

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

ORDER NO.: 99-028

WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR:

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, CALIFORNIA STATE
ROUTE 4, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, hereinafter Board, finds that:

1. The California Department of Transportation (hereinafter Discharger) proposes to place fill in Rodeo Creek, Telephone Creek, and adjacent wetlands to construct a highway improvement project for California State Route 4 in Contra Costa County. The project is referred to as the State Route 4 Gap Project and will be carried out in two phases.

The first phase of the project will impact 2.92 acres of wetlands (including 0.62 acre of seasonally flooded wetland, 2.15 acres of hay field wetland, and 0.15 acre of other waters) in order to construct a bridge across Rodeo Creek and a box culvert at the Claeys Lane crossing of Rodeo Creek. The second phase which is projected to be constructed within 10-15 years, will impact 1.59 acres of wetlands (including 0.30 acre of seasonally flooded wetland, 0.94 acre of hayfield wetland, and 0.35 acre of other waters) in order to construct a bridge across Rodeo Creek and a box culvert at Telephone Creek. During the second phase of the project, 600 linear feet of Rodeo Creek will be realigned between the proposed Rodeo Creek Bridge and the convergence with Telephone Creek. In addition, 440 linear feet of Telephone Creek will be realigned east of Rodeo Creek.

2. The State Route 4 begins at San Pablo Avenue in northwest Contra Costa County. At approximately kilometer post (Km) 50 State Route 4 connects with State Route 160 (at the Antioch Bridge approach) in the northeast part of the County. Within this 50 Km stretch, State Route 4 is a divided freeway with a minimum of two lanes in each direction, except for the 7.6 Km segment between I-80 and Cummings Skyway. This Section is a two-lane, two-direction, undivided highway with restricted sight distance, nonstandard shoulder widths and curve radii. This segment of State Route 4 is referred to as a gap because it is the only non-freeway section of this highway remaining between I-80 and Route 160. I-80 and Cummings Skyway are the termini of this "Gap".

3. The Discharger has applied to the Board for Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. On March 11, 1998, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (hereinafter Corps) issued a Public Notice for an Individual permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. On March 16, 1999, the Corps issued the Discharger an Individual permit.
4. State authority to regulate the discharge, and threatened discharge of waste to Waters of the State, including wetlands was granted to the State Water Resources Control Board in the Porter Cologne Water Quality Act (Act). Water Quality Control Plans implement the Act by designating the beneficial uses to be protected.
5. The Board, on June 21, 1995, adopted, in accordance with Section 13244 et. seq. of the California Water Code, a revised Water Quality Control Plan, San Francisco Bay Basin (Basin Plan). This updated and consolidated revised Basin Plan was approved by the State Water Resources Control Board and the Office of Administrative Law on July 20, 1995, and November 13, 1995, respectively. A summary of regulatory provisions is contained in 23 CCR 3912. The Basin Plan defines beneficial uses and water quality objectives for waters of the State, including surface waters and groundwaters. This order is in compliance with the Basin Plan.
6. The Discharger has submitted documentation to show that appropriate effort was made to avoid and then to minimize wetland impacts, as required by the Basin Plan.
7. To protect the water quality at and in the vicinity of the site for the duration of project construction, to adequately address proposed project impacts and mitigation to waters of the State, to meet the objectives of the California Wetland Conservation Policy, to require changes over the life of the project and its construction, and to address public safety concerns in an environmentally responsible way, the Board has determined to regulate the project and its construction by issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs).
8. In 1988, the voters of Contra Costa County approved a one-half cent retail transactions and use tax measure (Measure "C"), designated for use in implementing the Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program. The Expenditure Plan, included within the Measure "C" ordinance, provided that State Route 4 be widened and improved between Interstate 80 and Cummings Skyway.
9. Construction of a freeway between I-80 and Cummings Skyway is the last component of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's (CCTA) overall plan for State Route 4 West. The improvements to State Route 4 are intended to upgrade the roadway to function as a primary east-west corridor for interregional

travel in Contra Costa County accommodating heavy commuter and commercial traffic.

