



Summer Biological and Cultural Resource Surveys Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP or Program) conducting these biological and cultural resources surveys?

A: The Program is currently developing and analyzing alternatives as part of the Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Improvements Project (Reach 2B Project), a specific project required in the Stipulation of Settlement and the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act (Public Law 111-11), to improve channel capacity, provide fish passage, and establish riparian habitat from the Chowchilla Bifurcation Structure to below the Mendota Pool (generally referred to as Reach 2B). As part of the Reach 2B Project, the Program needs to develop and analyze the performance of Project alternatives, identify the impacts of implementing the Project alternatives on biological and cultural resources, and identify mitigation measures that will be implemented by the Program to reduce or avoid these impacts. The Program needs specific information on the types and locations of biological and cultural resources in the area to conduct these analyses.

Q: What is a biological resource survey?

A: A biological resources survey seeks to identify whether sensitive species, potential habitat for sensitive species, sensitive plants, and sensitive vegetation communities are present. Specific biological resources are protected under Federal and State laws including the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act. The Program is required by law to reduce or avoid impacts to specific sensitive biological resources that may result from implementing the Reach 2B Project.

Q: What is a cultural resource survey?

A: A cultural resources survey seeks to determine the presence or absence of archaeological and historical sites and structures, as well as evidence of prehistoric sites related to Native American populations. With the exception of some specific resources, cultural resources are the property of the landowner. However, the Program is required by law to reduce or avoid its impacts to certain cultural resources that may result from implementing the Reach 2B Project.

Q: When will the survey take place?

A: With landowner permission, biological and cultural surveys will occur between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m., August 23-August 27. This schedule allows surveys to occur when wildlife is most active and limits the time that the survey crew is working during hot mid-day temperatures. Unfavorable weather conditions (too hot or too cold) may require rescheduling some surveys.

Q: How will survey results be used?

A: The Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources will use the survey information in the development and analysis of alternatives for the Reach 2B Project. The information will also be used to analyze the impacts of the Reach 2B Project on biological and cultural resources and develop mitigation measures that will be implemented by the Program to reduce or avoid those impacts. The results of these analyses, including impacts and mitigation measures, will be included in the Environmental Impact Statement/Report under preparation for the Reach 2B Project. The results will also be used to obtain the necessary permit and approvals to construct the Reach 2B Project.

Q: What happens if sensitive species or cultural resources are found?

A: The purpose of the surveys is to determine the potential impacts of the Program's Reach 2B Project upon sensitive species and cultural resources and identify the avoidance or mitigation measures that will be implemented by the Program. The Program will document the resource found and will share this information with the landowner.

Q: When will I be notified of survey results?

A: Yes. It may take some time to analyze and consolidate the information collected following the surveys. Landowners will be notified of the results of the surveys conducted on their property as soon as the information can be analyzed and organized for distribution. Any public release will be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Temporary Entry Permit authorized between the landowner and the Program.

Q: Who can I contact if I have questions or need to reschedule the survey on my property?

A: Contact the Program's Landowner Coordinator, Craig Moyle, or the field crew point(s) of contact below. Craig or any of the field survey contacts can answer your questions or get you in contact with the appropriate person.

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For additional information, see the SJRRP website at www.restoresjr.net or contact the Program's Landowner Coordinator, Craig Moyle at (916) 418-8248.