NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Aquaterra Water Bank Project

State Clearinghouse No. 2024090124

November 5, 2025

Lead Agency: McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Project Title: Aquaterra Water Bank

Description of the Proposed Project: The McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MAGSA) is proposing to construct and operate a water bank (Proposed Project) on approximately 4,600 acres of farmland in Fresno County. The Proposed Project includes surficial features such as recharge basins (3,460 acres), conveyance canals (1,100 acres), pump stations, and recovery wells. It would be constructed over a four-year period beginning in 2026.

As part of the Proposed Project, MAGSA would create approximately 63.5 miles of conveyance canals, install 19 pump stations, 88 recovery wells, and 3,480 acres of recharge basins. Water from San Luis Reservoir or O'Neill Forebay would be delivered by bank subscribers from the Mendota Pool, distributed into recharge basins, and stored at the project site as groundwater until recovered by Bank depositors when needed and conveyed to the Mendota Pool. Once completed, the Bank would have the capacity to store up to 800,000 acre-feet (AF) of water, with annual recharge of up to 208,000 AF. Up to 148,000 AF could be recovered in any given year. At least 10 percent of the banked water would be left behind to replenish the aquifer.

Project Location: The 4,600-acre project area is located in unincorporated Fresno County, on agricultural lands approximately thirteen miles west of Fresno, three miles west of the towns of Kerman and Caruthers, adjacent to and east of the James Bypass, six miles southeast of the city of Mendota, and four miles north of the town of Helm ((see enclosed Project Area Map). Although conveyance and recharge features (surface area of effect) would be situated on approximately 4,600 acres close to the eastern edge of the MAGSA area, the groundwater gradient is from northeast to southwest, meaning recharged groundwater may spread beneath the entire 120,000-acre MAGSA area.

Environmental Review: The DEIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and one alternative (Alternative 1: Reduced Area/Reduced Pumping Alternative). A No Project Alternative was also evaluated, under which MAGSA would not construct recharge basins, conveyance canals to carry water from the Mendota Pool and Fresno Slough to the recharge basins and from the recovery wells, or build infrastructure required to operate a groundwater bank. No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified for the Proposed Project or Alternative 1. All potentially significant effects identified in the impact analysis would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of mitigation measures.

The DEIR includes analysis of the following environmental issue areas that may be impacted by the Proposed Project or Alternative 1:

Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Significance After Mitigation
Aesthetics	LTS	LTS
Agriculture and Forestry	LTS	LTS
Air Quality	S	LTS
Biological Resources	S	LTS
Cultural Resources	S	LTS
Energy	LTS	LTS
Geology, Soils, Seismicity, Paleontology	S	LTS
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS	LTS
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	LTS
Hydrology and Water Quality	S	LTS
Land Use and Planning	NI	NI
Mineral Resources	NI	NI
Noise	S	LTS
Population and Housing	NI	NI
Public Services	NI	NI
Recreation	NI	NI
Transportation and Circulation	LTS	LTS
Tribal Cultural Resources	S	LTS
Utilities	LTS	LTS
Cumulative	S	LTS

Notes: LTS = Less than Significant; S = Significant; NI = No Impact

Public Review Period: The issuance of this NOA begins a 45-day public review period, which begins on **November 5, 2025, and ends on December 20, 2025. Due to the 45-day period ending on a Saturday, we are extending the period to December 22, 2025**. Comments may be submitted any time during the public review period. All public and agency comments must be received or postmarked by 5:00 p.m. on December 22, 2025. Due to the time limits mandated by state law, MAGSA recommends that your feedback be provided as soon as possible, but not later than 45 days after the start of the public review period. If applicable, please include the name of a contact person for your agency. All comments should be directed to:

McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency
ATTN: Matthew Hurley, General Manager
275 S. Madera Avenue, Suite 301
Kerman, California 93630

Comments may also be emailed to comments@mcmullinarea.org. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final EIR will be prepared and will include responses to comments received during the public review period.

Public Meeting: A public meeting to address questions and receive comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIR will be held at the following location:

Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2025
Time 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Place: Kerman Senior Center, located at 720 S. Eighth St., Kerman, CA 93630.

Property Owner(s): The vast majority of land within the Project Area is privately owned. Exceptions include two ecological reserves, a landfill, and roads owned by the county and the state. This public notice is being sent to all potentially affected property owners and owners of lands adjacent to potentially affected properties.

