Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH #

Project Title: Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project

Lead Agency: San Luis Water District | Contact Person: Steve Stadler, PE

Mailing Address: 1015 6th St | Phone: (209) 826-4043

City: Los Banos | Zip: 93635 | County: Merced

Project Location: County: Merced | City/Nearest Community: Los Banos

Cross Streets: see attached project description for details | Zip Code: 93635

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): ____° ____′ ____″ N / ____° ____′ ____″ W Total Acres: ____

Assessor's Parcel No.: See attached project description | Section: ____ Twp.: ____ Range: ____ Base: ____

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: ____ Waterways: ____

Airports: ____ Railways: ____ Schools: ____

Document Type:

CEQA: ☐ NOP ☐ Draft EIR | NEPA: ☐ NOI | Other: ☐ Joint Document
☐ Early Cons ☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR ☐ EA ☐ Final Document
☐ Neg Dec (Prior SCH No.) ____ ☐ Draft EIS ☐ Other: ____
☒ Mit Neg Dec Other: ____ ☐ FONSI

Local Action Type:

☐ General Plan Update ☐ Specific Plan ☐ Rezone ☐ Annexation
☐ General Plan Amendment ☐ Master Plan ☐ Prezone ☐ Redevelopment
☐ General Plan Element ☐ Planned Unit Development ☐ Use Permit ☐ Coastal Permit
☐ Community Plan ☐ Site Plan ☐ Land Division (Subdivision, etc.) ☒ Other: Recharge Basin

Development Type:

☐ Residential: Units ____ Acres ____
☐ Office: Sq.ft. ____ Acres ____ Employees____
☐ Commercial: Sq.ft. ____ Acres ____ Employees____
☐ Industrial: Sq.ft. ____ Acres ____ Employees____
☐ Educational: ____
☐ Recreational: ____
☐ Water Facilities: Type ____ MGD ____
☐ Transportation: Type ____
☐ Mining: Mineral ____
☐ Power: Type ____ MW ____
☐ Waste Treatment: Type ____ MGD ____
☐ Hazardous Waste: Type ____
☒ Other: Recharge Basin

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

☐ Aesthetic/Visual ☐ Fiscal ☐ Recreation/Parks ☐ Vegetation
☐ Agricultural Land ☐ Flood Plain/Flooding ☐ Schools/Universities ☒ Water Quality
☐ Air Quality ☐ Forest Land/Fire Hazard ☐ Septic Systems ☒ Water Supply/Groundwater
☒ Archeological/Historical ☐ Geologic/Seismic ☐ Sewer Capacity ☐ Wetland/Riparian
☒ Biological Resources ☐ Minerals ☐ Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading ☐ Growth Inducement
☐ Coastal Zone ☐ Noise ☐ Solid Waste ☐ Land Use
☐ Drainage/Absorption ☐ Population/Housing Balance ☐ Toxic/Hazardous ☐ Cumulative Effects
☐ Economic/Jobs ☐ Public Services/Facilities ☐ Traffic/Circulation ☐ Other: Tribal Cultural

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

General Agriculture/Agricultural

Project Description: *(please use a separate page if necessary)*

See attached Project Description

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "X".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

X	Air Resources Board	X	Office of Historic Preservation
	Boating & Waterways, Department of		Office of Public School Construction
	California Emergency Management Agency		Parks & Recreation, Department of
	California Highway Patrol		Pesticide Regulation, Department of
	Caltrans District #		Public Utilities Commission
	Caltrans Division of Aeronautics	X	Regional WQCB # 5
	Caltrans Planning		Resources Agency
X	Central Valley Flood Protection Board		Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of
	Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy		S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.
	Coastal Commission		San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy
	Colorado River Board		San Joaquin River Conservancy
	Conservation, Department of		Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy
	Corrections, Department of		State Lands Commission
	Delta Protection Commission		SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
	Education, Department of		SWRCB: Water Quality
	Energy Commission	X	SWRCB: Water Rights
X	Fish & Game Region # 4		Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
	Food & Agriculture, Department of		Toxic Substances Control, Department of
	Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of	X	Water Resources, Department of
	General Services, Department of		
	Health Services, Department of	S	Other: APCD
	Housing & Community Development		Other:
X	Native American Heritage Commission		

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date October 31, 2025 Ending Date December 1, 2025

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group
Address: 455 W. Fir Ave
City/State/Zip: Clovis, CA 93611
Contact: Amy Wilson
Phone: (559) 636-1166

Applicant: San Luis Water District
Address: 1335 West I Street
City/State/Zip: Los Banos, CA 93635
Phone: (209) 826-1421

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: Date: 10/28/25

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

Project Title

Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project (Project)

