

Agency: Colusa County Water District
Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13
Self-Certification Form

BACKGROUND: Consistent with the March 28, 2022 Drought Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) developed this self-certification form to allow local agencies to submit their proposed recharge projects to DWR and that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. After reviewing the information submitted via this self-certification form, DWR will review and may concur. A list of activities eligible for the CEQA suspension is maintained on DWR's website at: <https://water.ca.gov/Water-Basics/Drought>.

INSTRUCTIONS: Entities carrying out a proposed recharge project that may meet the objectives of Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13 should complete this self-certification form as soon as possible to initiate DWR's review and potential concurrence that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. Please submit one self-certification form for each individual project. For questions, please email SGMPS@water.ca.gov.

- 1. Please provide a short description of the proposed recharge project in which you are seeking a CEQA suspension, demonstrating how it is consistent with Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 (include historical land use and current land use on the proposed project location):**

The objective of this Project is to demonstrate and pilot a multi-benefit groundwater recharge project to assist in meeting the sustainability goals under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, as addressed in detail in the Colusa Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The project will build drought resiliency and advance local conjunctive use practices through groundwater recharge according to the State's prioritization of groundwater recharge projects as codified by the Governor's Executive Order N-7-22 dated March 28, 2022. The Project will implement multi-benefit, direct and in-lieu groundwater recharge projects in a unified approach and demonstrate that groundwater recharge is a viable tool to immediately alleviate critical drought conditions. This Project will benefit the disadvantaged community surrounding Arbuckle, provide habitat for migratory shorebirds, and enhance groundwater dependent ecosystems supporting the region's objective to implement multi-benefit projects. All (or 100%) of the project benefits will serve the disadvantaged communities in the Arbuckle area as classified based on the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data for the years 2016- 2020 with a median household income of \$62,008.

The Project will utilize (when available) Section 215 water, excess Central Valley Project (CVP) contract water, purchased water from senior water right holders, and high stormflows under temporary water right permit(s), as feasible. The District holds a water service contract with the Bureau of Reclamation and a 215 contract for excess flows. The District is looking at applying for a 180-day permit through DWR. The proposed recharge sites include Salt, Elk, Sand, Brush, and Petroleum Creeks (when dry) and potentially fallow farmland. Discharge points are summarized in Table 1. Discharges into Salt Creek are already in place. The District will install the remaining discharges as funding allows. Additional discharges, not listed, may be incorporated over time as feasible.

Table 1. Summary of Existing and Potential Ephemeral Stream Discharge Points.

Ephemeral Stream	Status	Latitude	Longitude
Salt Creek	Existing	38.970278	-122.094258
Salt Creek	Existing	39.005600	-122.076552
Elk Creek	Potential	39.001884	-122.097885
Elk Creek	Potential	38.972951	-122.113593
Petroleum Creek	Potential	38.937807	-122.042181
Petroleum Creek	Potential	38.944271	-122.033058
Whiskey / South Branch Sand Creek	Potential	39.024280	-122.098111
Whiskey / South Branch Sand Creek	Potential	39.027978	-122.088637

A monitoring plan will be implemented in accordance with DWR's guidelines and the Colusa Subbasin GSP and in coordination with local groundwater management efforts. Monitoring will include water budget and isotope studies, continuous monitoring of groundwater levels and flows, and hydrologic modeling.

2. Please describe the anticipated benefits and the basis of those benefits from implementing the proposed recharge project (in acre-feet/year or estimated volume of water, if possible):

The approximate project benefit area corresponds to the District's service area. All recharge activities will be concentrated near the groundwater dependent, disadvantaged communities in the Arbuckle area including College City and Harrington. Pilot studies conducted by the University of California in Davis and Scott Valley, California and by Dunnigan Water District (LWA, 2023) have reported over 90% of the water applied to sites percolated to recharge groundwater. Based on diverting water 30 days per year, the estimated recharge benefit is approximately 700 AF per year. The annual amount will vary from year-to-year ranging between 50 AF per year to over 700 AF per year pending future surface water supplies and available funding. The diversion thresholds into the recharge sites range from 350 gpm to 3,000 gpm per site. The District intends to increase recharge amounts as additional funding sources are secured to purchase water. The ephemeral stream trickle flow test run performed by Dunnigan Water District in February 2022 showed that 125-210 AF was recharged within one-week period in just one creek.

Additionally, groundwater dependent ecosystems will benefit from the recharge along the nearby ephemeral streams. Shorebirds will benefit from habitat creation during their migration season. Finally, subsidence has long been an issue in the Arbuckle area, so this recharge will minimize subsidence and possibly help the region recover from the subsidence that has occurred.

3. Please identify the category this proposed recharge project would fall under (multiple answer can be selected):

- Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge. (selected option).
- DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program.
- Other.

4. Please identify which of the objectives the proposed recharge project meets as described in the Executive Order (multiple answers can be selected):

Projects is on Open Lands (which are those lands that are native or largely undeveloped from agricultural or industrial practices. These lands could include flood bypasses, natural areas, wildlife preserves, or existing managed wetlands.) (selected option).

