Frequently Asked Questions

STOP THE PACHECO DAM PROJECT

Protect Taxpayers and the Environment

No Significant Demonstrable Progress Has Been Made

- Years after the initial funding decision by the California Water Commission, the project remains stalled. Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) is just now preparing an environmental impact report (EIR) for geotechnical investigations. Completion of the full environmental review and permitting required under state and federal laws is years away.
- The project lacks a clear implementation timeline and the project has already experienced significant delays and cost overruns. Valley Water reports that estimated project costs have ballooned to over **$5 billion (with interest)**, with more than **$80 million** already spent.
- Prolonged and severe environmental impacts are expected, including: disruption of elk and other wildlife movement corridors, flooding of rare habitats such as sycamore alluvial woodland, and inundation of part of Henry Coe State Park. The total footprint of the reservoir itself is 1,500 acres, not including access roads, transmission lines and other ancillary facilities. The project would also terminate conservation easements that were intended to permanently protect habitat.
- The project is an expensive distraction that prevents Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program funding being spent on more viable, less environmentally damaging projects.
- The Commission should require Valley Water to **show demonstrable progress** prior to the allocation of any additional funds.

Less Expensive and Less Impactful Options are Available

Groundwater storage or the use of increased future capacity in San Luis Reservoir are better options with fewer environmental impacts, as depicted below.

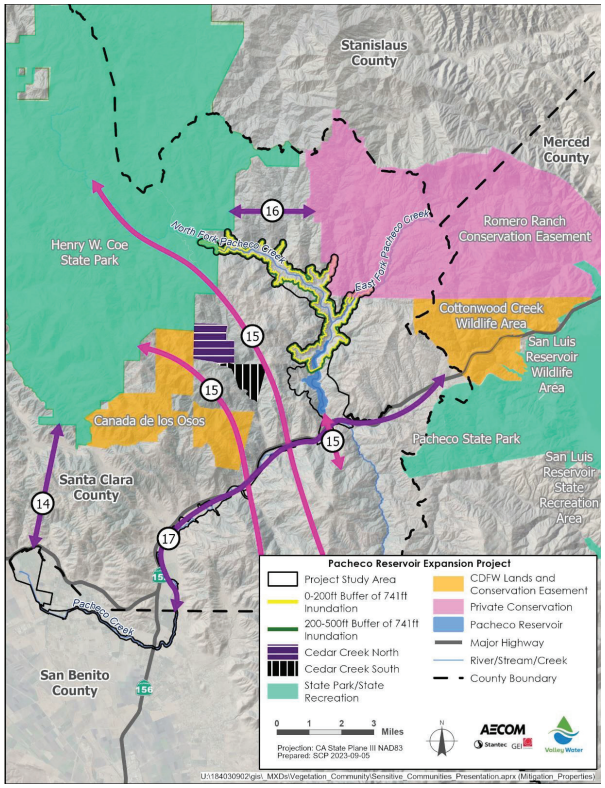


Figure 1. Wildlife Movement Corridors

[Attachment 1 of Valley Water's April 14, 2021 Meeting Agenda, item 2.1. Chart comparing similar water projects to Pacheco Reservoir. Note the cost per acre foot of storage capacity for other projects is less than half than Pacheco Reservoir's cost. Available at: https://scvwd.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=845870&GUID=B4E624E4-0EBA-466A-84FB-021B88827332&Options=info|&Search=]

Approximate Storage Project Cost Comparison

	Pacheco Reservoir Expansion	Los Vaqueros Expansion and Transfer Bethany Pipeline[1]	Sisk Dam Raise[2]	McMullin 'Aquaterra' Groundwater Bank[3]	AVEK 'High Desert' Groundwater Bank[4]
Total Capital Cost	~$2,520 Million	~$951 Million	~$1,292 Million	~$344 Million	~$159 Million
Total Storage Capacity	134 TAF	115 TAF	130 TAF	800 TAF	280 TAF
$/AF of storage capacity	$18,800/AF	$8,300/AF	$9,900/AF	$400/AF	$600/AF