10. A jurisdictional determination report prepared in September 1996 indicates the total delineated jurisdictional wetlands within the project limits is 9.4 acres. Construction of the proposed project would impact 4.50 acres of wetlands (including 0.91 acres of seasonally-flooded wetlands; 3.09 acres of hay field wetlands; and 0.50 acres of other waters).
11. The Discharger has proposed a mitigation plan as part of its proposal, to offset the loss of beneficial uses of waters of the State.
12. The mitigation plan proposes, at a minimum, to create 4.00 acres of seasonally flooded wetlands, and preserve 4.65 acres of upland within the seasonally flooded wetlands. The mitigation plan also proposes to preserve 9.73 acres of upland area which contains approximately 0.13 acre of Contra Costa Goldfield, an endangered plant specie. This upland area, referred to as the Goldfield preserve, also contains 0.44 acre of seasonal wetland that will be preserved along with the 0.13 acre of Contra Costa Goldfield.

In addition, the mitigation includes preservation and restoration of a 3,600-foot length of Rodeo Creek, commencing from 220 feet east of the TOSCO entrance gate and extending west to the BN&SF railroad. The Rodeo Creek restoration also referred to as the Rodeo Creek conservation easement, consists of acquiring, fencing, and planting of near mature (3" to 12") oak trees and willow saplings within the creek preserve. This restoration and preservation of Rodeo Creek is expected to create suitable habitat for the Red Legged Frogs and Western Pond Turtles. The Discharger is also required to implement a bull frog control program to enable favorable Red Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle populations count in 5 years.

The Discharger further estimates the riparian corridor to be included within the Goldfields preserve and within the Rodeo Creek conservation easement will total 7.14 acres and would be suitable habitat for the frog and turtle population. The Discharger is proposing to mitigate for the impacts of both phases now, but the second phase impacts are not projected to occur before the next 10 to 15 years.

13. Stormwater discharges to surface waters associated with construction activities and post project construction will occur. The Discharger has prepared a stormwater pollution prevention plan. These discharges are subject to a separate national discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit.
14. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires all projects approved by State agencies to be in full compliance with CEQA, and requires a lead agency to prepare an appropriate environmental document (EIR or Negative Declaration)

for such projects. An EIR was prepared and subsequently certified by the Discharger on September 14, 1998. Finding No. 1 contains all of the water quality impacts identified in the EIR while Finding No. 12 contains proposed activities to mitigate the impacts. Provisions 8 and 9 directs the Discharger to fully implement the mitigation and Provision 10 directs the Discharger to monitor the mitigation.

15. Pursuant to Title 23, California Code of Regulations Section 3857, the Board is issuing WDRs and will not act on this application for Water Quality Certification.
16. The Board has notified the Discharger and interested agencies and persons of its intent to prescribe WDRs for this discharge.
17. The Board, in a public meeting, heard and considered all comments pertaining to the discharge.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Caltrans, in order to meet the provisions contained in Division 7 of the California Water Code and regulations adopted thereunder, shall comply with the following:

A. DISCHARGE PROHIBITIONS

1. The direct discharge of waste to surface waters or surface water drainage courses is prohibited.
2. The discharge of oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, any petroleum derivative, any toxic chemical, or hazardous waste is prohibited.
3. The discharge of waste shall not cause a pollution or, nuisance as defined in Section 13050 of the California Water Code.
4. At no time shall surplus or waste earthen materials be placed in surface drainage courses, or in such a manner as to allow the discharge of such materials to adjacent undisturbed land or to any surface water drainage course except as authorized by the Order (fill in wetlands and waters of the State).
5. Discharges of materials other than stormwater, which are not otherwise regulated by a NPDES permit or allowed by this Order to waters of the State are prohibited.
6. In accordance with Section 13620 of the California Water Code, the Discharger shall file a report with this Board of any material change or proposed change in the character, location, or volume of the discharge. Any proposed material change in the operation shall be reported to the Executive Officer at least 30 days in advance of implementation of any such proposal. This shall include, but need not be limited

to, all significant new soil disturbances, all proposed expansion of development, or any change in drainage characteristics at the project site.

