

## 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:

10/28/2023

Reporting Period:

2023 Quarter 3

### **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: February 2024

Percent Complete: 75%

#### **2. Contracts for administration of public benefits:**

Status: In Progress

Estimated Completion Date: February 2024

Percent Complete: 65%

**3. Completed feasibility studies:**

Status: Completed

Estimated Completion Date: Completed November 2021

Percent Complete: 100%

**4. Final environmental documentation:**

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

Estimated Completion Date: September 2023

Percent Complete: 80%

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

Status: In Progress

Estimated Completion Date: June 2025

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

2023

# Progress Report: Willow Springs Water Bank Conjunctive Use Project



John Whitt

WSWB General Manager

10/28/2023

## 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 2023 Quarter 3 Progress Report and reflects works completed in Quarter 3 of 2023. 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 continued demonstrable progress towards a project partnership with Antelope Valley East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), updating of project configuration to reflect feedback and coordination with AVEK, biweekly meetings with AVEK to define project roles, responsibilities, and coordinated operations, presentation of proposed San Luis Reservoir operations to Department of Water Resources (DWR) operations staff and the State Water Project Contractors (SWPC), refinement of proposed operations plan based on feedback from DWR and SWPC, and continued coordination with DWR, CDFW, and other project proponents in the development of funding agreements and contracts for the administration of public benefits (CAPB's) contract terms.

### *Agreements and Public Benefit Contracts*

Meetings and progress have been made with all WSIP project proponents in the development of proposed and common contract terms for public benefits. These terms are being reviewed by DWR and administering agencies. Draft contracts and adaptive management frameworks were developed and refined in Quarter 3 of 2023 for the delivery of ecosystem benefits. WSWB has provided input to this process and is currently working with administering agencies and project proponents to develop public benefit contracts.

In Quarter 4 of 2022 WSWB communicated its intent and commitment to partner with AVEK. In Quarter 3 of 2023, WSWB has been diligently working with AVEK to formalize this partnership, while at the same time working in tandem with AVEK to refine project operations, facility description and conveyance mechanisms to meet the requirements of WSIP. The framework of this agreement is focused on delivering the public benefits and developing facilities that are mutually beneficial to all parties.

WSWB is also in the process of vetting operations for the predelivery of water from San Luis Reservoir with DWR Operations and SWPC with support from AVEK. During this quarter WSWB made presentations to DWR Operations and SWPC to receive feedback in order to further refine the proposed operation. WSWB has revisited project water supply modeling, updated analysis and is in the process of responding to DWR Operations and SWPC comments.

In Quarter 3 of 2022, WSWB drafted an Emergency Response Operation Plan. When finalized, this plan will aid in the development of the Emergency Response Public Benefit Contract and associated adaptive management plan. In Quarter 3 of 2023, WSWB and AVEK jointly conducted outreach to potential participating SWPC's to brief them on the project and benefits that could be realized.

### *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 application was submitted in Quarter 1 of 2022 and was selected for \$39.5M pending a local review process. In Quarter 2 of 2023 this grant received a request for additional information. In Quarter 3 of 2023 provided a response to this

request and is awaiting further direction from FEMA. WSIP funds are the proposed state cost share for this grant.

*Water Quality Monitoring*

In Q2, 2023, WSWB finalized and circulated water quality reports for 2019 and 2022. WSWB is currently refining data collection efforts and updating methods for sampling to be conducted in 2023. Of note, sampling conducted in 2023 included the addition of PFAS with none being detected. Other constituents were at levels consistent with or below that of other samples collected throughout the Antelope Valley.

In Q3, 2023, WSWB began planning and preparation for sampling to resume in 2024. Site selection, methods, and constituents to be analyzed is being discussed and coordinated with AVEK.

*Priorities and Next Steps*

The current priority for WSWB is to continue positive progress in the development of a formal project partnership with AVEK and initiate pre-design of an agreed upon set of facilities. In addition, WSWB will continue the refinement of project operations, agreements with AVEK, DWR operations and other interested SWPC’s for the reoperation of San Luis Reservoir. Agreements are needed with DWR and the SWPC’s to initiate pre-delivery of water from San Luis Reservoir into WSWB. Progress made with the delivery of an initial operations plan was reviewed by and presented to DWR and SWPC’s. WSWB is in the process of refining proposed operations based on feedback received from both parties. An updated 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.

In Q4, 2023, WSWB is slated to update the CWC on project progress with respect to partnership with AVEK and a general project update.

WSWB will continue to coordinate with DWR and administering agencies on CEQA documentation for pulse flows and CAPB’s.

**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 Westside Water Bank is an existing facility with approved expansion capabilities. 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.**

<b>Project Element</b>	<b>Relevant Components</b>	<b>Environmental Coverage</b>
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

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
---------------	---	--

Additional CEQA 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 has begun the preliminary design and permitting phase for project elements specifically located on WSWB property.

### 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 2024. 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**). Project participants are working on agreements for formal partnership with AVEK. Concurrently, pre-design and permitting will take place primarily for the WSWB infrastructure. Westside Water Bank and the SNIP Phase II pipeline have existing and underway permits.

**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	
Project Partnership Agreement with AVEK																				
Contracts for Administration of Public Benefits																				
	Funding Agreement with CWC																			
												Project Construction Phase								