1. *LVE Total Project Cost based on LVE Expansion Proforma Financial Model Version 5.0 Total Capital Cost, which includes the Transfer Bethany Pipeline cost.*
2. *Sisk Total Project Cost based on Sisk Dam final feasibility report dated December 2020, which was converted to an inflated cost projection using 4% inflation assumption*
3. *McMullin Total Project Cost based on 2020 preliminary estimate (to be revised) which was converted to an inflated cost projection using 4% inflation assumption*
4. *AVEK Total Project Cost based on Phase 1 Project Cost (similar size/scope), which was converted to an inflated cost projection using 4% inflation assumption*

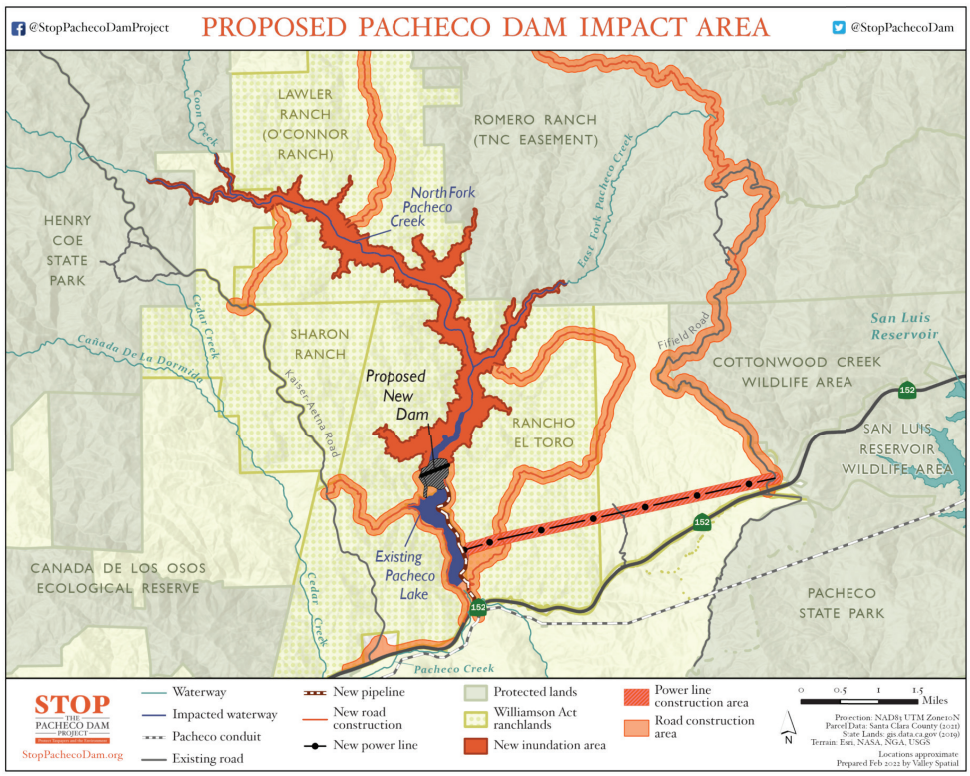
Figure 2: Attachment 1 of Valley Water's April 14, 2021 Meeting

Out-of-Control Costs Will Burden Local Ratepayers

When viewed in the context of other solutions, the cost of Pacheco Dam and burden on ratepayers cannot be justified.

Bottom Line

The Pacheco Dam project is poorly planned and is being poorly executed. Valley Water ignores viable cost-effective options such as underground storage and recharge, and the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise at San Luis Reservoir. These alternatives are cheaper and less environmentally damaging. Valley Water also has unused storage capacity in its existing reservoirs in most years. Expensive projects such as Pacheco Dam would unjustifiably raise rates for both municipal and agricultural water users in the future.



Connect With Us

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