

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To:
Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From:
United Water Conservation District
1701 North Lombard Street, Suite 200
Oxnard, CA 93030

Ventura County Clerk
800 South Victoria Ave
Ventura, CA 93009

Project Title: Lake Piru Sediment Sampling Project

Project Location: Lake Piru, Ventura County, California (Figure 1)

Name of Public Agency Approving Project (Lead Agency): United Water Conservation District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: United Water Conservation District

Project Description: United Water Conservation District (United) proposes to conduct the Lake Piru Sediment Sampling Project (Project) for the purpose of obtaining information on the character of sediments that have accumulated within the reservoir over the past 65 years following dam construction in 1955. Sampling will be performed at four target exploration locations and all four test pits will be completed within a maximum duration of three (3) working days (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The timing of work activities will be limited to January 11 through March 15, 2022 (if permits and authorizations are received in time, United will prioritize completing work prior to February 15, 2022). A test pit will be performed at each location, designated TP1 through TP4. The test pits will be logged in general accordance with ASTM D5434, *Standard Guide for Field Logging of Subsurface Explorations of Soil and Rock*. The soil samples obtained from the test pits will be logged in general accordance with the Unified Soils Classification System as described in ASTM D2488, *Standard Practice for Description and Identification of Soils (Visual-Manual Procedure)*.

Test pits will be performed with a backhoe excavator with the ability to excavate to a depth of 12 feet. Bulk samples of representative materials from the test pits will be obtained and placed in five-gallon buckets with a sealable lid to preserve moisture content of the material. The soil stratigraphy and the depth to groundwater, if encountered, will be documented on test pit logs and with photographs. Excavations will be 12 feet deep, however, excavations need not extend below groundwater level and groundwater would be avoided when encountered. The test pits will be backfilled with the material excavated from the pits. The backfill material will be placed in nominal 12-inch-thick layers, and each layer tamped with the backhoe bucket. The surface layer will be wheel-rolled (e.g., sheephead roller) with the backhoe. A general 25-foot-radius work area surrounding the

test pits will be established for the staging and operation of construction vehicles and equipment.

The Project will incorporate best management practices (BMPs) designed to avoid or reduce the potential for impacts to sensitive natural resources. The BMPs include guidelines for Project implementation such as seasonal timing of work, delineating work and access boundaries, and maintaining a high level of environmental awareness through biological monitoring and worker environmental awareness training. Limiting the size of the work areas for TP1 and TP2 and accessing the work areas from the existing Juan Fernandez boat launch ramp by overland truck travel using rubber-wheeled vehicles will further reduce any potential for impacts to sensitive natural resources. By the end of each workday, all excavations will be backfilled or covered. Work activities will only be conducted in dry lakebed areas (i.e., no work will occur in ponded or flowing water).

