



ADVANCE MITIGATION PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL GUIDANCE FOR MITIGATION PROVIDERS

GUIDANCE NUMBER: 3

ISSUE DATE: March 19, 2026

TITLE: Site Selection Best Practices

BACKGROUND

This guidance document was developed to support the Advance Mitigation Program's (AMP's) Request for Proposal (RFP) process for establishing credits. Its purpose is to organize the site selection guidance of the natural resource regulatory agencies (NRRAs) who are parties to the Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative Memorandum of Understanding (SAMI MOU)¹. The compiled list of references serves as a starting point and will be updated as NRRAs guidance is updated; mitigation providers are not restricted to this list in the site selection process. As outlined in AMP RFP Guidance for Mitigation Providers Number 2, site selection should also consider and acknowledge the conservation goals and objectives identified in the Regional Advance Mitigation Needs Assessment (RAMNA) from which the advance mitigation project was derived.

2011 Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Mitigation and Conservation Banking and In-Lieu Fee Programs in California ([2011 MOU](#))² guidance:

- [Prospectus Checklist](#)
- [Proposal Guidance](#)

California Coastal Commission (CCC):

- [Mitigation for Natural Resource Impacts - Background for Caltrans Projects](#)

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):

- [What Lands are Appropriate for Banking](#)
- [Bank Site Selection Considerations](#)
- Chapter 4 of Draft Banking Guidelines (pending; the 2026 update will be posted on the CDFW [Conservation and Mitigation Banking](#) website.)
- [Permittee Checklist of Documents for Habitat Management Land Property Review and Protection](#) (a reference for concepts and principles only)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- [Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule](#)

¹ NRRAs who are parties to the SAMI MOU consist of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); California State Coastal Commission (CCC); State Water Resources Control Board (SWB); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS); and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

² NRRAs signatories to the 2011 MOU are: the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and State Water Resources Control Board (SWB).



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS):

- [Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Act Compensatory Mitigation Policy](#)

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):

- [Recommended Service Areas for NMFS Trust resources within the California Central Valley](#)
- [NAO 216-123: NOAA Mitigation Policy for Trust Resources](#)

State Water Resource Control Board (SWB):

- [State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State](#)
- [Implementation Guidance for the State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State](#)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):

- [12512-SPL: Regulatory Program Standard Operating Procedure for Evaluation of Proposed Compensatory Mitigation Sites](#)
- [Final 2015 Regional Compensatory Mitigation and Monitoring Guidelines for South Pacific Division USACE](#)

This collaboration effort is consistent with the intentions and objectives of the Master Process Agreement³ between NRRAs and Caltrans, which formalizes a mutually agreeable process for implementing advance mitigation projects to meet the needs of Caltrans through timely approval of compensatory mitigation. The agreed-upon process helps manage Caltrans' risks when the AMP is justifying its mitigation investments using planning-level information.

³ Please send the AMP an email at advance.mitigation@dot.ca.gov to request a copy.