NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DATE: September 4, 2024

TO: State Clearinghouse, Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

PROJECT: Aquaterra Water Bank Project

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies and interested parties that the McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MAGSA), as Lead Agency, is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Aquaterra Water Bank Project (Project). MAGSA is requesting input from reviewing agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR.

The NOP, which includes a project description, maps, and the project's Initial Study, is available for review on MAGSA's website at: https://aquaterra.mcmullinarea.org/. Copies are available for review at the MAGSA office, 275 S Madera Ave. Suite 301, Kerman, CA 93630.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: MAGSA proposes to construct and operate a groundwater banking program within MAGSA's jurisdictional boundaries, found in Fresno County northeast of Helm, west and south of Kerman, and approximately 20 miles southwest of Fresno. The project will establish an 800k acre-foot water bank underlying the MAGSA area. The project may include and involve the following actions:

1. Contract Water Sources and Returns
    - State and federal contract water will be the source water for the Bank. Diversions to the Bank will be allocated contractor water from San Louis Reservoir that is routed to the Fresno Slough and the Mendota Pool. Contract water will be returned as either "wet" water or through state and federal contractor-controlled water trades and transfers.
2. Groundwater Banking Program
    - Establishment of the Bank will require construction of conveyance, recharge, and recovery facilities. Recharge deposits to the Bank are expected to occur primarily from October through February of any given year.
3. Infrastructure and Easements
    - Project infrastructure elements to be constructed include conveyance, recharge, and recovery facilities. Long-term easements with landowners for the elements will be obtained. The conveyance and recharge system will include the construction of a main canal, lateral canals, recharge basins, pump stations, recovery wells, and road crossings.
4. Operations
    - The Bank will be managed under an Operational Model that will provide a framework for monitoring hydrologic and water quality data and planning, tracking, and projecting water recharge and export.
5. Monitoring
    - Groundwater quality and quantity, groundwater and surface water movement, import and export of drinking water constituents to and from the Mendota Pool, and movement of legacy groundwater constituents will be monitored and managed through a developed program.

A complete description of construction elements is provided in the Initial Study found on the Project website. A description of the operational elements of the Project including an Operational Plan is in development and will be included in the Draft EIR.

Traducción en español disponible en: aquaterra.mcmullinarea.org | ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਇੱਥੇ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ: aquaterra.mcmullinarea.org

EIR SCOPE OF ANALYSIS: The EIR is intended to provide decision-makers and the public with information that enables them to consider the environmental consequences of the proposed project. The EIR would identify potentially significant effects, cumulative impacts, and any feasible means of avoiding or reducing the effects through project redesign, the imposition of mitigation measures, or implementation of project alternatives.

Based on the analysis contained in the Initial Study, the probable environmental effects to be analyzed in the EIR include but are not limited to the following:

Air Quality	Biological Resources
Cultural Resources	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Hazards & Hazardous Materials	Hydrology/Water Quality
Land Use/Planning	

PUBLIC SCOPING: MAGSA is seeking comments from residents, property owners, and concerned citizens regarding issues they believe should be addressed in the EIR. In accordance with CEQA, MAGSA requests that agencies review the description of the Project provided with the NOP at https://aquaterra.mcmullinarea.org/and provide comments or guidance on the scope of environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the Lead Agency.