7. The Discharger shall immediately notify the Board by telephone whenever an adverse condition occurs as a result of this discharge. An adverse condition includes, but is not limited to, a violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this Order, significant spill of petroleum products or toxic chemicals, or damage to control facilities that could affect compliance. Pursuant to Section 13267(b) of the California Water Code, a written notification of the adverse condition shall be submitted to the Board within 5 days of occurrence. The written notification shall identify the adverse condition, describe the actions necessary to remedy the condition, and specify a time table, subject to the modifications of the Board, for the remedial actions.

B. RECEIVING WATER LIMITATIONS

1. The proposed activities shall not cause:
 - a. Floating, suspended or deposited macroscopic particulate matter or foam in waters of the State at any place as a result of the discharge of diverted flow.
 - b. Alteration of apparent color beyond present natural background levels in waters of the State at any place as a result of the discharge of diverted flow.
 - c. Visible floating, suspended, or deposited oil or other products of petroleum origin in waters of the State as a result of the discharge of diverted flow.
 - d. The diverted flow shall not cause Waters of the State to exceed the following quality limits at any place more than 100 feet from the point of discharge of diverted flow:
 - i) Dissolved Oxygen: 5.0 mg/l minimum. When natural factors cause lesser concentrations, then this discharge shall not cause further reduction in the concentration of dissolved oxygen.
 - ii) pH: A variation of natural ambient pH by more than 0.5 pH units.
 - iii) Toxic or other deleterious substances: None shall be present in concentrations or quantities which may cause deleterious effects on aquatic biota, wildlife or waterfowl, or which render any of these unfit for human consumption either at levels created in the receiving waters or as a result of biological concentrations.

2. Turbidity of the waters of the State, as measured in NTUs, at any point beyond 100 feet downstream of the point of discharge of diverted flow shall not increase above background levels by more than the following:

Receiving Waters Background

Incremental Increase

≥ 50 units

10% of background, maximum

3. Waters of the State shall not be degraded as a result of the construction and related activities.

C. PROVISIONS

1. The Discharger shall at all times fully comply with the engineering plans, specifications, and technical reports submitted with the completed report of waste discharge. The Discharger shall at all times fully comply with the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.
2. All reports pursuant to these Provisions shall be prepared under the supervision of a suitable professional registered in the State of California.
3. The discharge of any hazardous, designated or non-hazardous waste as defined in Title 27, Division 2, Subdivision 1, Chapter 2 of the California Code of Regulations shall be conducted in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.
4. The Discharger shall remove and relocate any wastes which are discharged at the project site in violation of this Order.
5. The Discharger shall file with the Board a report of any material change or proposed change in the character, location, or quantity of this waste discharge. For the purpose of these requirements, this includes any proposed change in the boundaries of the project site.
6. The Discharger is considered to have full responsibility for correcting any and all problems which arise in the event of a failure which results in an unauthorized release of waste or wastewater.
7. The Discharger shall permit the Board or its authorized representative, upon presentation of credentials as follows:
 - a. Entry on to the project site or the premises in which records are kept.
 - b. Access to copy any records required to be kept under the terms and conditions of this Order.

- c. Inspection of any treatment equipment, monitoring equipment, or monitoring method required by this Order.
 - d. Sampling of any discharge or surface water covered by this Order.
8. The Discharger shall implement and complete the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, Route 4 Gap between I-80 and Cummings Skyway, Contra Costa County, dated August 28, 1998. This mitigation shall be implemented prior to commencement of the construction of the first phase of the project.
 9. Any substantive changes to the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan described herein must be approved in writing by the Executive Officer.
 10. The Discharger shall submit mitigation monitoring reports by December 31 of each year for a minimum of 5 years following the completion of the mitigation construction at the mitigation sites.
 11. To assure that unavoidable impacts to the waterbodies of the United States are successfully mitigated, the Discharger will provide financial assurance for the development, operation, and long-term maintenance of mitigation waterbody areas. The financial assurance for the 5-year mitigation monitoring period will be based on the cost estimates for construction of the mitigation for both phases of the project. The Discharger will be obligated to maintain all mitigation measures until such time as the performance criteria are met.
 12. The Discharger shall be considered to have a continuing responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Prohibitions, Limitations, and Provisions of this Order in the operations or use of the owned property. Caltrans shall notify the Board when a change in ownership of land occurs.
 13. These requirements do not authorize commission of any act causing injury to the property of another or of the public; do not convey any property rights; do not remove liability under federal, state, or local laws, regulations or rules of other programs and agencies nor do these Requirements authorize the discharge of wastes without appropriate permits from other agencies or organizations.
 14. Prior to the commencement of the second phase of the project construction, the Discharger shall submit a technical report containing a plan acceptable to the Executive Officer, for the realignment of Rodeo and Telephone Creeks.
 15. Prior to the commencement of the first phase of the project construction, the Discharger shall submit a technical report containing a Goldfields management plan acceptable to the Executive Officer.

