



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Draft Environmental Impact Report

DATE: October 16, 2020

TO: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Organizations, and Interested Parties

PROJECT: Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project (SCH# 2020049019)

LEAD AGENCY: Groundwater Banking Joint Powers Authority (previously the Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District)

REVIEW PERIOD: October 16, 2020 to November 30, 2020

This Notice of Availability (NOA) has been prepared to notify responsible and trustee agencies, interested organizations, and interested parties that the Groundwater Banking Joint Powers Authority (Authority), as the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the proposed Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project (proposed project) that is available for review and comment. The Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District (Rosedale) and Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) have formed the Authority for the purpose of developing, constructing and operating the proposed project. The Draft EIR was prepared to comply with CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines* and to provide agencies and the public with information on the potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, recommended mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those environmental effects, and the analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. In addition, the Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with the CEQA-Plus requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to fulfill the requirement of potential federal funding partners to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND LOCATION: The proposed project would allow the Authority to more effectively manage sources of water supply available to Rosedale and IRWD by using available underground storage in the local San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. To do that, the Authority would develop water recharge and recovery facilities in the Kern Fan area of Kern County, California (**Figure 1**). The proposed project would recharge, store, recover and deliver:

- State Water Project (SWP) water, including Article 21 water;
- Central Valley Project (CVP) water, including Section 215 water;
- Kern River water available to the Authority through agreement(s) with existing right holders; and
- Water from other sources when available.

The stored SWP water would be used to provide ecosystem benefits downstream from the SWP's Lake Oroville and supply reliability benefits for agricultural, and municipal and industrial (M&I) uses in Rosedale's service area in Kern County and IRWD's service area in Orange County. A portion of the stored CVP water would be used to provide Incremental Level 4 supplies to federal wildlife refuges as well as supply reliability benefits to agricultural, and M&I uses. The proposed project would involve the construction and operation of water conveyance, recharge and recovery facilities. Constructed recharge basins, when inundated, would also provide intermittent wetland habitat to benefit local and migratory birds.

The proposed project would be located in western Kern County, west of the City of Bakersfield. The proposed recharge and recovery facilities would be constructed in two phases on approximately 1,300 acres of agricultural or vacant land within or near the Rosedale service area (Figure 1). The proposed project would also involve the acquisition of easements for construction, operation and maintenance of proposed Kern Fan Conveyance Facilities that would deliver water to and from the California Aqueduct and other facilities operated in Rosedale's Conjunctive Use Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The Draft EIR evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project and, for identified significant impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geologic and paleontological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, transportation, and wildfire, recommends mitigation measures that would reduce the potential significant impacts of the proposed project to a less than significant level. The proposed project could be located on a site, which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to *Government Code* Section 65962.5; however, the implementation of mitigation measures would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The NOA and Draft EIR may be downloaded from the Rosedale and IRWD websites at the following locations:

- <https://www.rrbwsd.com/newsletter-notices>
- <https://www.irwd.com/doing-business/environmental-documents>

As permitted, printed copies of the Draft EIR may be available for public review at the following public libraries, as well as the Rosedale and IRWD offices, if/when the restrictions due to facility closures and the need for social distancing required in response to COVID-19 are lifted by the appropriate governmental agencies:

- Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District, 849 Allen Rd., Bakersfield CA 93314
- Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine CA 92618
- Beale Memorial Library, 701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield CA 93301
- Irvine/Heritage Park Library, 14361 Yale Avenue, Irvine CA 92604

Members of the public who desire to review a printed copy should call (661) 589-6045 in advance to determine which of the above locations are open and, if not, whether other appropriate accommodations may be made.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PRESENTATION: During the 45-day public review period, the Authority will conduct a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom and telephonically to receive comments on the Draft EIR. The virtual meeting will describe the following: the proposed project; the contents and conclusions of this Draft EIR; and the key steps for the remainder of the public review process including the hearing on the proposed project before the Authority Board of Directors. The virtual meeting will be held at 2:00 P.M. on November 4, 2020 as follows:

