



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
San Francisco District

SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

Regulatory Division
1455 Market Street, 16th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103-1398

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROJECT: Charles M. Schulz – Sonoma County Airport Runway Safety Enhancement Project

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1. **INTRODUCTION:** Sonoma County Airport, through its agent, LSA Associates, Inc. (POC: George Molnar, 510-236-6810, 157 Park Place, Point Richmond, California 94801) has applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), San Francisco District, for a Department of the Army Permit to discharge fill material into jurisdictional waters of the United States associated with the Charles M. Schulz – Sonoma County Airport Runway Safety Enhancement Project located at Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport (Airport) northwest of the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. This Department of the Army permit application is being processed pursuant to the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended (33 U.S.C. § 1344 *et seq.*).

2. PROPOSED PROJECT:

Project Site Location: The Airport is located at 2290 Airport Boulevard, approximately seven miles northwest of the center of the City of Santa Rosa and about 1.5 miles west of Highway 101 (Figures 1-3) in Sonoma County. The Airport is located between 122.8002° West and 122.8257° West, and between 38.4946° North and 38.5270° North.

Project Site Description: The Airport encompasses approximately 1,180 acres and has elevations ranging from approximately 100 to 140 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL). The majority of the study site contains airport facilities. The Airport perimeter has an 8-foot-high security fence with locked gates. Private lands within areas just outside of the Airport contain residences, agricultural buildings, pastures, and vineyards. The perimeters of some parcels within these areas are fenced, typically with barbed-wire. Access to the Airport-owned portions of the study site is by Airport permission through

locked gates. Surrounding land uses include commercial light industrial to the east, ranchette residential and grazing to the north and west, and vineyards to the south.

The Airport is located within the northern portion of the Santa Rosa Plain, in gently rolling to relatively level topography. Some areas within the Airport have been graded and their natural drainage has been altered with ditches and underground storm drains. Much of the area surrounding the runways were cultivated for irrigated hay production, which was discontinued in approximately 2005. Portions of the formerly cultivated land have natural appearing vernal pool basins and swales. The site receives an average annual rainfall of approximately 31 inches+. The northern and northeastern portions of the Airport property drain to Redwood/ Airport Creek, which flows westward through the northern part of the site. The extreme northern portion of the site drains northwestward to Pool Creek. Redwood/Airport and Pool Creeks are tributary to Windsor Creek approximately 1 mile west of the Airport. The central and southern portions of the site drain southward to Mark West Creek, which is approximately 1 miles south of the Airport. An outlier of the study site includes a short reach of Mark West Creek. The western portion of the site drains westward to Windsor Creek approximately 1 mile west of the Airport. Windsor Creek is tributary to Mark West Creek approximately 1 mile southwest of the Airport. Mark West Creek is tributary to the Russian River approximately 4 miles west of the Airport. Pool Creek, Windsor Creek, Mark West Creek; both Redwood/Airport and Upper Ordinance Creeks; and a small un-named channel draining the western portion of the Airport are shown as solid blue line perennial creeks on the USGS Quad map.

Site vegetation is predominantly non-native annual grassland, some of which was used for irrigated hay production until approximately 2005. Two parcels south of Sanders Road are grazed by cattle. Grass species commonly observed throughout the study site include wild oats (*Avena* spp.), rip-gut (*Bromus diandrus*), harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*), medusa-head (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum aristatum*), and rat-tail fescue (*Vulpia myuros*). Grassland forbs include vetch (*Vicia* spp.), field bind weed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), bristly ox-tongue (*picris echinoides*), and coast tar plant (*Madia sativa*). Seasonally wet pools and swales on the site contain hydrophytic vegetation that includes Mediterranean barley (*Hordeum marinum* ssp. *gussoneanum*), brown-head rush (*Juncus phaeocephalus*), creeping spike-rush (*Eleocharis macrostachya*), coyote thistle (*Eryngium armatum*), rabbit's-foot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), annual semaphore grass (*Pleuropogon californicus*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* spp.), annual hairgrass (*Deschampsia danthonoides*), woolly-marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), downingia (*Downingia con color* var. *concolor*), pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*). Riparian areas along the named creeks have riparian tree canopy that includes red and arroyo willow (*Salix laevigata* and *S. lasiolepis*), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), coast live oak (*Q. agrifolia*), black walnut (*Juglans* spp.), and Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*). These riparian areas often have understory cover dominated by Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Woodlands are dominated by valley oak. Some of the woodlands contain abandoned orchard pear and plum (*Prunus* spp.) trees. Former farm homesteads in the northern part of the study site contain eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus* spp.) and other horticultural landscape shrubs and trees.

