

Castaic Lake Water Agency

27234 Bouquet Canyon Rd.
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

CEQA Initial Study/Negative Declaration

Extension of Castaic Lake
Water Agency's 2002 and
2003 Groundwater Banking
Projects

November 2010

Prepared by
Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
2775 North Ventura Rd., Suite 100
Oxnard, CA 93036

K/J Project No. 1089033*00

The SWSD service area is located in north-central Kern County in the San Joaquin Valley, about 20 miles northwest of the City of Bakersfield (Figure 1). The total area of SWSD is approximately 347 square miles. Water demand within SWSD is almost exclusively for agricultural irrigation. In 1995, SWSD began implementation of the SWSD Banking Program². The program began with 1 million AF total storage capacity and six banking partners: the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Alameda County Water District, Alameda County Zone 7, The Newhall Land and Farming Company, and Vidler Water Company (CLWA 2000). In wet years, participating banking partners deliver their surplus water to SWSD. Currently, SWSD is seeking new water banking partners as the SWSD Banking Program's storage and return capacity has been expanded. This expansion, called the Stored Water Recovery Unit, will increase storage by 650,000 AF to a maximum of 1.65 million AF and increase recovery capacity by 200,000 AFY for a total guaranteed or pumpback capacity of 290,000 AFY (SWSD, 2004). SWSD has subcontracted for 155,000 AFY of SWP water with the Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) (SWSD 1994).

The California Aqueduct is the main conveyance facility of the SWP. It conveys water from the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant at the Clifton Court Forebay in the southern portion of the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta to SWP water contractors located in the South Bay, Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

1.5 Environmental Setting

The climate in CLWA's service area is generally semi-arid and warm, with an average precipitation for the area of 18.16 inches (1931-2005) (USCR IRWMP, 2008). Land use in the service area ranges from the urbanized environment of the City of Santa Clarita to the undeveloped environment of the eastern Santa Susana and western San Gabriel Mountains.

SWSD has a warm and semi-arid climate, and has an average annual rainfall of 6 inches. Nearly all land (approximately 95 percent) within SWSD is designated "agricultural" in the Kern County General Plan. The remaining 5 percent of the land consists of federal or state land, solid waste facilities, rural communities, residential areas, a highway commercial area, and service industrial areas (SWSD 1994).

1.6 Proposed Finding

The attached Initial Study for the Project shows that there is no substantial evidence that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not have the potential to significantly affect an environmental resource. No mitigation is proposed since no potentially significant effects were identified.

² Under the SWSD Banking Program, a banking partner is typically a water agency who would deliver a portion of its unused SWP, CVP or other surface water supplies to SWSD during periods when such water is available. The stored groundwater would then be returned when the banking partner needs such supplies in the future.