Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

SAWPA

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SANTA ANA WATERSHED PROJECT AUTHORITY WEATHER MODIFICATION PROJECT

- State Clearinghouse N. (SCH#): Pending Assignment by OPR –

Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code Article 7 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended, the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) has prepared an Initial Study for the project described below. Under CEQA, SAWPA identified no significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels and proposes to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

PROJECT LOCATION: The target areas for the Project include four general locations in the Santa Ana River watershed (Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast) as shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 2 shows the 15 proposed ground-based weather modification locations. These proposed locations have been chosen based on their upwind proximity to high precipitation target areas as follows:

- Northwest: The northwest target area bordering Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties encompasses a portion of the Central Transverse Ranges, to the west of the Interstate (I)-15 freeway. Estimated average seasonal runoff: 25,000 acre-feet (AF). Four sites are proposed in this area, two sit just south of the Transverse Ranges on the Angeles National Forest just north of the 210 freeway, and two are located south of the 210 freeway.
- Northeast: The northeast target area target area in San Bernardino County encompasses the area of the Central Transverse Ranges east of I-15, extending down to I-10 north of Palm Springs. Estimated average seasonal runoff: 65,000 AF. Six sites are proposed within or just south of the Central Transverse Ranges on the San Bernardino National Forest.
- Southeast: The southeast target area includes the mountains in Riverside County centered just to the west and southwest of Palm Springs. Estimated average seasonal runoff: 10,000 AF. Three sites are located at the base of the San Jacinto Mountains.
- Southwest: The southwest target area includes the mountain range that lies on the border of Orange and Riverside counties. Estimated average seasonal runoff: 5,000 AF. Two sites are near the base of the Santa Ana Mountains.

The table below provides the exact location of the 15 sites and their existing land use:

Site Name	Elevation (ft)	Coordinates (Lat., long.)	Local Jurisdiction	Zoning	Ordinance/Code Regulating Land Use	Current Land Use
Waterwise - CBWCD	1044	34.078103, -117.704509	City of Montclair, San Bernadino County	R1 Single-Family Residential	City of Montclair Zoning Ordinance 11.18.010	Community center/park
Upland - CBWCD	1318	34.101183, -117.695932	City of Upland, San Bernardino County	PB-FC/R Public Flood Control/ Recharge	Upland Municipal Code 17.08.020 Land Use Regulations for Special Purpose Zones	Flood control

Site Name	Elevation (ft)	Coordinates (Lat., long.)	Local Jurisdiction	Zoning	Ordinance/Code Regulating Land Use	Current Land Use
SAWC-1	1720	34.137955, -117.639953	City of Upland, San Bernardino County	M Mining	Upland Municipal Code 17.08.020 Land Use Regulations for Special Purpose Zones	Mining
SAWC-2	2120	34.156470, -117.671847	San Bernardino County	RS-10M Single Residential - 10,000 square feet Minimum	San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances 82.04.040	Water treatment/ flood control
EVWD	1498	34.136848, -117.188404	City of San Bernardino	Publicly Owned Flood Control	City of San Bernardino Development Code Chapter 19.10	Sparsely vegetated vacant land
Thousand Pines Christian Camp	4903	34.249539, -117.278552	San Bernardino County	CF/RL-5 Crest Forest/Rural Living-5 Acre Minimum	San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances 82.04.040	Camp and conference center
Sycamore Water Plant	1649	34.186745, -117.309273	City of San Bernardino, San Bernardino County	University Hills Specific Plan District	City of San Bernardino Development Code Chapter 19.10	Sparsely vegetated vacant land
SBVWCD-1	1841	34.070031, -117.114747	San Bernardino County	RM Residential Multiple	San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances 82.04.040	Vacant lot
SBVWCD-2	2120	34.107975, -117.099455	San Bernardino County	Resource Conservation	San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances 82.03.030	Dam powerhouse and ancillary facilities
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	2881	33.975799, -116.981613	Riverside County	R-A-1, Residential Agricultural	Riverside County Ordinance 348.4966 Section 6.50	Vacant lot
EMWD - N	2182	33.780236, -117.072465	Riverside County	R-A-10, CZ No. 5696, Residential Agricultural	Riverside County Ordinance 348.4966 Section 6.50	Open space
EMWD - S	1854	33.668970, -116.970352	Riverside County	A-2-10, Heavy Agriculture	Riverside County Ordinance	Water storage

Site Name	Elevation (ft)	Coordinates (Lat., long.)	Local Jurisdiction	Zoning	Ordinance/Code Regulating Land Use	Current Land Use
					348.4966 Section 14.1	
Mary Lea Gardiner	3663	33.536251, -116.805057	Riverside County	R-1-2 1/2 One and multiple family dwellings	Riverside County Ordinance 348.4966 Section 6.1 and 7.1	Private residence
Irvine Ranch Water District	810	33.776528, -117.754128	Orange County	A1 (SR) General agricultural/ rural residential (sign restriction)	Orange County Municipal Code Section 7-9-32	Municipal buildings
El Toro Reservoir	579	33.6234824, -117.6697852	City of Mission Viejo	Community Facility	Mission Viejo Code of Ordinances Chapter 9.14	Water reservoir