Jurisdictional waters of the U.S. within the project site total approximately 50.6 acres (Figures 4 and 5). This total consists of 40.3 acres of vernal pools and other seasonal wetlands, 5.2 acres of irrigation/stock ponds, 3.0 acres of intermittent and perennial streams, 1.4 acres of willow scrub, 0.5 acre of freshwater marsh, and 0.2 acre of ditches.

Project Description: As shown in the attached drawings (Figures 6 and 7), the applicant proposes to complete grading and filling activities for the construction of runway extensions, blast pads, aprons, taxiways, access roads and associated runway safety areas (RSAs) in

accordance with FAA design standards and guidelines. The project is anticipated to be implemented in two phases in 2013 and 2014. The first phase would include a variety of project elements that will support the creation of standard RSAs and the decoupling of the ends of Runways 14 and 19. The second phase would include the proposed extension of Runway 14/32 by 885 feet, the proposed extension of Runway 1/19 by 200 feet, and the other project elements that are functionally related to these runway extensions.

Runway 14/32 and its associated parallel taxiway (Taxiway Y) would be extended 885 feet to the northwest (i.e., from 5,115 feet to 6,000 feet). This extension is needed to achieve the decoupling of the two Airport runways. A bypass taxiway would be constructed at the northern end of the runway. Edge lights, pavement markings and signs would be included with this extension. The existing blast pad would be replaced with a 200-foot-long blast pad at the new end of Runway 14. Two exit taxiways and a run-up apron would be removed and replaced with similar facilities.

Runway 1/19 would be extended 200 feet to the north (i.e., from 5,002 feet to 5,202 feet). A partial parallel taxiway (Taxiway V) would be constructed from the south end of the runway to the midfield taxiway (Taxiway B). Runway and taxiway edge lights, pavement markings and signs would accompany this development. A 200-foot-long blast pad would be constructed at the new end of Runway 19. One exit taxiway would be removed and two exit taxiways would be added. The existing section of Taxiway B would be strengthened and widened.

Other paving elements include the following: (1) a realignment of Taxiway D so that this taxiway is connected to the end of Runway 32; (2) the construction of a paved service road beyond both ends of Runway 14/32; and (3) the construction of a service road on the western side of the Airport.

In addition to areas that would be paved, grading would occur in several areas. These graded areas would be re-vegetated following construction. Graded RSAs would be constructed off the ends of Runways 1, 14, and 19 and along Runway 1/19, requiring the filling of vernal pools and other seasonal wetlands. Soil used to construct the RSAs would be obtained from a borrow site southwest of the end of Runway 1. The Proposed Project would include the temporary disturbance of approximately 96.3 acres of upland areas for temporary haul roads,

staging and spoil areas during construction. Construction equipment would be parked and materials stored on a site south of Sanders Road, located just north of the Airport. Grading would occur between new segments of runways and parallel taxiways. All temporarily graded areas would be re-vegetated following construction.

North of the runways, a 1,506-linear foot reach of Airport Creek would be filled, which would include re-routing of the filled reach into a new 630-foot-long channel and an 888-foot-long underground culvert for meeting RSA design specifications. In this same area, removal or trimming of riparian vegetation along an approximately 565-linear foot segment of Airport Creek would occur in order to provide airspace clearance for approaches to Runway 14, as required under Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77, *Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace* (Part 77). The existing 395-linear-foot-high water drainage ditch that connects Airport Creek to Lower Ordinance Creek would be placed into a culvert. Additionally, the Runway 14 service road would cross Ordinance Creek and Airport Creek in the locations shown on the enclosed project plans. Both crossings would entail the use of platforms that would extend from above the tops of the banks; neither bridge crossing would affect the creek beds or banks.

Pond 4, a 0.5-acre man-made pond located north of Airport Creek would be filled; Pond 6, a 1.2-acre man-made pond south of Runway 32 would be drained and partially filled to eliminate wildlife attractant hazards as required by FAA AC 150/5200-33B, *Hazardous Wildlife Attractants On or Near Airports*. For drainage purposes, a detention pond would be constructed east of Runway 14/32 to slow the introduction of stormwater into Airport Creek and improve water quality while still meeting the requirements of FAA AC 150/5200-33B which requires that detention ponds drain within 48 hours. Additionally, an underground retention pond would be constructed east of Runway 14/32.

Other project elements included as part of the Proposed Project relate to the changes in landing aids following the shift in runway end location. The localizer antenna (an electronic landing aid) and associated equipment building would be relocated about 1,000 feet north of the approach end of Runway 14. Visual landing aid units (VASI units) west of Runway 14/32 would be replaced with Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) units (another type of visual landing aid) on the same side of the runway but north of Runway 1/19. Additionally,

trees and tall bushes north and west of the approach end of Runway 14 that would penetrate the Federal Aviation Regulation Part 77 airspace surfaces would be removed.