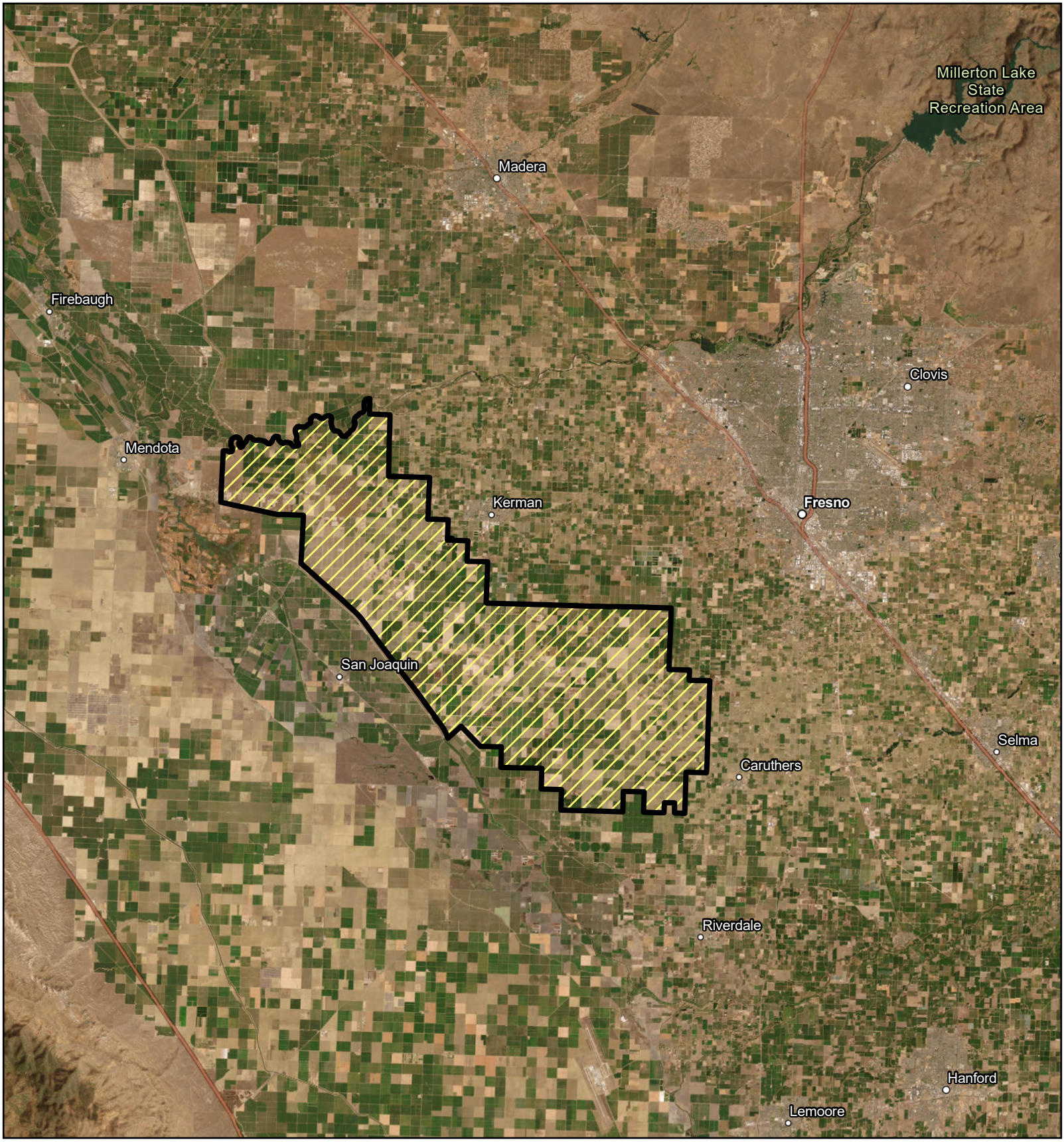
A scoping meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18th, 2024, at 6:00 pm at the Kerman Senior Center, at 720 S 8th St, Kerman, CA, 93630. The scoping meeting will include a brief presentation describing the Project and a preliminary review of potential environmental effects. The scoping meeting will include time for the public and stakeholders to provide input on the scope and content of the EIR, including any input regarding potential mitigation measures or possible alternatives to the Project.

The issuance of this NOP triggers a 30-day public scoping period. The scoping period begins on September 4th, 2024, and ends on October 4th, 2024. Comments may be sent any time during the 30-day public scoping period. Please focus your comments on issues related to the scope and content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the EIR. All public and agency scoping comments must be received or postmarked by October 4th, 2024. Due to the time limits mandated by state law, MAGSA recommends that your feedback is provided at the earliest possible date, but not provided later than 30 days (October 4th, 2024) after receipt of this notice. If applicable, please include the name of a contact person for your agency. All comments should be directed to:

McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency
275 S. Madera Avenue, Suite 301
Kerman, CA 93630

Comments may also be emailed to
aquaterra@mcmullinarea.org

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Aquaterra Water Bank Project Regional Location Map

