

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE
CARBON CANYON DAM SAFETY MODIFICATION STUDY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Environmental Assessment (EA) dated May 2026 for the Carbon Canyon Dam Safety Modification Study is located in northern Orange County, California. The overall objective of the project is to identify and recommend a Risk Management Plan (RMP) which supports the expeditious and cost-effective reduction of risk within the USACE portfolio of dams. This is accomplished by recommending a RMP which addresses Potential Failure Modes with unacceptable dam life safety risk. The recommended plan is contained in the Draft EA dated May 2026.

The EA incorporated herein by reference evaluated three alternatives that would reduce the risk to the project. The recommended plan, or Alternative 2/Proposed Action/RMP 4, includes the following components which would occur downstream, or on the south side of the dam: (1) placement of a downstream filter blanket, (2) abandonment and grouting of the entire length of a wastewater line, (3) new berm, toe drain system for the new berm, and relocation of an existing access road, (4) conversion of a portion of the open channel outlet works conduit to a closed channel conduit/pipe, (5) relocation of the operations storage area, and (6) implementation of nonstructural measures such as improving risk communication plans.

In addition to a No Action alternative and the recommended plan, one other alternative was evaluated that involved adjustments to the dam infrastructure. Alternative 3 incorporates all of the proposed Alternative 2 measures, as described above, in addition to the installation of an upstream, or north side of the dam, slope geomembrane.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of Recommended Plan

Resource	No significant impact	No significant Impact as a result of mitigation	Resource unaffected by the project
Aesthetics	☐	☐	☒
Air Quality and Air Quality Emissions	☒	☐	☐
Biological Resources	☒	☐	☐

Resource	No significant impact	No significant Impact as a result of mitigation	Resource unaffected by the project
Climate	☐	☐	☒
Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste	☒	☐	☐
Health and Public Safety	☐	☐	☒
Historic and Cultural Resources	☐	☐	☒
Land Use	☐	☐	☒
Noise	☒	☐	☐
Recreation	☒	☐	☐
Socioeconomic Indicators	☒	☐	☐
Soils and Geology	☒	☐	☐
Traffic	☒	☐	☐
Water Quality	☒	☐	☐

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices as detailed in the EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.

Public review of the draft EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is anticipated to be complete in summer 2026. All comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the Final /EA and FONSI.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, the USACE determined that the recommended plan, may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the following federally listed species or their designated critical habitat: southwestern willow flycatcher, coastal California gnatcatcher with temporary noise impacts to its designated critical habitat, and least Bell's vireo. USACE has determined

that the recommended plan would not jeopardize the continued existence of western spadefoot. The ESA consultation will be initiated in summer 2026 and completed prior to the final EA and signing of the FONSI. A biological assessment was completed and can be found in Appendix B of the EA.

Pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the USACE initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer on April 8, 2025 and it is anticipated to be finalized prior to the signing of the FONSI.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, for this study, neither Sections 404 nor 401 are triggered due to no discharged of dredged material into the Waters of the U.S.

All applicable environmental laws were considered, and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials is ongoing.

Technical and environmental criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other federal, state, and local agencies, tribal nations, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

JESSICA D. COFFENA
COLONEL, U.S. Army
District Commander