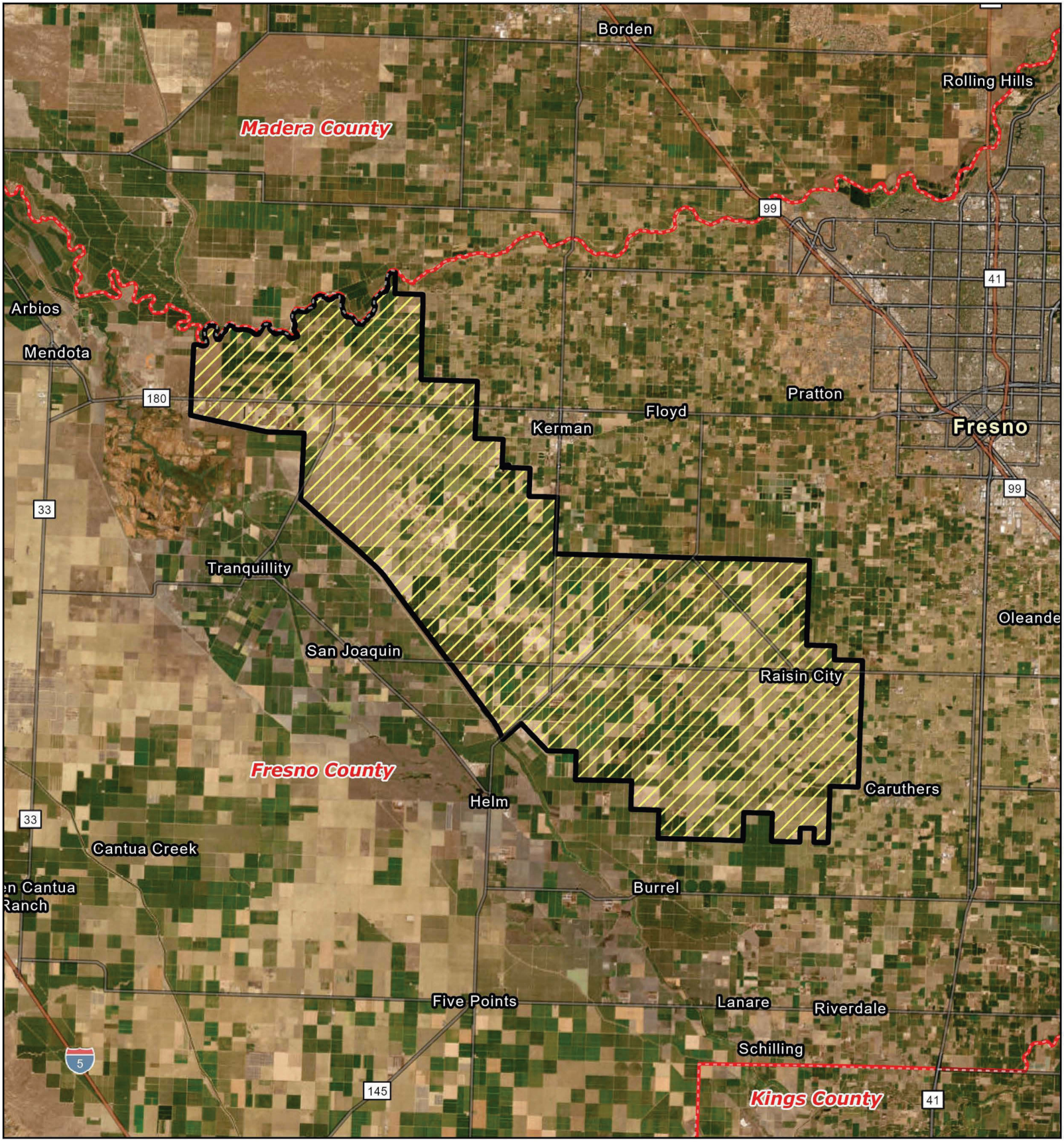
Document Availability: A copy of the DEIR and supporting documents will be available both at the Kerman Branch Library and the MAGSA office, addresses listed below:

McMullin Area GSA
(address provided above)

Kerman Branch Library
15081 W Kearney Blvd
Kerman, California 93630

The DEIR and supporting documents are available for download from MAGSA's Aquaterra website: https://aquaterra.mcmullinarea.org

Hazardous Materials: The Proposed Project is not located on a site included on a list of hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5. Two Cortese List facilities may be located within a 1-mile radius of Proposed Project features, but the Proposed Project has been designed to avoid them and they would not present a significant hazard to the public or the environment.



