NOTICE OF PREPARATION

October 17, 2006

TO: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

FROM: Ventura County Watershed Protection District
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1600

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report
Lake Canyon Dam and Detention Basin Project, Ventura County, California

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District, acting as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has determined that the above-referenced project may have a significant effect on the environment, and that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to call your attention to the proposed Lake Canyon Dam and Detention Basin Project and request that your organization assist us in identifying the scope and content of the environmental information that should be contained in its EIR.

A description of the project, its location, and a summary of the potentially significant adverse environmental effects that are anticipated to be addressed in the EIR are provided in Attachment A. A copy of the Initial Study (X is ___ is not) attached. Attachment A contains a listing of the locations where the Initial Study can be obtained for review.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this NOP. Please submit comments to:

Theresa Stevens, Ph.D.
Senior Environmental Specialist
Ventura County Watershed Protection District
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1610
Fax: (805) 654-3350
Email: Theresa.Stevens@ventura.org

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this NOP or the Initial Study, please contact Theresa Stevens at (805) 477-7139 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jeff Pratt, P.E.
Director
Ventura County Watershed Protection District

Attachment

Attachment A
Lake Canyon Dam and Detention Basin Project
Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Location: The proposed project site is located at the southern end of Lake Canyon in an unincorporated area of Ventura County, California. It is an estimated 15 acres in size, and includes a 1,600-foot long portion of Lake Canyon and two smaller sub-canyons that enter Lake Canyon from the east. The site is located immediately adjacent to lands within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of San Buenaventura (City), and is within the City's Sphere of Influence.

The site is approximately one mile north of Foothill Road, and one-quarter mile upstream of the confluence of Sexton and Lake Canyons with Arundell Barranca. Sexton Canyon Road, a private roadway, provides access to the site from Foothill Road. The northern terminus of North Victoria Avenue is located approximately 475 feet east of the entrance to Sexton Canyon Road. Telegraph and Telephone Roads are located approximately one-half mile and one and one-half miles south of Sexton Canyon Road, respectively.

The site is located within Ventura County Assessor's Parcel Number 064-100-040; it is zoned Open Space with a 160-acre minimum parcel size, and designated as Open Space with an Urban Reserve Overlay in Ventura County's General Plan. Within the City's General Plan, the site is located within the "Hillsides Planning Community" area, which the City defines as undeveloped, and designates as Open Space.

Project Description: The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) proposes to construct and operate the Lake Canyon Dam and Detention Basin (project). The project would consist of an earthfill dam and detention basin. The project would operate in conjunction with the existing Arundell Detention Basin, located immediately southwest and downstream of the project site, to detain storm flows and capture associated debris. The project would detain the peak flows that would be expected from a 100-year storm event, while releasing 76 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water into the Arundell Detention Basin. The total design storage capacity of the project would be 197 acre-feet, which is based on the 100-year storm event.

The purpose of the project, in conjunction with the Arundell Detention Basin, is to reduce storm flows associated with the Lake Canyon watershed by temporarily storing them behind the Lake Canyon dam so that peak flows in the lower reaches of Arundell Barranca are contained within its existing channel. The project is needed to eliminate flooding problems along the Arundell Barranca and within its adjacent neighborhoods between the Arundell Detention Basin and Telegraph Road. The project would also serve to reduce flood flows along Arundell Barranca downstream of Telegraph Road, and provide a debris management system for material eroded from within the Lake Canyon watershed.

The project would include approximately 280,000 cubic yards (cy) of excavation, and construction of an earthfill dam, reinforced concrete emergency spillway structure, intake structure and principal spillway, access roads, surface drainage improvements and native plant revegetation, as follows:

- ***Earthfill Dam.*** The proposed dam would be under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). The dam embankment would be constructed as an earthfill dam from native material acquired by excavating the upstream basin area. The embankment of the proposed dam would have three zones: a shell; core (made up of clays); and filter material. The height of the proposed dam from the downstream low flow channel would be about 70 feet, with a crest length of about 360 feet and a top width of 20 feet. The dam crest would be at an elevation estimated to be 635 feet above msl. The upstream face of the dam would be at a 2.5:1 (horizontal:vertical) slope, and the downstream face would be constructed at a 3:1 slope. The downstream face would be covered with a 12-inch thick layer of native cobblestones. Reinforced concrete "V" ditches and down drains would remove surface runoff from the proposed dam's faces.

