

Permit like the Pros

STEP 1

Develop a Conceptual Project Design & Obtain Initial Feedback

Engage partners and develop a conceptual project design that will improve ecological conditions for a potential project site. Define the project purpose and objectives. Draft a project description and site map. Establish design criteria (reference site and approved guidelines/manuals). Using the Permitting Process Flow Chart and Permit Summary Table, identify a short list of permit/approval processes relevant to your project and efficient permitting options.

Permits from city or county departments for grading, building, land use, and other permits may also be needed.

As applicable, ensure cooperating landowners, coordinate with adjacent landowners and secure access to easements. Develop a plan to conduct early and meaningful consultation with California Tribes in the project area. Seek initial feedback from relevant agencies, including local agencies. Identify lead agencies for CEQA/NEPA, as applicable. Begin to develop the overall project timeline.

STEP 2

Complete Resource Surveys & Associated Reports

Complete biological and cultural records searches, reconnaissance surveys, and biological resource assessments. Identify any listed or protected species that may be affected by the project. Consider assuming the presence of a species if working in their habitat. It may be faster and less costly to get authorization for "take" of species than to do enough surveys to show the species is not present. Consider species work windows when refining the project timeline.

STEP 3

Refine a List of Approvals Needed & Confirm with Regulatory Agencies

Use the Permitting Process Flow Chart and Permit Summary Table, initial feedback from agencies, and information obtained in Step 2 to refine the list of permits/approvals that will likely be needed, and to understand the relationships between those approvals.

Use restoration specific pathways wherever possible (i.e., NMFS Central Valley PBO, USFWS Statewide Restoration PBO, or other authorizations) after discussing project eligibility with agencies. Begin the CEQA/NEPA compliance process. Plan for adaptive management and maintenance and have that covered in CEQA/NEPA compliance and permits. Refine project timeline based on the approvals needed and eligibility for restoration specific pathways.

STEP 4

Convene Formal Pre-Application Meeting(s)

Invite agency staff (preferably those who will be writing the permits) to attend a pre-application consultation, with site visits as needed to help staff understand the project and site conditions. Meetings that bring together staff from different agencies are recommended. Receive agency feedback on the project design and environmental protection measures. Confirm with agency staff which efficient permitting pathways the project is potentially eligible for. Maintain a record of decisions and items discussed. Distribute notes to agency staff.

STEP 5

Modify Project Design & Submit Permit Applications

Maintain ongoing and frequent communication with agency staff. Through an iterative process, incorporate agency feedback into the project design. Some project types require a higher level of oversight and engineering review (e.g., culvert retrofits and replacement, construction/retrofitting of fishways). In permit applications, include a detailed project narrative clearly describing the impacts and anticipated ecological benefits of the project.

STEP 6

Project Authorization, Implementation, & Post-Construction Phase

After the project is authorized, begin construction and complete permit compliance monitoring and reporting, as required. Permit conditions are applied and implemented during this step, which may require engagement with regulators to interpret and adjust permit conditions to fit construction conditions or situations that may arise during project implementation. Complete post-construction monitoring and reporting as required.