Virtual Public Meeting Details

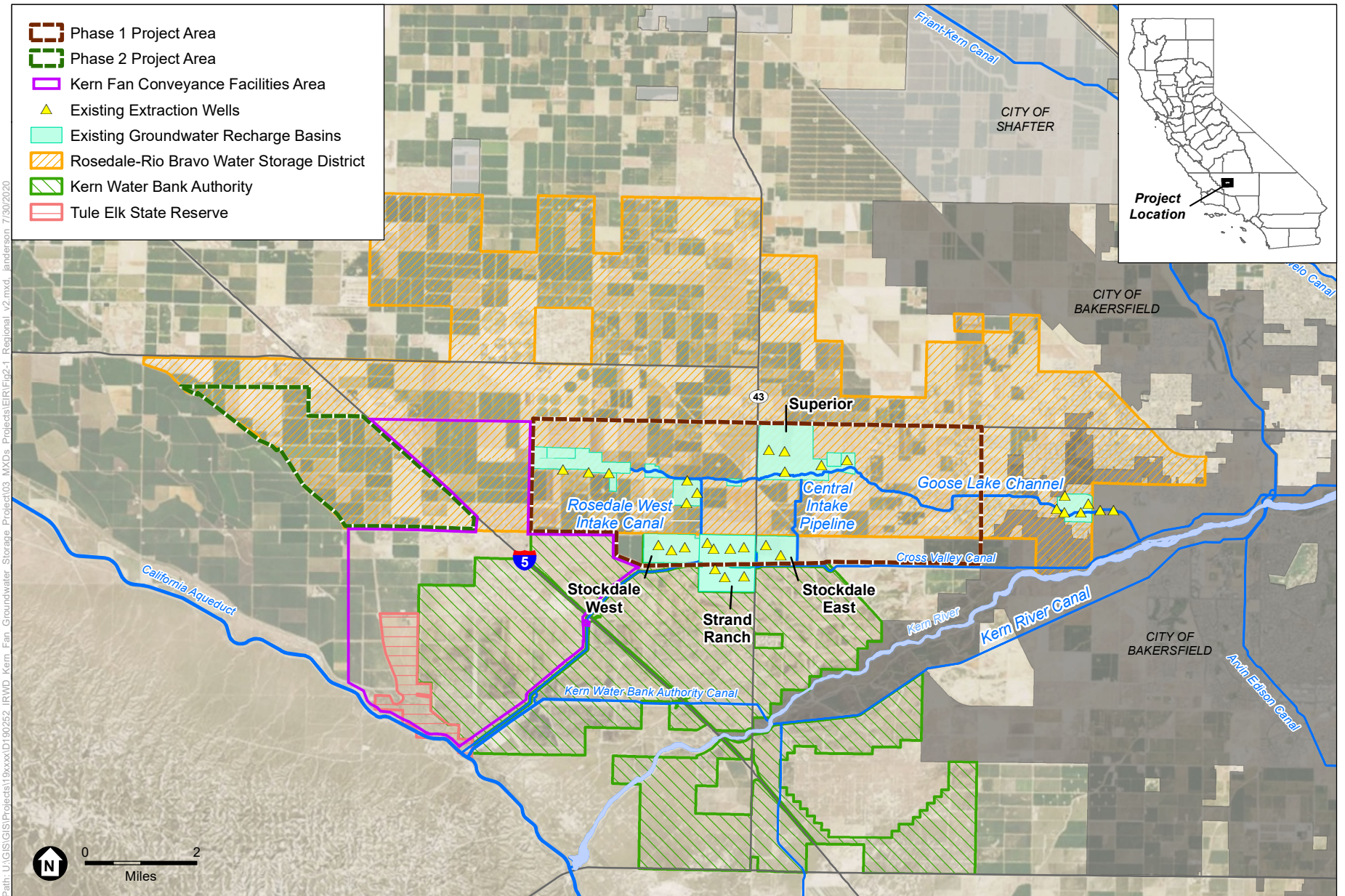
Date:	November 4, 2020
Time:	2:00 PM
Zoom:	http://bit.ly/kernfanmeeting
Telephone Dial-in:	(213) 338-8477 or (877) 853-5247
Meeting ID:	891 5693 0018
Submit Written Comments to:	Eric Averett General Manager Groundwater Banking Joint Powers Authority P.O. Box 20820, Bakersfield, CA 93390-0820 eaverett@rrbwsd.com

If participating online, please register for the meeting prior to joining by providing your name and email address. For the best experience it is recommended that you download and install Zoom on your computer before the meeting begins. The free Zoom software can be downloaded in advance, or at the moment you join the meeting at: <https://zoom.us/download>. However, it is not required to install the Zoom software on your computer to participate and provide comments. When you click on the meeting link provided at registration, a new browser tab or window will open (depending on your browser settings).

If participating by phone, you will not be able to see the visual content presented, but you can listen and participate. When instructed to do so, please press *6 to mute and unmute yourself, and press *9 to raise your hand.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS: The Authority is soliciting comments from the public regarding the content of the environmental information provided in the Draft EIR. Written comments on the Draft EIR must be received by the Authority at the address provided below, no later than 5:00 P.M. on November 30, 2020.

Groundwater Banking Joint Powers Authority
P.O. Box 20820
Bakersfield, CA 93390-0820
Attn: Eric Averett, General Manager
eaverett@rrbwsd.com



SOURCE: Mapbox; Kern County

Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project

Figure 1
Regional Project Location