

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Palmdale Water District

2023 Strategic Water Resources Plan Update

Date: August 14, 2023

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies/ County Clerk/ Interested Organizations and Individuals

Project: 2023 Strategic Water Resources Plan Update Environmental Impact Report

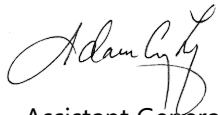
Lead Agency: Palmdale Water District
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Palmdale Water District (PWD) has developed a Strategic Water Resources Plan Update (Plan Update) to provide a sound water supply strategy to meet customer demands through 2050. As part of this effort, PWD will complete an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) according to the regulations in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This notice is being sent to agencies, organizations, and individuals that PWD believes may have an interest in the scope of the environmental analysis. PWD is particularly soliciting this input from those stakeholders who may rely on the EIR for consideration of their own permitting and project approvals.

PWD will be the Lead Agency (per CEQA Guidelines sections 15050 and 15051[b]) and will prepare the EIR for the Plan Update. PWD requests written comments related to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your interests or statutory responsibilities in connection with the Plan Update. The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. CEQA Guidelines section 15063(a) provides that if a Lead Agency determined that an EIR will clearly be required for a project, an Initial Study is not required. Therefore, an Initial Study is not attached.

The review period for this NOP is **August 14, 2023 to September 15, 2023**. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. A scoping meeting will be held to provide the public an overview of information contained within this NOP and to solicit written comments on the content of the Draft EIR. The scoping meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 7 2023 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.** at the PWD Headquarters, located at 2029 East Avenue Q in the City of Palmdale. Written comments can be submitted at the scoping meeting or sent to Adam Ly, PWD Assistant General Manager, at the address shown above. Please include the name, phone number, and address of a contact person in your response.

Signature



Title: Assistant General Manager

Project Location:

The Plan Update is located throughout Palmdale Water District's (PWD) 47-square mile service area in the Antelope Valley area of Los Angeles County, California. A portion of the Palmdale Ditch component of the Project extends south of the PWD service area and a portion of the conveyance facilities to the Upper Amargosa Creek Water Recharge Project extend north of the PWD service area in unincorporated Los Angeles County, California (Figure 1). The project site is located in the Palmdale and Ritter Ridge U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangles (Figure 2).

Project Description:

PWD has developed the Plan Update to provide a sound water supply strategy to meet customer demands through 2050. Water use by existing and future PWD customers is expected to grow through 2050. At the same time, substantial periods of drought have significantly impacted water resources throughout the State of California, resulting in reduced imported water allocations and increased water use efficiency. The Plan Update presents a Preferred Strategy that includes proposed actions for maximizing local supplies and facilities and increasing water storage in the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin to meet demands during times of imported water shortage (Figure 3). PWD will prepare a Program EIR that analyzes the potential effects on the environment associated with implementation of the Plan Update's Preferred Strategy (proposed Project).

The Plan Update's Preferred Strategy consists of the following implementation actions:

Imported Supplies

Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would maximize its existing Table A allocations by recharging imported water that is not treated and used to meet potable demands directly. Up to 1,600 acre-feet (AF) to the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin each year (as described further in the following section). Imported water beyond existing contracts will not be purchased. Existing turnouts, conveyance, recharge and treatment will be used to maximize existing imported water supplies.

Upper Amargosa Creek Water Recharge Project

Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would increase recharge through the Upper Amargosa Creek Water Recharge Project (UAP). This includes 1,600 acre-feet per year (AFY) of imported water recharged into the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin. The environmental impacts of the UAP were evaluated in an EIR (State Clearinghouse (SCH)# 2008091061) that was adopted by the City of Palmdale in 2009. A Supplemental EIR was adopted in 2018 that evaluated a change in turnout location and pipeline alignment. Construction of the UAP was completed in December 2019.

