

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

13 April 2023

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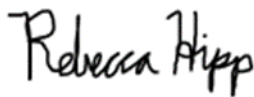
PROJECT COMMENTS, HUME BASIN RESTORATION PROJECT, SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST, HUME LAKE RANGER DISTRICT, FRESNO AND TULARE COUNTIES

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) staff received the invitation for comments letter dated 15 March 2023 for the Hume Basin Restoration Project. I would like to take this opportunity to provide the following comments based on my review of the supplied *Environmental Assessment* and associated analysis documents:

- The project documents appear to utilize outdated information and data from the 2014-2016 *California Integrated Report*. The 2020-2022 *California Integrated Report* contains the most recent data on 303(d) listed waterbodies in the Central Valley Water Board region. Based on the 2020-2022 *California Integrated Report*, there are additional waterbody impairments within and downstream of the project area that are not currently identified in the project documents. The project documents should be updated using the 2020-2022 *California Integrated Report* and the 2020-2022 *California Integrated Report Map* (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2020_2022_integrated_report.html; <https://gispublic.waterboards.ca.gov/portal/home/item.html?id=6cca2a3a1815465599201266373cbb7b>).
- The project documents do not identify any municipal or domestic supply beneficial uses within or near the project area. However, the *CA Drinking Water Watch* reports that Hume Lake Christian Camps, Inc., may have active surface water intakes in Hume Lake and Long Meadow Creek (https://sdwis.waterboards.ca.gov/PDWW/JSP/WaterSystemDetail.jsp?tinwsys_id=881&tinwsys_st_code=CA).

- Designated beneficial uses identified in the project documents do not appear to match those in the most recent version of the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin, Third Edition, May 2018* (Basin Plan). The designated beneficial uses described in the project documents should be updated to reflect those in the Basin Plan, which is the controlling document on lands in the state, including federal lands (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/tularelakebp_201805.pdf).
- Page 5 of the *Environmental Assessment* describes mechanical treatments in streamside management zones for the restoration of riparian hardwoods at Aspen Hollow Group Campground, Bearskin Diabetic Youth Camp, and Forest Road 13S09F. However, the design features on pages 9 and B-4 state that heavy equipment would be excluded from streamside management zones. Please revise the conflicting language to clarify.
- Page 39 of the *Soils and Watershed Specialist Report* states that pH values will be maintained between 6.5 and 8.5. The water quality objective for pH in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin, Third Edition, May 2018* is between 6.5 and 8.3. Management activities should not contribute to an exceedance of any applicable water quality objective.
- The Sequoia National Forest is required to seek coverage under the *General Order for Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges related to Timberland Management Activities, Order R5-2017-0061* (General Order) for timberland management activities. Based on my review of the supplied documents, the project appears to be eligible for enrollment in Category 5B. A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted at least 15 days prior to operations commencing. Significant Existing or Potential Erosion Sites (SEPES) and priority road improvement locations and treatments that are not identified in the supplied project documents should be included with the Notice of Intent. The General Order and associated documents are available at the following web address: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/forest_activities/.

For questions regarding the above information, please contact me at (559) 445-5977 or by email at Rebecca.Hipp@waterboards.ca.gov.



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