



TULARE IRRIGATION DISTRICT

6826 Avenue 240 ■ Tulare, CA 93274

Phone Number: (559) 686-3425 Fax Number: (559) 686-3673

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY (NOA) / NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO ADOPT A DRAFT EIR (EIR) FOR THE MCKAY POINT RESERVOIR PROJECT (SCH #2014011078)

DATE: March 1, 2024

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

FROM / LEAD AGENCY: Tulare Irrigation District
6826 Avenue 240
Tulare, CA 93274

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability and Public Comment Period of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

The Tulare Irrigation District (TID), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) that identifies and evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed McKay Point Reservoir Project. The proposed Project is located on approximately 500 acres adjacent to the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River. TID releases this Notice of Availability (NOA) / Notice of Intent (NOI) to open the 45-day public comment period for the EIR, in accordance with CEQA.

Project Title: McKay Point Reservoir Project

Project Applicant: Project joint owners – Tulare Irrigation District (TID), the Consolidated Peoples Ditch Company (CPDC), and the Visalia and Kaweah Water Company (VKWC).

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): The Project site is comprised of portions of the following Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN's): 113-070-016-000, 113-080-005-000, 113-080-008-000, 113-090-001-000, 113-100-002-000.

Project Location: Located in Tulare County, California, the Project site lies between and to the south of both Lake Kaweah (2.5 miles northeast of the site) and Bravo Lake (1.5 miles northwest of the site); 1.0 miles northwest of the community of Lemon Cove; and 2.5 miles southeast of the community of Woodlake. The Project site is located approximately 1.0 mile west-southwest of the intersection of State Highways 216 and 198, in Sections 3 and 4, Township 18 South, Range 27 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

The surrounding land uses in the Project area are mining, agricultural, and residential. The adjacent lands to the north, northeast, southwest and west are currently being used for aggregate mining operations, and the areas south and east of the Project site are used intensively for agricultural and, to a limited extent, for rural residential purposes.

Project Background: TID is a public agency organized and existing pursuant to Division 11 of the California Water Code. CPDC and VKWC are mutual water companies organized and existing pursuant to Division 3 of the California Corporations Code. The Project Owners are all members of the Kaweah and St. Johns Waters Association (Association), which oversees the surface water rights and diversion operations on the Kaweah River. VKWC is also a mutual water company formed under Section 200 of the California Corporations Code. Together they are the Owners of the Project.

Project Summary: The Owners propose to develop approximately 200 acres within the 500-acre McKay Point property into a surface water storage and re-regulation reservoir (the proposed Project). The reservoir would be located on the north side of the divergence of the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River.

The Project would consist of the following phases: excavation of the site for the reservoir; construction of the reservoir; and operation of the reservoir. The Owners would contract with West Coast Sand and Gravel (WCSG) to excavate the site to allow for the construction of the reservoir. After the excavation and construction of the reservoir, the McKay Point Reservoir would be used as a surface water storage / re-regulation reservoir. The reservoir would also be used to optimize groundwater recharge within the Owners service areas.

TID is the Project applicant on behalf of the Owners and is the CEQA Lead Agency. The Owners' objectives in proposing the Project include the following:

- Capturing and re-regulating water made available to the Owners during flood releases from Lake Kaweah at the proposed Project site.

- Capturing and re-regulating water entitlements belonging to the Owners released from Lake Kaweah at the proposed Project site.
- Capturing and re-regulating any other water sources on the Kaweah River that may be made available to the Owners at the proposed Project site.
- Allowing other entities with water rights on the Kaweah River to capture and/or re-regulate flows when designated by the Owners at the proposed Project site.
- Allowing other entities to capture and/or re-regulate flows of the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River for purposes of storm water runoff and flood prevention with permission of the Owners and Kaweah/St. Johns water rights interests at the proposed Project site.
- Constructing the reservoir at the proposed Project site in such a way that revenue can be obtained to offset a portion of the construction and development costs.
- Locating the reservoir adjacent to and north of the Kaweah River to allow for off-stream access to surface water storage, thus minimizing the need for pipelines as part of the proposed Project.

To accomplish these objectives, the Owners propose to construct and operate the Project to:

- Divert and receive water immediately upstream of the divergence of the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River, commonly referred to as McKay Point.
- Provide a water storage capacity of approximately 4,600 acre-feet as part of the proposed Project.
- Deliver water to the Lower Kaweah River or the St. Johns River using an electrically operated weir channel and pump(s), as needed.
- Provide additional storage capacity at the proposed Project site for storm water layoff and flood prevention.
- Coordinate all such diversions and deliveries to and from the reservoir with the Kaweah Delta Conservation District and the Kaweah and St. Johns River Association.
- Enter into a lease agreement with WCSG to excavate at the proposed Project site for the reservoir and process the excavated material into a marketable product (primarily construction grade aggregate). TID would receive revenue from the sale of the excavated material that could be used to offset a portion of the construction and development costs.

A detailed Project Description can be found within the Draft EIR.

Public Review and Comment Period: The circulation of the Draft EIR is to disclose information and encourage written public comments. TID invites public comments on the Draft EIR during a 45-day public comment period, beginning on March 1, 2024, and ending on April 15, 2024. When providing comments, please include your name, the name of your agency or organization (if applicable), and contact information.

The Draft EIR can be obtained electronically at the following website: <https://tulareid.org/>. Physical copies of the Draft EIR can also be accessed Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the following location:

Tulare Irrigation District
6826 Avenue 240
Tulare, CA 93274

Comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted via e-mail to gstephens@sespe.com, or via U.S. mail to:

Sespe Consulting, Inc.
Attn: Graham Stephens
374 Poli Street, Suite 200
Ventura, CA 93001

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Graham Stephens, Project Manager, at (805) 275-1515 or via email at gstephens@sespe.com.

Public Hearing: TID will schedule a public hearing to consider adoption of the EIR at a future date. In advance of the hearing date, TID will distribute a separate notice regarding that hearing.