Description of Project

Project Background and Purpose

The Project is located within the boundaries of San Luis Water District's (SLWD) service area and predominantly on properties owned by Vulcan Materials Company surrounding the intersection of Los Banos Creek and the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC), generally within existing quarry pits located on the properties that are adjacent to the aforementioned waterways. The Project area is located southwest of the City of Los Banos within Merced County, more near and along Los Banos Creek between the San Luis Canal and the Central California Irrigation District (CCID) Outside Canal. The property has been the site of a pilot project to recharge groundwater and more recently groundwater recharge operations under the State of California Governor's Executive Orders N-4-23 and N-7-23. The Project has received funding through the State of California Department of Water Resources Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation Grant and through the Consolidated Appropriations Act pursuant to Public Law No. 118-42. The Project is eligible to receive Central Valley Project (CVP) water consistent with SLWD's CVP Contract No. 14-06-200-7773A-IR1-P.

SLWD and Vulcan have entered into a 20-year License Agreement (License Agreement) that automatically renews for five-year periods unless a notice of termination is issued by either party. The License Agreement facilitates SLWD's ability to construct, operate, and maintain all the necessary infrastructure to conduct storage, and recharge operations in the proposed Central and South Basins. The License Agreement provides for the addition of basins to be used for water supply projects as they become available.

Project Description

The Project entails using existing gravel pits (basins), designated as the Central Basin and the Southern Basin, to capture, store, recharge, and bank CVP and Warren Act water and/or Los Banos creek flood waters. The Central Basin is approximately 85 acres and has the capacity to store approximately 1,000 acre-feet. The Southern Basin is approximately 51 acres and is expected to store approximately 800 acre-feet upon completion of mining operations. The Basins will serve four purposes:

1. Surface Water Storage

Conveyed using the DMC, CVP and Warren Act water will be stored during the winter months and returned to the DMC in the spring to serve agricultural demand. Some of the return water may be exchange with Reclamation to serve agricultural demands from the San Luis Canal. CVP water may be transferred to SLWD from other CVP contractors for short term storage, and the return transfer will take place in a subsequent water year, typically the next water year. In most cases the transfer(s) will be conducted using the Accelerated Water Transfer Program.

2. Groundwater Recharge

The Central Delta Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency is developing groundwater management policies. It is expected that policies will be developed to encourage recharge and other actions that will improve groundwater sustainability. The basins will be operated to achieve both their maximum storage and recharge potential. Assuming a conservative daily infiltration rate of 0.5 inches per day, the Central Basin can recharge over a 90-day period approximately 242 acre-feet. Using the same assumptions, the Southern Basin can recharge approximately 208 acre-feet. Evaporation losses will be calculated using data from the California Irrigation Management Information System and deducted from the daily surface volume to calculate net recharge. SLWD

will consider transfers of surface water for recharge by other contractors to help improve basin wide groundwater sustainability. These types of transfers for recharge will typically be conducted by CVP water contractors within the Delta Mendota Sub-Basin.

3. Groundwater Recovery

When drought conditions occur, SLWD may extract, or effectively recover, a portion of the water recharged in the Central and Southern Basins and introduce the water into the Delta-Mendota Canal. Recovery of the recharged water will comply with the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, limited to avoid significant and unreasonable impacts, as defined under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014, and at least 5% of all water recharged will remain in the aquifer and will not be recovered. Recovered water will be used within the SLWD boundaries (which is wholly within the Central Delta Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency boundaries).

All water recovered and introduced into the DMC will comply with all relevant standards and monitoring protocols established for the introduction of pumped water into the DMC. The relevant standards and monitoring protocols are detailed in a draft Monitoring Plan prepared for the Project provided in Appendix D..

4. Flood Water Capture

Los Banos Creek is prone to flooding. During a declaration of flood emergency or when the State of California Governor's office issues Executive Orders such as N-4-23 and N-7-23 the basins may be used to divert flood water.

DMC Diversions

Under the Project, CVP and/or Warren Act water will be conveyed through the DMC and diverted into the Central Basin or the Southern Basin at three locations. The first point of diversion will be constructed at approximately mile post MP 80.03-L where a new storage and recovery pump system will be installed to lift water from and return water to the DMC from the Central Basin. The second point of diversion will be constructed at approximately mile-post MP 80.03-R where a second new storage and recovery pump system will be installed to lift water from and return water to the DMC from the Southern Basin. The third point of diversion is at the existing diversion structure near Check 15 at mile post MP 79.60-R (Los Banos Creek) which will gravity flow water from the DMC into Los Banos Creek where a weir and diversion structure will be constructed to divert flows into the Central Basin.

