

DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT: ROSE RECHARGE BASIN PROJECT

LEAD AGENCY: CONSOLIDATED IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the project. The Consolidated Irrigation District is the CEQA lead agency and Project sponsor because it is responsible for implementation and operation of the Proposed Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION

Project Location

The Proposed Project is located approximately 2 miles east of Selma, California. It is bordered by Rose Avenue to the south and the Kingsburg Branch Canal to the north and east. The project latitude is 36.57231° and the longitude is -119.56035°.

Description

The proposed project includes construction of a new approximately 34-acre recharge basin, including earthwork and structures, on Consolidated Irrigation District (District)-owned land at 12796 Rose Avenue, identified as APN 393-031-23 in Fresno County (See Figure 1). With two exceptions, the site is currently vacant and clear of vegetation, having previously supported vine crops. There is one large cork tree and one large oak tree on the property that will be maintained by constructing a "peninsula" levee around them. The project could potentially provide over 2,000 acre-feet of groundwater recharge annually based on an assumed infiltration rate of one foot per day for approximately 60 days per year.

Compacted earthen levees will be constructed along the perimeter of the site and one interior levee running in the east-west directly will divide the basin roughly in half. The levees will be approximately 4-feet above existing ground and keyed into the existing soil to a depth of 18-inches. The top of the levees will be 20-feet wide and the sides will be sloped at 5:1 (horizontal to vertical). Soil material used to construct the levees will be excavated from the interior of the site such that the volumes of excavation and levee fill are roughly equal and no soil material will need to be imported or exported from the site.

The District's Kingsburg Branch Canal runs along the northeast border of the site and near to the east border. A new concrete turnout structure will be constructed on the west bank of the canal a short distance upstream of an existing canal check structure. The turnout will include a metal trash rack at the inlet and canal gate with an integral acoustic flow meter. A concrete pipeline will cross under the northeastern levee, connecting the turnout structure to the basin. The area around the pipe outlet will be armored with rip rap rock slope protection to minimize erosion. A second concrete structure with a canal gate and pipeline will be constructed through the interior levee to regulate discharges from the northern to the southern half of the basin. A new barbed wire fence will be constructed along the site perimeter with one or more vehicle access gates.

An existing agricultural production well located on the site will be abandoned in accordance with Fresno County requirements. An existing domestic well located near the aforementioned cork and oak trees will be preserved and

used strictly for measuring groundwater levels. Two existing homes and several agricultural buildings which are clustered together near the domestic well and the two trees will be demolished and removed from the site. Prior to demolition, the existing building materials will be tested for the presence of asbestos, and if necessary, remediation will be implemented.

Mitigation Measures: Mitigation measures are defined as specific feasible actions to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce or eliminate, or compensate for any potentially adverse impacts from any part of the Proposed Action. Although not a mitigation measure under CEQA, monitoring of a resource or condition ensures that the conclusions regarding no impacts continue to be addressed over the Project life.

Based on biological surveys and analysis of construction and operational impacts, it was determined that there would be no significant impact to the environment and no mitigation measures are required.

Project Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Project has been evaluated in an Initial Study ("IS") with respect to each item in the environmental checklist set forth in Appendix "G" to the CEQA Guidelines. This completed IS reflects research and analysis conducted to examine the interrelationship between the Proposed Project and the physical environment. The information contained in the IS has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.

Determinations of a "Potentially Significant Impact" in an IS indicate that a specific adverse environmental effect has been identified in a category which is of sufficient magnitude to be of concern. Such an effect may be inherent in the nature and magnitude of the project or may be related to the design and characteristics of the individual project. No effects rated in this manner were identified for the Proposed Project. The effects analyzed in the Proposed Project are not sufficient in themselves to require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and/or have been mitigated to less-than-significant impacts.

Within the Project Area and vicinity, all new development activity and many ongoing activities may contribute directly or indirectly toward a cumulative impact on the physical environment. The incremental effect contributed by this Project towards such a cumulative effect is not considered substantial in itself.

The Proposed Project is not expected to result in any significant adverse effects in terms of the factors considered on the environmental checklist, including any such factors for which insubstantial impacts have been identified. Cumulative effects of a significant nature are also not expected. The Proposed Project will not result in any adverse effects which fall within the "Mandatory Findings of Significance" contained in Section 15065 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, the overall conclusion is made that the Proposed Project would not have a potentially significant effect on the environment. As such, Consolidated Irrigation District proposes to adopt a Negative Declaration (following public review).

FINDINGS

An Initial Study has been prepared to assess the Rose Recharge Basin Project's potential impacts on the environment and the significance of those impacts. Based on the Initial Study, it has been determined that the Proposed Project would not have any significant effects on the environment. The conclusion is supported by the following findings:

1. The Project would have no impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources, cultural resources, energy resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.
2. The Project would have a less-than-significant impact on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation, and utilities and service systems.
3. The Project would not have any impacts that require mitigation.

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, the Consolidated Irrigation District has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the Project (prepared by Summers Engineering, Inc) and finds that the Initial Study and Negative Declaration reflect the independent judgment of Consolidated Irrigation District.

I hereby approve the Rose Recharge Basin Project:

Philip Desatoff, General Manager
Consolidated Irrigation District

Date