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## **Sites Reservoir Advances Toward Construction with Key Permitting and Contracting Milestones**

Maxwell, CA – Today, the Sites Project Authority (Authority) announced two major advancements that move the Sites Reservoir Project (Project) closer to construction. Significant contractor outreach progress and two key environmental permitting milestones indicate that the Authority’s goal of breaking ground on Sites Reservoir by the end of 2026 is within reach.

The Authority is reviewing a short list of qualified applicants for the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) contract to construct the reservoir and roads portion of the Project. The CMAR procurement process began earlier this year, and the Authority is now requesting detailed proposals from the short list applicants and anticipates selecting a CMAR contractor later this year.

“The CMAR selection process, which is done through a qualifications based competitive procurement, ensures we select the highest ranked team that will provide the best value for the Project and local community,” said **Jerry Brown, Executive Director of the Sites Project Authority**. “The first phase shortlisted from a group of premier internationally recognized contractors, while this second phase allows the Authority to dive deeper into each firm’s approach to efficiency, cost certainty, local community compatibility, and project management for a project of this magnitude.”

Additionally, on Wednesday, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued the biological opinion for the construction of the Project, a key permit that analyzes potential impacts of the Project on federally listed endangered and threatened species. The biological opinion also addresses the Project’s construction effects on three species listed as candidates, should they become listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. In addition, on July 7, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued the Master Streambed Alteration Agreement for the construction of the Project. This is a key permit required to modify local waterways in the construction site during Project construction.

“While our permitting process is not complete, we are encouraged that we have received key project permits and appreciate the hard work of our state and federal partners to develop this important scientific and technical work,” said **Ali Forsythe, Environmental Planning and Permitting Manager for the Authority**. “These decisions are essential to helping to move Sites Reservoir toward construction in a way that is protective of listed species, their habitats, and the water resources of our State.”

USFWS’s biological opinion and the CDFW Master Streambed Alteration Agreement represent two of a handful of key permitting milestones that further authorize the construction of the Project by state and federal resource agencies. In late 2024, the Project received two Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) from CDFW, authorizing the Authority to build and operate Sites Reservoir in compliance with California’s comprehensive endangered species laws. The ITPs ensure the Authority will fully mitigate any potential impacts to the state’s endangered and threatened species throughout construction and operation.

Sites Reservoir will increase water supply throughout California and provide, for the first time, environmental benefits by storing water specifically to support native wildlife and their habitat during drought periods. The

Project will provide an additional 1.5 million acre-feet of storage capacity, substantially improving the state's water flexibility, reliability, and resiliency in drier years.

*Sites is an off-stream reservoir proposed north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where it would provide unique water supply and environmental benefits during dry periods, especially during extended drought. Additional information can be found at [www.sitesproject.org](http://www.sitesproject.org) or on Facebook, Instagram, and X at @SitesProject.*