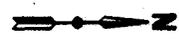
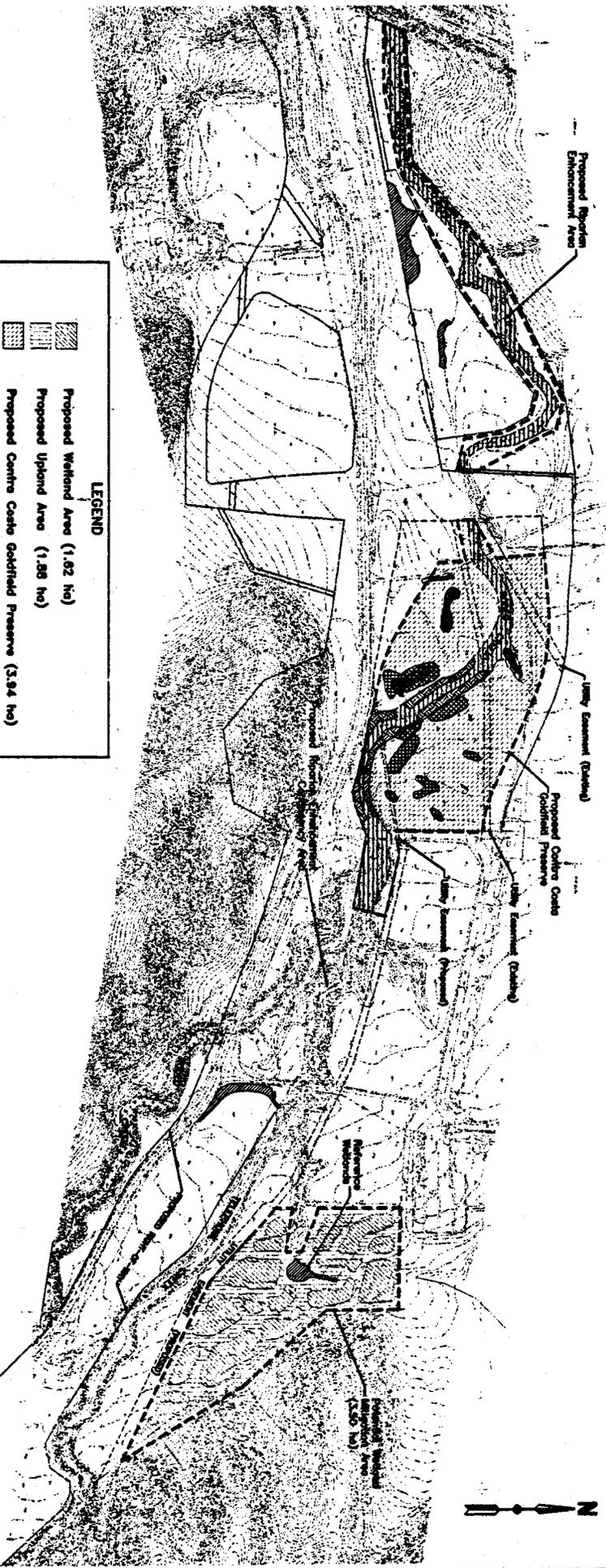
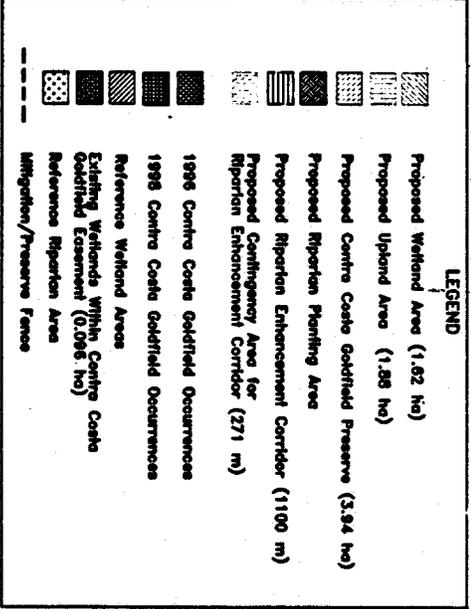
16. The Discharger shall obtain all necessary approvals and/or permits for the project from the applicable government agencies, including the State Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Corps prior to the commencement of the project construction.
17. The Board may reconsider the terms of this Order based on any material changes to the project and long-term maintenance of the project's waterbodies.

