

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

DATE: April 2, 2025
PROJECT TITLE: Westside Subbasin Ephemeral Creeks Recharge Projects
LEAD AGENCY: Westlands Water District
286 W. Cromwell Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Westlands Water District (District) intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Westside Subbasin Ephemeral Creeks Recharge Projects (Project). The Draft MND is available for public review and comment.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: The document is available for review for a period of 30 days which extends from **April 2, 2025** through **May 2, 2025**. Please provide any written comments (either by mail or electronically) no later than **5:00 p.m. on May 2, 2025**. Please direct all comments to the following address:

Bobby Phillips, Resources Engineer
Westlands Water District
P.O. Box 5199
Fresno, CA 93755
bphillips@wwd.ca.gov

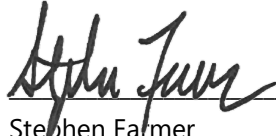
PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: The Project would entail (1) the construction and operation of new surface water diversion and groundwater recharge basins and facilities located along Arroyo Pasajero Creek and Panoche Creek, and (2) the conversion and operation of the existing Cantua Creek storage basin to a surface water diversion system and recharge basin facility. The proposed basins would provide a combined percolation area of 1,004.95 acres, up to a maximum of 1,485.3 acres. The District proposes to divert up to a total maximum of 24,260 acre-feet per year (AFY) of surface waters from these three ephemeral drainages during periods of high flow to be retained in three (3) proposed diversion and recharge basin locations.

The purpose of the Project is to provide facilities to capture excess surface water supply to be more efficiently recharged to the underlying groundwater basin, improving water supply reliability within the region, and improving conditions of the underlying aquifer consistent with the District GSP. In addition, some of the other goals of the Project are to protect baseline replenishment and existing beneficial uses while appropriating flood waters, enhancing natural aquifer recharge, promoting groundwater sustainability in the Subbasin, and providing flood relief to landowners adjacent to the proposed Project facilities. More efficient and reliable groundwater recharge would reduce adverse effects related to groundwater pumping, and support agricultural operation throughout the region. Recharging excess surface water during normal and wet hydrological years would also aid in lessening the effect of dry years and drought periods.

INITIAL STUDY: An Initial Study was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements to provide a project-level assessment of the potential environmental consequences of the adoption and implementation of the proposed Project. That document concluded that the Project could result in significant effects on the environment, but that significant effects could be avoided or lessened to an insignificant degree through the adopted to revisions to the Project or through the adoption

and implementation of mitigation measures. Accordingly, it has been determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration is appropriate for the Project.

TO REVIEW DOCUMENT: Copies of the document can be reviewed at the District office, located at 286 W. Cromwell Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711, or online at the District's website at <https://wwd.ca.gov/news-and-reports/environmental-docs/>. All written comments on the Draft MND must be submitted no later than the **May 2, 2025** deadline.



Stephen Farmer
Chief Administrative Officer
Westlands Water District

April 2, 2025

Date