

Friant Water Authority

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION PROJECT

DATE: May 7, 2020

PROJECT TITLE: Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project

TO: Office of Planning and Research, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Organizations and Parties

CEQA LEAD AGENCY: Friant Water Authority
854 N. Harvard Ave.
Lindsay, CA 93247

CONTACT: Doug DeFlitch, Chief Operating Officer c/o Ms. Toni Marie, Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

The Friant Water Authority (FWA), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) announce the availability of the joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate and address the potential impacts of implementing the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project (proposed Project) (SCH No. 2019120007).

The proposed Project location, description, and summary of impacts are described below.

PROPOSED PROJECT LOCATION/SETTING

The proposed Project is located in Tulare and Kern counties along the existing Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) between the communities of Lindsay, CA and McFarland, CA. The proposed Project is within and adjacent to the alignment of the FKC from milepost (MP) 88.2 (Fifth Avenue check) to MP 121.5 (Lake Woollomes check). Figure 1 shows the approximate location of the proposed Project.

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project consists of components that would restore the FKC design capacity using two methods: (1) raising portions of the embankments of the existing FKC, and (2) constructing a realigned canal segment east of the existing FKC.

- **Canal Enlargement** – The existing canal would be enlarged by raising the lining up to four feet from MP 88.2 (at Avenue 208) to MP 95.7 (immediately south of Tule River) and from MP 116.0 (at Avenue 8) to MP 121.5 (at the Lake Woollomes check), for a total of about 13 miles.
- **Canal Realignment** – The realigned canal segment would be constructed immediately east of the existing FKC and would serve as the exclusive water conveyance and delivery mechanism through its length. Most of the existing FKC adjacent to the new realigned canal segment would remain in place but would be taken out of active service; limited portions would be preserved for delivery pools at pump station turnouts. The realigned segment would extend about 20 miles from MP 95.7 to MP 116. For those portions of the existing canal removed from conveyance service, FWA would continue to maintain those portions of the canal consistent with their O&M agreement with Reclamation and Reclamation regulations.

Approximately 510 acres of new right-of-way would be required to accommodate the proposed realigned canal. The proposed Project would also require removal and replacement of the existing check structures, wasteways, and siphons at Deer Creek and White River. Control buildings and associated electrical, mechanical, and controls equipment at the Deer Creek and White River facilities would also be replaced with new equipment, as required. Where the realigned canal segment crosses roads that currently cross the FKC via existing bridges, new road crossings would be constructed over the realigned canal. The new crossings would be built to match the new, higher road elevations associated with raising the FKC. The corresponding bridge would then be demolished, the unused segment of the FKC would be filled to road grade, and the paved road surface would be reconstructed on earth fill. In addition to the road crossings, existing utility crossings would be removed, modified, or replaced to accommodate the needs of the existing utilities and the realigned canal system. The proposed Project would also require modification, relocation, abandonment, and/or removal of existing privately held facilities on lands adjacent to the canal and within the new alignment. Impacted privately held facilities may include, but are not limited to, wells, irrigation systems, farm roads, miscellaneous structures, power lines, etc.

PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACTS

The proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on cultural resources due to changes proposed to the FKC itself, land use due to the permanent conversion of important farmland, and transportation due to a potential temporary increase in emergency response times when construction-related detours may be in place. All other potential impacts would be less than significant or reduced to a less than significant level with proposed mitigation measures. These impacts include air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; geology and soils; greenhouse gases/climate change; hazardous and hazardous materials/wildfire; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning and agricultural resources; noise; transportation; tribal cultural resources; and utilities and service systems and energy. Reclamation and FWA prepared an Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) that provided an initial review of potential impacts associated with the proposed Project. Pursuant to the EA/IS, Reclamation and FWA determined that the proposed Project would have no impact or less-than-significant impacts on the following resources or topics: aesthetics, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, environmental justice, Indian Trust Assets, Indian Sacred Sites, and socioeconomics. The EA/IS is included as Appendix D in the Draft EIS/EIR and is available for review at the following locations:

<https://friantwater.org/projects> and https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_project_details.php?Project_ID=41341.

AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIS/EIR

A digital copy of the Draft EIS/EIR is available for download on FWA's website at: <https://friantwater.org/projects> and Reclamation's website at: https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_project_details.php?Project_ID=41341. Hard copies are available for viewing at the following locations:

- Friant Water Authority 854 N. Harvard Ave. Lindsay, CA 93247¹
- Porterville City Clerk's Office 291 N. Main St. Porterville, CA 93257.

Referenced materials used in the preparation of the Draft EIS/ER may be reviewed upon request by contacting FWA, please call Toni Marie (559) 562-6305.

ONLINE PUBLIC MEETING

In response to California's Executive Order N-33-20 and interim guidance from the U.S. Department of the Interior in association with large gatherings and Covid-19, FWA and Reclamation will hold an **online public meeting** and conference call to provide an overview of the proposed Project and receive verbal comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. No

¹ Covid-19 Statement: Hard copy review is by appointment only. Please contact Toni Marie at (559) 562-6305 to schedule.

in-person meetings will be held during the 45-day public comment period. Attendees may participate by webinar or phone. Meeting details and the registration process are as follows:

Date: June 8, 2020

Time: 5:00 p.m.: Webinar and Conference Line Open

5:30 p.m.: Presentation Starts

6:15 – 7:25 p.m. Public Comment Period (approx.)

