



**Friends of  
Auburn Ravine**  
AuburnRavine.org

**FOOTHILLS WATER NETWORK**



May 15, 2021

Kris Stepanian, Board Secretary  
Nevada Irrigation District  
1036 West Main Street  
Grass Valley, California 95945

*Sent via email to [stepiank@nidwater.com](mailto:stepiank@nidwater.com) and via U.S. Mail*

Dear Ms. Stepanian:

Friends of Auburn Ravine (FAR) and the Foothills Water Network (Network) respectfully respond to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Hemphill Diversion Structure Project (Project) prepared by Nevada Irrigation District (NID).

The Network represents a broad group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and water resource stakeholders in the geographic area bounded by the Yuba River, Bear River, and American River watersheds. The overall goal of the Network is to provide a forum that increases the effectiveness of non-profit conservation organizations to achieve river and watershed restoration and protection benefits for the Yuba, Bear, and American rivers and adjacent watersheds.

### **Preferred Alternative**

Among the three Alternatives presented in the DEIR, it is our opinion that Alternative 2 is the best alternative. That alternative would install a nature-like roughened rock ramp within the stream channel to allow unimpeded fish passage, and a vertical screen at the entrance to the Hemphill canal to prevent entrainment of fish into the canal. It is much less expensive than the other alternatives and involves lower risk of construction delays and unforeseeable construction expenses. Operation and maintenance expenses will probably be lower than the other alternatives because all components of the proposed design will be visible and accessible – not buried under fields, roadways, or the streambed as with the other alternatives.

### **Public Access**

Whichever alternative is chosen, provisions for public access to the site should be part of the final design. This should include an interpretive sign, a shade structure, seating, safety railings, and parking. The existing dirt pathway that begins near the Hemphill Diversion and extends along the high bank on the north side of the creek downstream to the old Lincoln dump should be improved. The ancient Native American campground along this trail should be protected from vandalism, and an interpretive sign provided nearby. This area is now within the City of Lincoln and has been designated as future City of Lincoln Open Space in their Village 1 plan.

### **Fish Passage Monitoring**

To obtain reliable data as to the success of the Project, funding for “walk and wade” surveys should be included in the Project. The surveys should be conducted each week upstream from the Hemphill site from mid-October to mid-April (weather and water conditions permitting). The surveys should include counts of salmon, steelhead, and lamprey, their redds, and collection of DNA samples from salmonid carcasses. With professional supervision, the cost for these surveys could be mitigated by using volunteer “citizen scientists” such as the well-trained volunteers that Friends of Auburn Ravine has deployed for the last four years to do such surveys from central Lincoln up to Hemphill Dam. Funding would need to include provisions for liability insurance, survey equipment, safety equipment, and training supplies, etc. UC Davis has recently published a manual for planning such projects: <https://education.ucdavis.edu/featured-pod/new-resources-citizen-science-project-planning>

At the Hemphill site, a secure weather-proof cabinet should be provided on the south bank near the canal entrance to support potential future installation of an in-stream PIT tag monitoring system. The cabinet should be pre-wired to the same circuit breaker panel that will serve the selected water diversion system and contain a dual 15A, 110V power outlet and knock-outs for future installation of conduits, and a mast for a cellular data antenna. Examples of such systems are available on request.

### **Contingency Plan**

The Project should include a Contingency Plan that will provide temporary fish passage and water diversion if Project Completion is delayed beyond October 15 of the year when construction begins.

Thank you for considering these comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Hemphill Diversion Structure Project. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



**Friends of  
Auburn Ravine**  
AuburnRavine.org

*JH*

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*TSV*

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*Chris Shutes*

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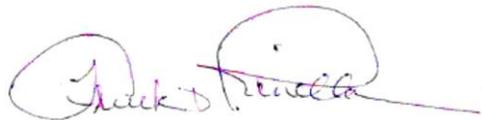
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