Los Banos Creek Diversions

Flood water flowing in Los Banos Creek may be diverted downstream of the DMC siphon crossing where the aforementioned weir and diversion structure will be constructed to divert flows into the Central Basin. Flood waters will only be diverted under the previously stated conditions. Under the Project, the weir and diversion structure would be constructed and the capacity to divert flood waters would increase.

Conveyance and Infrastructure

The Project would include constructing the following infrastructure and conveyance components:

- Construct a 30 to 50 cfs water transfer facility between the Central Basin and the DMC.
- Construct a 30 to 50 cfs water transfer facility between the Southern Basin and the DMC.
- Construct a weir in Los Banos Creek downstream of the DMC siphon crossing and the existing Vulcan haul road crossing to facilitate convey water into the Central Basin from Los Banos Creek to capture water released from the DMC or flood flows;

- Construct a diversion structure on the right bank of Los Banos Creek immediately upstream of the newly constructed weir to convey water flowing in Los Banos Creek into the Central Basin.

The Project also includes contouring of the of the bottom of the existing pits being used for the Central Basin and the Southern Basin to facilitate the evacuation of the storage space. There will be no excavation work to create water storage space as the storage space was effectively created through past mining operations. Reshaping and stability improvements to the banks of the basins will also be performed.

Construction Schedule

Construction of the Project is anticipated to be completed within 12 months. Generally, construction would occur between the hours of 7am and 6pm, Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays.

Equipment

Construction equipment would likely include the following equipment used during construction:

- Excavators,
- Backhoes,
- Graders,
- Skid steers,
- Loaders,
- Hauling trucks,
- Scrapers,
- Compactors (Large and Small dependent on area conditions),
- Bulldozer,
- Large tractor and large discing unit, and
- Water trucks supplying water for dust control and conditioning soil for compaction

Operation and Maintenance

System Operation

The Project may have different and overlapping operations depending on the water year and water type. The following descriptions are based on an average water year and are subject to change as the water year deviates from the average.

- Surface Water Storage – Filling of the basins could begin as soon as November through February and discharge starting in March through June.
- Groundwater Recharge – As water is made available recharge operations could take place anytime throughout the year. At a minimum groundwater recharge will take place during the short-term Surface Water Storage operation. The summer months will be avoided to reduce evaporation losses.
- Flood Water – Typical flood events can start as early as January and as late as March. Flood water would be diverted when the appropriate flood stage is triggered, and storage capacity is available. Releases from the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam can take place at any time but typically occur from the end of September through the middle of March, when the conservation pool is at its lowest volume.

In the latter of consecutive dry years, there is the possibility that the Project may not conduct surface water storge or recharge operations.

Recovery Infrastructure and Operations

As a part of the Project, up to three recovery wells would be constructed south of the Delta-Mendota Canal and west of Creek Avenue. The specific locations for the wells will be selected based on a hydrogeological evaluation of potential sites. Each well will be connected to a discharge pipeline to a point-of-introduction into the Delta-Mendota Canal. Where practical, existing turnout facilities, such as the turnout at MP 80.03R, or newly constructed facilities, such as the water transfer facility between the DMC and the Southern Basin, will be utilized and improved as necessary. Whereas not practical, a new point of introduction will be constructed. Any construction would take place within the Project site.

A draft Monitoring Plan has been developed specifically for this Project to ensure the following: (1) at least 5% of all recharged groundwater is retained within the aquifer; (2) extractions only occur when groundwater levels are above established minimum thresholds; (3) extractions are not causing or contributing to groundwater quality degradation; and (4) extractions are not causing or contributing to land subsidence. The recovered water that is introduced shall comply with the established monitoring plan for water introduced into the Delta-Mendota Canal.

Water Quality Testing

Stored surface water introduced back into the Delta-Mendota Canal will comply with the draft Monitoring Plan prepared specifically for this Project. Stored surface water and recharged water recovered back into the DMC would be tested and comply fully with this draft Monitoring Plan. As part of this Monitoring Plan, when water is diverted into the basins from the DMC, water quality sampling will be conducted monthly. Constituents identified in the water quality requirements established for the introduction of water into the Delta-Mendota Canal will be tested (DMC Water Quality Requirements). Prior to stored water being returned to the DMC water quality testing will be conducted and compared to the DMC Water Quality Requirements. In the event the monthly water quality testing of the DMC is of lesser quality than the DMC Water Quality Requirements, the monthly DMC test results shall be used as the benchmark for the stored water. Water from the basins shall not be reintroduced into the DMC if the water quality has degraded significantly from the baseline test results (the DMC Water Quality Requirements or monthly DMC water quality test results). Reclamation may authorize minor water quality deviations from the DMC Water Quality Requirements.