

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT FINDINGS IN CONNECTION WITH THE APPROVAL OF LANDELS HILL-BIG CREEK NATURAL RESERVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LANDELS HILL-BIG CREEK NATURAL RESERVE

I. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS AND ADOPTION OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The University of California (“University”), as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (“MND”) for the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project (“Project”). This Project will be developed at the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve on the Big Sur coast 5 miles north of the town of Lucia in Monterey County. The Santa Cruz Campus Chancellor, pursuant to delegations of authority from the Board of Regents and President of the University, hereby issues these Findings and concurrently adopts the MND and approves the Project.

Project construction is proposed at two locations on the Reserve: the Gatehouse area at the mouth of Big Creek canyon just east of Highway 1; and the Coyote Creek area, which is a 1-acre, relatively flat section of undeveloped land at elevation 650 feet above sea level near the southern boundary of the Reserve. In the Gatehouse area, the Project would remodel an existing staff residence to create living space for up to five visiting researchers. A new 1,600-sf building would be constructed adjacent to the existing building to create a 40-seat classroom, an office for the Reserve Manager, and outhouses. At the Coyote Creek site, the Project would construct three new buildings: a 1,332-sf residence for full-time staff, a 493-sf studio for part-time staff and researchers, and a 1,048-sf garage/workshop. At both sites, the Project would construct new septic systems and infrastructure to supply domestic and fire protection water from springs that are already used for water supply at existing facilities. Electricity would be provided by existing and new solar arrays and backup generators.

Pursuant to Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15063, the University prepared an Initial Study to consider the potential environmental effects of implementation of the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project. The University solicited public comments during preparation of the Initial Study and received comments from the California Coastal Commission and the Monterey Bay Area Unified Air Pollution Control District. After reviewing those comments, the University made the following changes to the impact analysis:

- In response to a comment by the California Coastal Commission, Mitigation Measure AES-1 (Initial Study, p. 27) has been revised to include adjustment of the configuration of the proposed classroom building, in addition to the selection of building materials, to reduce visibility from Highway 1.
- In response to a comment by the California Coastal Commission, revisions have been made on pp. 25, 39-40, 42, 58-59, and 67, to clarify that the Commission's standard of review for the proposed Project is the Coastal Act rather than the Big Sur Land Use Plan.
- A more detailed description of the trees and shrubs to be removed has been added to the Final IS/MND on p. 37, and Figures 3-2 and 3-3 have been revised to show the locations of trees that will be removed and the areas where shrubs will be removed.

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- Mitigation Measure BIO-7 (Initial Study, p. 40) has been revised to include the requirement that the contractor prepare and implement an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan as specified in Appendix D of the Campus Standards.
- Mitigation Measures CULT-1A and CULT-1B, have been added on p. 46 of the Initial Study to further reduce the less-than-significant impact to archaeological resources and human remains.
- Mitigation Measures HYD-1 has been added to require documentation that the Project storm water management system meets the requirements specified in Campus Standards.
- Three pages of the Visual Impact Study (Appendix D), which present photographs taken from the vantage points shown on the map, which were inadvertently omitted from the Draft Initial Study, have been added.

The Initial Study describes the Project, analyzes the environmental impacts of the Project (including all phases of Project planning, implementation, and operation), and discusses means of mitigating impacts. Pursuant to Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15074, the University has determined, on the basis of the Initial Study, that no aspect of the Project may cause a significant effect on the environment that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the University has prepared an MND for the Project. The University published a notice of intent to adopt the MND on November 13, 2014 and made the MND and Initial Study available for public review for 32 days from November 13, 2014 to December 15, 2014. The University also submitted the draft Initial Study and MND to the Office of Planning and Research's State Clearinghouse (SCH No.2014111034). In response, the University received two comment letters from public agencies and no comments from individuals or organizations. The University has considered all of these comments in evaluating the Project's impacts and in preparing the MND.

In connection with the adoption of the MND and approval of the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project, the University also hereby adopts the attached Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program ("MMRP"). The MMRP details mitigation measures that will reduce the Project's individual and cumulative impacts to less-than-significant levels.

