Lake and Streambed Alteration Notification Process Improvement Partnership Agreement

Between

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

and

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

February 12, 2018

Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement (Agreement) is to express leadership support for the work achieved by the Lean 6 Sigma team focused on improving the Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Notification Process. Beginning in 2016, a team of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff collaborated to improve the initial acceptance rate of LSA Notification submittals to CDFW by Caltrans. A primary objective of this Lean 6 Sigma project was for at least 95 percent of the LSA Notifications submitted by Caltrans to be determined complete by CDFW upon initial receipt (a notable improvement from the historical average of 49 percent).

This initiative coincides with a timely need for increased collaboration due to potential for increase permit workload. With the passing of the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (SB1), we anticipate a substantial surge in the number of state transportation projects. New U.S. infrastructure spending may be directed towards states demonstrating lean and efficient project development and permitting processes. As a result, there is a critical need for our project development and permitting processes to perform much more efficiently. AB 1282 (2017) also calls for early coordination with Caltrans and resource agencies.

Commitments

With the initiation of improvements to the process comes our continued commitment to be "Environmental professionals collaborating to create a thriving California ecosystem; one that enhances the lives and mobility of its citizens while protecting and preserving the state's abundant natural resources."

The Lean 6 Sigma LSA Notification Process Improvement project exhibits a successful interagency partnership between Caltrans and CDFW. From our collaborative efforts, a number of solutions have been developed to reduce the amount of review and rework involved in achieving a complete LSA Notification.

Summarized below are the agreed upon process improvements, with the mutual understanding that this is a flexible working agreement with the possibility of revision:

Standardized Checklist

Caltrans will prepare and use a standardized checklist to address all sections of the LSA Notification whenever a LSA Notification is prepared.

Peer Review

A peer review by Caltrans staff of the LSA Notification is mandatory prior to any submission.

Permit Coordinators

Designated Permit Coordinators or Biologists for each district will correspond with CDFW Liaisons. Currently this is being piloted in Caltrans District 5 and, depending on the outcome, may be incorporated in other districts.

Early Coordination with CDFW

At each phase of project development, early coordination between Caltrans and CDFW staff will be conducted to receive input from CDFW on the Caltrans proposed activities requiring notification under section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code.

Internal Permit Coordination Meeting

A Caltrans Internal Permit Coordination Meeting and subsequent Communication Plan for project related permits, licenses, agreements, certifications, and approvals will ensure that all functional units are aware of any information required to complete the LSA Notification.

CDFW Office Hours

Based on a mutually agreed upon schedule, CDFW staff to hold office hours in each Caltrans District to provide immediate review of project specific issues and promote relationships between the Caltrans and CDFW staff.

CDFW Provide Formal Incomplete Letters

CDFW will provide formal Incomplete Letters to document incomplete submittals. This will allow both agencies to keep accurate records of incomplete LSA Notifications.

LSA Training

Based on a mutually agreed upon schedule, CDFW and Caltrans will provide training on the details required for successfully completing LSA Notifications.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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