ABOUT THE PROJECT: The objective of the pilot Project is to increase water supply in the region through implementation of a weather modification project and evaluate the realized benefits of cloud seeding in the Santa Ana River watershed to inform long-term decision-making and investments related to water supply. The Santa Ana River watershed is within one of the most densely populated areas in the State, with a growing and urbanizing population that is increasing demands on water supply. Due to population growth and climate change, historic hydrologic patterns can no longer be relied on and the system of imported water that provides significant supply to the region has become less reliable. The watershed gets about 50% of its water from local precipitation in the form of surface water and stored as groundwater, 35% using imports from the State Water Project and the Colorado River Aqueduct, and 15% from recycled water. Southern California, as with much of the state, has experienced drought conditions since 2014. The Project seeks to benefit the region by increasing the productivity of storm events and increasing local water supply.

The Project is a four-year pilot project that would include the installation and operation of 15 ground-based weather modification units throughout the Santa Ana River watershed to increase precipitation in the region. The Project would be operated for four years. Two types of ground-based cloud seeding methods would be used: North American Weather Consultants (NAWC) proprietary automated high output ground seeding (AHOGS) systems and ground-based cloud nuclei generators (CNGs). AHOGS are triggered by the Project meteorologist operating remotely; once triggered the units burn flares that rapidly release a concentrated amount of silver iodide (NAWC 2020). These generators are used for seeding convective bands with high concentrations of supercooled liquid water and strong vertical updrafts. CNGs are manually-operated systems that burn a solution of silver iodide and acetone to create a constant cloud of seeding material that provides broad coverage over mountainous terrain with strong orographic effects.

PROJECT IMPACTS: Based on the findings of the Initial Study, it has been determined that the project will not have a significant effect upon the environment based on mitigating measures, which will be attached to the project as conditions of approval. A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared outlining a Mitigation Monitoring

and Reporting Plan to mitigate the potentially significant impact to nesting birds, special status species, and cultural resources to less than significant impact. Additionally, none of the project site are known to contain any significant hazardous waste contamination under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The proposed project IS/MND will be circulated for a thirty (30) day public review period, beginning on April 7, 2022, and ending on May 6, 2022. The IS/MND is available for review at:

- ONLINE at – https://sawpa.org/santa-ana-river-watershed-weather-modification/
- SAWPA Office – 11615 Sterling Ave, Riverside, CA 92503

Please send your written/typed comments on the Draft IS/MND to SAWsPA by one of the following delivery methods. In your comments, please include your name, email address, telephone number, address, and an "RE: SAWPA Weather Modification Project Comments" at the top of your comments.

Mr. Mark Norton
SAWPA
11615 Sterling Avenue
Riverside, CA 92503
mnorton@sawpa.org

A Public meeting will also be held virtually on April 19, 2022, from 11:00am-12:00pm immediately following the regularly scheduled SAWPA Board of Commissioners Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to answer questions on the Project and environmental analysis. SAWPA will present the project and analysis at the beginning of the meeting and then open the meeting for question and answer. The public meeting may be accessed through the following zoom link: https://sawpa.zoom.us/j/89142636595
Meeting ID: 891 4263 6595
Or to join audio by phone, dial by your location
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
Meeting ID: 891 4263 6595

All comments must be received by no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 6, 2022.