7:30 p.m.: Meeting Adjourned

RSVP: The meeting will be held on GoToWebinar, an online service that enables participation by landline phone, smart phone, computer, or tablet. Pre-registration is required to attend the meeting. To RSVP and receive by email directions on how to join, visit the website address below. Please note that registration assigns a single conference call identification number and webinar address to each email address. The GoToWebinar platform does not accommodate sharing of registrations. Meeting materials will be provided to registrants in advance of the meeting. For technical support, or for stakeholders that do not have email, please contact Craig Moyle, Public Affairs Specialist, Stantec, at (916) 418-8248 or Craig.Moyle@Stantec.com.

Pre-registration: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8305010853274552846>

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

Written comments on the Draft EIS/EIR may be submitted from May 7, 2020 to June 22, 2020. Written comments should be submitted to Doug DeFlitch at the following physical or e-mail address by **5:00 p.m. on June 22, 2020**.

Doug DeFlitch, Chief Operating Officer

c/o Ms. Toni Marie, Executive Secretary

Friant Water Authority

854 N. Harvard Ave.

Lindsay, CA 93247

E-mail: FKCProjectComments@stantec.com

All comments should include the name, email address, phone number, and mailing address of the contact person submitting the comments.

For more information about the proposed Project please visit the Project website: <https://friantwater.org/projects>.

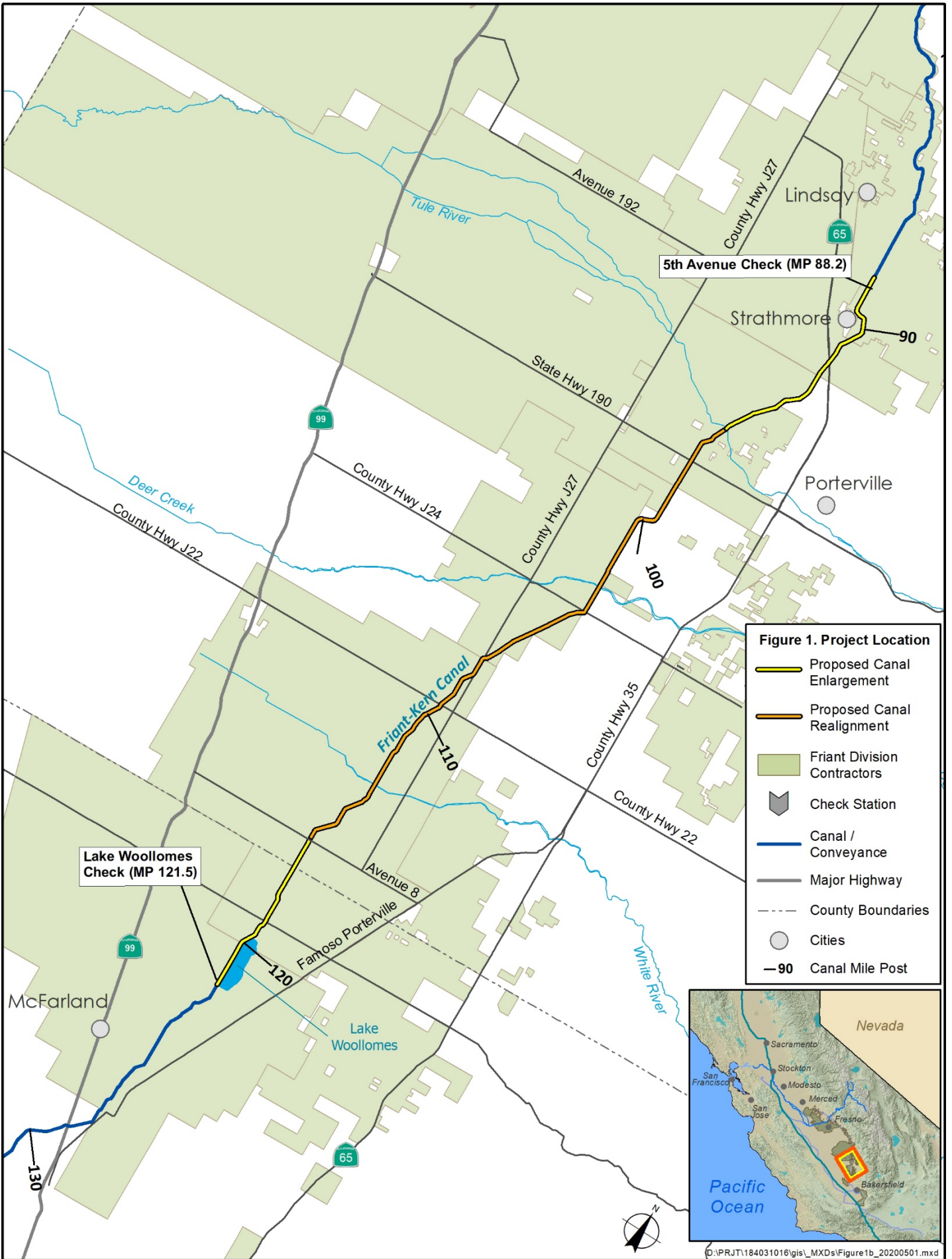











Figure 1. Project Location

-  Proposed Canal Enlargement
-  Proposed Canal Realignment
-  Friant Division Contractors
-  Check Station
-  Canal / Conveyance
-  Major Highway
-  County Boundaries
-  Cities
-  -90 Canal Mile Post