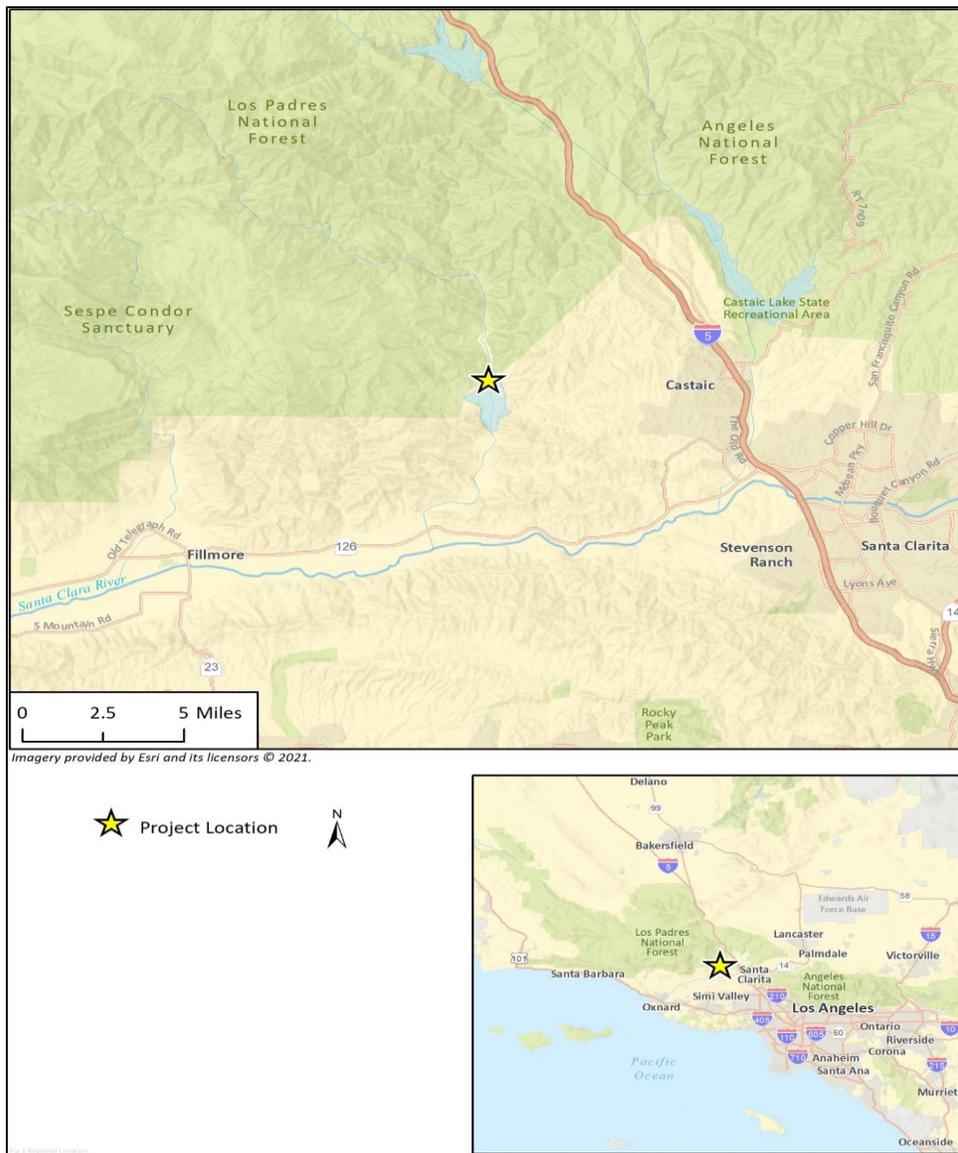


Figure 1. Regional location of Project Area.

