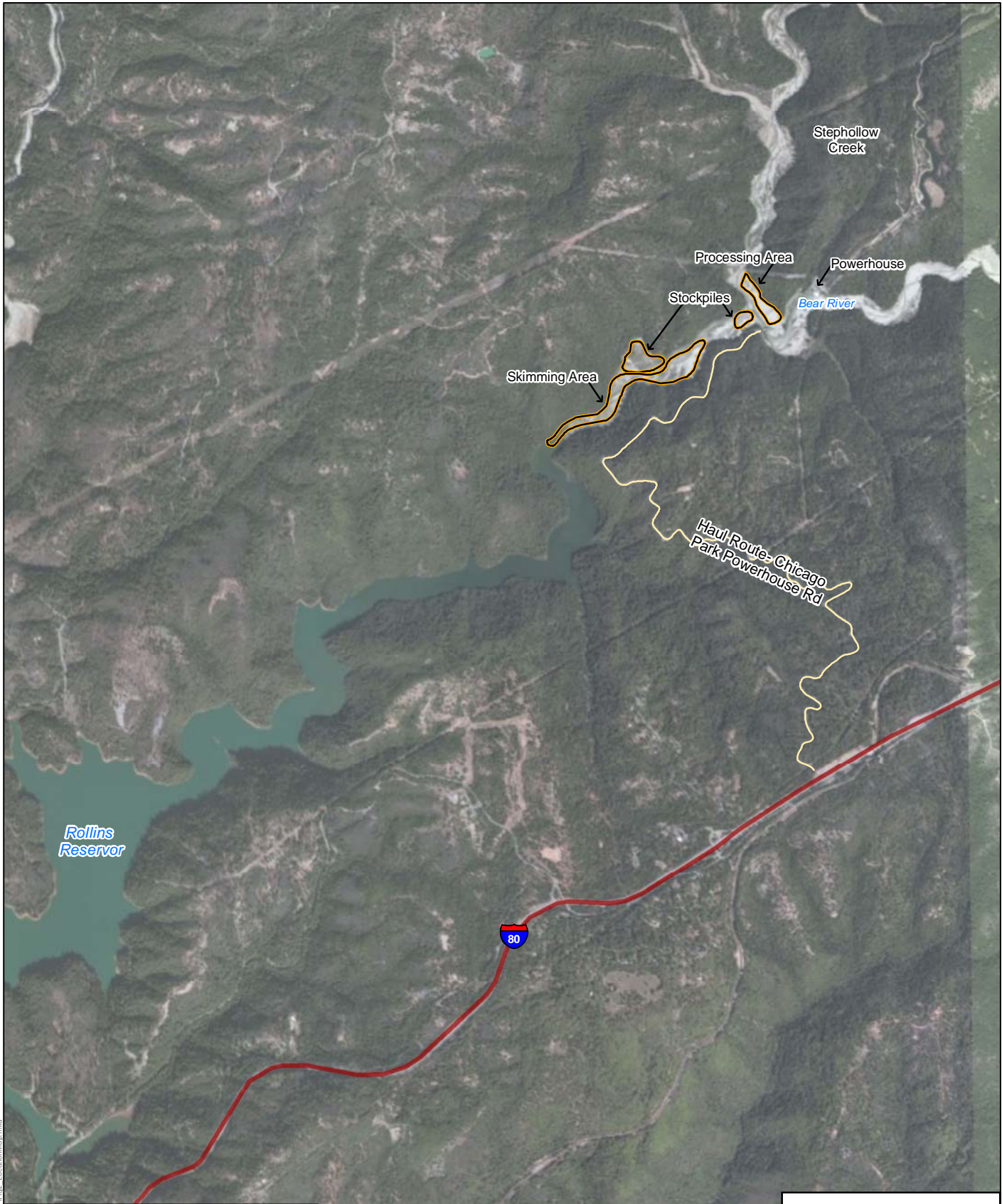
**DUDEK**

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BEAR RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT NOP

**FIGURE 1**  
**Regional Map**

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0 1,000 2,000  
Feet



Project Area

**DUDEK**

SOURCE: ESRI; Nevada and Placer County

**FIGURE 2**  
**Project Location Map**

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BEAR RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT NOP

