DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR LEVEE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE AT MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States [U.S.] Code §§ 4321-4370h); the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing procedural provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508); Department of the Navy procedures for implementing NEPA (32 CFR § 775); and Marine Corps Order 5090.2, dated 11 June 2018, *Environmental Compliance and Protection Program*, the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the proposed project to repair and maintain the flood control structure at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton. I find that the Proposed Action, including adherence to the avoidance/minimization measures and conservation measures set forth in detail in the EA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion, will not have a significant impact on the human environment and, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for this Proposed Action.

Proposed Action (Alternative 2): The Proposed Action would involve major repairs to the levee and floodwall including: installing launchable riprap on top of the existing buried riprap revetment; filling and sealing cracks in the Air Station Segment of the levee (i.e., the segment of the levee along MCAS Camp Pendleton); establishing a 15-foot-wide permanent gravel access path along the base of the launchable riprap or adjacent to the riverside levee toe or floodwall where launchable rip rap is not installed; removing unwanted vegetation on the levee and within the 15-foot vegetation clear zone on both sides of the levee and floodwall or launchable riprap; and removing or filling the toe drains with grout. To prevent or minimize future damage to the repaired levee and floodwall, ongoing inspections and maintenance would occur under the Proposed Action. Maintenance activities would include keeping unwanted vegetation permanently cleared from within 15 feet of the toe of the levee/floodwall and launchable riprap.

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action: The purpose of the Proposed Action is to repair the flood control structure that provides protection for MCAS Camp Pendleton, the Chappo Area, Sewage Treatment Plant 3, and the Santa Margarita Ranch House, which lie entirely within the limit of the 100-year floodplain of the Santa Margarita River. The Proposed Action is needed because of deficiencies in the existing flood control structure that pose a risk to these USMC assets and military readiness. Deficiencies in the existing flood control structure include erosion and scour, inadequate performance of the gap graded riprap revetment, the crack between the soil-cement and the concrete cap at the top of the fabric-form concrete along the Air Station Segment, and vegetation growing on the levee and riprap revetment.

Flood risk and flood control structure conditions are dynamic. Flood control structures change over time: for example, banks erode, closures rust, animals burrow, and pumps wear out. Ongoing observation, vigilance, and maintenance are required to ensure that the flood control structure will perform properly during a flood event. An improperly functioning flood control structure puts valuable USMC assets (e.g., personnel, facilities, planes/helicopters) at risk during significant rain events that cause flooding of the Santa Margarita River, as well as interrupt training until cleanup and repairs can be made. If the flood control structure is damaged or fails during a flood event, emergency repairs would be costly and disruptive.

Alternatives Analyzed: The Proposed Action consists of physical repairs to the existing system that would be constructed, and long-term inspections and maintenance practices. The EA analyzed two action alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) and the No-Action Alternative.

The two action alternatives would both include: filling and sealing cracks in the Air Station Segment of the levee; establishing a permanent gravel access path along the riverside of the levee/floodwall; removing vegetation on the levee and within the 15-foot vegetation clear zone on both sides of the levee and floodwall; removing or filling the toe drain with grout; and ongoing inspection and maintenance of the flood control structure. The primary difference between the action alternatives is related to how to address the deficiencies in the existing protective riprap revetment on the riverside of the levee and floodwall. Under Alternative 1, the entire existing riprap revetment would be excavated and replaced with a well graded riprap that would perform better against scour. Under Alternative 2, launchable riprap would be placed on top of the existing riprap revetment along sections of the levee and floodwall to resist scour.

Under the No-Action Alternative, the repairs to the flood control structure protecting MCAS Camp Pendleton and other USMC assets would not occur. Deficiencies to the existing flood control structure could result in damages to or failure of the flood control structure during a 100-year flood event.

Selected Alternative: Based on the analysis in the EA, I have selected Alternative 2, as described in the EA, for implementation.

Summary of Environmental Effects: The EA analyzed the potential environmental impacts resulting from each of the alternatives. The resources most likely to be affected by this action are geological resources, water resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, public health and safety, hazardous materials and waste, transportation, and utilities. Conversely, impacts to the following resources were considered to be negligible or non-existent and were not further analyzed in the EA: noise, socioeconomics, environmental justice, land use and recreation, and aesthetics.

With the incorporation of avoidance/minimization measures, additional conservation measures developed through section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation with the USFWS, and through compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters by purchasing mitigation credits at an approved mitigation bank, implementation of the Selected Alternative will not result in significant impacts to any resource and will comply with all regulatory requirements. Air quality impacts from the Selected Alternative will not exceed any conformity *de minimis* thresholds for the San Diego Air Basin. A Record of Non-Applicability for Clean Air Act General Conformity requirements has been prepared and approved for this project. There are no significant cumulative effects associated with this project.

Findings:

There will not be any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the Selected Alternative on minority or low-income populations. Nor will there be any impacts associated with the protection of children from environmental health and safety risks.

The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact addressing this action are on file and may be reviewed at the place of origin: Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton (Attn: Environmental Officer), Box 555151, MCAS Camp Pendleton, California 92055-5151, telephone (760) 725-8584.

4 Oct 2023

David B. Moore
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer
Marine Corps Installations West-Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton

Date