

# Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project

## Proposition 1 WSIP Funding Application Submittal

### Introduction

California's Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 provides for issuance of \$7.5 billion in general obligation bonds, including \$2.7 billion for investments in surface and groundwater storage projects. The water storage projects will be funded under the act's Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) through the efforts of the California Water Commission, which is responsible for allocating these funds using a competitive selection process.

To further optimize and expand local control of its water supply portfolio, the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Board of Directors authorized staff in February 2017 to evaluate whether expansion of Pacheco Reservoir in southeast Santa Clara County will meet WSIP eligibility requirements and compete against other water storage projects in the state vying for WSIP funds. WSIP funds can be allocated to cover up to 50 percent of a project's cost, but only that portion dedicated to providing public benefits, including environmental benefits, beyond water supply. Santa Clara Valley Water District staff – in collaboration with the Pacheco Pass Water District and San Benito County Water District – have made good progress in their evaluation and expect to show that increasing the storage capacity of Pacheco Reservoir can help establish a permanent South-Central California Coast steelhead population in Pacheco Creek, plus provide both water supply and other significant public benefits.

### The Project

Owned by Pacheco Pass Water District, the existing Pacheco Reservoir has an operational capacity of 5,500 acre-feet. Water released from the reservoir flows down Pacheco Creek and seeps through the creek bed and into the underlying groundwater aquifer as it winds towards its confluence with the Pajaro River. The released flow is measured to fully infiltrate into a groundwater aquifer that begins at the northern tip in Santa Clara County and extends southwards into San Benito County. Agricultural users in Pacheco Pass Water District and San Benito County Water District pump water from the aquifer.



*Existing Pacheco Reservoir.*

The project includes construction of a new earthen dam a short distance upstream from the existing dam and a pipeline to connect the dam to the existing Pacheco Conduit, a federal Central Valley Project pipeline that delivers water into Santa Clara and San Benito counties from San Luis Reservoir. The Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project would expand the reservoir to 140,000 acre-feet and deliver water supply, water quality, and ecosystem benefits to the region and, through specific operations, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The reservoir, when filled, would inundate lands on private properties, but would not extend into Henry Coe State Park.

The enlarged reservoir would be operated to enhance the continuity of flows in Pacheco Creek, not only for groundwater recharge but also to establish a high quality steelhead habitat that reaches far inland from Monterey Bay into Pacheco Creek. It would also expand the storage of Central Valley Project water available to the Santa Clara Valley and San Benito County water districts and provide more flexibility for use of this water at optimal times. The expanded reservoir would be filled by a combination of Central Valley Project supplies and local inflows. Potentially, the reservoir could also provide downstream flood protection benefits.

## Benefits

- Fisheries and habitat establishment along Pacheco Creek and downstream Pajaro River.
- Increased emergency water supplies and improved groundwater conditions.
- Improved water quality through avoidance of San Luis Reservoir low point issues.
- Expanded storage of wet year supplies for utilization during dry and critical years.
- Increased operational flexibility and greater local control of water supplies.
- Potentially, reduced flood risk along Pacheco Creek and downstream Pajaro River, offering some relief to the disadvantaged communities of Watsonville and Pajaro.
- Potentially, increased water supplies to Central Valley wildlife refuges.

## Cost

The project capital cost is provisionally estimated at \$800 million.

## Schedule

WSIP funding applications are due by Aug. 14, 2017. The California Water Commission is planning to release project rankings in April 2018 and early funding decisions in June 2018.

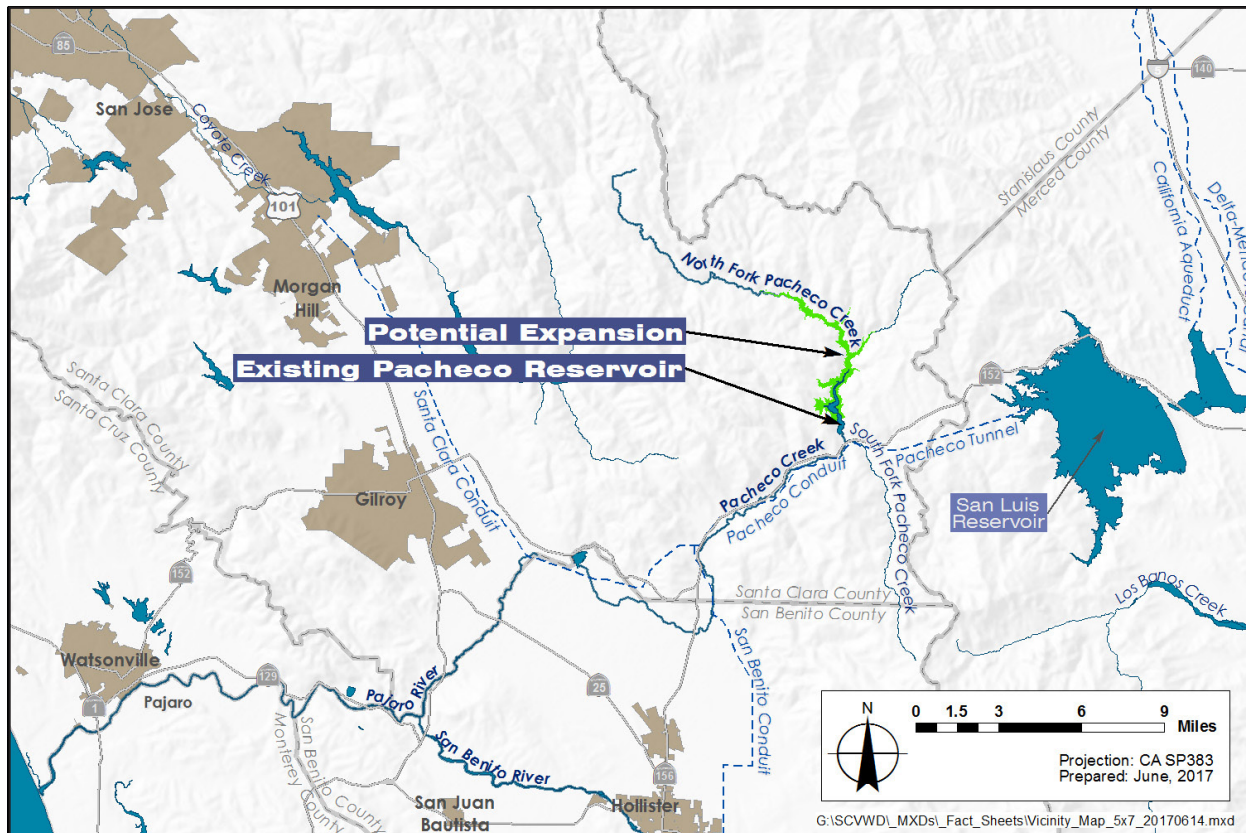


Figure 1: Study area map of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project. Map subject to revision.



**PACHECO PASS  
WATER DISTRICT**

## CONTACT US

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