

GHD Contract Number: 12628973

August 21, 2025

Dan Thompson, Contract Manager
RailPros
270 E Bonita Avenue
Pomona, CA 91767

Re: Additional Scope and Fee Proposal for Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) Santa Paula Branch Line Sespe Creek Overflow Railroad Bridge Repair Project – Biological Support Services During Construction

Dear Dan,

GHD is pleased to submit this proposed scope of work and fee estimate to provide biological support services and reporting in support of Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) Santa Paula Branch Line Sespe Creek Overflow Railroad Bridge Repair Project, located in Fillmore, CA. It is our understanding that the Project involves the repair of the VCTC Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) Rail Bridge at Mile Post 423.44 over the Sespe Creek overflow channel.

Introduction

GHD previously provided biological monitoring and final reporting in support of emergency repairs to the scoured railroad embankment at Sespe Creek in September and October 2024. These efforts included monitoring dewatering activities in the Sespe Creek overflow channel, where a temporary cofferdam was constructed in accordance with the Ventura County Public Works Agency's Water Diversion Guidelines. All activities were conducted under emergency authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Regional General Permit (RGP) No. 63 (SPL-2024-00568-AJS) and through emergency consultation procedures with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

GHD understands that construction of the new rail bridge over the Sespe Creek overflow channel is expected to proceed under emergency authorizations from USACE and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). As of today (August 21, 2025) the Project received the RGP Emergency Permit Authorization from USACE. We anticipate that work will now start as early as September 2, 2025, but no later than September 4, 2025, given that the contractor (Granite) now has 14 days to begin project work per RGP63 permit conditions. We anticipated the RWQCB permit will be issued within the next couple of days, now that the USACE permit has been issued. As part of the USACE permit, we are to follow all measures as outlined in the Fish Protection Plan that was prepared by HDR per the USACE permit measures.

HDR has contracted with All Hands Biological and their permitted fish biologist, Brian Zitt. It is our understanding that Brian will oversee the installation of the water diversion structures and will guide the capture and relocation of any stranded fish species. GHD biologists will assist Brian with this work as necessary and will remain as the day to day onsite biological monitor.

GHD's scope of work for the 2025 construction phase includes biological monitoring, preconstruction surveys, and final permit reporting, as well as weekly monitoring summaries, consistent with the support provided during the 2024 emergency effort. Monitoring during dewatering and diversion activities will include visual observation for steelhead and implementation of preventative measures, such as the installation of block nets, to reduce the likelihood of steelhead entering dewatered areas. GHD biologists will assist the permitted fish biologist (Brian Zitt) with any required relocation efforts.

The USACE permit is not completely clear about the seasonal work restriction for in-water construction. The permit says that all work must be completed by November 30, 2025. However, we are not sure if that means just in-water work, or for all project work activities including the bridge superstructure construction, which is contracted to go through December 31, 2025. Nonetheless, GHD has conservatively budgeted for a full-time biological monitor to be present onsite throughout September, October, November, and December 2025 (Monday through Friday, 8-hour days) if necessary to ensure compliance with the USACE permit requirements. Once in-water work concludes and site conditions stabilize, we will coordinate with regulatory agencies to seek concurrence to reduce monitoring to weekly site visits. However, full-time monitoring has been included in our cost estimate to accommodate regulatory expectations during the active construction window.

Proposed Scope of Work

We propose the following biological support tasks:

1. Project Coordination and Compliance Assistance
2. Preconstruction Surveys and Biological Monitoring
3. Weekly Monitoring Reports
4. Reporting and Notifications

Details of each task, assumptions, deliverables and an estimated budget for each task is described as follows in this document. Should you have any questions, please contact me or Jennifer Ibrahim for assistance.

Regards,



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Proposed Scope of Work and Fee

Biological Support Services During Construction

Ventura County Transportation Commission's Santa Paula Branch Line Sespe Creek Overflow Railroad Bridge Repair Project

Task 1: Project Coordination and Compliance Assistance

GHD will assist RailPros and the contractor with interpreting and implementing all biological resource permit conditions required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). We will support the integration of permit terms into daily construction operations and provide technical feedback as needed, particularly regarding the water diversion and fish passage plan, which may need to be revised to avoid stranding native aquatic species and increasing biological monitoring efforts. This task includes time for agency coordination, team meetings, construction kick-off support, and plan review.

