



June 24, 2023

Mr. Wade Crowfoot
Secretary for Natural Resources
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Request for Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project - to be conducted under Suspension of CEQA pursuant to Executive Order N-7-22

Dear Secretary Crowfoot:

Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (District) hereby respectfully requests suspension of Public Resources Code, Division 13, and related regulations (CEQA) for its Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project (Phase II Project) pursuant to Executive Order N-7-22. The District consists of a 340,000 acre service area located within portions Tulare and Kings Counties. Since its formation in 1927 the District through its network of facilities and operations has provided flood protection and groundwater conservation that benefits the Kaweah Groundwater Sub-Basin (5-022.11). The District is currently in the middle of Phase I of the Paregien Basin Expansion Project (Figure No. 1), which is being performed by our own forces under a State Proposition 68 Grant. The Phase I Project will expand existing basins in a location now known to have excellent groundwater recharging capabilities. When this phase is completed it is anticipated to generate an average of 1,440 acre-feet per year of recharge in addition to increased flood protection and environmental benefits for migrating waterfowl.

Responding to this season's excess water conditions, the project's construction activities were temporarily suspended. The facility was prepared and utilized to capture flows, during the months of March through May, from Deep Creek (Figure No. 2) for flood protection and groundwater recharge to the benefit of a downstream disadvantage community, the nearby City of Farmerville. The grant for the Phase I project has a termination date of December 31, 2023 and in order to complete construction of the project, recharge activities on the western most basin ceased at the end of May. Work will proceed on the Phase I Project at the end of this June, once the site is sufficiently dry enough.

During March of this year, the District took advantage of an opportunity to purchase 70 acres of land south and adjacent to the existing 112 acres of the Phase I Project that is currently under development (Figure No. 3). The new acquisition will be utilized for the implementation of the Phase II Project (Attachment No. 1). The addition is anticipated to increase flood protection and water conservation benefits as much as 60 percent beyond those of the Phase I Project. Conceptual designs for the Phase II Project (Figure No. 4) have been considered in anticipation of initiating the environmental review (CEQA) process necessary to advance the project for

June 26, 2023

Page 2

Mr. Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources

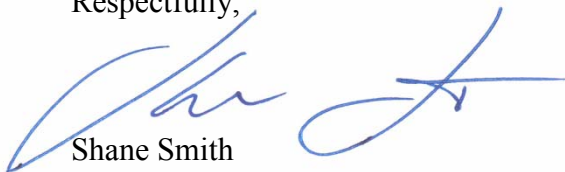
Request for Suspension of CEQA: Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project

implementation. The Phase II Project lands are presently in agricultural use in various varieties and ages of Walnuts. The first step in the Phase II Project would be the removal of the orchard for the reduction in groundwater usage that has historically been applied for irrigation purposes. The District is presently coordinating with the Department of Water Resources in obtaining funding through the “Rip & Chip” program in accomplishing this first task of the Phase II Project.

During our discussion with DWR staff, it was recommended that the District request a Suspension of CEQA in order to streamline the delivery of the Phase II Project. Granting this request would give the District the opportunity to fast track the project to provide the critically over drafted Kaweah Groundwater Sub-Basin with a vital asset in a location that would best serve the water resource needs of the region and the local disadvantaged community of Farmersville.

The District appreciates the opportunity that the CNRA offers that would progress our efforts in providing safe and sustainable water resources that will benefit the region’s agricultural, municipal and environmental vitality in support of a stable economy. Please contact the District’s Senior Engineer, Larry Dotson (ldotson@kdwcd.com) should you require further information regarding this request or the District in general.

Respectfully,



Shane Smith
General Manager

cc: Nancy Vogel, Deputy Secretary for Water
Christopher Calfee, Special Counsel to the Secretary
Stephanie Shimazu, General Counsel

Enclosures:

- Figure No. 1 – Paregien Basin Expansion Project (Phase I)
- Figure No. 2 – Paregien Basin Operational Photograph
- Figure No. 3 – Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project (Land Acquisition)
- Figure No. 4 – Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project (Conceptual Plan)
- Attachment No. 1 – Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project (Project Description)

Attachment No. 1

Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project

Project Description:

The Paregien Basin Phase II Expansion Project is put forward to enhance the recharge capacity and capability of an existing recharge site. The project is located within close proximity to the northeasterly limits of the City of Farmersville. The Project property is adjacent and west of Deep Creek, which is a natural channel distributary from the Kaweah River that runs through the City of Farmersville. The proposed effort intends to expand existing basins in a location known to have excellent groundwater recharging capabilities.