Basic Project Purpose: The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the project, and is used by USACE to determine whether the project is water dependent. The basic project purpose is to complete Airport improvements to enhance safety.

Overall Project Purpose: The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Section 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis, and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, while allowing a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose is to implement various improvements to be constructed by 2015 in order to meet the Federal Aviation Administration safety standards and guidelines.

Project Impacts: The Proposed Project would result in the permanent loss of 4.61 acres of wetlands, 0.58 acre of perennial stream, 2.18 acres of ponds and marsh, 0.29 acre of willow scrub, and 0.02 acre of ditches. In addition, there would be impacts to federally listed plant and animal species (Figures 8 and 9).

Proposed Mitigation: The applicant is currently proposing a mix of credit purchase and on and off-site stream/riparian mitigation (Figures 10-12). Credit purchase is proposed at the Windmill Conservation Area, Alton North Conservation Bank, and Kerry Conservation Bank. The applicant proposes to purchase 13.23 acres of seasonal wetland establishment/rehabilitation, 26.8 acres of California tiger salamander credit, 11.34 acres of Burke's goldfield credit, and 4.36 acres of rehabilitated vernal pools. The applicant also proposes the purchase of Burke's goldfields credit from Alton North (1.03 acres) and Kerry Conservation Bank (1.43 acres).

On-site mitigation along Airport Creek includes the relocation of part of Airport Creek (0.5 acre) and establishment and enhancement of riparian habitat (0.5 acre and 0.7 acre, respectively).

Most of the off-site mitigation would take place at the Desmond Mitigation Bank and would include enhancement (2.4 acres), re-establishment (6.38 acres), and rehabilitation of riparian habitat (1.49 acres), and re-

establishment of stream channel (0.15 acre). Additional riparian habitat re-establishment (4.15 acres) would occur at the Copeland Creek site.

3. STATE AND LOCAL APPROVALS:

Water Quality Certification: State water quality certification or a waiver is a prerequisite for the issuance of a Department of the Army Permit to conduct any activity which may result in a fill or pollutant discharge into waters of the United States, pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended (33 U.S.C. § 1341 *et seq.*). The applicant has recently submitted an application to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to obtain water quality certification for the project. No Department of the Army Permit will be authorized until the applicant obtains the required certification or a waiver of certification. A waiver can be explicit, or it may be presumed, if the RWQCB fails or refuses to act on a complete application for water quality certification within 60 days of receipt, unless the District Engineer determines a shorter or longer period is a reasonable time for the RWQCB to act.

Water quality issues should be directed to the Executive Officer, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403, by the close of the comment period.

Coastal Zone Management: Section 307(c) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1456(c) *et seq.*), requires a non-Federal applicant seeking a federal license or permit to conduct any activity occurring in or affecting the coastal zone to obtain a Consistency Certification that indicates the activity conforms with the State's coastal zone management program. Generally, no federal license or permit will be granted until the appropriate State agency has issued a Consistency Certification or has waived its right to do so. Section 307(c) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1456(c) *et seq.*), requires a Federal applicant seeking a federal license or permit to conduct any activity occurring in or affecting the coastal zone to obtain a Consistency Determination that indicates the activity conforms with the State's coastal zone management program. Generally, no federal license or permit will be granted until the appropriate State agency has issued a Consistency Determination or has waived its right to do so. The project does not occur in the coastal zone, and a *preliminary* review by USACE

indicates the project would not likely affect coastal zone resources. This presumption of effect, however, remains subject to a final determination by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH VARIOUS FEDERAL LAWS:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Upon review of the Department of the Army permit application and other supporting documentation, USACE has made a *preliminary* determination that the project neither qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion nor requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the purposes of NEPA. At the conclusion of the public comment period, USACE will assess the environmental impacts of the project in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347), the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508, and USACE Regulations at 33 C.F.R. Part 325. The final NEPA analysis will normally address the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that result from regulated activities within the jurisdiction of USACE and other non-regulated activities USACE determines to be within its purview of Federal control and responsibility to justify an expanded scope of analysis for NEPA purposes. The final NEPA analysis will be incorporated in the decision documentation that provides the rationale for issuing or denying a Department of the Army Permit for the project. The final NEPA analysis and supporting documentation will be on file with the San Francisco District, Regulatory Division.