Aquaterra Water Bank Project
Regional Location Map

TETRA TECH

MAGSA Boundary
Project Area
California Counties

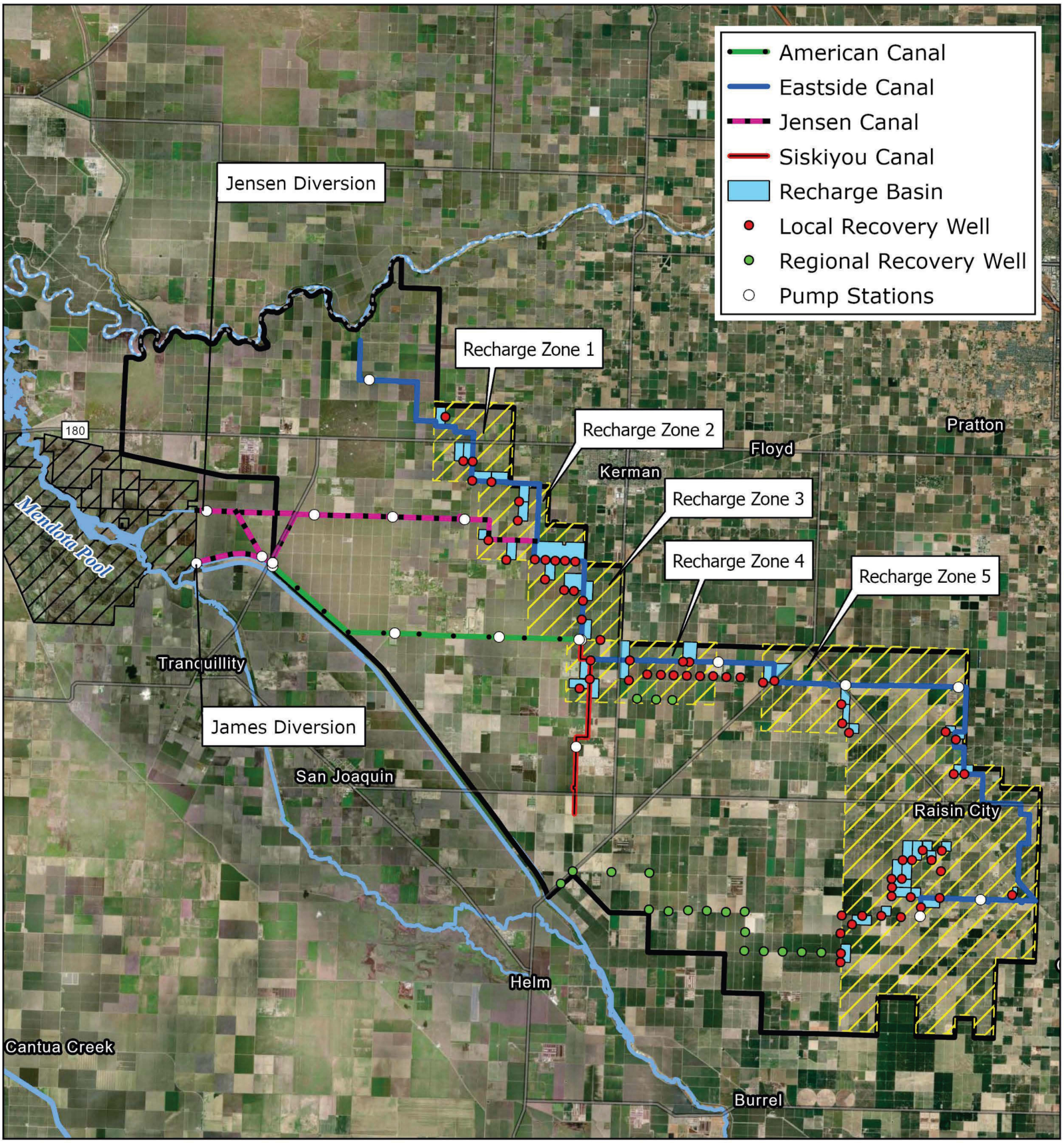
0 2 3 5 6 Mi

N

SCALE = 1:126,720

Source: MAGSA 2024, ESRI 2022

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N



Aquaterra Water Bank Project Features Map

TETRA TECH

MAGSA Boundary
Recharge Zones
Mendota Wildlife Area

0 1 2 3 4 Mi

N

SCALE = 1:210,000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

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