

Requested Action:

Consider Approval to release the RDEIR/SDEIS Project Description (with Operations) to regulatory agencies and interested parties, including posting on the Authority's website, to improve Project transparency and facilitate more detailed Project discussions.

Detailed Description/Background:

At the Reservoir Committee and Board meetings in June, September and December 2020, staff provided an overview of the alternatives under consideration for the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RDEIR/SDEIS). Staff has continued to refine the alternatives and, with the consulting team, is nearing completion of a draft of the RDEIR/SDEIS project description.

The project description comprises Chapter 2 of the RDEIR/SDEIS. The project description includes a summary overview of the alternatives screening and selection process, an overview of the action alternatives and the no action alternative along with a detailed description for each of the three action alternatives. Also included in the project description are best management practices and environmental commitments that would be implemented under all the alternatives.

The project description continues to include three alternatives as discussed with the Reservoir Committee and Board in prior meetings. Table 1 provides a high-level summary of the three alternatives. Attachment A provides a more expansive summary table of the alternatives. The key changes to the alternatives that have been made since the previous presentations to the Reservoir Committee and Board are as follows:

- Hydropower – All alternatives include power generation incidental upon release up to 40 megawatts at Funks Reservoir and up to 40 megawatts at the Terminal Regulating Reservoir. Staff has conferred with staff at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and believes that incidental power generation at these two separate facilities would qualify for separate FERC exemptions. With this generation capacity built in to the Project, power consumption for Project operations will be partially self-generated renewable energy. It is expected that the remaining operating power needs will be met with renewable sources to ensure no net increase in greenhouse gas emissions from the operations of the Project.
- Regulatory Required Emergency Drawdown and Release Flows, Alternative 2 – Refinements to emergency drawdown and release locations have been made to Alternative 2. Emergency releases under this alternative would occur at the Inlet/Outlet Works, Sites Dam, and Saddle Dam 8B into Hunters Creek watershed. On net the frequent flood control benefits far outweigh the very low risk of infrequent, if ever, emergency releases. To improve understanding of the risk and the potential scale of these rare emergency events, an inundation review encompassing the potential release areas will be conducted.

- Stored water Release Location, Alternative 3 – The release location for Alternative 3 will be the Colusa Basin Drain as it was determined that the Colusa Basin Drain likely has sufficient capacity to handle the flows.
- Diversion Criteria and More Detailed Operations Criteria – Diversion criteria were refined, and more detailed operations criteria were added to all the alternatives. The team conducted an extensive analysis of different possible diversion criteria, including an extensive review of the current scientific literature. Through these efforts, the diversion criteria have been shifted upstream into the Sacramento River to allow for practical operations at the diversion locations. Additional pulse protections to protect migrating juvenile salmonids have also been added. While the species effects analysis and modeling is being completed in January and February, the team believes that the revised diversion criteria are more protective of migrating juvenile salmonids throughout the Sacramento River and Delta and also result in little changes in Sacramento River flows in downstream locations, such as Freeport, and little changes to Delta flows, including net Delta outflow index and Delta salinity. The team will be sharing the outcomes of the species effects analyses in the coming months.

Table 1. Summary of the Alternatives In the RDEIR/SDEIS Project Description

Facilities / Operations	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Reservoir Size	1.5 MAF	1.3 MAF	1.5 MAF
Hydropower	Incidental upon release	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1
Diversion Locations	Red Bluff Pumping Plant and Hamilton City	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1
Conveyance Release / Dunnigan Release	1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) into new Dunnigan Pipeline to Colusa Basin Drain	1,000 cfs into new Dunnigan Pipeline to Sacramento River. Partial release into the Colusa Basin Drain	Same as Alt 1
Reclamation Involvement	1. Funding Partner 2. Operational Exchanges a. Within Year Exchanges b. Real-time Exchanges	Operational Exchanges a. Within Year Exchanges b. Real-time Exchanges	Same as Alt 1, Funding Partner up to 25% investment
DWR Involvement	Operational Exchanges with Oroville and use of SWP facilities South-of-Delta	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1
Route to West Side of Reservoir	Bridge across reservoir	Paved road around southern end of reservoir	Same as Alt 1

The project description identifies Alternative 1 as the Authority's proposed project based on the alternative meeting the intent and the goals of the Value Planning effort, its close alignment with VP-7, and its ability to meet the project objectives.

