

NOTICE OF FINDING

Floodplain Approval
Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (Band)
Septic to Sewer Conversion Project
CA24-J51

The Band is seeking federal funding assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services – Indian Health Service (IHS) to convert tribal residences from septic systems to the existing Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) treatment facilities. The proposed improvements will include the microtunneling of a sewer pipeline beneath the San Jacinto River, construction of mainlines and laterals, and 11 underground wet-well lift stations. The IHS completed the 8-step Decision Document as required by Executive Order 11988 *Floodplain Management*.

The Proposed Action is the construction of approximately 19.6 miles of new sewer pipeline both on- and off-Reservation that will connect Tribal residences and other Tribal facilities to existing EMWD sewer lines. The proposed facilities will include the microtunneling of a sewer pipeline beneath the San Jacinto River, construction of mainlines and laterals, and 11 underground wet-well lift stations. A portion of the pipelines and lift stations will be developed within the floodplain. Temporary staging areas will also be located within the floodplain. The floodplain includes the 100-year (1% annual chance) floodplain (Zone A), as well as adjacent Zone X identified as having a reduced flood risk due to the San Jacinto River levees as identified by the FIRM (refer to Figure 3-9 of the IS/EA). Zone X identifies areas of 500-year (0.2% annual chance) flood; areas of 100-year floodplains with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from a 100-year flood. No base flood elevations have been determined in the Action Area by FEMA and are unmapped.

The proposed action is predominately located on the Band's Reservation and is not subject to any state or local floodplain ordinances. However, the portion off-reservation would be required to adhere to state and local ordinances.

Alternatives were investigated through the 8-step process. Those alternatives included the construction method alternative, pipeline crossing alignment alternatives (proposed action), staging area location alternatives, and the no action. However, no alternatives exist that would reduce the already minimal impacts expected due to the temporary staging within and drilling below the floodplain. No adverse impacts to floodplains are expected.