I, LORETTA K. BARSAMIAN, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, complete and correct copy of an Order adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, on May 25, 1999.


LORETTA K. BARSAMIAN
Executive Officer

Attachments:

- A: Project Location and Vicinity Map
- B: Mitigation Map
- C: Functions and Values of Jurisdictional Habitat



ATTACHMENT B: Mitigation Map

ATTACHMENT C

FUNCTIONS AND VALUES OF JURISDICTIONAL HABITATS

The various jurisdictional habitat types in the State Route 4 Highway Project limits have been altered by manmade disturbances, including agriculture, industrial development, and cattle grazing. Consequently, these habitats currently have low to moderate habitat values. The functions and values of these habitat types occurring on the project site are discussed below:

Types and Acreages of Jurisdictional Habitats Within the SR 4 Gap Closure Project Area Affected by Phase I (Preferred Alternative) and Phase II (Full Freeway).

HABITAT TYPE	AREA		
	(hectares/ (acres))		
	Alternative		
	Phase I (Preferred Alternative)	Phase II (Full Freeway)	Total (Phase I and Phase II)
Seasonally-flooded Wetlands (does not include hay field wetlands)	0.25 (0.62)	0.12 (0.30)	0.37 (0.92)
Seasonally-flooded Wetlands (only includes hay field wetlands)	0.87 (2.15)	0.38 (0.94)	1.25 (3.09)
Total Seasonally-flooded Wetlands	1.12 (2.77)	0.50 (1.24)	1.62 (4.01)
Aquatic Habitat (waters of the U.S., including freshwater emergent wetland)	0.06 (0.15)	0.14 (0.35)	0.20 (0.50)
Valley Foothill Riparian	0.26 (0.64)	0.44 (1.09)	0.70 (1.73)
• Areal Canopy of Valley Foothill Riparian	0.04 (0.10)	0.05 (0.12)	0.09 (0.22)
• Linear extent of Valley Foothill Riparian (meters/feet)	(140/459)	(317/1040)	(457/1499)
TOTAL	1.44 (3.56)	1.08 (2.68)	2.52 (6.24)

2.6.2.1 Seasonally-flooded Wetlands

Wetlands, in general, tend to reduce flood hazards by delaying the passage of peak storm flows and by storing flood waters and releasing them more gradually than adjacent uplands. Wetlands on the project site, however, are relatively small compared to their watershed size, thus minimizing storm desynchronization.

Seasonally-flooded wetlands occur within flat depressional areas where the presence of clayey soils reduces the loss of water due to infiltration, resulting in open-water ponded areas. Most of the seasonally-flooded wetlands and freshwater seeps within the project corridor function primarily as drainages, but some may also provide groundwater recharge where cracks or permeable lenses provide a pathway to the shallow aquifer.

Wetlands can protect waterway edges through the holding power of the vegetation's fibrous root systems. Marsh vegetation has been found to be capable of holding soil within the root mass even under severe erosive pressure. Some wetlands are typically exposed to extreme events and most marsh plants, therefore, can function as erosion control agents. Most of the wetlands onsite occur within natural drainage ways, and, therefore, may provide some erosion control value.

Wetlands can remove sediment and other suspended solids from agricultural runoff through ponding or slowing of flows which results in suspended materials settling from the water column into the wetland basin. Reduced sediment loads improve downstream water quality and reduce future flood hazards by reducing in-stream sediment deposits that build up bed elevations.