Endangered Species Act (ESA): Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 *et seq.*), requires Federal agencies to consult with either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ensure actions authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any Federally-listed species or result in the adverse modification of designated critical habitat. As the Federal lead agency for this project, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will be responsible for determining the presence or absence of Federally-listed species and designated critical habitat, and the need to conduct consultation. To complete the administrative record and the decision on whether to issue a Department of the Army Permit for the project, USACE will obtain all necessary supporting documentation from the applicant

concerning the consultation process. Any required consultation must be concluded prior to the issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for the project.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA): Section 305(b)(2) of the MSFCMA of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1801 *et seq.*), requires Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all proposed actions authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH). EFH is defined as those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. EFH is designated only for those species managed under a Federal Fisheries Management Plan (FMP), such as the *Pacific Groundfish FMP*, the *Coastal Pelagics FMP*, and the *Pacific Coast Salmon FMP*. As the Federal lead agency for this project, the FAA will be responsible for determining the presence or absence of EFH, and the need to conduct consultation. To complete the administrative record and the decision on whether to issue a Department of the Army Permit for the project, USACE will obtain all necessary supporting documentation from the applicant concerning the consultation process. Any required consultation must be concluded prior to the issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for the project.

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA): Section 302 of the MPRS of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1432 *et seq.*), authorizes the Secretary of Commerce, in part, to designate areas of ocean waters, such as the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay, as National Marine Sanctuaries for the purpose of preserving or restoring such areas for their conservation, recreational, ecological, or aesthetic values. After such designation, activities in sanctuary waters authorized under other authorities are valid only if the Secretary of Commerce certifies that the activities are consistent with Title III of the Act. No Department of the Army Permit will be issued until the applicant obtains the required certification or permit. The project does not occur in sanctuary waters, and a *preliminary* review by USACE indicates the project would not likely affect sanctuary resources. This presumption of effect, however, remains subject to a final determination by the Secretary of Commerce, or his designee.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA): Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 470 *et seq.*), requires Federal agencies to consult with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer to take

into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places*. Section 106 of the Act further requires Federal agencies to consult with the appropriate Tribal Historic Preservation Officer or any Indian tribe to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, including traditional cultural properties, trust resources, and sacred sites, to which Indian tribes attach historic, religious, and cultural significance. As the Federal lead agency for this project, the FAA will be responsible for determining the presence or absence of historic properties or archaeological resources, and the need to conduct consultation. To complete the administrative record and the decision on whether to issue a Department of the Army Permit for the project, USACE will obtain all necessary supporting documentation from the applicant concerning the consultation process. Any required consultation must be concluded prior to the issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for the project. If unrecorded archaeological resources are discovered during project implementation, those operations affecting such resources will be temporarily suspended until USACE concludes Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to take into account any project related impacts to those resources.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE SECTION 404(b)(1) GUIDELINES: Projects resulting in discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States must comply with the Guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344(b)). An evaluation pursuant to the Guidelines indicates the project is not dependent on location in or proximity to waters of the United States to achieve the basic project purpose. This conclusion raises the (rebuttable) presumption of the availability of a less environmentally damaging practicable alternative to the project that does not require the discharge of dredged or fill material into special aquatic sites. The applicant has submitted an analysis of project alternatives which is being reviewed by USACE.

6. PUBLIC INTEREST EVALUTION: The decision on whether to issue a Department of the Army Permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the project and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts requires a careful weighing of the public

interest factors relevant in each particular case. The benefits that may accrue from the project must be balanced against any reasonably foreseeable detriments of project implementation. The decision on permit issuance will, therefore, reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. Public interest factors which may be relevant to the decision process include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Public Notices tab on the USACE website:
<http://www.spn.usace.army.mil/regulatory/>.

7. CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS: USACE is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; Native American Nations or other tribal governments; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the project. All comments received by USACE will be considered in the decision on whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a Department of the Army Permit for the project. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, and other environmental or public interest factors addressed in a final environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the project.

8. SUBMITTING COMMENTS: During the specified comment period, interested parties may submit written comments to Bryan Matsumoto, San Francisco District, Regulatory Division, 1455 Market Street, 16th Floor, San Francisco, California 94103-1398; comment letters should cite the project name, applicant name, and public notice number to facilitate review by the Regulatory Permit Manager. Comments may include a request for a public hearing on the project prior to a determination on the Department of the Army permit application; such requests shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. All substantive comments will be forwarded to the applicant for resolution or rebuttal. Additional project information or details on any subsequent project modifications of a minor nature may be obtained from the applicant and/or agent, or by contacting the Regulatory Permit Manager by telephone or e-mail cited in the public notice letterhead. An electronic version of this public notice may be viewed under the *Current*