Staff recommends posting the RDEIR/SDEIS project description on the Authority's website. The project description would be posted for informational purposes to aide in the discussion of permitting approaches with regulatory agencies and in discussions with non-governmental organizations. It is important to note that the Authority is not taking public comments nor responding to comments on the project description and a preamble to the project description would make this clear to the reader. Making the project description available to the public increases transparency and provides a common foundation for regulatory agencies, non-governmental agencies, and other interested stakeholders to understand the project components. Refinements would continue to be made to the project description after posting on the Authority's website until the release of the RDEIR/SDEIS and any significant or material changes would be brought back to the Reservoir Committee and Authority Board for consideration before the change is made.

Prior Action:

December 18, 2020: Reviewed and commented on option to add Alternative 3 with Reclamation at 25% investment to EIR/EIS project description.

September 17, 2020: Approved to designate Alternative 1, based on VP-7 of the Sites Project Value Planning Alternatives Appraisal Report (Value Planning Report), as the Authority's preferred project for the purposes of the RDEIR analysis and for the purposes of the Biological Assessment and State Incidental Take Permit applications.

April 22, 2020: The Authority directed staff to revise and recirculate a Draft EIR to analyze the environmental effects of the options identified in the Final Sites Project Value Planning Alternatives Appraisal Report dated April 2020, including VP7.

April 22, 2020: The Authority accepted: the final report titled "Sites Project Value Planning Alternatives Appraisal Report, dated April 13, 2020" and the recommendations presented within, and a recommendation to the Sites Project Authority to approve the final report titled "Sites Project Value Planning Alternatives Appraisal Report, April 13, 2020" and the recommendations presented within.

February 26, 2020: The Authority approved a recommendation to re-start efforts on the EIR for the Sites Reservoir Project and assess the most appropriate approach for completing the EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

July 20, 2017: The Reservoir Committee approved a recommendation to forward the Draft EIR/EIS to the Authority Board for its consideration to formally receive and adopt the document for inclusion in the Authority's Water Storage Investment Project application.

July 31, 2017: The Authority approved the release of the Draft EIR for public and agency review, in connection with the Authority's application to the California Water Commission by August 14, 2017. The document was published as joint Draft EIR/EIS by the Authority under the California Environmental Quality Act and Reclamation under the National Environmental Policy Act.

December 19, 2016: The Authority approved release of a Supplemental Notice of Preparation (released February 2, 2017) to transfer the California Environmental Quality Act lead agency status from the Department of Water Resources to the Sites Project Authority. Public scoping meetings were conducted on February 14 and 15, 2017.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

Staff reported in December that sufficient funds to incorporate Alternative 3 into the RDEIR/SDEIS were included in the Amendment 2 Work Plan (Budget), which was approved by the Authority at its August 26, 2020 Board meeting. Since that time, staff has become aware of additional fisheries analysis and document formatting needs that will be necessary to incorporate Alternative 3 into the RDEIR/SDEIS. Staff is working with ICF to understand these potential costs and will determine how to incorporate these costs into the Amendment 2

Work Plan within existing revenue sources. Staff is also working with Reclamation to include these costs in an amendment to the existing Financial Assistance Agreement that will incorporate a portion of the \$13.7 million Federal Appropriation signed into law last month. The February 2021 update to the Reservoir Committee and Authority Board on the Amendment 2 Work Plan (Budget) will reflect these changes and these added costs will not impact the second cash call amount to Reservoir Committee Members.