Task 1 Limitations / Assumptions:

- RailPros will provide a construction schedule and updates to the schedule in a timely manner so that GHD can perform all needed pre-construction surveys and monitoring to satisfy all project permit timing requirements.
- Time has been included to coordinate with CDFW, USACE and USFWS if necessary, for determining project site monitoring efforts for all special status wildlife species.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Attendance at meetings as requested by RailPros, VCTC, or regulatory agencies, if necessary.

Task 1 Estimated Effort: 60 hours

Task 2: Preconstruction Surveys and Biological Monitoring

GHD will conduct all preconstruction and daily clearance surveys required by permit conditions, including surveys for: 1) southwestern pond turtle, 2) southern California steelhead (visual observation only), 3) other fish and aquatic species, and 3) least Bell's vireo fledglings. We will be outside of the nesting bird season (typically recognized as February 1 through August 31) when project work begins, therefore, preconstruction nesting bird surveys will not be necessary.

GHD will also provide a biological monitor onsite each weekday during in-water work, currently assumed to occur from September through November 2025. Monitoring will include assisting with the oversight of water diversion installation, dewatering activities, and removal of temporary structures. GHD biologists will install and inspect block nets, conduct daily clearance surveys under the direction of the qualified fish biologist, and monitor for southwestern pond turtles and other sensitive wildlife. Passive and active relocation techniques will be employed under the direction of the fish biologist and will follow all measures as outlined in the HDR prepared Fish Protection Plan.

Each morning prior to the start of construction, the biologist will conduct clearance surveys to confirm that no pond turtles or other aquatic species are present in the in-water work area. Surveys will also cover upland habitat, to check for southwestern pond turtles and during the breeding season.

Following the completion of in-water work, construction is expected to shift to work on the bridge superstructure and rail top from November through December 2025. Biological monitoring during this time is anticipated to have a lower level of intensity, as construction will take place outside of the stream channel and away from aquatic habitat. GHD will attempt to coordinate with regulatory agencies to reduce the frequency of biological monitoring during this period to weekly site visits. Nonetheless, we have conservatively budgeted for continued daily monitoring throughout the full duration of construction.

The biologist will be present during the removal of temporary water diversion structures to ensure the area is restored to pre-construction conditions. If any special status species are encountered, they will be

allowed to move out of the work area on their own. If relocation is necessary, the biologist will move southwestern pond turtles to suitable nearby habitat and will follow measures found in the Fish Protection Plan. If steelhead need to be relocated, that will be conducted by the HDR permitted fish biologist with GHD biologist assistance as necessary.

Task 2 Limitations / Assumptions:

- In-water work is assumed to occur in September, October, and November 2025.
- Bridge superstructure (rail-top) work is expected to occur November through December 2025. While GHD will request reduced monitoring frequency during this phase, we have conservatively assumed daily monitoring in this estimate.
- Monitoring for southern California steelhead and other native fish species will be limited to visual observation only. However, GHD biologists, working under the direction of the qualified fish biologist will assist with any passive and active fish relocation efforts. However, we are not authorized or permitted to capture or relocate southern California steelhead.
- A permitted fish biologist (contracted through HDR) will be responsible for any necessary handling or relocation of listed fish species (i.e., steelhead).
- GHD biologists will provide seine and block nets. We expect that the permitted fish biologist will provide any necessary fish relocation equipment such as five-gallon buckets, bubblers, additional fish dip nets. GHD is happy to provide this additional equipment at cost covered under expenses.
- This scope assumes one full-time biologist onsite Monday through Friday for approximately 75 workdays over the construction period (September through December 2025), unless reduced by agency concurrence. At times, an additional biologist may be necessary, particularly at the start of the project to seine in-water work areas and set-up block nets, as well as assist the permitted fish biologist with rescuing stranded fish species. Additionally, GHD has conservatively included effort for up to two instances of weekend work based on the team's latest coordination with the Contractor. If additional weekend work is expected outside of two occurrences (i.e., 4 workdays), then additional budget may be required.
- GHD assumes that construction will proceed as scheduled without long-term pauses or shutdowns that would significantly alter the monitoring timeline.
- Travel, per diem, and equipment costs are included in the overall task budget

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Preconstruction survey results and documentation, including survey maps, species observations, and habitat conditions.
- Daily biological monitoring logs, including observations of special status species, compliance with permit measures, and corrective actions as needed.
- Photo documentation of construction progress, species observations, and habitat conditions (before, during, and after construction).
- Block net installation and inspection logs during water diversion and dewatering phases.
- Fish and aquatic species relocation observation forms, per the Fish Protection Plan, in coordination with the permitted fish biologist.
- Communication records with RailPros, HDR, and regulatory agencies, as needed to document adaptive actions and ensure compliance.