Most of the wetlands within the project corridor have been altered by agriculture and grazing practices and, consequently, have relatively low habitat values. These seasonally-flooded wetlands and the surrounding annual grasslands may be used as foraging areas for raptors. In several locations, water stands in pools for extended periods and does provide habitat for amphibians, particularly Pacific treefrogs (*Hyla regilla*). However, the value for seasonally-flooded wetlands is primarily associated with their agricultural use.

Freshwater emergent marsh grows mainly in the creek and tributaries, where it adds wildlife value to the aquatic habitat by providing food, cover, and breeding habitat for

some species. The egg masses of the CRLF have been found attached to cattails and water-cress growing along the creek edges. Also, western toads (*Bufo boreas*) have been observed mating in the emergent vegetation.

The food resources and protective cover of seasonally-flooded wetlands are limited due to the low-lying vegetation and ephemeral presence of standing water. Nevertheless, wildlife does utilize this habitat type. Small arthropods, such as seed shrimp, mosquito larvae, water beetles, water fleas, dragonflies, damselflies, and water midges, occur in the seasonal pools. Pacific treefrogs breed within seasonally-flooded areas. This species is abundant within the SR 4 Gap Closure Project boundaries, and various life history stages (i.e., eggs, tadpoles, and adults) were observed during the field surveys. Juvenile and adult stages of CRLFs, California newts, and mating western toads were also observed within the project limits. The abundance of smaller amphibians, the emergent vegetation and moist conditions provide suitable conditions for various garter snakes (*Thamnophis* spp.). Such reptiles, although not observed within the project area, most likely do occur within the seasonally-flooded wetlands, especially those areas adjacent to the tributaries of Rodeo Creek. Wading birds such as egrets, and waterfowl, most commonly represented by mallards, also forage within these areas.

The Contra Costa Goldfields (CCG) is a federal endangered species that is usually found in vernal pools in California (Hickman 1993). Rare plant surveys conducted in the spring of 1996 located three populations of CCGs in the western portion of the project area (see Figure 2-2 for location). Although CCGs are generally considered vernal pool species, most of the population adjacent to Rodeo Creek occurs in depressions that are not saturated long enough to be jurisdictional wetlands or vernal pools. Since this is the only known population occurring in Contra Costa County, Phase I (Preferred Alternative) and Phase II (Full Freeway) have been realigned to avoid disturbance to this population.

The vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) prefers areas with clear to tea-colored water and herbaceous vegetation, such as grassy swales and mud-bottomed pools (Eng *et al.* 1990). Within the SR 4 Gap Closure Project corridor, marginal habitat for the vernal pool fairy shrimp occurs within two ephemeral pools (See Figure 2-2 for location of pools). These pools are more accurately characterized as vernal-filled wetlands rather than typical vernal pools. However, based on a site visit in December 1995 by Nancy Kang of the USFWS, the vernal pool fairy shrimp was considered to have some chance of occurrence at the project site. The USFWS authorized Dr. Dick Arnold (Permit PRT-

797233) to conduct wet season status surveys during the winter and spring of 1996 and dry season surveys in summer of 1996. No listed fairy shrimp or shrimp egg cysts were found inhabiting the two seasonally inundated areas.

2.6.2.2 Aquatic/Valley Foothill Riparian Habitat

Waters of the United States (Rodeo Creek and its tributaries) function in transporting water from the surrounding hills to the San Francisco Bay. Because the creek is deeply incised at some locations, it also provides some flood control. Rodeo Creek is a permanent water supply, providing moderate to good habitat for some species, such as migrating waterfowl, herons and egrets, CRLFs and WPTs. Although some tributaries are dry by the end of the summer, they do support aquatic habitat during winter and spring. The main value of the creek system is two-fold: (1) it carries floodwaters and prevents flooding of the surrounding area except in unusually high rainfall years and (2) it provides habitat for sensitive amphibians and reptiles.

