

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE ATMOSPHERIC RIVER CAPTURE PROJECT

March 13, 2026

Notice is hereby given that the Marin Municipal Water District (the District), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Atmospheric River Capture Project (Project), located in the City of Novato and unincorporated Marin County, California.

Written comments on this Notice of Preparation (NOP) may be submitted during the NOP review period, which begins March 13, 2026, and ends at 12:00 pm on April 13, 2026. Two public scoping meetings will be held to receive comments on the scope and content of the EIR. **The scoping meetings will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm, and Thursday, March 26, 2026, from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.**

The District invites responsible and trustee agencies, as well as federal agencies involved in reviewing the Project, to provide input on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. The District also invites comments from Native American tribes and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR, including suggested alternatives to the Project that may be considered in the EIR.

INTRODUCTION

CEQA requires a public agency to prepare an EIR for any discretionary project that the agency proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant direct or indirect effect on the physical environment. As the Lead Agency, the District will prepare an EIR to evaluate the potential significant environmental effects of the Project.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the District has prepared an Initial Study (IS) to identify environmental effects of the Project determined not to be significant and to focus the EIR on potentially significant impacts. The Project description, location, and potential environmental effects are summarized below. The IS Checklist is available at marinwater.org/ARCproject.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project is located in the City of Novato and unincorporated Marin County, California. The Project would deliver winter water consisting of naturally occurring flows from precipitation events in the Russian River that exceed minimum instream flow requirements. This water would be delivered to Nicasio Reservoir for use during dry conditions (**Figure 1**).

The Project includes the following components, as shown in **Figure 2**:

- Tie-in to the North Marin Aqueduct in the City of Novato
- Wood Hollow Pump Station near the North Marin Aqueduct tie-in in the City of Novato
- Stafford Lake Pump Station and dechlorination facility
- Point of delivery near Stafford Lake in unincorporated Marin County
- Point of delivery at Nicasio Reservoir in unincorporated Marin County
- 13.2-mile-long, up to 36-inch diameter water transmission pipeline between the North Marin Aqueduct and Nicasio Reservoir, referred to as the Nicasio Aqueduct, located within City of Novato and unincorporated Marin County road rights-of-way

The Wood Hollow Pump Station, located at 7701 Redwood Boulevard in the City of Novato, is shown in **Figure 3**. The Stafford Lake Pump Station and dechlorination facility would be located east of Stafford Lake, as shown in **Figure 4**. The Nicasio Aqueduct would be installed beneath Wood Hollow Drive, Redwood Boulevard, San Marin Drive, Novato Boulevard, Point Reyes–Petaluma Road, and Nicasio Valley Road. (see **Figure 3**, **Figure 4**, and **Figure 5**).

PROJECT PURPOSE

The District's primary water supply is local surface water. Approximately 75 percent of the District's water supply comes from seven local reservoirs: Alpine Lake, Bon Tempe Lake, Kent Lake, Lake Lagunitas, Phoenix Lake, Nicasio Reservoir and Soulajule Reservoir. Water from these reservoirs is treated and delivered to customers through the District's potable water distribution system.

The District also contracts with the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) to supplement local supplies with water from the Russian River Project. Under an existing agreement, Sonoma Water may provide up to 14,300 acre-feet per year (AFY) to the District, with a minimum take-or-pay requirement of 5,300 acre-feet (AF) annually. Over the past 30 years, the District has purchased an average of approximately 6,800 AF annually from Sonoma Water. Purchases have typically increased during dry conditions and decreased during wetter periods. The District currently does not have the ability to store for extended periods the water obtained from Sonoma Water. The Project would provide the ability to store contract water in a local reservoir.

Historically, the District has successfully met water demands during periods of extended dry conditions through intensified conservation measures and supplemental supplies from Sonoma Water. As part of its water shortage contingency planning, the District conducts drought risk assessments to evaluate water supply shortfalls under multi-year and extreme drought scenarios. The most recent assessment indicates that, even with full implementation of the District's water shortage contingency plan, a water supply shortage would occur during periods of extreme dry conditions (EKI Environment & Water, Inc. 2024). The Project would help address this projected shortage by enabling the District to store water obtained from Sonoma Water, thereby increasing available water reserves during dry conditions.

