

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2022

Contact: Brian Lockwood

(831) 722-9292

lockwood@pvwater.org



PV Water Calls for Bids to Construct the College Lake Project

Watsonville, CA — November 16, 2022 - The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) Board of Directors enthusiastically authorized staff to advertise for bids to construct the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project. Bids are being advertised at [Watsonville Blueprint](#). The College Lake Project will provide much-needed water to the critically overdrafted basin of the Pajaro Valley. The Project will also improve fish bypass flows and fish passage for South-central California coast steelhead migration. Once completed, the Project will be the largest new source of water in the Pajaro Valley since the completion of the Watsonville Area Water Recycling Facility in 2009.

The College Lake Project is PV Water's top priority project in 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 the water supply needs of the Pajaro Valley by developing College Lake as a water storage and supply source.

PROJECT IMPORTANCE

Groundwater accounts for more than 90% of water demand in the Pajaro Valley Basin. Throughout the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin, groundwater levels are overdrafted, meaning they are below sea level because of long-term unsustainable pumping of the groundwater aquifer. 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 will help to protect the freshwater resources that all water users rely on in the Pajaro Valley. The College Lake Project is an essential component to achieve sustainable groundwater resources in the critically overdrafted basin. PV Water will use water from College Lake to leverage existing water infrastructure, 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 with fish passage 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.

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. The Addendum that was approved in July 2022 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 and all supporting documents are available online at www.pvwater.org/college-lake-project.

Since the PV Water 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, by incorporating 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.

ADDITIONAL 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 and to follow construction progress, visit www.pvwater.org or www.facebook.com/PajaroValleyWater.

#