



NOTICE OF COMPLETION & NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT WHITewater RIVER GROUNDwater REPLENISHMENT PROJECT

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Project (Project) in accordance with Public Resource Code §§21000 – 21189.57 and the CEQA Guidelines §§15000 – 15387.

CEQA Guidelines §15105 require a 45-day review period for the Draft EIR. During this review period, beginning **August 20, 2021 and ending October 4, 2021**, CVWD will receive comments on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated (CEQA Guidelines §15104). If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive notices regarding the proposed Project, have any questions, or need additional information, please use the Contact Person information identified below.

Project Description

CVWD is requesting a right-of-way (ROW) grant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the continued operation and maintenance of CVWD's existing Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Facility (Facility). Since the early 1900's, CVWD has been replenishing the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) in Whitewater with natural flow, snow melt, and beginning in 1973 with imported water as part of cooperative program with the Desert Water Agency. The Facility is a critical component for management of the Basin. The Facility is located on CVWD-owned lands as well as public land managed by the BLM. CVWD's existing ROW grants with the BLM have expired, and CVWD has applied to renew and amend the ROW grants. The proposed ROW grant would allow CVWD to continue groundwater replenishment activities at the Facility by delivering Colorado River water into the Basin at a maximum rate of up to 511,000 acre-feet in any given year. The proposed Project does not involve any new construction or ground disturbing activities.

Project Location

The existing Facility is located in the northwest portion of the CVWD service area, in the City of Palm Springs within Riverside County. The Facility is generally bound by the Interstate 10 (I-10) to the north, Indian Canyon Drive to the east, and State Route 111 (SR-111) to the west and south. CVWD has requested a ROW grant from the BLM for two locations totaling approximately 690.73 acres:

- The renewal area (approximately 511.9 acres) consists of two individual areas originally included in ROW grant LA 052742, which was previously issued by the BLM in 1984 and expired in 2014, and ROW grant CA 19150, which was previously issued by the BLM in 1987 expired in 2012. The renewal area covers a portion the existing Facility, including portions of Ponds 6 through 19, the concrete-lined and earthen conveyance channels, and Intake Structure 2. This area is located

within portions of Section 24 of Township 3 South, Range 3 East and Sections 20, 28, and 30 of Township 3 South, Range 4 East (approximately 509.7 acres). The renewal area also includes the existing low-flow dike and channel crossing on a portion of Section 14, Township 3 South, Range 3 East (approximately 2.2 acres).

- The amendment area consists of approximately 178.83 acres that was not included in either of the previous ROW grants issued by BLM, but is currently used by CVWD for maintenance of existing flood control berms. The amendment area includes two existing flood control berms within portions of Sections 23 and 24 of Township 3 South, Range 3 East (approximately 178.83 acres).

Environmental Impacts Analyzed

The Draft EIR analyzed potential environmental effects associated with the proposed ROW grant, including: air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; energy; geology and soils; greenhouse gas emissions; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; and tribal cultural resources. The EIR will also evaluate potential growth inducing effects, cumulative effects, irreversible environmental impacts, and energy impacts.

Availability of Environmental Documentation: The Draft EIR and other project background materials may be viewed online at: <http://www.cvwd.org/502/Whitewater-River-Groundwater-Replenishme>.

How to Submit a Comment & Contact Person

You are invited to submit written comments on the Draft EIR by standard mail to: William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor, CVWD, 75-515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, CA 92211; or by email to wpatterson@cvwd.org

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, comments on the Draft EIR must be received not later than **5:00 p.m. on October 4, 2021**. All comments provided will become public record.