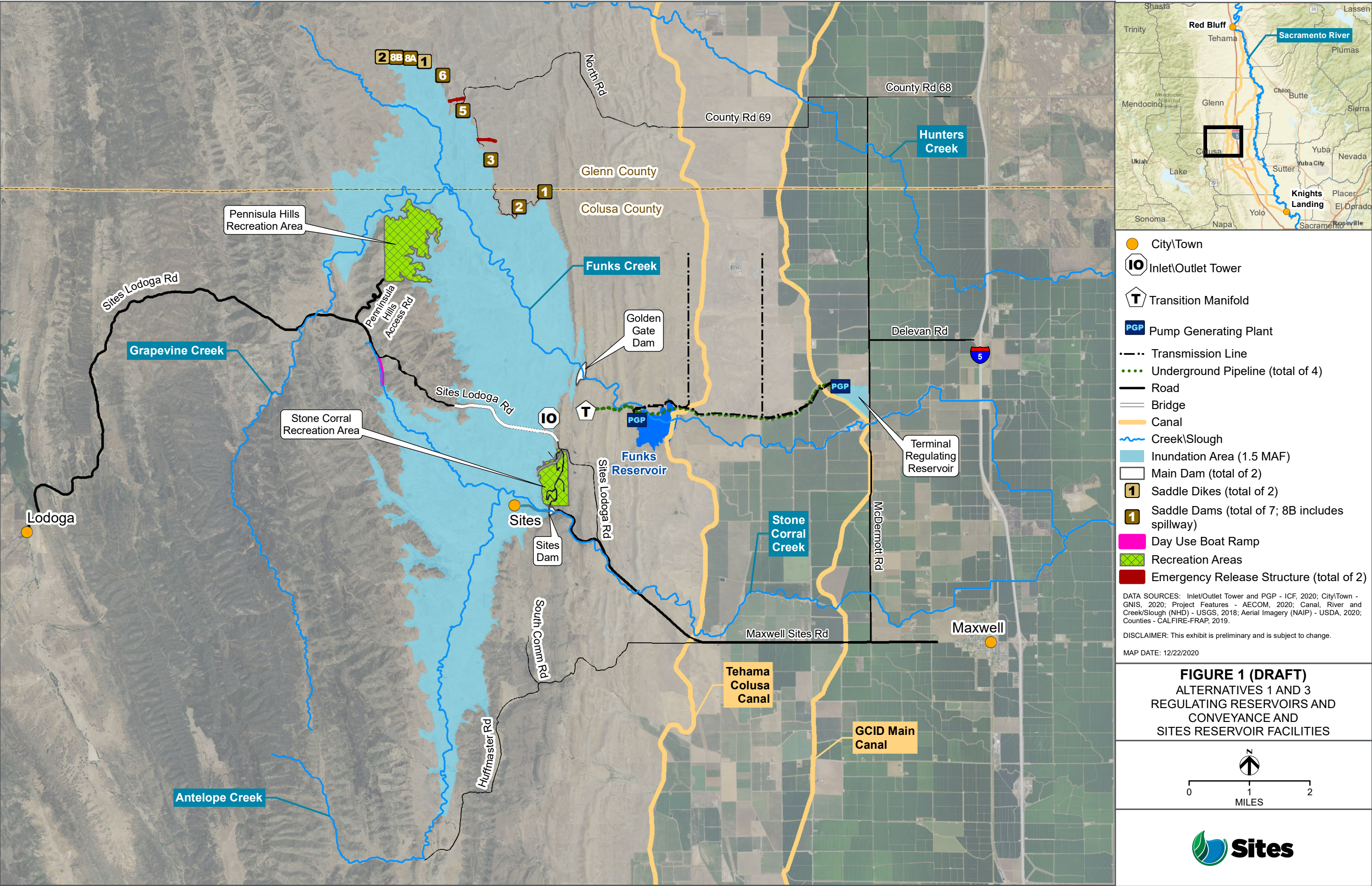
Costs to complete and circulate the Final EIR/EIS will be considered in a future Work Plan.

