

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 27, 2022

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# PV Water Board of Directors Advances College Lake Project

Watsonville, CA — The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) Board of Directors unanimously approved the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Addendum at its meeting on July 20, 2022. As part of the action the Board approved a updated version of the project that moves the College Lake Project pipeline to the east side of Watsonville (lessening traffic impacts during construction), and reduced other aspects of the project footprint decreasing environmental impacts.

The College Lake Project is PV Water's highest priority project within its community-developed and state-approved Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Alternative. The primary purposes of the College Lake Project are to help balance the groundwater basin, prevent further seawater intrusion, and meet water supply needs in PV Water's service area by developing College Lake as a water storage and supply source.

The public process to review the College Lake Project has been extensive, beginning with the publication of a Notice of Preparation of the EIR that was published in November 2017, which initiated the public comment period. This Addendum acknowledges modifications PV Water has made to the College Lake Project since the Final EIR for the project was certified by the Board in October 2019. The EIR is available online at [www.pvwater.org/college-lake-project](http://www.pvwater.org/college-lake-project).

Since Board certified the College Lake Project EIR in 2019, the design has evolved to include the following four significant updates:

- **Weir Structure and Intake Pump Station.** The configuration and dimensions of the weir structure and intake pump station have been refined since approval of the Project, for example, incorporate input from National Marine Fisheries Service regarding design of the fishway passage.
- **Water Treatment Plant (WTP).** The design for the WTP has been refined, resulting in a *smaller* permanent footprint compared to the previously approved Project, and an addition of a potable water well.
- **College Lake Pipeline.** To reduce disruption to streets within the City of Watsonville, PV Water is going with an alternative alignment for the College Lake pipeline that is

closer to agricultural fields and generally east of city streets. The proposed pipeline is now approximately 6 miles long and 30 inches in diameter.

- **Project Construction.** Construction is estimated to occur over approximately 22 months beginning in 2023.

## **PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE**

Groundwater accounts for more than 90% of water demand in the Pajaro Valley Basin. Throughout much of the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin, groundwater levels have declined as a result of long-term groundwater overdraft. Overdraft conditions result in seawater intrusion, groundwater quality degradation and groundwater storage depletion.

The College Lake Project will add a significant and consistent source of water to PV Water's supplemental water supply network, which PV Water developed to achieve sustainable groundwater resources in its critically overdrafted basin. PV Water will use water from College Lake to supplement existing water supplies, which will help reduce the annual groundwater deficit of approximately 12,000 acre-feet per year. (An acre-foot is equal to 325,851 gallons, or one foot of water covering an acre of land.) In addition to providing water, the College Lake Project will improve habitat and passage for Steelhead, an endangered species, and maintain habitat for waterfowl.

The College Lake Project includes a weir structure and intake pump station, a water treatment plant, and a pipeline to convey water from the water treatment plant to PV Water's Coastal Distribution System. On average, the Project would generally supply 1,800 to 2,300 acre-feet per year (586 to 749 million gallons per year) of water to growers in the Pajaro Valley.

## **MILESTONES**

In April, PV Water was awarded a \$7.6 million state Department of Water Resources (DWR) grant to fund planning, design, environmental assessment, and land acquisition costs associated with the College Lake project.

In January, the PV Water Board of Directors accepted the Adaptive Management Plan for the Project. Hydrologic modeling has shown that the most effective way to stop seawater intrusion and balance the overdrafted basin is to reduce groundwater pumping in the coastal area. PV Water is striving to achieve basin sustainability by 2040 and the College Lake Project helps reach that goal.

In December 2021, the State Water Board approved PV Water's water right application in the beginning of December for the College Lake Project. The approval means PV Water will be permitted to divert and utilize up to 3,000 acre-feet of water per year to help eliminate groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion.



*College Lake, with Kelly Lake in background.*

## **ABOUT PV WATER**

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) is a state-chartered water management district formed to efficiently and economically manage existing and supplemental water supplies in order to prevent further increase in, and to accomplish continuing reduction of, long-term overdraft. PV Water works to provide and ensure sufficient water supplies for present and future anticipated needs within its boundaries, generally the greater coastal Pajaro Valley. For more information, visit [www.pvwater.org](http://www.pvwater.org) or [www.facebook.com/PajaroValleyWater](https://www.facebook.com/PajaroValleyWater).

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