Rodeo Creek in the project area is a heavily degraded aquatic / riparian system. The creek is deeply entrenched and probably overflows its banks only during 100-year flood events. Aquatic / riparian systems usually function in nutrient cycling and energy flow by transporting materials from upstream reaches to downstream reaches. Rodeo Creek probably supports these functions. However, because the creek is incised, it does not have floodplain wetlands associated with it. Rodeo Creek receives water flow from freshwater seeps in the surrounding hillsides that contribute to the habitat connectivity of the project regions. Additionally, it contributes to the cycling of nutrients through the aquatic and riparian habitats downstream of the creek.

During flooding events, Rodeo Creek provides a water supply for the sparse vegetation that currently exists. This is particularly true of the adjacent wetlands along Telephone Creek where CRLFs were found. This periodic flushing carries away many of the waste products of soil and root metabolism, such as carbon dioxide and methane. This periodic flushing also increases productivity and results in habitat diversity values for animals that seek its refuge. Species such as mallards, great egrets, western toads, California newts, WPTs, and CRLFs have been recorded utilizing the riparian habitats and adjacent wetlands. These species benefit from the habitat values of Rodeo Creek, which provides food, cover and breeding areas for these species to complete their life cycles.

A variety of wildlife species occupy the aquatic habitat within the project corridor. Rodeo Creek and its tributaries provide habitat for fish, including native species such as the three spine stickleback, Sacramento sucker and hitch. The waters of the creek and its tributaries, as well as the instream vegetation, also provide habitats for amphibians, including bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), Pacific treefrogs and CRLFs. In addition, portions of the banks, cement culverts and some of the woody debris provide suitable aerial and aquatic basking sites for WPTs (see Figure 2-2 for location of observations). Birds, such as mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), great egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) and belted kingfishers (*Ceryle alcyon*), have been observed foraging along Rodeo Creek, while common snipes (*Capella gallinago*) and killdeers (*Charadrius vociferous*) have been seen along the various unnamed tributaries. Mammals, such as raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*) and small rodents, also utilize the aquatic habitat, as evidenced by their tracks along the banks of the creek.

CRLFs are usually confined to aquatic habitats, such as creeks, streams and ponds, and occur primarily in areas having pools approximately 1 m deep, with adjacent dense emergent or riparian vegetation (Hayes and Jennings 1988). Several full-sized adult and smaller immature (approximately 2 years old) CRLFs were observed in the SR 4 Gap Closure Project area during Spring 1996 (see Figure 2-2 for location of observations). These individuals were located in the western portion of the project site, along Telephone Creek, a tributary to Rodeo Creek. In addition to these post-metamorphs, three CRLF egg masses were also observed. These egg-masses were attached to emergent vegetation in the same region of the project area where the adult CRLFs were found.

WPTs live in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, vernal pools, seasonal wetlands and intermittent streams where permanent pools exist (Zeiner *et al.* 1988). This species is the only abundant native turtle in the state. WPTs were observed at several locations along Rodeo and Telephone Creeks in the western portion of the project area (see Figure 2-2 for location of observations).

There are only a few scattered willows (19 trees) and oaks (2 trees) along the banks of the aquatic / riparian habitat. Currently, the area is actively grazed, which has eliminated most willow trees and prevented the natural recruitment of new willows. Presently, the percent tree cover from the TOSCO entrance gate extending west to the BN&SF railroad is only 10 to 15 percent. From the TOSCO entrance gate extending east to the end of the

TOSCO property line, the percent cover is less than 5 percent. Consequently, in its current condition, the value of the riparian habitat is very low.

In spite of the paucity of riparian canopy in the area, wildlife species still inhabit or utilize the riparian habitat because of its proximity to the associated water course. These areas provide refuge, food, water, resting and nesting areas for some amphibian, reptilian, avian and mammalian species. For example, tree branches provide nesting and roosting features for species of birds that have been observed in the project area, including the downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) and northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*). Several large, conspicuous cone-shaped stick nests that were constructed either on the ground or in lower branches of the trees were found in the riparian habitat within the project area, indicating the presence of dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fucipes*). Although some of the highest densities of CRLF have been associated with riparian vegetation (Hayes and Jennings 1988; USFWS 1996), the degraded riparian habitat in the project area currently does not provide any habitat for this species. No CRLF were observed in this habitat during the 1996 surveys.