Groundwater Injection

Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would store recycled water in the Antelope Valley Basin via injection. 5,000 AFY of recycled water would be injected into the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin each year. Up to five (5) new recycled water injection wells would be needed. The location of the recycled water injection wells is yet to be determined but would be within the vicinity of the Palmdale Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) (see Figure 3). To increase recycled water recharge into the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin via injection, additional recycled water conveyance pipelines would be needed between the Palmdale WRF and the new injection wells. Conveyance pipeline locations are yet to be determined but would be constructed within existing roadways whenever possible. To increase imported water recharge, no new injection wells or conveyance pipelines would be needed; PWD would use the existing UAP infrastructure.

Groundwater Extraction

Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would construct new wells to pump the banked water and connect to the existing distribution system for use during dry or drought periods. In addition, PWD would purchase 1,000 AFY of groundwater production rights from other pumpers in the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin. In total, seven (7) new wells would be drilled and equipped to extract the purchased groundwater rights and to extract the recharged water (assuming a well capacity of 2 million gallons per day). The location of the new wells is shown in Figure 3. Conveyance pipeline locations are yet to be determined but would be constructed within existing roadways whenever possible.

Existing Wells Rehabilitation and/or Replacement

PWD currently operates 21 groundwater wells in the Antelope Valley Basin with a maximum pumping volume of approximately 11,000 AFY. Under this option, PWD would rehabilitate and/or replace the existing PWD wells to maintain existing pumping capacity and enable greater pumping during dry years. Implementation of this component would improve the resilience of the production wells to maintain baseline groundwater pumping capacity. Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would proceed with the rehabilitation and replacement of its wells as recommended in the 2020 Well Rehabilitation Prioritization Program to maintain current pumping capacity, which includes replacement of five (5) existing wells. Replacement wells would occur in the same physical location as existing wells.

Pure Water Antelope Valley

Under the Preferred Strategy, PWD would maximize beneficial use of recycled water through construction and implementation of an approximately 5 million gallon per day advanced water treatment plant, referred to as Pure Water Antelope Valley (AV). The Pure Water Antelope Valley project is conceptual in both location and capacity and CEQA evaluation is anticipated in the future.

Littlerock Reservoir Sediment Removal

Littlerock Reservoir is a man-made feature formed by the impoundment of water by the Littlerock Dam. The initial design capacity of Littlerock Reservoir was 4,300 AF; however, this capacity was substantially reduced to approximately 1,600 AF because of the deposition of sediment behind Littlerock Dam. In 1992, the height of Littlerock Dam was raised to restore storage capacity to 3,500 AF. Since then, sedimentation has further reduced storage capacity, thus limiting an equivalent amount of local supply storage. The Preferred Strategy includes sediment removal at Littlerock Reservoir in order to maintain storage capacity. This project was evaluated separately at the project level in accordance with CEQA (SCH# 2005061171) and adopted by Palmdale Water District in 2017.

Palmdale Ditch Improvement Project

The Palmdale Ditch is a 7.2-mile long part earthen and part concrete-lined open ditch that conveys water from Littlerock Dam Reservoir to Lake Palmdale. It is estimated that up to 25 percent of water supplies are lost due to evaporation and seepage from the ditch. To reduce conveyance losses and increase local water supply, PWD would enclose the Palmdale Ditch by constructing one to two miles of pipe within the Palmdale Ditch. See Figure 3.

Probable Environmental Effects:

The following is a list of the subject areas that will be analyzed in detail in the EIR:

- Air Quality
- Agricultural and forestry resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Paleontological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/ Water Quality
- Noise
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Topics that are expected to be included in the effects found not significant discussion of the EIR are aesthetics/visual quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

Public Scoping Meeting:

Consistent with Section 21083.9 of the CEQA Statutes, a public scoping meeting will be held to solicit written comments on the content of the Draft EIR. The meeting will be held on Thursday, September 7, 2023 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at Palmdale Water District, located at 2029 East Avenue Q. Please contact Adam Ly at the Palmdale Water District for more information.

Attachments:

Figure 1: Regional Location Map

Figure 2: Project Vicinity (USGS Topography)

Figure 3: Aerial Photograph

FIGURE 3: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

