

The Sites Project Authority has taken an important step toward advancing the Sites Reservoir Project by awarding a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) contract for a major portion of the project, known as the Reservoir work package.

What is the scope of the Reservoir work package?

The scope of the Reservoir work package, also referred to as the Reservoir Project, includes the construction of two large dams and nine other smaller embankments that will create the new Sites Reservoir, as well as a new three-quarter mile long bridge that will cross the reservoir, an inlet/outlet structure that will manage water imports and exports from the reservoir along with other associated facilities.

What are the estimated costs for the construction work for the Reservoir work package?

The estimated costs for the construction work is expected to be approximately \$3 billion dollars.

What is Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR)?

Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) is a delivery method for projects where the owner brings a contractor on early to help plan the work, develop pricing, and identify risks before construction starts. When construction begins, that same contractor delivers the project for an agreed-upon maximum price—and if costs exceed that price (except for approved changes), the contractor is generally responsible for the overrun. This is a common delivery method for large, complex projects that offers a more collaborative approach than traditional design-bid-build projects, where the owner has a design developed without contractor input; then, once the design is complete a contractor is selected through a bidding process.

The term CMAR is also commonly used to refer to the contractor performing the work under the CMAR delivery model. In this document, references to the CMAR or the Reservoir CMAR should be understood to mean the contractor responsible for the Reservoir work package.

What is the expected timeline for completion of the Reservoir package?

Construction work is planned to start in 2027 and continue into 2033.

What is the magnitude of workforce required and when will they be needed?

It is estimated that the workforce required for the Reservoir work package will be around 500 at the peak workload. This peak is not anticipated until around 2029 or 2030. Other packages associated with the construction of Sites Reservoir will also have significant workforce demand with an estimated overall peak demand of 1,700 depending on the sequencing of the work packages.

What type of workforce is required for this Reservoir work package?

The Reservoir work package will require various labor skillsets ranging from equipment operators, carpenters, laborers, cement masons, and on-highway truck drivers among other disciplines.

How will other project features be contracted?

In addition to the Reservoir work package, a separate large CMAR contract is planned for the facilities needed to fill and release water from Sites Reservoir; this is referred to as the Conveyance work package. This procurement is expected to be initiated Spring 2026 and will also be a large and complex project—currently estimated at over \$1.5 billion.

The Project's [Contracting Strategy](#), adopted by the Board in July 2022, establishes a comprehensive framework for construction contracting that includes multiple smaller, discrete work elements, such as county road improvements, pipelines, recreation facilities, reservoir footprint clearing, and improvements to existing facilities.

What process has the Authority gone through to hire the Reservoir CMAR?

The Authority used a two-step qualifications-based selection process. The first step was issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify those CMAR contractors that best meet the qualifications, experience, and capacity to deliver a project of this size and complexity. The second step was issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to short-listed CMAR contractors. The short-listed CMAR contractors then submitted detailed proposals and went through interviews that were evaluated and scored by an independent evaluation committee made up of subject matter experts.

Who was hired as the Reservoir CMAR and when will they start?

At the January 2026 Board Meeting, Barnard Construction Company Inc. (Barnard) was selected by the Authority as the Reservoir CMAR. The Authority also approved execution of a contract which authorized Barnard to begin preliminary preconstruction services relating to the Reservoir work package within a defined budget.

Why was Barnard selected as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for the Sites Reservoir Project?

The rationale for selecting Barnard has been described in a Staff Report which can be found here: [Selection of Reservoir Package Construction Manager At Risk and Authorize Contract](#).

Will the Reservoir project be a union job?

In order to use the CMAR delivery method, special California legislation was necessary to authorize the use of what is referred to as “alternative delivery methods.” This legislation was passed in 2021 under AB 2551 specific to Sites Reservoir. As part of the legislation, alternative delivery methods are only authorized with the use of a “skilled and trained workforce,” as defined in state law. This requirement is most commonly satisfied through the use of union labor. The Authority decided that the Reservoir work package must be delivered in compliance with a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) that conforms to the Construction Workforce Policy which Barnard must negotiate and execute.

What is the “Construction Workforce Policy” and how was it developed?

Working in conjunction with individuals and organizations consulted by the Authority (Local Community Working Group, labor organizations, and consultants with labor availability expertise) on issues related to local impacts of the Sites Reservoir Project, the Authority Board adopted a Construction Workforce Policy in April 2025 to describe conditions the construction contractors must adhere to.

What is a Project Labor Agreement (PLA), and will one be generated for this project?

A Project Labor Agreement (PLA) is a pre-hire, project-specific collective bargaining agreement for a particular construction project negotiated between organized labor organizations and either the project owner and/or the prime contractor performing the work. The Reservoir work package will have a project-specific PLA and will be developed between the select CMAR and the applicable organized union groups that represent the trades performing the work.

What is the timing of the PLA?

The Authority expects that the PLA for the Reservoir project will be executed by Barnard, following the Authority’s confirmation of compliance with its Construction Workforce Policy very shortly after the award of the CMAR contract (i.e. approximately 30 days). It is important to the Authority that Barnard ensure labor stability on a project of this magnitude to avoid costly delays due to worker shortage or work stoppage delays.

What commitments has the Sites Project made regarding hiring workforce from the local area?

The commitments the Authority has made regarding workforce hiring were memorialized in the Construction Workforce Policy and will be a requirement of PLA that Barnard will develop with the organized labor groups. The specific requirement is that at least 20% of the workforce should come from the Project Area (Colusa, Glenn, and Yolo Counties) and that at least 50% of the workforce should come from the broader Local Area (the Project Area plus Butte, Placer, Sacramento, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama, and Yuba Counties).

When will construction-related jobs and contracting opportunities become available?

Most likely, opportunities associated with construction will begin in 2027. A limited amount of field construction is expected in 2027 and will begin to ramp up in 2028 and beyond. The peak construction workforce starts in about 2030 and extends for approximately two years.

How will the wage of the workforce be set and will healthcare and other benefits be offered?

The Sites Reservoir Project is a public works project and will comply with both California Prevailing Wage requirements and the federal Davis–Bacon Act (because federal funding is involved). Under both frameworks, “prevailing wage” generally includes a base hourly wage plus a required fringe benefit amount. Contractors can satisfy the fringe requirement by providing bona fide benefits (such as health coverage, sick leave, and retirement contributions) and/or, where allowed, by paying the required fringe amount as additional cash to the worker in lieu of specific benefits. The individual collective bargaining agreements of each trade generally flow through as requirements in the PLA.