Figure 1 Project Location

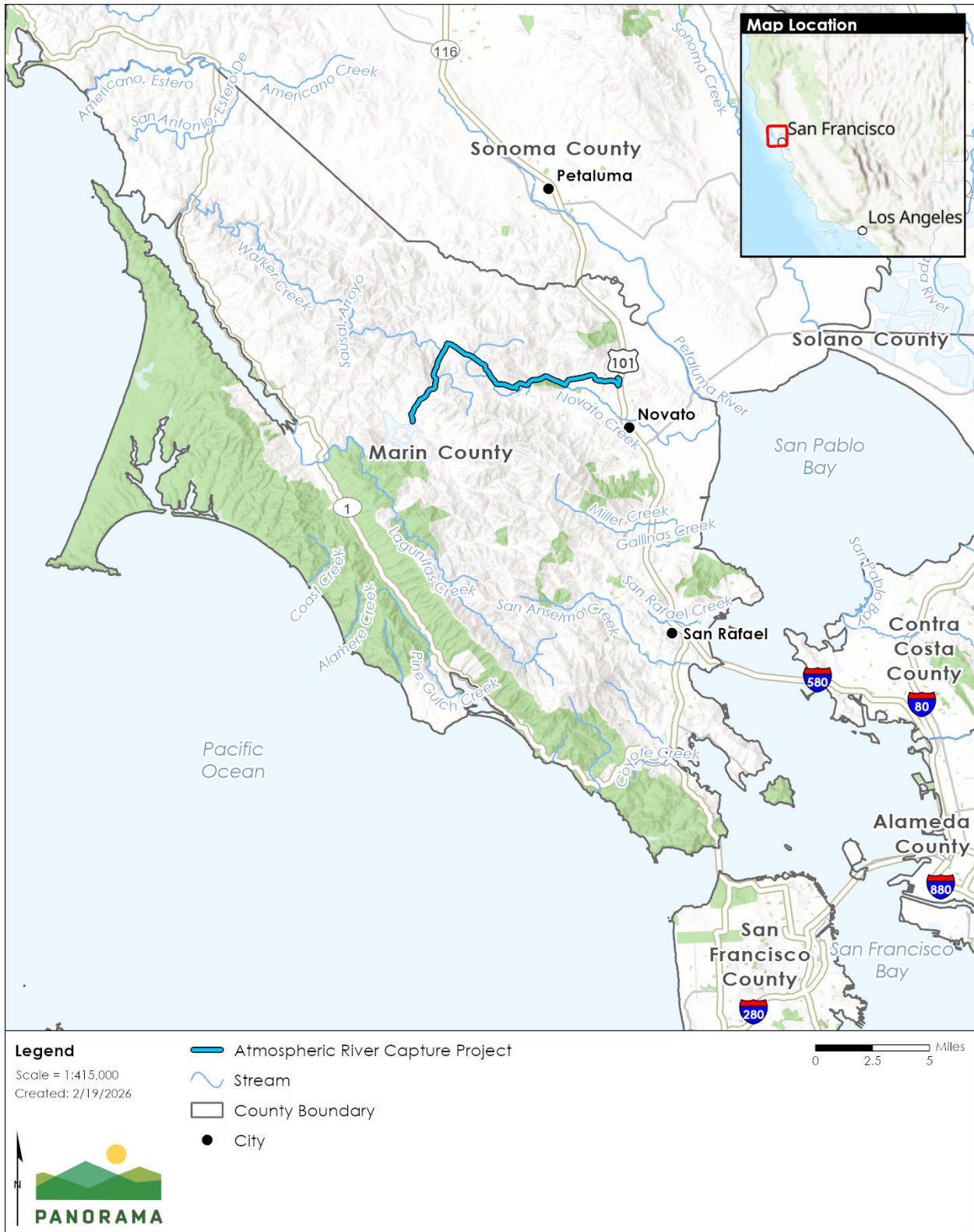


Figure 2 Nicasio Aqueduct Overview



Figure 3 Wood Hollow Pump Station Location



Figure 4 Stafford Lake Pump Station and Point of Delivery Location