Task 2 Schedule:

- Anticipate September 2 through December 31, 2025

Task 2 Estimated Effort:

- Preconstruction surveys and full-time biological monitoring (45 days; September–October): 400 hours
- Conservative daily monitoring for remaining in-water work and rail work (30 days; November–December): 240 hours
- Dewatering/fish rescue and relocation coordination and support: 40 hours
- Travel: 80 hours

Total Task 2 Level of Effort: 760 hours

Task 3: Weekly Monitoring Reports

GHD will prepare and submit weekly summary reports throughout construction. These reports will include: 1) daily monitoring activities, 2) wildlife observations and avoidance actions, 3) permit compliance tracking, 4) photo documentation, and 5) summary of any coordination with agencies or HDR's permitted fish biologist.

Task 3 Limitations / Assumptions:

- Weekly monitoring reports will be based on daily field notes, photo documentation, and observations collected by GHD biological monitors during construction.
- Reports will summarize biological monitoring efforts for the preceding week (Monday through Friday), with delivery assumed by the following Monday, unless otherwise requested by the client or regulatory agencies.
- The scope assumes a standard report template will be used unless otherwise specified in the final permit conditions.
- Reports will be submitted electronically (PDF format) to RailPros, VCTC, and other parties as needed; no hard copies are included in this scope.
- GHD will incorporate feedback on report format/content once, following the first submittal, and apply agreed-upon formatting to all subsequent weekly reports.

Task 3 Deliverables:

Weekly Biological Monitoring Reports (delivered electronically) summarizing:

- Monitoring activities conducted
- Observations of special status or native wildlife
- Compliance with permit measures
- Summary of any corrective actions taken or recommended
- Supporting photo documentation

Formatted, cumulative monitoring log (optional, upon request) summarizing key events and observations across the duration of construction.

Task 3 Estimated Effort: 50 hours

(Assumes 1.5–2 hours per week over the construction window, with buffer for formatting and submittals.)

Task 4: Reporting and Notifications

GHD will prepare and submit all biological reporting deliverables required under the emergency permits issued for the project. The scope and content of reporting are contingent upon the final conditions issued by the USACE, USFWS, NMFS, CDFW, RWQCB, and any other regulatory agency, if applicable.

Pre-construction notifications will be submitted to confirm that preconstruction surveys, species avoidance measures, and environmental training (if required) have been completed. These notifications will affirm that qualified biological monitors are in place and that the project is ready to proceed in compliance with the approved permits.

Post-construction notifications will confirm the cessation of all in-water or regulated activities, as well as completion of any restoration or site stabilization measures required by the permits.

Following project completion, GHD anticipates that the following reports may need to be prepared:

- A **Final Biological Compliance Report**, summarizing biological monitoring activities, implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, species observations, coordination with agencies, and photo documentation.
- A **Dewatering Activities Report** for submission, if required under RGP or 401 Water Quality Certification conditions. This will summarize all dewatering methods, schedules, outcomes, and supporting monitoring data.
- A **USACE Final Construction Report**, prepared and submitted within 45 days of project completion. This report will include detailed descriptions of the work completed, project timeline, environmental impacts, species protection measures, and supporting figures and photographs.

All reports will include GIS-based figures and photographic documentation and will be submitted electronically unless otherwise requested.

Task 4 Limitations / Assumptions:

- Final reporting content and submittal requirements will be based on conditions set forth in forthcoming permits issued by USACE, RWQCB, CDFW, NMFS, USFWS and other agencies (if applicable).
- GHD assumes HDR and/or RailPros will provide any previously submitted documentation needed for reference (e.g., Notice of Intent, permit conditions, agency correspondence).
- GHD assumes HDR and/or RailPros will provide GIS shapefiles showing construction boundaries and impact areas for inclusion in final figures.
- Any reporting submittal fees (if applicable) will be the responsibility of RailPros.
- Deliverables are based on electronic submittals only (PDF); printed copies are not included in this scope.
- If agency feedback results in substantial report revisions beyond one round of review, additional effort may be billed separately upon client approval.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Pre-construction notifications to CDFW, USACE, and RWQCB, confirming readiness to begin permitted activities (unless HDR will be performing these tasks).
- Post-construction notifications to applicable agencies.
- Final Biological Compliance Report
- Dewatering Activities Report (if required)
- USACE Final Construction Report (typically within 45 calendar days of project completion)
- GIS-based report figures and photo documentation in all final reports

Task 4 Estimated Effort: 60 hours

(Includes reporting coordination, document drafting, agency correspondence, GIS support, and preparation of figures.)