US Army Corps of Engineers®

NOTICE OF INTENT

Applicant:
Karla Smith
Stanford University

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San Francisco District
Permit Application No. SPN-2013-00048

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The San Francisco District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. § 403). This public notice serves as the Corps' Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Searsville Watershed Restoration Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)(42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and the Processing of Department of the Army Permits and 33 U.S.C. 408 Permissions, National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (33 C.F.R. pt. 333).

Affected Federal, State, regional, and local agencies; Native American Tribes; other interested private organizations; and the general public are invited to participate in the NEPA scoping process. USACE is requesting comments on potential alternatives or effects and on relevant information, studies, or analyses with respect to the proposed action.

Two virtual public scoping meetings will be held on April 7 and 8, 2026 to present information to the public and to receive comments from the public on the proposed project, alternatives, and the scope of the environmental analysis. The meetings will be presented via Zoom from 1:00-2:30 pm on April 7 (https://kearnswest.zoom.us/j/87367664795?pwd=wnm3EeC2TO6bDTlgPP6PbLf2ib0cuA.1) and 6:00-7:30 pm on April 8 (https://kearnswest.zoom.us/j/89869392029?pwd=VaMqVfwbbrvmmAA849OFVhiYPrHWL7.1).

Any changes to the scoping meetings will be posted on the USACE San Francisco District website (https://www.spn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Public-Notices/).

The EIS will analyze the environmental consequences of the proposed project's reasonable alternatives including any potential effects on conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, 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. Based on currently available

information, there may be significant effects to biological resources (including fish and wildlife values), hydrology, and water quality.

USACE will work closely with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, in their preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which will be developed separately but in parallel to the Corps' EIS. In addition, the Corps will consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer and with Native American Tribes to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to comply with the Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Additional permits may include state water quality certification or waiver under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

The draft EIS is scheduled to be available for public review and comment in December 2026. The decision-making process for the related permitting action will not be completed until all NEPA requirements have been met.

APPLICANT: Karla Smith
Stanford University
560 Fremont Road
Stanford, CA 94305

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The proposed project is located within the San Francisquito Creek Watershed, in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, CA. The project includes multiple components throughout the watershed, including modification of Searsville Dam and Reservoir (37.4072 °N, -122.238 °W), restoring reaches of Corte Madera Creek and San Francisquito Creek upstream and downstream of the dam, expanding Felt Reservoir (37.3949 °N, -122.1856 °W), and upgrading the existing San Francisquito Creek pump station (37.4226 °N, -122.1883 °W). The project would also have potential indirect effects on the entire 12-mile reach of San Francisquito Creek from Searsville Dam downstream to the mouth at San Francisco Bay (Figures 1-3).

EXISTING CONDITIONS: Searsville Reservoir is an artificial impoundment created by the construction of Searsville Dam in 1891 on Corte Madera Creek, just upstream of the confluence where it joins with Bear Creek and forms San Francisquito Creek. Stanford owns and operates the Searsville Reservoir and Dam, the San Francisquito Creek Pump Station, and Felt Reservoir, and uses these facilities to supply non-potable water for irrigation, stock watering, and fire suppression. Searsville Dam presents a complete passage barrier for federally listed steelhead and other native fish in the watershed, and also interrupts natural sediment transport within San Francisquito Creek and Corte Madera Creek. Since construction of the dam, Searsville Reservoir has been filling with sediment, and water storage capacity has been reduced from about 1,200 acre-feet to about 100 acre-feet. The reservoir is expected to eventually fill completely with sediment, at which point sediment originating in the upper watershed would begin

passing over the dam and deposit downstream where it could increase flood risk in San Francisquito Creek.

PRIOR RELATED PUBLIC NOTICES: A notice of intent related to the proposed project was previously published in the Federal Register and described in a previous Public Notice on February 7, 2023 (https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2023-02564). The permit application that was the subject of that notice of intent was withdrawn on October 15, 2025. As a result, the Corps' previous NEPA review was terminated.

Changes in hydrologic and hydraulic modeling for San Francisquito Creek following publication of the previous notice of intent led to changes in the proposed project. A new permit application was submitted on February 3, 2026. The proposed agency permitting action for the February 2026 permit application is the subject of this NOI.

The proposed agency action, proposed project, and range of alternatives discussed in this NOI are similar to the prior notice of intent. However, as noted in the sections below, the proposed project includes two additional project components (initial coarse sediment removal and offstream detention basin, which were previously considered as alternatives) to address potential flood risk factors, as well as an additional project alternative (the Off-Haul Alternative).

PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose and need is to restore hydrogeomorphic processes, riparian habitat, and fish passage conditions within the upper San Francisquito Creek watershed; to avoid increasing future flood risk associated with Searsville Reservoir filling with sediment, and to replace Searsville Reservoir's historic non-potable water storage and supply while improving seismic safety at Felt Reservoir.

PROPOSED PROJECT:

Searsville Dam and Reservoir

- Initial Coarse Sediment Removal. Current modelling indicates that there is a risk from sand deposition in the downstream reaches of San Francisquito Creek resulting from flushed sediment. Most of the coarse sediment (sand and gravel) in Searsville Reservoir is in the southern lobe formed by Corte Madera Creek. To reduce the amount of sand that could potentially deposit in the downstream urban reaches of San Francisquito Creek, Stanford is proposing to mechanically remove much of this material prior to the reservoir flushing described above. To this end, the project would include the excavation and processing of approximately 480,000 cubic yards of sediment from the Corte Madera lobe of the reservoir during the initial construction phase. Up to 200,000 cubic yards of sand-sized sediment would be separated and off-hauled. The remaining sediment would be left in the reservoir to be flushed downstream, where gravel would deposit in San Francisquito Creek upstream of I-280 and silt would flush out to the bay.

- Construct a gated tunnel through Searsville Dam to allow controlled flushing of trapped sediment, restore natural sediment transport, and re-establish fish passage conditions, while still providing some attenuation of peak storm flows.

- Restore a confluence valley supporting a variety of habitats within the former reservoir footprint above Searsville Dam.

- Construct channel improvements to facilitate fish passage conditions below Searsville Dam, through the proposed tunnel, and in restored creek channels upstream of the dam.

San Francisquito Creek downstream from Searsville Dam

- Downstream Detention Basin. Current modeling indicates that peak flows in San Francisquito Creek include higher flows entering from Bear Gulch Creek, which would not be attenuated by the proposed Searsville Dam tunnel. To provide additional peak flow attenuation in addition to that provided by the dam tunnel, Stanford would construct an offstream detention basin at the former site of the Boething tree nursery, on the north side of San Francisquito Creek approximately 1.7 miles downstream of Searsville Dam. (Note: This detention basin, as well as an alternate basin location at Webb Ranch closer to I-280, were previously considered in two alternatives of the 2023 proposed project.)

- Construct log and boulder features for sediment trapping, habitat improvement, and bank stabilization in San Francisquito Creek between Searsville Dam and I-280.

- Modify the existing San Francisquito Creek Pump Station at Stanford Golf Course to accommodate increased stream diversions, in order to replace the existing diversion at Searsville Dam.

- Monitor for accumulation of flushed sediment downstream of I-280 and remove deposited sediment as needed, most likely at Hwy 101 in conjunction with Santa Clara Valley Water District's existing SMP sediment removal program.

Felt Reservoir

- Replace Searsville's lost water storage capacity by constructing a new dam at Felt Reservoir north of the existing dam in order to expand the reservoir's capacity from approximately 900 acre-feet to approximately 1,800 acre-feet.

Additional information on the background and components of the proposed project can be found at https://searsville.stanford.edu/.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES: Multiple alternatives will be evaluated. In addition to the no action alternative and the applicant's preferred alternative (i.e. the proposed project), the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS currently include:

- Dam Removal: this alternative would be similar to the proposed project, except the dam would be removed completely after sufficient sediment has been flushed, and offstream detention basins would be constructed adjacent to San Francisquito Creek downstream of Searsville Dam to provide flood attenuation; also includes Felt Reservoir and Pump Station components described for proposed project.

- Bypass Channel: this alternative would restore fish passage and sediment transport by constructing a bypass channel around Searsville Dam; accumulated sediment in the reservoir would be left in place, and detention basins would be built as described above; also includes Felt Reservoir and Pump Station components described for proposed project.

- Off-Haul: this alternative would increase the amount of sediment to be excavated and off-hauled to approximately 900,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment from behind Searsville Dam prior to installing a tunnel in Searsville Dam. (Note: This alternative was not included in the previous notice of intent related to the project.)

COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Comments received will be used in the preparation of the EIS pursuant to NEPA and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity. The San Francisco District will receive written comments on the proposed project, as outlined above, until April 11, 2026. Comments should be submitted via email to Greg Brown at Gregory.G.Brown@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District (Attention: Greg Brown), 450 Golden Gate Ave., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102. Please refer to the permit application number in your comments.