Project is on Working Lands (which are those lands that have been previously developed for agricultural or other industrial practices. These lands could include active or fallowed agricultural lands, gravel and sand operations, open storage fields, or other similar working lands.) (selected option).

5. Please describe how the proposed recharge project meets the following objectives as described in the Executive Order:

Project will help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by the drought (To mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought, projects should include the replenishment of groundwater resources to the subsurface, especially shallow aquifers, for the purpose of storage, temporary or otherwise. Drought impacts to groundwater conditions would include lowering of groundwater levels that may have occurred due to lack of natural recharge or groundwater pumping that may especially impact shallow aquifers.) (selected option).

6. What funding sources are supporting the proposed recharge project? (Please list all local, state, federal, private or public funding sources):

This project is supported with funding from the following entities/sources: Colusa County Water District (in-kind services); Northern Sacramento Valley IRWM Grant through DWR's Round 2, Cycle 2 of the Proposition 1 Implementation 1 Grant Program (\$545,000 - pending grant agreement with DWR/Sutter County); and possibly the Nature Conservancy. The DWR IRWM funds expire December 2027. All funding sources are public except TNC, which is private. The District will pursue additional funding sources when opportunities become available.

7. Please provide the estimated project start date:

6/5/2023.

8. Please provide the estimated project end date or date project can be considered operational:

12/31/2027.

9. Please identify if the proposed recharge project requires a new water right permit to be issued by the State Water Board under their Groundwater Storage Water Rights Permitting process. If an existing water right is being used, please provide the permit number under the 'Other' category (For more information, visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/applications/groundwater_recharge/):

No new water right is needed; already have existing water rights or agreements for this proposed recharge project. (selected option).

Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (180 days).

- Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (1 to 5 years).
- Need a streamlined permit for a standard water right.
- Need a standard water right for this recharge project.
- Other. "CCWD may pursue winter water right(s) to supplement contract with USBR, but they are not needed to proceed with the project". (selected option).

10. When do you anticipate your proposed recharge project will be ready for construction phase (i.e. shovel ready)?

This project will be implemented as soon as the IRWM grant agreement is executed. Surface pipe will be connected to existing district outlets and discharged directly into ephemeral streambeds. Streambeds will not be altered through construction. All discharges will be metered. Currently, the District has two sites ready to discharge into Salt Creek when/if water and funding become available. Additional discharges will be constructed as soon as funding is secured.

Please note, the start and completion dates in question 7 and 8, are just the anticipated dates the grant funds will be available. The intent is for this program to be in place perpetuity if recharge is needed in the aquifer. We intend to move from grant funding to beneficiary funded eventually when the GSA catches up and places more permanent and flexible funding tools into action.

11. Are there other permitting requirements necessary to carry out the proposed recharge project. If so, please describe.

No additional permits are anticipated at this time. No streambed alteration is required.

12. Please describe if there are any anticipated water quality or other environmental impacts associated with the proposed recharge project (if so, please describe the mitigation measures that will be taken to remedy or offset those impacts):

Weed control in the ephemeral streams is planned and water quality monitoring is included in the monitoring plan, in addition to the groundwater level I 1 monitoring. This program is intended to help the local "de minimus" users as well as agricultural users in the area, so water quality monitoring is a high priority.

13. Please provide the name of the Local Agency implementing the proposed recharge project:

Colusa County Water District is the lead agency. Partners include the Northern Sacramento Valley IRWM, Arbuckle Public Utility District, Colusa Groundwater Authority, and possibly The Nature Conservancy.

14. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact First and Last Name:

Shelly Murphy.

15. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact Email and Phone Number:

s.murphy@colcwd.com, 530.476.2669.

16. Please identify the groundwater basin in which the proposed recharge project will be located. If possible, please provide the proposed project location coordinates (latitude, longitude). (For more information, visit:

<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/index.jsp?appid=gasmaster&rz=true>):

~ Project is located within Colusa Subbasin. The approximate latitude and longitude of the project is 39' 0'47.11 "N and 122' 3'7.58"W, respectively. The Project will extend throughout Colusa County Water District's service area. The coordinates are intended to provide an approximate location for the Project.

17. Please provide the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) or Alternative to a GSP that the proposed recharge project is associated:

Colusa Groundwater Authority

<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsp/preview/92>

18. Please provide any additional information you would like to include in your Self-Certification Form:

None.

In signing this self-certification form, I understand that the Department of Water Resources will rely on this signed certification form to determine if a concurrence with the Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 is granted for the project described and that false and/or inaccurate representations in this self-certification form may result in the invalidation of the CEQA suspension.

Furthermore, I understand that by receiving concurrence from the Department of Water Resources concerning eligibility for the CEQA suspension outlined in EO N-7-22, DWR makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the project feasibility, benefits claimed from the completed project, adequacy of the project, potential environmental impacts of the construction activities or completed project, and expressly disclaims liability for project performance, environmental impacts during and after construction, project construction disturbances, unmitigated environmental impacts post-construction, or project failures.

Original document signed by Shelly Murphy on 7/27/2023

Name of Authorized Representative

Signature

Date

Title

Agency