TETRA TECH

MAGSA Boundary

Project Area

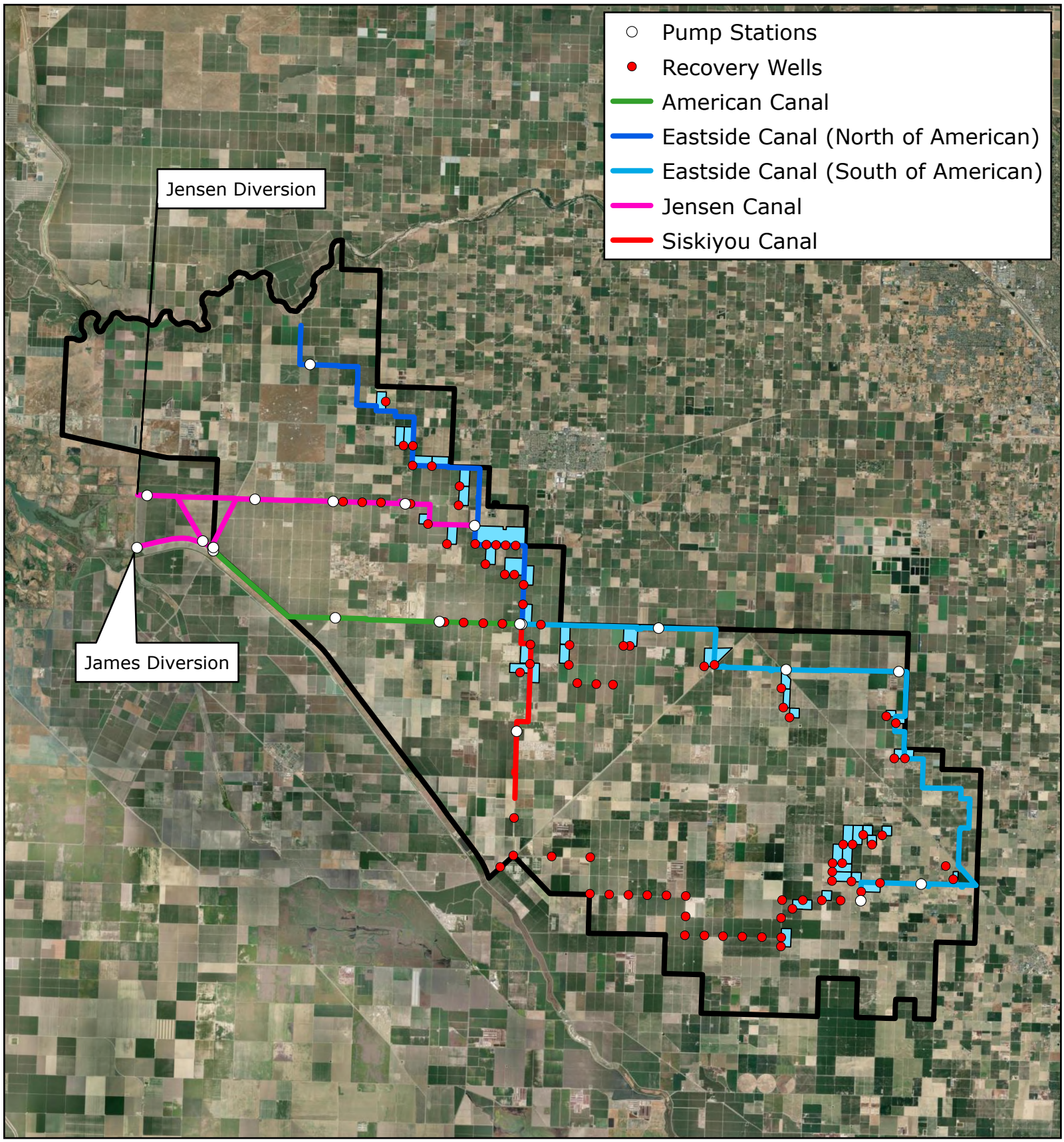
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SCALE = 1:126,720

Source: MAGSA 2024, ESRI 2022

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N





Aquaterra Project Features Map

TETRA TECH

Recharge Basin

MAGSA Boundary

0 1 2 3 4 Mi

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SCALE = 1:210,000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

Sources: MAGSA 2024, ESRI 2022, Provost and Pritchard 2023