

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

To: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Interested Persons

From: Eric Limas
Lower Tule River Irrigation District
357 E. Olive Avenue
Tipton, CA 93272

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report – Tule River Basin Investigation / Success Lake Capacity Expansion (State Clearinghouse #1999044004)

Project Title: Tule River Basin Investigation / Success Lake Capacity Expansion

Notice is Hereby Given: The Lower Tule River Irrigation District (District) is the Lead Agency on the below-described Project and has prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The District (Lead Agency) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Federal Sponsor) are proposing to expand the water storage capacity of Success Lake, as further described in the “Project Description” in this NOP. The NOP is intended to disclose introductory environmental information and to solicit the views of the public, interested parties, and/or agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Specifically, the District is requesting that commenters provide comments on the NOP; identify additional environmental topics (and/or special studies) and alternatives that they believe need to be explored in the forthcoming Supplemental EIR; and to identify other relevant environmental issues related to the scope and content of the forthcoming Supplemental EIR.

Document Availability and Public Review Timeline: Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response to the NOP must be sent at the earliest possible date *but not later than 30 days* after receipt of this notice. The review period for the NOP will be from May 20, 2020 to June 20, 2020. Copies of the NOP can be reviewed at Lower Tule River Irrigation District Offices, 357 E. Olive Avenue, Tipton, CA 93272.

Please send your comments to Eric Limas, General Manager at the address shown above or to elimas@ltrid.org. Please provide the name and return mailing address for a contact person in your agency (if applicable).

Scoping Meeting: A scoping meeting will be conducted to collect oral comments from agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the forthcoming Draft Supplemental EIR. In-person attendance at the Public Scoping Meeting may be limited in order to comply with applicable social distancing requirements that may be in place at the time of the meeting. In order to ensure ability to participate, interested parties may opt to participate in the Scoping Meeting through a “Zoom” meeting. The meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date: June 19, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

In-Person Location: Lower Tule River Irrigation District Office Conference Room
357 E. Olive Avenue
Tipton, CA 93272

Zoom Meeting Access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5599310633>

Meeting ID: 559 931 0633

Phone Access: (669) 900-9128

The online virtual session will begin at 11:00 AM

Project Background and Environmental Evaluation: The Lower Tule River Irrigation District (Lead Agency) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Federal Sponsor) are proposing to expand the capacity of Success Lake, while providing additional flood protection as described in the "Project Description" in this NOP. The proposed Project environmental impacts were previously evaluated in the *Tule River Basin Investigation – Final Feasibility Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report* (State Clearinghouse #1999044004) prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (September 1999). The forthcoming Supplemental EIR for the proposed Project is being prepared because of the lapse in time (approximately 20 years since the original document), updates/changes to the CEQA Guidelines, and updates to applicable regulatory requirements. However, the Project remains substantially the same as what was previously analyzed. The Supplemental EIR will evaluate the 20 environmental topics outlined in the CEQA Appendix G Checklist. Technical studies being prepared for the Project include biological resources surveys/reports, cultural resources surveys/reports, water quality studies, air emission calculations, geotechnical studies, hydraulic studies, and other related technical analyses.

Project Location: Success Lake and Richard L. Schafer Dam is a multi-purpose facility that provides flood damage reduction benefits, irrigation water storage, recreation, and electrical power generation. It is located on the Tule River, which drains approximately 390 square miles of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The zoned earth-filled dam is approximately 5 miles east and upstream of the city of Porterville, Tulare County, California. It spans 3,404 feet across the Tule River, is approximately 145 feet high, has two low level outlet conduits, and an ungated spillway. When at gross pool (elevation 655.1 feet) the lake holds 82,300 acre feet of water with a surface area of 2,450 acres. The maximum length of the lake at this elevation is 3.5 miles with approximately 30 miles of shoreline. The existing spillway is a 200 feet wide, broad crested weir with the crest at el. 655.1 feet. A rolled earth-fill dike, called Frazier Dike, 42 feet maximum height and 7,650 feet long, extends across Frazier Valley about 3½ miles northwest of the dam.

Project Description: The Project consists of constructing a 10 foot-high concrete ogee weir across the spillway, raising the gross pool elevation from 655.1 feet to 665.1 feet. Raising the gross pool elevation would add approximately 28,000 acre-feet of joint-use flood control and irrigation water storage space in the reservoir, increasing storage capacity from 82,300 to 110,300 acre-feet. The reservoir surface area would increase from 2,400 to 3,120 acres. Bridge abutments along California Highway 190 will be armored to accommodate the increase in gross pool at the point the highway spans the reservoir. Rock slope protection will be added to Frazier Dike. In addition, Southern California Edison (SCE) will be required to raise the height of an existing transmission line that crosses the lake. This will involve removal of existing towers and installation of new or replacement transmission towers. Some existing distribution poles and facilities will also need to be replaced, removed or relocated as a result of the Project. The Supplemental EIR includes the environmental analysis associated with SCE's activities related to the Project. To accommodate the Project, acquisition of right-of-way and/or private property will be required on surrounding properties. Refer to Figure 1 for Project location.

Figure 1 – Project Area