The proposed expansion project will perform removal of the existing Walnut orchard and the excavation of approximately 55 acres for a new retention basin area to provide additional capacity for water control and storage. The project will be designed to balance cut and fills, taking into account shrinkage/compaction, to produce a minimum amount of over excavation. Any excess excavation will be stockpiled at a designated location on-site on a portion of the agricultural lands that are a sufficient distance from Deep Creek to avoid water quality issues. The stockpile will be utilized by the District or other local developments for project fill. This work will be accomplished with mechanical land moving equipment in conformance with design plans that will avoid or minimize impacts to the sites natural resources along the Deep Creek riparian corridor located over 200 feet to the east and outside of the Project work limits. Excavation and associated project activities will only occur within existing agricultural (Walnut Orchard) land, which has been in-place for over 3 years. The converted agricultural areas are proposed to provide a uniform retained water depth of 3 feet across all the areas and thereby increase the overall retention capacity by approximately 60 percent and provide sufficient hydraulic pressures to facilitate optimum percolation rates. The noted improvements should expand the site's overall water retention area by approximately 50 acres and provide a maximum capacity of 176 acre-feet, up from the current capacity of 108 acre-feet. The expansion is anticipated to generate 900 acre-feet per year of recharge in addition to the flood protection and environmental benefits.

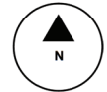
Improvements will also be required to interconnect the existing basins to the expansion for the project to achieve designed operational goals. Prefabricated concrete structures and piping placed between the basins will accomplish this objective. There is already a diversion structure and inlet to the existing basins, so there will be no required project activities within Deep Creek. The creek is a natural channel and does have adjoining riparian habitat, but will not be within the project footprint. The Project also will include a safety feature that will provide an overflow structure from the basins back into Deep Creek that will prevent overfilling the basin beyond the free board water level requirements. This safety feature would operate similar to a spillway at a dam. If there would be any operational failure then the "overflow" feature would direct water back into Deep Creek

thereby protecting adjacent regional lands from flooding that might have occurred if the banks of the basins were overtopped. Deep Creek is a regulated/controlled stream, such that during most operational scenarios the flows would be under prescribed limits that would provide safe levels through Farmersville, even if the overspill occurred. Only in the extreme events where Deep Creek is flowing “Out of Control” would the City incur potential flooding and one of the design features of the basins is the ability to attenuate flow surges during such events to reduce risk to the City.

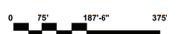
The need for the Project stems largely from the declining groundwater levels and degrading groundwater quality in the area. This Project will provide additional groundwater recharge to replenish the groundwater aquifer and will utilize existing surface supplies from the Kaweah River, a known source of good quality water that may have been otherwise lost to the Kaweah Subbasin.



NOTES:
PROPERTY LINE P - - - - -



Scale: 1" = 150'



PAREGIEN BASINS RECHARGE EXPANSION PROJECT

PAREGIEN PROJECT SITE MAP

REVISIONS

NO.	DATE	REVISIONS
1	11/11/2011	Initial Design
2	11/11/2011	Final Design
3	11/11/2011	Final Design
4	11/11/2011	Final Design
5	11/11/2011	Final Design