All of the CEQA documentation regarding the Project is available for review at UCSC Physical Planning and Construction, Barn G, UC Santa Cruz; McHenry Library and the Science and Engineering Library on the UC Santa Cruz campus; the Big Sur Branch, Monterey County Free Library on Highway 1 at Ripplewood Resort; and the UC Santa Cruz web site, at <http://ppc.ucsc.edu>.

II. FINDINGS

Having received, reviewed, and considered the Initial Study, MND, public comments, and other information in the administrative record, the University hereby adopts the following Findings for the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project in compliance with CEQA, the CEQA Guidelines, and the University's procedures for implementing CEQA. The University adopts these Findings in conjunction with its approval of the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project, as set forth below. The University finds, on the basis of the whole record, that there is no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the MND reflects the University's independent judgment and analysis. The University further finds that any potentially significant individual or cumulative impacts of the Project have been adequately evaluated in the Initial Study. All such potentially significant impacts have been mitigated to a level of insignificance by project-specific mitigation measures. All of the mitigation measures required for the Project are described in the attached MMRP.

A. Potentially Significant Impacts Reduced to Less-Than-Significant Impacts Through Mitigation

The Initial Study identified significant and potentially significant impacts associated with the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project that would be reduced to less-than-significant levels by the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study. Therefore, the University finds that the analyses in the Initial Study demonstrate that the Project's impacts listed below will be less than significant with the implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study. The University has briefly described the relevant impacts and mitigation measures below. For a detailed description of these impacts and mitigation measures, please see the text of the Initial Study prepared for this Project.

- a. **A portion of the new classroom building would be visible from Highway 1** (addressed by Mitigation Measure AES-1, which requires selection of building materials and configuration to reduce the visibility of the structure from Highway 1)
- b. **Removal of the pine trees and coastal scrub, limbing of trees, and noise and dust from construction could result in impacts to nests of migratory birds** (addressed by Mitigation Measure BIO-1, which requires scheduling construction outside the nesting season if possible, or pre-construction surveys and establishment of buffers around active nests).
- c. **Dust from construction activities could impact Smith's blue butterfly both directly and indirectly through impacts to its host plant, dune buckwheat** (addressed by Mitigation Measures BIO-2 through BIO-5, which require a silt fence or other suitable barrier between construction access roads and adjacent buckwheat plants, measures to control dust on access roads and construction sites, limiting the speed of construction vehicles to 5 mph on the access roads, and placing flagging and construction fencing along the access roads and parking areas).

- d. **Construction activities have the potential to adversely affect riparian woodland and coastal scrub ESHA** (addressed by Mitigation Measures BIO-2 through BIO-5, described above, and Mitigation Measures BIO-7, which requires measures to protect riparian habitat during construction).

B. Less-than-Significant Impacts that would be Further Reduced with Proposed Mitigation

The Initial Study identifies the following less-than-significant impacts associated with the Project for which the Initial Study identifies mitigations for further impact reduction.

- a. **Cultural Resources:** Implementation of the Project would not result in adverse changes in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource, directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or unique geological feature, or disturb human remains. However, to further reduce the potential for adverse impacts to archaeological resources or human remains, the Initial Study identifies mitigation measures CULT-1A and CULT-1B, which require that construction be halted and appropriate measures be taken if archaeological resources or human remains are encountered during construction (*Initial Study pp. 44-46*).
- b. **Hydrology and Water Quality:** The Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with recharge, substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of a site or area, create runoff which would exceed the capacity of storm water drainage systems or add substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, or otherwise degrade water quality. However, because of the proximity of the Gatehouse site to Big Creek, to ensure that the Project storm water management system meets the appropriate standards, the Campus would implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1, which requires that the final Project plans and specifications shall include documentation that the Project design meets applicable requirements of Campus Standards (*Initial Study pp. 53-59*).

C. Environmental Resources Areas with Less-than-Significant or No Impacts

The Initial Study identified the following environmental resources areas in which the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project would have less-than-significant adverse impacts or no adverse impacts. The University finds that, because CEQA requires mitigation measures only for potentially significant impacts, no mitigation is necessary for these environmental resource areas.