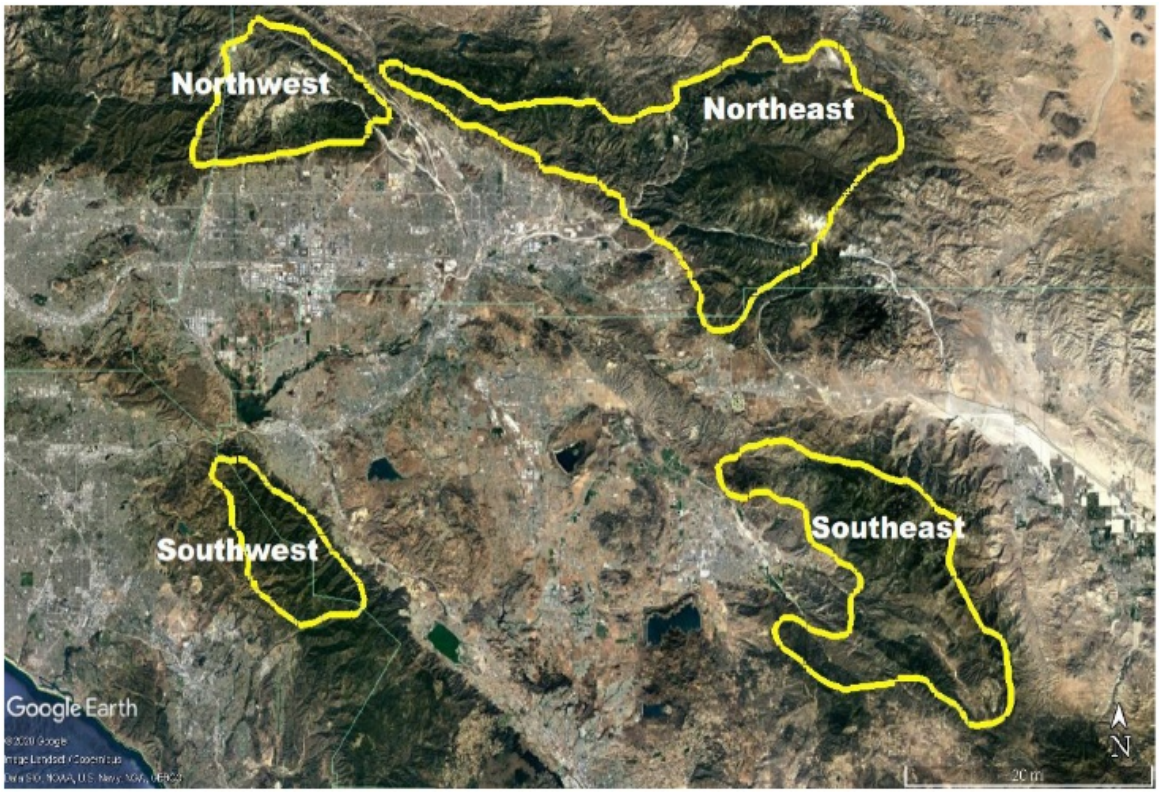

Figure 1 – Weather Modification Target Locations

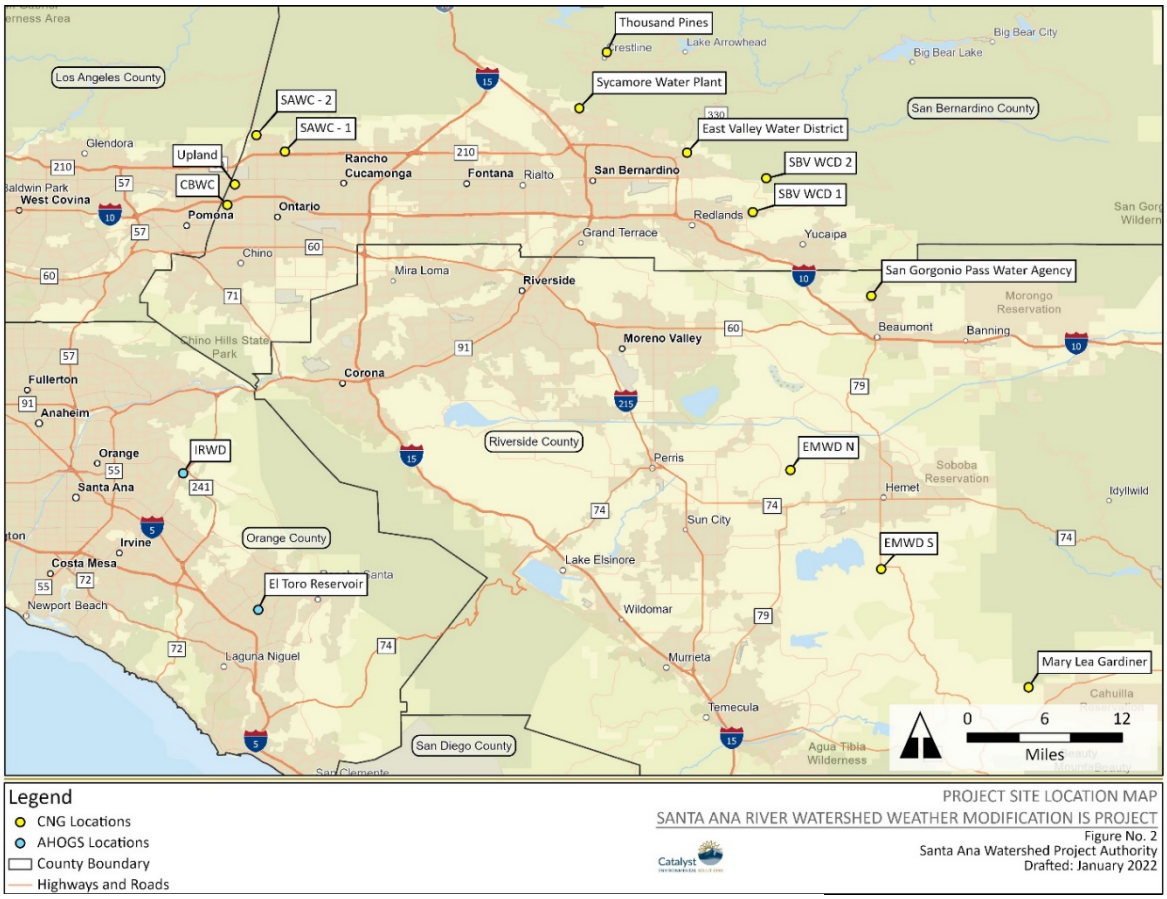

Figure 2 – Location of Weather Modification Units