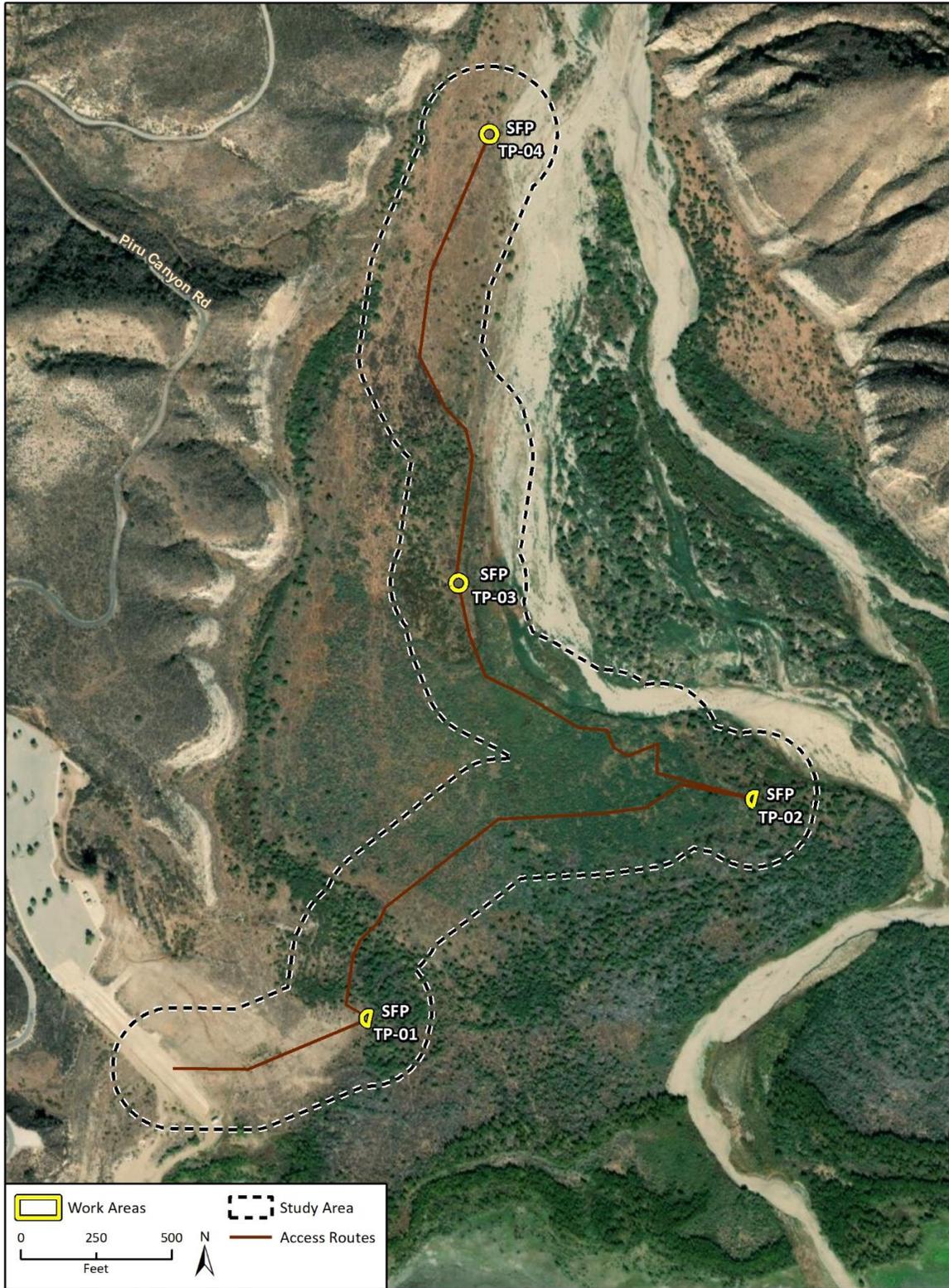


Figure 2. Project Area and proposed test pit sample sites.

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
 Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
 Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
 Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 6, Section 15306 – Information Collection
 Statutory Exemptions
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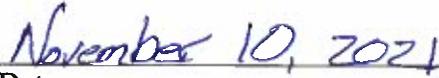
Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The Project is categorically exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15306 *Information Collection* (Class 6). Section 15306 *Information Collection* consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The Project's purpose is to obtain information on sediment accumulation within the reservoir to inform the planning of future sediment management activities. The Project will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Therefore, the *Information Collection* exemption is applicable.

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, a project exempt under Class 6 that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, a Class 6 exemption would apply except where the Project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. Federally designated critical habitat is present in or adjacent to the Project area for three species including arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*, federally endangered), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*, federally threatened), and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*, state and federally endangered). However, there is no suitable habitat in the Project area for arroyo toad or California red-legged frog and there have not been any documented occurrences of California red-legged frog within three miles of the Project area in over 50 years. In addition, due to the nature of the lake level fluctuations and potential inundation of the area, the current southwestern willow flycatcher habitat is transient and no records of southwestern willow flycatcher have been documented in the wildlife agencies databases within a three-mile radius of the Project area. As a result of the Project's design features, no impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies will occur. The District has determined that none of the exceptions to categorical exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 would apply.

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Date

Date OPR received for filing: _____