- ***Emergency Reinforced Concrete Spillway Structure.*** The emergency reinforced concrete (RC) spillway structure has been designed in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Handbook No. 301. The spillway would be a RC drop inlet approximately 45 feet long connected to an RC box about 155 feet long within the proposed dam's embankment. The box changes to an open RC channel that transitions to a stilling basin. The stilling basin would discharge into the existing streambed and then into the Arundell Detention Basin through an existing box culvert. The spillway crest elevation is estimated to be 628 feet msl, and seven feet below the dam crest. A weir crest about 105 feet in length would pass the 4,600 cfs flow associated with a six-hour PMP storm event into the Arundell Detention Basin.
- ***Intake and Outlet Structures.*** The principal spillway would consist of a two-way drop inlet with an anti-vortex intake structure (approximately 3-feet wide by 6-feet long by 26-feet high) connected to an outlet pipe passing through the proposed dam's embankment. The low-flow water would enter an opening (low flow intake riser) in the side of the RC intake structure, which would be covered with a slotted corrugated steel half-pipe of about 48-inches in diameter.
- ***Detention Basin.*** The detention basin area upstream of the dam would encompass approximately 11 acres with constructed side slopes at a 2:1 ratio. The detention basin bottom would have an approximate grade of two percent. As previously noted, it would be able to detain 100-year frequency storm flows and capture debris generated from the Lake Canyon watershed.
- ***Access Roads.*** A new access road extending from the end of the existing access road located along the northern boundary of the Arundell Detention Basin to the project's dam crest would be paved with asphalt. Crushed rock access roads would be constructed to the dam's toe and from the dam's crest to the back of the detention basin. A concrete "V" ditch would collect runoff from the main access road and adjacent slope and direct it to a down drain that discharges into the proposed basin.
- ***Construction Staging Area.*** The area used for staging of construction equipment, storage, and stockpiling of materials would be within the designated work area of the 15 acre project site. The primary staging area would be located at the mouth of the first sub-canyon upstream of the dam. This area was previously used as a staging area during construction of the Arundell Detention Basin.
- ***Revegetation Areas.*** To reduce erosion on the slopes of the detention basin, the VCWPD would apply a hydroseed mix above the 25 percent debris line. Species in the hydroseed mix would include herbaceous coastal sage scrub species. Hydroseeding would occur following completion of construction. Revegetated areas within the project boundary would be monitored and maintained weed free in perpetuity. Revegetation would not occur on access roads or other areas that are critical for future maintenance operations. Permanent impacts to riparian habitat would be mitigated on site to the extent feasible, and any oak trees which must be removed as a result of construction or other project-related activities would be replaced in kind. The replacement ratio (using one gallon containers) for trees which must be removed would be 10:1, and the replacement ratio for damaged trees would be 2:1 for tress with a diameter at breast height (DBH) less than 12 inches, and a 5:1 ratio for trees with a DBH greater than 12 inches.

On a routine basis, operation and maintenance of the project would be nearly identical to operation and maintenance of the Arundell Detention Basin. Typical activities would include periodic inspections and testing, minor facility repairs, weed abatement and removal, and native plant revegetation monitoring. No new VCWPD employees would be required for completion of these activities and most on site work would be scheduled to coincide with activities associated with operation and maintenance of the Arundell Detention Basin.

As with the Arundell Detention Basin, storm-related debris captured by the project would need to be removed periodically. The VCWPD's standard operational threshold for debris basins is to clean them out when 25 percent of their design debris capacity has been filled by debris material. However, the rate at which a debris basin is filled depends on the frequency and intensity of rainfall and the conditions of the watershed; consequently, the 25 percent clean-out threshold may be exceeded within one year if the volume of rain in that year is exceptionally high, or it could take several years to reach the 25 percent threshold if average annual rainfall amounts during that period are at or below average.

The project would have an estimated maximum operating capacity of 197 acre-feet, including 17 acre-feet of debris and 180 acre-feet of flood storage; its 25 percent debris storage volume would be approximately 6,900 cy (or 4.24 acre-feet). Under a "worst case" scenario, both the proposed detention basin and the Arundell Detention Basin would be cleaned-out when they are filled with 100,000 cy of debris material. Under this scenario, it is anticipated that excavation would require approximately 40 working days to complete. A maximum of approximately 350 trucks would be loaded with eight cy of debris material per day, and an average of approximately 300 trucks would be loaded with eight cy of debris material per day.

Implementation of the project would not increase the total volume of storm-related debris originating from Lake Canyon. Annual storm-related debris associated with Lake Canyon would remain a function of any given year's precipitation rates and volumes in conjunction with the physical conditions of the canyon for that year. Implementation of the proposed project would only relocate the Lake Canyon portion of the total storm-related debris material that is currently captured by the Arundell Detention Basin to a second detention basin. Consequently, the volume of storm-related debris captured in any given year would remain the same, and there would be no net increase in the frequency or intensity of future clean-outs. Due to annual fluctuations in local and regional precipitation, the long-term frequency of clean-outs cannot be predicted with accuracy; however, it is anticipated that the proposed project would require clean-out every one to five years.

Probable Environmental Effects: Based upon the project's Initial Study Environmental Checklist form and associated analysis, issues that are anticipated to be addressed in the EIR include:

- Noise
- Circulation and Traffic
- Biological Resources

Should additional issues arise in response to the Notice of Preparation review and comment process, the scope of the EIR will be expanded, as necessary, to accommodate all areas of potentially significant adverse environmental effects. The EIR will additionally analyze a range of reasonable project alternatives, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15126.2.

Availability of the Initial Study: The Initial Study prepared for the Lake Canyon Dam and Detention Basin Project is available for public review at the following locations:

Ojai Library
111 East Ojai Avenue
Ojai, CA 93023-3295
(805) 646-1639

H.P. Wright Library
57 Day Road
Ventura, CA 93003-2097
(805) 642-0337

E.P. Foster Library
651 East Main Street
Ventura, CA 93001-2814
(805) 648-2716

Oxnard Public Library Main Branch
251 South A Street
Oxnard, CA 93030-5750
(805) 385-7500

Avenue Library
606 North Ventura Avenue
Ventura, CA 93001-1943
(805) 643-6393

In addition to the above locations, the Initial Study may also be viewed on the VCWPD's website at:

http://www.vcwatershed.org