A 01

FIGURE NO. 1



Paregien Basin Project
(Northwest View : April 3, 2023)
FIGURE NO. 2

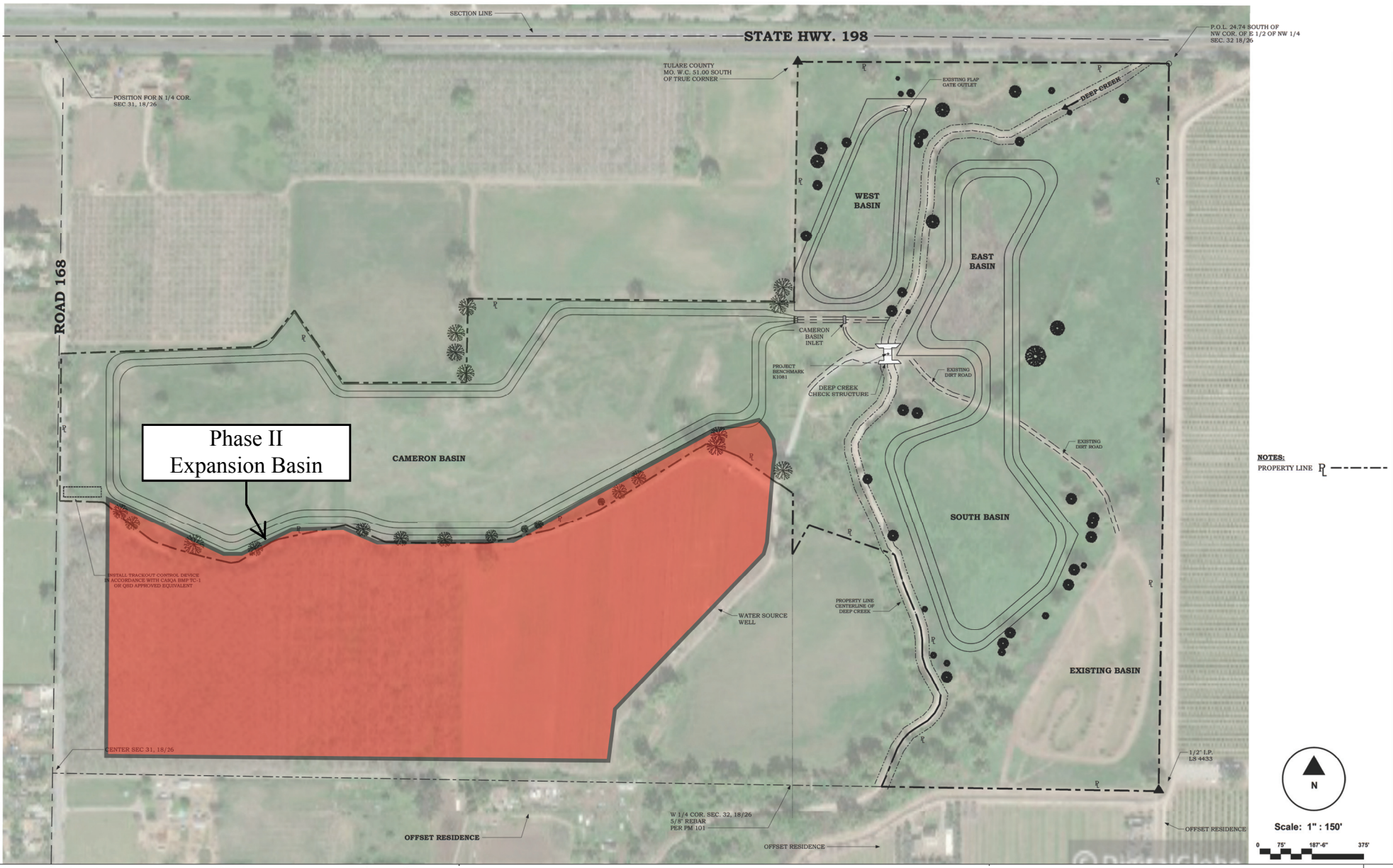


Paregien Basin Project
(East View : April 3, 2023)
FIGURE NO. 2



PAREGIEN BASIN PROJECT PARCELS

FIGURE NO. 3



**Phase II
Expansion Basin**

INSTALL TRACK-OUT CONTROL DEVICE
IN ACCORDANCE WITH CALIF. BMP #C-1
OR QED APPROVED EQUIVALENT

CENTER SEC. 31, 18/26

CAMERON BASIN

WEST BASIN

EAST BASIN

SOUTH BASIN

EXISTING BASIN

STATE HWY. 198

ROAD 168

POSITION FOR N 1/4 COR.
SEC. 31, 18/26

TULARE COUNTY
NO. W.C. 51.00 SOUTH
OF TRUE CORNER

P.O.L. 24.74' SOUTH OF
NW COR. OF E. 1/2 OF NW 1/4
SEC. 32 18/26

CAMERON BASIN
INLET

PROJECT BENCHMARK
R1081

DEEP CREEK
CHECK STRUCTURE

WATER SOURCE
WELL

PROPERTY LINE
CENTERLINE OF
DEEP CREEK

EXISTING FLAP
GATE OUTLET

EXISTING
DIFT ROAD

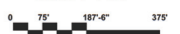
EXISTING
DIFT ROAD

1/2" I.P.
LS 4433

NOTES:
PROPERTY LINE



Scale: 1" = 150'



Pargien Basin Phase II Expansion Project
Conceptual Plan

NO.	DESCRIPTION
3	-----
4	-----
5	-----

01
A

FIGURE NO. 4