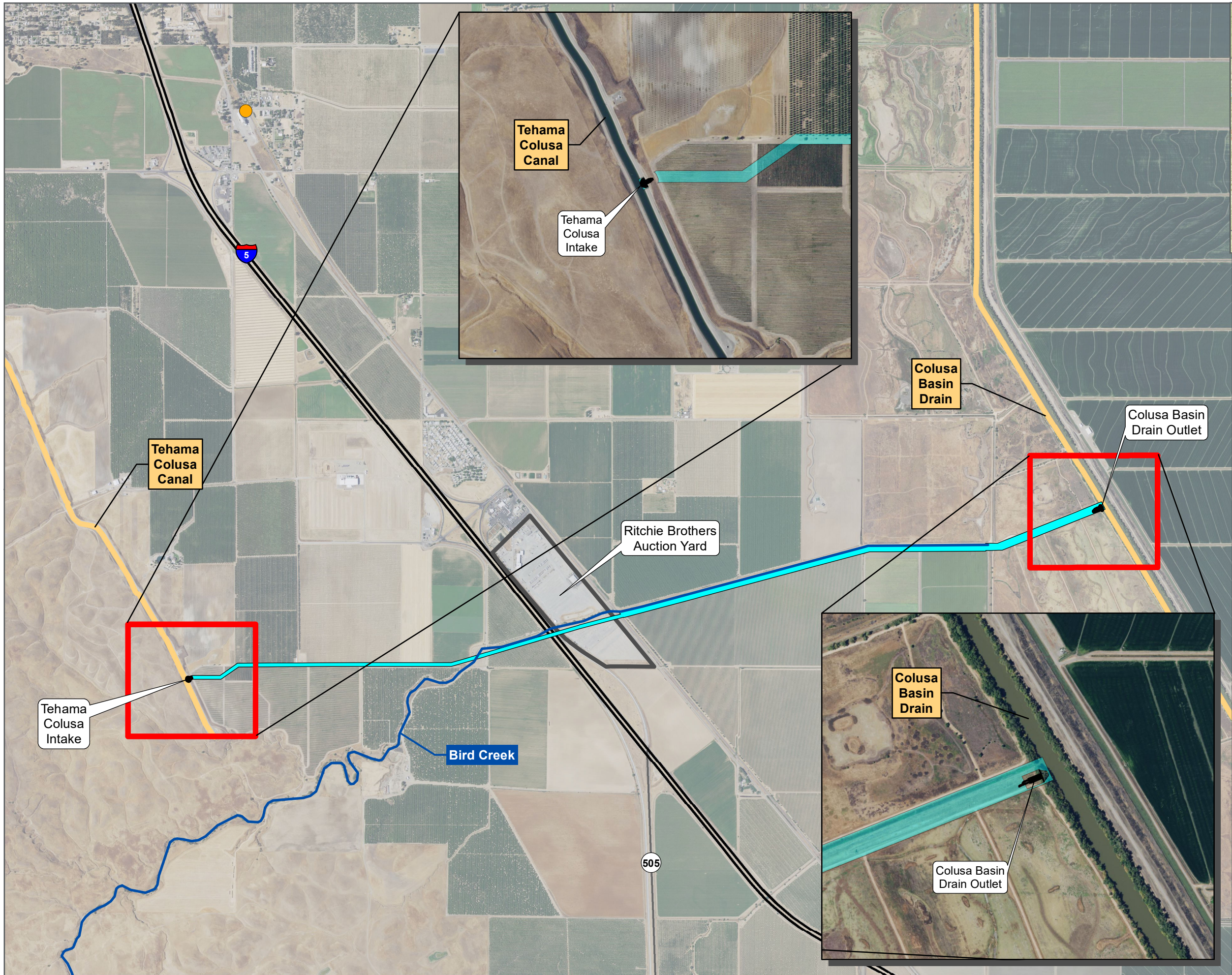
Staff Contact:

Ali Forsythe

Attachments:

Attachment A – Sites Reservoir Project, Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS Project Alternatives





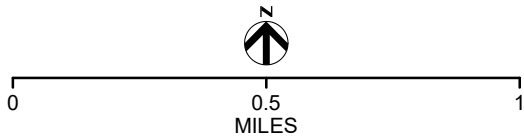
- LEGEND**
- City\Town
 - Bird Creek
 - Dunnigan Underground Pipeline

