



Resolution 2021-04

A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency

Selecting, Approving, and Adopting the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge & Recovery Projects

The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency does resolve as follows:

Section 1. Procedural Findings. The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (“Agency”) does hereby find, determine, and declare that:

A. The Agency was formed, among other reasons, to provide integrated management of the groundwater and surface water resources within the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin (“Pajaro Basin”). As the sole local agency responsible for the integrated management of water resources for the Pajaro Basin, the Agency bears responsibility for the management and augmentation of water supplies for domestic, agricultural, municipal and industrial purposes.

B. In 1994, the Agency adopted a long-term Basin Management Plan (“BMP”) which identified various water supply projects involving local water sources and importation of supplemental water, to balance water demands with water supplies in the Pajaro Basin. In 2002, the Agency adopted a revised BMP.

C. In 2010, the Agency formed an Ad Hoc BMP Committee to develop a further updated BMP that would include a portfolio of projects and programs to address the problems of seawater intrusion and basin overdraft in the Pajaro Basin. This work resulted in the Agency’s adoption in 2014 of an updated BMP (“BMP Update”).

D. In 2015, the Agency elected to become a Groundwater Sustainability Agency under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and in 2019, the California Department of Water Resources notified the Agency that it had approved the BMP Update and associated documents as functionally equivalent to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

E. Throughout much of the Pajaro 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. To address these circumstances, and in furtherance of the BMP Update, the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Projects (“Projects”), comprised of the Harkins Slough Facilities Upgrades Project and Struve Slough Project, were developed. The primary purposes of the Projects are to help balance the groundwater basin, prevent further seawater intrusion, and meet water supply needs in the Agency’s service area by further developing the Watsonville Slough System as a water storage and supply source. The Board adopted the following project-specific objectives for the Projects in April 2020:

- Design and implement reliable facilities to help achieve sustainable groundwater management of the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Subbasin by 2040, taking into account potential future hydrologic changes, including those associated with climate change.

- Substantially contribute to the Pajaro Valley’s water supply needs in a timely manner, consistent with the Basin Management Plan Update implementation goals.
- Use locally controlled surface water for agricultural purposes to offset groundwater pumping in an environmentally sound manner and in coordination with resource agencies, the public, and other stakeholders, while preserving existing habitat.
- Make efficient use of, and leverage federal, state, and local investments in, existing Agency infrastructure.
- In coordination with other agencies, develop surface water supplies in a manner that is compatible with flood risk reduction and habitat restoration planning

F. The Projects are located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The Harkins Slough Project would include upgrades at the Harkins Slough pump station and filter plant, installation of intake screens, installation of a backwash and raw water pipeline from the filter plant at the Harkins Slough pump station to an existing gravity sewer in West Beach Street, and construction of two new recharge basins and associated recovery wells, monitoring wells, and pipelines. The Struve Slough Project would develop Struve Slough as a water supply source by installing a new screened intake, new pump station, a pipeline to connect the new pump station to the Harkins Slough pump station, a second pipeline to the recharge basins, and a new recharge basin and associated recovery wells, monitoring wells, and pipelines. On average, the Projects would generally divert approximately 740 acre-feet per year (AFY) from Harkins Slough and approximately 1,320 AFY from Struve Slough to either the recharge basins and/or the Watsonville Area Water Recycling Facility for ultimate use as a water supply for growers in the Pajaro Valley.

G. The Projects were processed, including but not limited to all public notices, in the time and manner prescribed by State and local law, including the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code § 21000, *et seq.* (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, 14. Cal. Code Regs. § 15000, *et seq.* On January 20, 2021, the Agency’s Board of Directors, at a duly noticed public hearing, considered the Final Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) prepared for the Projects, and certified it in Resolution 2021-03, including adopting written findings, adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopting a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

H. A notice of public hearing describing the Projects, the date, time, and location of the public hearing was published and posted in compliance with all legal requirements.

I. Prior to taking action, the Agency Board of Directors has heard, been presented with, reviewed, and considered the information and data in the administrative record regarding the Projects, including staff reports and presentations, and all oral and written testimony presented during the public hearing on the Projects.

J. The Agency’s General Manager is the custodian of records, and the documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are located at the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, 36 Brennan Street, Watsonville, California, 95076.

Section 2. Substantive Findings. The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency does hereby:

A. Declare that the above Procedural Findings are true and correct, and incorporate them herein by this reference.

B. Select, approve, and adopt the Projects as described in the Final EIR.

C. Impose as a condition on the Projects each mitigation measure specified in Exhibit C to Resolution 2021-03, and direct Agency staff to implement and to monitor the mitigation measures as described in Exhibit C.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this **20th** day of **January, 2021** by the following vote:

AYES: Newell, Culbertson, Zamora, Bannister, Broz, Rider
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None


Amy Newell, Chair

Attest:



Laura R. Taay, Board Secretary