

Water Storage Investment Program Quarterly Report

The Quarterly Report is intended to document applicants' progress toward complying with regulation section 6013 and receiving final WSIP funding, including any changes in the magnitude of public benefits that could affect cost allocation. Applicants must provide a summary level update of the project status for the requirements and milestones listed below. The template may be modified as necessary to effectively communicate information. If minimal activities occurred during a reporting period, the report can be condensed.

- Note any issues or concerns that have, will, or could affect milestones or requirements.
- Identify key issues, including legal issues such as lawsuits or injunctions related to the project, that need to be resolved.
- Discuss how the actual schedule is progressing in comparison to the schedule provided in the Initial Report or the last reported schedule.
- Update the project schedule as needed.
- Note any milestones or accomplishments that occurred since submittal of the prior Quarterly Report.

Project Information

Project Name:

Willow Springs Water Bank Conjunctive Use Project

Applicant Name:

Southern California Water Bank Authority

Date:

2/1/2022

Reporting Period:

2021 Quarter 4

General Update and Key Issues

Please provide a general update and describe any key issues that occurred during this reporting period. You may attach additional documents or pages if more space is needed:

See attached

Items Required Prior to Scheduling a Final Award Hearing

The following items must be provided prior to scheduling a hearing. As applicable, please describe the status, estimated completion date, and percent complete of:

1. Contracts for non-public cost share:

Status: In Progress

Estimated Completion Date: January 2023

Percent Complete: 75%

2. Contracts for administration of public benefits:

Status: In Progress

Estimated Completion Date: January 2023

Percent Complete: 40%

3. Completed feasibility studies:

Status: Final Feasibility Work in Progress

Estimated Completion Date: November 2021

Percent Complete: 100%

4. Final environmental documentation:

Status: All Local Infrastructure Complete. Pulse flow CEQA in progress.

Estimated Completion Date: January 2023

Percent Complete: 80%

5. All required federal, state, and local approvals, certifications, and agreements:

Status: In Progress with updated list and schedule to be delivered w/ final feasibility work

Estimated Completion Date: January 2024

Percent Complete: 50%

Items Required to Execute a Funding Agreement

Please provide an update, as applicable, on the following documents, which are needed to execute a funding agreement for the project:

- Applicant’s audited financial statements
- Final project costs, schedule, and scope of work
- Evidence of bilateral communications
- Limited waiver of sovereign immunity (see regulations section 6013(f)(8))

Updates to information provided in the Initial Report or prior Quarterly Reports are only needed when a significant change has occurred. The Commission may request submittal of updated information prior to executing a funding agreement.

Cost, schedule and scope of work were updated in the final feasibility report submitted in November 2021. Attached narrative includes most up to date information.

Status Update

Provide a status update for the following, as applicable:

- Labor Compliance
- Urban Water Management Plans
- Agricultural Water Management Plans
- Groundwater Management or Groundwater Sustainability Plans
- Potential effect of other conditionally eligible projects on the applicant’s public benefits

Updates to information provided in the Initial Report or prior Quarterly Reports are only needed when a significant change has occurred. The Commission may request submittal of updated information prior to executing a funding agreement.

See attached supporting documentation

2022

Progress Report: Willow Springs Water Bank Conjunctive Use Project



Mark Beuhler

WSWB General Manager

2/1/2022

General Update and Key Issues

This Narrative provides supplementary context to the quarterly report template provided by the California Water Commission (CWC) and staff for the 2021 Quarter 4 Progress Report and reflects works completed in Quarter 4 of 2021. This Narrative is intended to update the CWC on new developments over the past few months that could impact Willow Springs Water Bank (WSWB) and its progress towards statutory requirements. Primary developments to the project included the completion of a final feasibility study, final 75% commitment letter for non-public benefits, continued discussions with WSWB partners, positive progress towards an agreement with a State Water Project Contractor, submittal of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure for Communities (BRIC) grant application and continued coordination with DWR Operations and other proposed pulse flow projects.

Items to Meet Regulatory Requirements of 1/1/22

WSWB and consultants finalized all the items necessary to meet the regulatory requirements for January 1, 2022. These items included an agreed upon letter with Antelope Valley East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) to a commitment of 75% of the non-public cost share of the project, a final feasibility study and environmental documentation out for public review. WSWB and AVEK have previously completed the environmental review process for proposed infrastructure. At the December 15th, 2021, monthly CWC meeting, WSWB had its feasibility and continuing eligibility hearing. CWC members unanimously approved of the projects continued eligibility.

Joint Pulse Flow Meetings and Additional CEQA Analysis

WSWB continues to attend bi-monthly joint coordination meetings with DWR Operations, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) leadership and representatives from the Chino Basin Program and the Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project. These three projects have all proposed pulse flows to the Feather River in order to achieve the environmental benefits described throughout the WSIP Application process. Recently, contractors for DWR developed a combined draft of the project description to be used for the CEQA analysis.

A draft agreement has been circulated to project proponents for review. This draft is a large step forward in the finalization of the process. Some outstanding issues are currently under discussion. Primarily, discussions involving the cost to administer benefits and associated loss of power generation at DWR facilities in the Feather River (pulse flows would bypass generation facilities).

This process and CEQA documentation are viewed as an important step towards developing agreements with both DWR and CDFW for providing the environmental benefits of the project. Meetings have been focused on contract mechanisms, operational constraints, CEQA lead agency determinations, CEQA strategy, and a proposed process for how and when CDFW can call upon making pulse flow releases. WSWB is also in the process of vetting operations for the predelivery of water from San Luis Reservoir with DWR Operations.