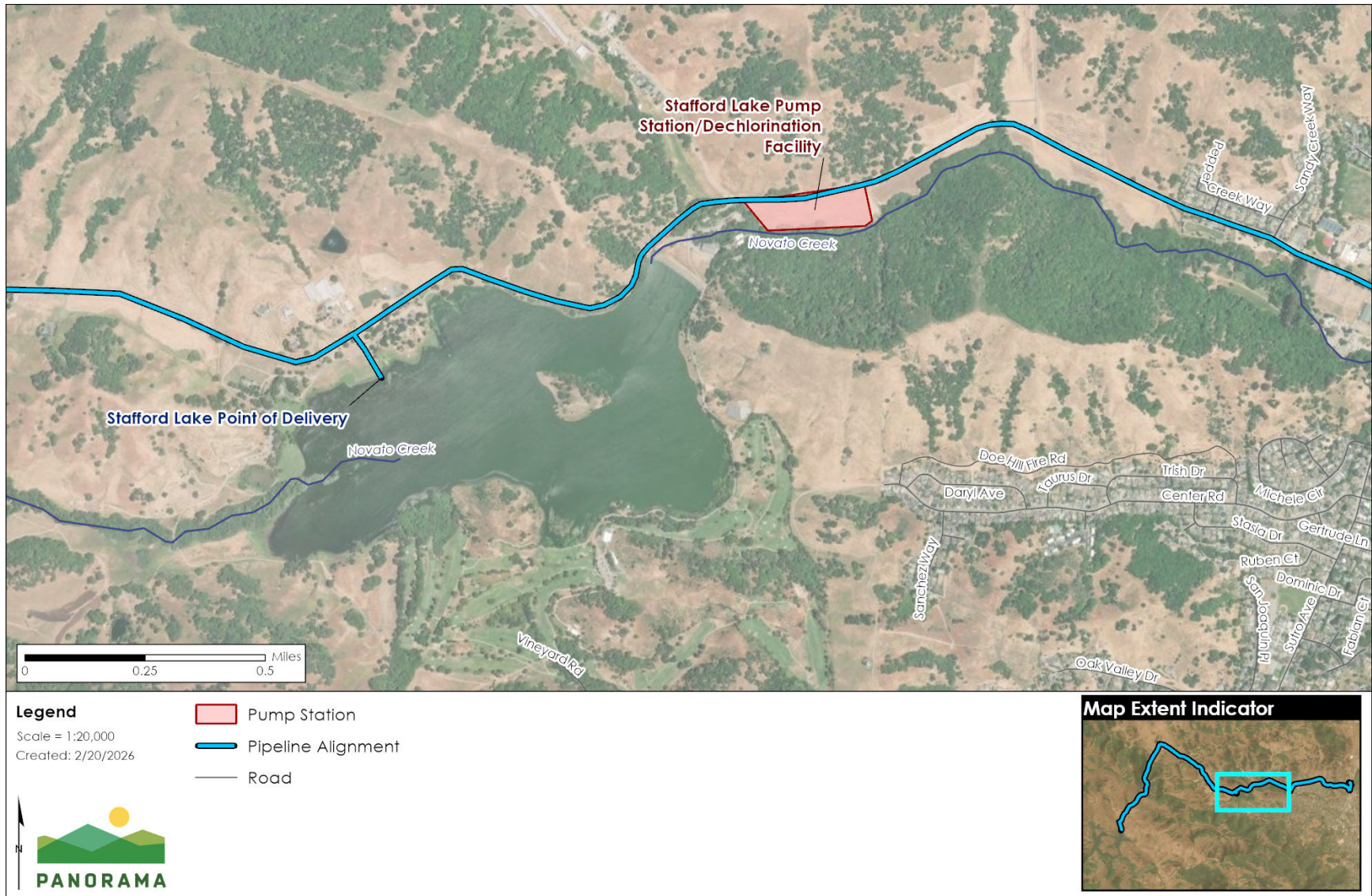


Figure 5 Nicasio Reservoir Point of Delivery Location



PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The Project may require permits or other approvals from the following agencies:

Federal

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State

- California Office of Historic Preservation
- State Water Resources Control Board
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Local

- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Marin County
- City of Novato
- North Marin Water District
- Marin Municipal Water District

ALTERNATIVES

The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including the No Project Alternative, to avoid or reduce any significant environmental effects, in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The environmental analysis will evaluate the Project's potential environmental impacts and identify feasible measures and alternatives that may be implemented to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant impacts.

Based on the IS prepared for the Project, the Draft EIR will analyze the following environmental topic areas for potentially significant impacts: Aesthetics; Agriculture and Forestry Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Noise; Recreation; Transportation and Traffic; Tribal Cultural Resources; and Wildfire.

The Draft EIR will also address potential cumulative impacts and growth-inducing impacts. A reasonable range of alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, will be evaluated. The IS Checklist is available at marinwater.org/ARCproject.

SCOPING MEETINGS

Two public scoping meetings to obtain public input on the scope and content of the EIR are scheduled. Meeting dates, times, and locations are provided below:

- **Wednesday, March 25, 2026, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm**
Novato Recreation Center
950 7th Street
Novato, CA 94945
- **Thursday, March 26, 2026, from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm**
San Ramon Elementary School, Multipurpose Room
45 San Ramon Way
Novato, CA 94945

The purpose of the scoping meetings is to provide information about the Project and to solicit input from agency representatives, interested parties, Native American tribes, and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR. Input may include identification of potentially significant environmental impacts, as well as suggestions for alternatives or mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts associated with the Project.

COMMENTS

This NOP is being circulated to solicit suggestions and information from agencies, Native American tribes, members of the public, and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the EIR. The primary purpose of the scoping process is to identify issues related to the Project's potential environmental impacts, issuance of regulatory permits and approvals, and protection of natural resources. Written comments are encouraged to help ensure that the full range of potential environmental issues associated with implementation of the Project is identified.

The NOP review period begins on March 13, 2026, and ends at 12:00 pm on April 13, 2026. Written comments on the scope and content of the EIR must be received by the District no later than 12:00 pm on April 13, 2026. Written comments may be submitted as follows:

- **By mail:**
Marin Municipal Water District, c/o Lucy Croy
220 Nellen Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925
Letter subject heading: "RE: Atmospheric River Capture Project Public Comment"

- **By email:**

arcproject@marinwater.org

Subject line: "RE: Atmospheric River Capture Project Public Comment"

PLEASE NOTE: The District's practice is to make all comments received part of the public record. Therefore, names, home addresses, home telephone numbers, and email addresses of commenters, if included in responses to this NOP, will be made available for public review. Individual commenters may request that the District withhold their name and/or home address or other personal information. If a commenter wishes the District to consider withholding such information, the request must be stated prominently at the beginning of the written comments. In the absence of a written request, the information will be made part of the public record.

All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Individuals who submit written comments on this NOP will be added to the distribution list for future notices and information related to the environmental review process for the Project. Individuals who do not wish to submit comments but would like to be added to the mailing list may provide contact information, including an email address, to the District contact listed above, along with a request to be added to the mailing list.

Interested parties may also provide oral comments regarding the content and scope of the EIR at the public scoping meetings listed above. Additional information about the Project is available on the District's website at marinwater.org/ARCproject.

APPENDIX NOP-1

Initial Study Checklist for the Atmospheric River Capture Project

This appendix includes the Initial Study Checklist, which identifies potentially significant environmental effects of the Project that will be addressed in the EIR, as well as impacts determined not to be significant and therefore not addressed in the EIR.