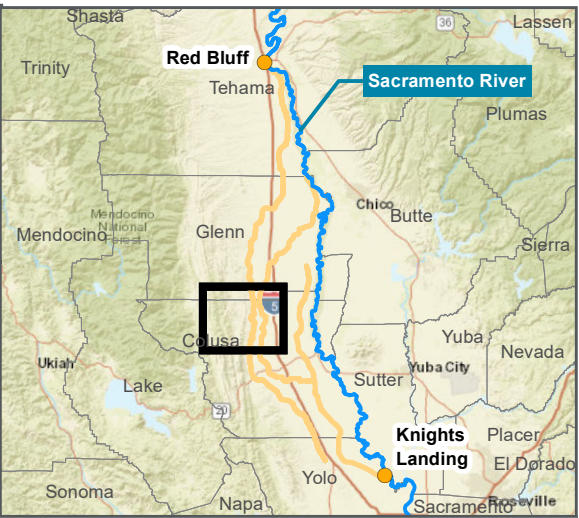
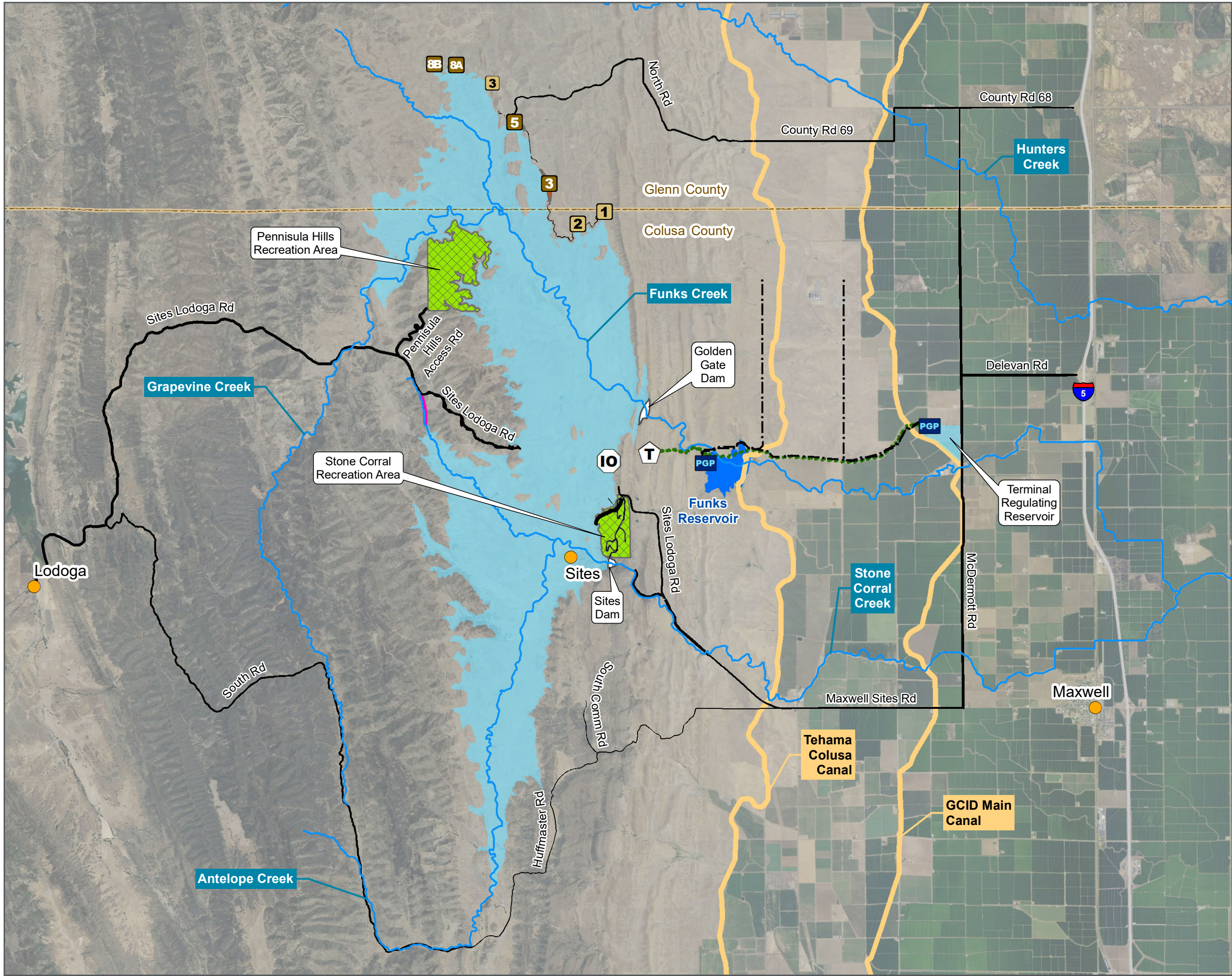
DATA SOURCES: City/Town - GNIS, 2020; Project Features - AECOM, 2020; Canals (NHD) - USGS, 2018; Aerial Imagery (NAIP) - USDA, 2020.

DISCLAIMER: This exhibit is preliminary and is subject to change.

MAP DATE: 12/22/2020

FIGURE 2 (DRAFT)
ALTERNATIVES 1 and 3
CONVEYANCE TO COLUSA BASIN
DRAIN COMPONENTS





- City/Town
- Inlet/Outlet Tower
- Transmission Manifold
- PGP Pump Generating Plant
- Transmission Line
- Underground Pipeline (total of 4)
- Roads
- Canal
- Creek/Slough
- Inundation Area (1.3 MAF)
- Main Dams
- Saddle Dikes (total of 3)
- Saddle Dams (total of 4; 8B includes spillway)
- Day Use Boat Ramp
- Recreation Areas

DATA SOURCES: Inlet/Outlet Tower and PGP - ICF, 2020; City/Town - GNIS, 2020; Project Features - AECOM, 2020; Canal, River and Creek/Slough (NHD) - USGS, 2018; Aerial Imagery (NAIP) - USDA, 2020; Counties - CALFIRE-FRAP, 2019.
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FIGURE 3 (DRAFT)
ALTERNATIVE 2
REGULATING RESERVOIRS AND
CONVEYANCE AND
SITES RESERVOIR FACILITIES





- LEGEND**
- City\Town
 - Bird Creek
 - Dunnigan Underground Pipeline

DATA SOURCES: City/Town - GNIS, 2020; Project Features - AECOM, 2020; Canals (NHD) - USGS, 2018; Aerial Imagery (NAIP) - USDA, 2020.

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FIGURE 4 (DRAFT)
ALTERNATIVE 2
CONVEYANCE TO SACRAMENTO
RIVER COMPONENTS

