

Topic: **Sites Reservoir Project**

Subject: **Monthly Status Report**

Report Period: **2020 November**

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### **Monthly Status Summary:**

The development of the Sites Project continues to make progress in the critical areas including the following activities:

#### **WSIP Funding:**

- The Commission considered options for reallocating the Temperance Flat Reservoir \$170M MCED. It is expected that a staff recommendation and possible Commission could occur on this issue as early as December 2020.
- The project team has met with CWC staff and have been discussing the proposed elements of the Authority's demonstration of 75% local cost share commitment. These early discussions will help to ensure the final deliverables meet CWC standards.

#### **WIIN Act Funding:**

- The first request for payment has been compiled and reviewed by Reclamation. Staff are setting up a separate bank account to receive federal funds and submit final request for payment once account is available. Additional requests for reimbursement will occur quarterly.
- The Final Federal Feasibility Report is in the Office of Management and Budget. The document is still on track for a December 2020 completion, which is the statutory deadline for the WIIN Act.

#### **USDA Funding:**

- No update this month.

#### **Engineering:**

- Continued feasibility design analysis.
- Continued preparation of Class IV project cost estimate.
- Completed preparation of high-level preliminary project construction schedule.
- Continued supporting permitting and environmental data needs, including review and input of the Project Description and Construction Appendix.

#### **Coordination with Reclamation:**

- Continued coordination with Reclamation for in-kind work associated with geologic and geotechnical exploration efforts in support of the feasibility design.
- Continued to work with Reclamation planning and environmental teams on the National Environmental Policy Act approach and schedule.
- Continued coordinating with Reclamation on Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act consultations for geotechnical exploration and project-level work.
- Began discussions with Reclamation on a Sites-Reclamation Operating Agreement.
- Worked with Reclamation to evaluate possibilities for federal participation,

including consideration of a third EIR/EIS alternative.

**Coordination with Department of Water Resources:**

- Staff continued focused meetings with DWR operations and modeling teams to discuss the operations of Sites as it relates to the State Water Project, Oroville operations, and conveyance of water south-of-delta.
- Team coordinated a meeting related to modeling results between SWP-Sites contractors and DWR operations staff. Meeting to be held in December.

**Environmental Planning and Permitting:**

- Continued to work with Project engineers in the refinement and further description of project alternatives and the development of Chapter 2 (Alternatives) of the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS (RDEIR/SDEIS).
- Continued analysis of construction-related environmental effects and the development of RDEIR/SDEIS chapters and appendices; first batch due for submittal December 10.
- Continued AB 52 outreach efforts to Native American tribes including support in drafting and mailing ongoing consultation letters to tribes. Consultation letters were sent on November 14, 2020 and the Authority received responses back from the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and the Colusa Indian Community Council.
- Coordination with CEQA legal counsel on technical issues, baseline and alternatives.
- Continued coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the preparation for the Clean Water Act 404 permit and initiated 404 permitting small working group.
- Continued discussions with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on 2020/2021 meetings and workshops.
- Continued discussions with CDFW regarding take permit conditions and Prop 1 benefits.
- Developed Permitting Action Plan outlining key permit schedule and general approach to coordination with the Environmental Planning and Permitting Work Group, Reservoir Committees and Authority Board.
- Finalized permits for 2020/21 geotechnical activities.

**Water Rights:**

- Developed the Water Rights Application Key Principles Parameters and began refinements based on comments and input received.

**Operations:**

- Finalized second iteration of CalSim run including full integration of modeling exchanges with Shasta Lake and Lake Oroville.
- Began implementing updated baseline: CalSim II 2020 Benchmark baseline, which includes both ROC on LTO BiOp and actions from the SWP ITP.
- Worked closely with fisheries team to refine diversion criteria based on preliminary analysis.
- Continued reviewing Prop 1 benefits under revised project and updated model; coordinated with CDFW on ecosystem benefits agreement.

- Worked with Storage Policy Small Group on next steps for updating the Storage Policy.
- Supported environmental planning team in development of operations-related components of the project description.

**Stakeholder Engagement, Public Outreach & Real Estate:**

- Facilitated a project update meeting with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) including project discussing the Federal Feasibility Report, project right sizing, permitting and planned 2021 work plan activities.
- Continued engagement and outreach efforts with landowners, local community members, state and federal elected officials, non-governmental organizations and coalitions of regional and statewide organizations to introduce the Value Planning Report and the new “rightsized” project.
- Responded to landowner requests for project information, facilitated coordination activities with local government agencies and organizations and planned for future landowner, stakeholders and general public outreach activities and events.
- Made a presentation on the project to the Colusa Rotary Club and finalized an upcoming article for Municipal Water Leader magazine featuring the Sites Project in the March 2021 issue.

**Program Management & Administration:**

- Continued coordination efforts for Project Financing Action Plan.