

FERC Committee

June 19, 2024



Meeting Goals

- Review Stantec's proposal for Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Discuss next phases of foothill yellow-legged frog studies
- Make recommendations to the full Utica Board

Potential Studies and Cost Ranges

Combine

Combine

Individual Studies

#	Study Description	Recommended (yes/no/modify)	Low Range	High Range	Additional Comments
1	Foothill Yellow Legged Frog (FYLF)	Yes	\$ 75,000	\$ 175,000	Recommend phased approach for implementation
2	California Red Legged Frog (CRLF)	Modify	\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000	more data required, add on to FYLF study
3	Western Pond Turtle (WPT)	Modify	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000	eDNA, if it becomes an issue, include trapping.
4	Fish Studies (trout, catfish, etc.)	Yes	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000	Recommend electro-fishing; avoid snorkel surveys
5	Water Quality	Yes	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000	Required study 401 WQ cert; wet season/dry season sampling
6	Benthic Macroinvertebrate (BMI)	No to Modify	\$ 10,000	\$ 150,000	SWAMP protocol study; if needed, perform w/ other field work
7	Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)	No to Modify	\$ 5,000	\$ 50,000	Address this through WQ studies; adjacent observations
8	Wildlife Entrapment (Canals/Flumes)	Modify	\$ 5,000	\$ 50,000	Limit to visual inspections of canals/flumes; O&M reporting
9	Instream Flow Study	No	\$ 100,000	\$ 400,000	Can previous (PG&E) studies be used? Costly, avoid if possible.
10	SHPO Section 106 Studies & Reporting	Yes	\$ 350,000	\$ 400,000	Attempt to use existing data as much as possible to lower costs
			\$ 740,000	\$ 1,705,000	
* Costs are approximate; may be higher based on agency requirements (i.e., Take Permits, sampling procedures).					

High Level Cost Estimates (2024 – 2026)

Cost Element	2024 Costs		2025 Costs		2026 Costs	
	Lower End	Upper End	Lower End	Upper End	Lower End	Upper End
Ongoing Stantec Strategic and Regulatory Support	\$ 40,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
Recommended Studies	\$ 225,000	\$ 650,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -
Other Potential Studies (Modified or Unplanned)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 115,000	\$ 550,000	\$ -	\$ -
Final CE Applications	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
USFS Special Use Authorization Permit	\$ 5,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -
CEQA Initial Study/ 401 WQ Certificate	\$ 10,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
SHPO/Section 106	\$ 175,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ -
Biological Assessment/ Biological Evaluation	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
Summary of Costs	\$ 495,000	\$ 1,060,000	\$ 470,000	\$ 1,140,000	\$ -	\$ 85,000
Low End Estimate Range	\$ 850,000	\$ 965,000	(higher cost assumes "not recommended" studies performed)			
Upper End Estimate Range	\$ 1,735,000	\$ 2,285,000	(higher cost assumes "not recommended" studies performed)			

Other Required/Recommended Activities

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- A. Finalization of CE Applications
 - B. USFS Special Use Authorization Permit (required)
 - C. SWRCB 401 Water Quality Certification (likely required)
 - D. CEQA Initial Study for 401 WQ Cert (required)
 - E. SHPO/Section 106 Studies & Consultation (required)
 - Phased approach, utilize as much as previous info as possible
 - Potential to be costly, depending on tribal/SHPO needs
 - F. Biological Assessment (USFWS)/Biological Evaluation (USFS)
 - Depending on data collection results (species presence)



WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- A water quality study was requested in FERC Exemption comments by the State Water Board
- This study is required for the State Board to issue a 401 Water Quality Certification
- Stantec has proposed a 15-month water quality monitoring program, which takes continuous and periodic measurements.

Water Quality Program: Task 1 - (\$8,156)

- Development of a Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Outlining data collection
- Articulating methodology
- Includes sampling plan
- Review and finalization with Utica staff

Water Quality Program: Task 2 - (\$4,136)

- Present Water Quality Monitoring Program to State Water Board
- Meet with State Board to discuss the plan
- Reach agreement with State Board staff
- State Board approval is necessary before launching the Program to avoid wasted time and sunk costs

Water Quality Program: Task 6 (\$21,694)

- 15 months of project management and administration
- Project kick-off call
- Biweekly calls
- Project administration, field support, safety plans, field oversight
- Notes from kick-off meeting with action items

Additional Tasks in Proposal

Task No.	Task Description	Budget
Task 1	Water Quality Monitoring Program Development	\$8,156
Task 2	Water Quality Monitoring Program Meeting	\$4,136
Task 3	Implementation of Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring	\$192,922
Task 4	Implementation of Periodic Sampling Program	\$91,977
Task 5	Develop and Implement Data Reporting Program	\$13,304
Task 6	Project Management and Project Administration	\$21,694

Water Quality Study Costs

- Total proposed cost: \$332,259
- Cost of staff recommended phased approach: Approve tasks 1, 2, and 6 with modified budgets
- Per Stantec and legal counsel advice, Utica staff intend to negotiation with the State Water Board on reaching agreement on a less comprehensive water quality monitoring program

An aerial photograph of a rugged mountain landscape. A wooden boardwalk with a metal railing winds across a steep, rocky slope. The terrain is covered with large, light-colored boulders and patches of green and yellowish vegetation. In the background, a valley with a forest of evergreen trees is visible under a cloudy sky. A semi-transparent dark grey banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'FOOTHILL YELLOW-LEGGED FROG STUDY' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

FOOTHILL YELLOW-LEGGED FROG STUDY

Foothill Yellow Legged Frog Study

- Utica authorized \$73,000 in late April for a field survey of egg masses, eDNA sampling, and preliminary study plan. This work is nearly complete
- No frogs or egg masses were observed
- There was one eDNA sample that came back positive in Mill Creek
- CDFW's strong preference is for agencies to do at least three field studies
 - Egg masses in spring
 - Tadpoles in summer
 - Metamorphs in fall

Foothill Yellow Legged Frog Study

- Stantec estimates the cost of conducting a tadpole survey, metamorph survey, and writing the final technical memo will be \$80,000 - \$100,000
- That cost is in addition to the \$73,000 already approved by Utica
- All phases of the study are expected to be complete by November-December 2024
- Results of the studies will be incorporated into the Final FERC Exemption Applications

Committee Recommendations

What are the FERC Committee's recommendations for the following:

- Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Foothill Yellow Legged Frog Study

Questions?