Leveraging of Funds

In December of 2021, WSWB drafted an application for a FEMA BRIC grant. The grant would be used to build additional extraction and recharge capacity at the bank to be used primarily as drought resiliency for disadvantaged communities in Kern County. With the ability to use shared facilities, a portion of Proposition 1 grant funds are being proposed as a cost share. Final applications will be submitted in Quarter 1 of 2022 with final award announcements likely in July of 2022.

Priorities and Next Steps

The current priority for WSWB is to continue the refinement of project operations, agreements with necessary parties, CEQA strategy for pulse flows, and working towards design. These items include updating technical studies for project water supply and analyzing potential impacts of pulse flow operations.

Recharge capacity is the initial priority for facilities. The bank needs to catch the next wet cycle and put it into the ground. With current drought conditions it is becoming increasingly important for the state to have additional storage online prior to the next wet season. Bringing well capacity online early is not as urgent as providing recharge capability because water cannot be extracted from the bank until it is recharged. Much like a surface reservoir, water cannot be taken out of storage in WSWB until it is banked. The AV Watermaster enforces this requirement. Unless an agreement to borrow groundwater can be developed, water must be stored before it can be extracted.

Agreements are needed with DWR and the SWP contractors to initiate pre-delivery of water from San Luis Reservoir into WSWB. The impacted parties must be convinced that there will be no negative impact on them due to the pre-delivery of water. An investigative study was recently completed that describes potential approaches, mechanisms and contracts needed to conduct this pre delivery and can be shared with CWC staff and agencies during future collaborations.

Items Required to Execute a Funding Agreement

The WSWB has complete CEQA documents as well as an addendum which expanded the bank’s approved capacity. AVEK’s HDWB received a Notice of Exemption from CEQA. The SNIP Phase II Pipeline has a completed Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. All of these CEQA documents received a Notice of Determination and are final (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Summary of CEQA coverage by project element and associated relevant components

Project Element	Relevant Components	Environmental Coverage
Willow Springs Water Bank	Up to 77 recovery wells and associated collection piping within an area of 8,650 acres Two booster pump station locations 9.2 miles of bi-directional pipeline from the California Aqueduct, some through Joshua Tree Habitat 1,106 gross acres of recharge basins Maximum storage of 1,000,000 AF Recharge capacity of 250,000 AF and recovered volume of 225,000 AF Connecting pipeline to AVEK West Feeder (already constructed) 2.5-mile-long connecting pipe to AVEK’s SNIP	Environmental Impact Report Notice of Determination 2006 SCH # 2005091117 Addendum to EIR Notice of Determination filed 12/26/2017
High Desert Water Bank	Rehabilitation of an existing turnout and one new turnout off the California Aqueduct 1,200 acres of recharge basins 3.5-mile bi-directional recharge and recovery transmission main Eight miles of aboveground recharge pipelines Six miles of well collection pipelines An estimated 18 groundwater extraction wells 5 monitoring wells, and 1 booster pump station water storage tank (250,000-gallon capacity).	Mitigated Negative Declaration Notice Of Determination Filed 6/26/2017 SCH#2017061030

SNIP Phase II	6.6 miles of steel pipeline Connections to SNIP Phase I Pipeline Connections to Quartz Hill Water Treatment Plant	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Notice of Determination filed 5/1/2014 SCH#2014051007
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Additional CEQA a work in conjunction with the DWR and CDFW will be needed for administering the pulse flow operations as the project’s ecosystem benefit. It is unclear at this point who will be the responsible party for development of these documents and look forward to coordinating these efforts with DWR and CDFW staff. The form and extent of required CEQA documentation has not been determined yet. It is envisioned that these items will be collaboratively addressed during the development of adaptive management plans, agreements and eventually contracting. Process and progress on these documents will be described in future quarterly reports.

A final feasibility study and a letter for the commitment of 75% of the non-public benefit was completed in November. A finalized contract for the entirety of the non-public cost share will be needed prior to scheduling a funding hearing.

WSWB plans to begin the design and permitting phase for project elements specifically located on WSWB property in Q1 of 2022.

Status Update

Considerable feasibility planning for the new facilities has already been completed. Past studies include the following:

- 2005 initial feasibility study prepared for the 2006 EIR (by Western Development and Storage)
- 2011 master plan for site buildout (by GEI)
- 2014 groundwater model (by HDR)
- 2016 master plan update (by GEI)
- 2021 final feasibility study (by GEI)

Additional planning is underway and is on track to start design process in 2022. It is assumed that 20% to 30% of design will need to be complete before entering into the final permitting phase of the project.

Schedule Update

The project is planned to be fully implemented within 5years (see **Table 2**). Following the December CWC continuing eligibility determination project participants are working to finalize agreements for the transfer of the WSIP grant leadership to AVEK. Concurrently, final design and permitting will take place primarily for the WSWB infrastructure. HDWB and the SNIP Phase II pipeline have existing and underway permits. An interim funding agreement with CWC to begin early construction may be needed for HDWB and SNIP Phase II prior to the completion of final permits for facilities at WSWB. Scheduling may shift based on the timing of a final funding award and permitting.

Table 2. Proposed implementation schedule for the completion of all project elements.

2022				2023				2024				2025				2026					
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Convey WSIP Prop 1 to AVEK																					
Final design and permitting																					
Contracts for administration of public benefits																					
Funding agreement with CWC																					
HDWB Construction																					
					SNIP Phase II Construction																
												WSWB Construction									