- a. **Agricultural and Forestry Resources:** Implementation of the Project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural uses, would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or forest, a Williamson Act contract, or forest land; would not involve other changes to the environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses or the conversion of forest land to other uses (*Initial Study, pp. 31-32*).
- b. **Air Quality:** Implementation of the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan, violate or

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contribute to the violation of an air quality standard, result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in criteria pollutants, expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, or create objectionable odors (*Initial Study pp. 32-34*).

- c. **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity:** Implementation of the Project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving earthquake-related ground rupture, strong seismic shaking, seismic-related ground failure, or landslides; result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil; be located on an unstable geologic unit or soil, or expansive soil, or on a site with soils that are incapable of adequately supporting the proposed wastewater disposal system (*Initial Study pp. 46-48*).
- d. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The Project would not generate direct or indirect greenhouse gas emissions that could have a significant effect on the environment or conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases (*Initial Study pp. 48-50*).
- e. **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or through upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; or emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials within one-quarter mile of a school; is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or private airstrip; would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss involving wildland fires (*Initial Study pp. 51-53*).
- f. **Land Use and Planning:** The Project would not divide an established community; conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy or regulation, habitat conservation plan, or natural community conservation plan; or result in development of land uses that are incompatible with existing or planned adjacent land uses (*Initial Study p. 55-59*).
- g. **Mineral Resources:** The Project would not result in the loss of availability of mineral resources (*Initial Study p. 59*).
- h. **Noise:** The Project would not result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of applicable standards, or to excessive groundborne vibration; and would not result in a substantial permanent, temporary, or periodic increase in ambient noise levels (*Initial Study p. 60*).
- i. **Population and Housing:** The Project would not induce population growth directly or indirectly, displace housing or people, or create demand for housing (*Initial Study p. 61*).
- j. **Public Services:** The Project would not result in demand for public services which would necessitate the provision of new or physically altered government facilities (*Initial Study p. 62*).
- k. **Recreation:** The Project would not increase the use of existing recreational facilities and does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment (*Initial Study p. 63*).
- l. **Traffic, Circulation and Parking:** The Project would not conflict with an

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applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, or with an applicable congestion management system; would not result in a change in air traffic patterns or increase hazards due to a design feature; or result in inadequate emergency access; or conflict with applicable policies, plans or programs regarding alternative transportation (*Initial Study pp. 64-65*).

- m. Utilities and Service Systems:** The Project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Project would require construction of a new on-site wastewater system and storm water drainage facilities, which would not cause significant environmental effects. There are sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources. The Project is served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste disposal needs and the Project would comply with statutes and regulations related to solid waste. The Project would not require or result in the construction of or expansion of electrical, natural gas, chilled water, or steam facilities (*Initial Study pp. 66-68*).

III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Incorporation by Reference

These Findings incorporate by reference in their entirety the text of the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, as well as any supporting documents, for the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project. Without limitation, this incorporation is intended to elaborate on the scope and nature of mitigation measures, Project-specific and cumulative impacts, the basis for determining the significance of impacts, and the reasons for approving the Project.

B. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Pursuant to Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15097, the University is adopting (concurrently with these findings) a Project-specific Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program ("MMRP") for the mitigation measures that the University has made a condition of Project approval, as well as any revisions to the Project that the University has required, in order to mitigate or avoid potentially significant effects on the environment. The Project-specific MMRP includes details of the timing and responsibilities for completing the identified mitigation measures.

C. Record of Proceedings

Various documents and other material constitute the record of proceedings upon which the University bases the Findings and decisions contained herein. These documents are located in the offices of Physical Planning and Construction; Barn G, University of California, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. The custodian for these documents is the Office of Physical Planning and Construction.

IV. APPROVAL

The University hereby takes the following actions:

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- A.** The University approves the Initial Study and adopts the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project.
- B.** The University approves and incorporates into the Project all Project elements and all mitigation measures described in the Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- C.** The University adopts these Findings in their entirety, as set forth herein.
- D.** Having independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study, as well as the Mitigated Negative Declaration and all comments received on these documents, and having adopted its Findings, the University approves the design of the Landels Hill-Big Creek Natural Reserve Facility Improvement Project.