



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Draft Environmental Impact Report

Date: March 19, 2021

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Organizations, and Interested Parties

Lead Agency: Irvine Ranch Water District

Project: Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project Draft Environmental Impact Report
(State Clearinghouse No. 2019080009)

Review Period: March 19, 2021 to May 18, 2021

This Notice of Availability (NOA) has been prepared to notify responsible and trustee agencies, interested organizations, and interested parties that Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD), as the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the proposed Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project (proposed project) that is available for review and comment. The Draft EIR was prepared to comply with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and to provide agencies and the public with information on the potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, recommended mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those environmental effects, and the analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. In addition, the Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with the CEQA-Plus requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to fulfill the requirement of potential federal funding partners to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Project Location: The proposed project would be implemented within IRWD's service area at the location of the existing Syphon Reservoir, northeast of Portola Parkway between Bee Canyon Access Road and SR-133 in the County of Orange (see **Figure 1**). The Crean Lutheran High School Athletic Complex is located between Portola Parkway and the toe of the existing dam. Residential neighborhoods are located on the southwest side of Portola Parkway. The reservoir is located within the Central and Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and is included as an operating reservoir allowed within the NCCP/HCP Reserve. Implementation of expanded seasonal storage for recycled water purposes was anticipated and identified as a permitted use in the NCCP/HCP.

Project Description: The proposed project would allow IRWD to increase the storage capacity of the existing recycled water Syphon Reservoir to help IRWD become more self-sufficient by reducing its dependence on costly and less reliable imported water during summer months, and support the increased use of recycled water for public landscaping, agricultural, business and industrial uses in IRWD's service area. Increased use of recycled water for these non-drinking water purposes would make more drinking water available to the region to better withstand future water shortages.

The proposed project would replace the existing engineered dam with a new engineered dam, increasing the existing 59-foot dam height to 136 feet and increasing the elevation of the dam crest from the existing 388 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to 466 feet amsl. A spillway would be included with the new dam to protect the reservoir from overtopping. The replacement dam would result in an increase in the reservoir's maximum water surface elevation from the existing 376 feet amsl to 456 feet amsl and increase the reservoir's capacity from approximately the existing 500 AF to 5,000 AF. As part of the new design, the engineered embankment dam would include a seepage control drainage system and a circulation/aeration system for the reservoir. The existing strainer and disinfection facilities would be demolished, reconstructed and expanded at the toe of the new engineered dam to provide filtration, chlorination and de-chlorination. Additional project features include new onsite access and maintenance roads; wetland and riparian mitigation areas; and a potential recreational facility (i.e. walking trail). Project features are shown on **Figure 2**.

Environmental Impacts: The Draft EIR evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project and, for identified potentially significant impacts, the Draft EIR recommends mitigation measures that would reduce the impacts of the proposed project to a less than significant level for the following environmental topics: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire. Per Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, there are no open active cases for hazardous materials sites within the project site.

Document Availability: The NOA and Draft EIR may be viewed and downloaded from the following IRWD website address: <http://www.syphonreservoir.com>. Printed copies of the Draft EIR may be available for public review at the following public library and the IRWD office as permitted if/when the restrictions due to facility closures and the need for social distancing required in response to COVID-19 are lifted by the appropriate governmental agencies: Heritage Park Library, 14361 Yale Ave, Irvine CA 92604; and IRWD, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, California 92618.

Public Information Presentation: IRWD will hold one virtual public meeting via Zoom and telephonically to receive public comments on the environmental analysis in the Draft EIR. The virtual public meeting will include a brief presentation providing an overview of the proposed project and findings of the Draft EIR. The virtual meeting will be held at 6:00 P.M. on April 21, 2021. For information on how to access the virtual public meeting, please see below or visit <http://www.syphonreservoir.com>.

Virtual Public Meeting Details	
Date:	April 21, 2021
Time:	6:00 PM
Zoom Link:	http://bit.ly/syphoneirmeeting
Telephone Dial-in:	(877) 853 5247 (toll free)
Meeting ID:	898 6243 8353

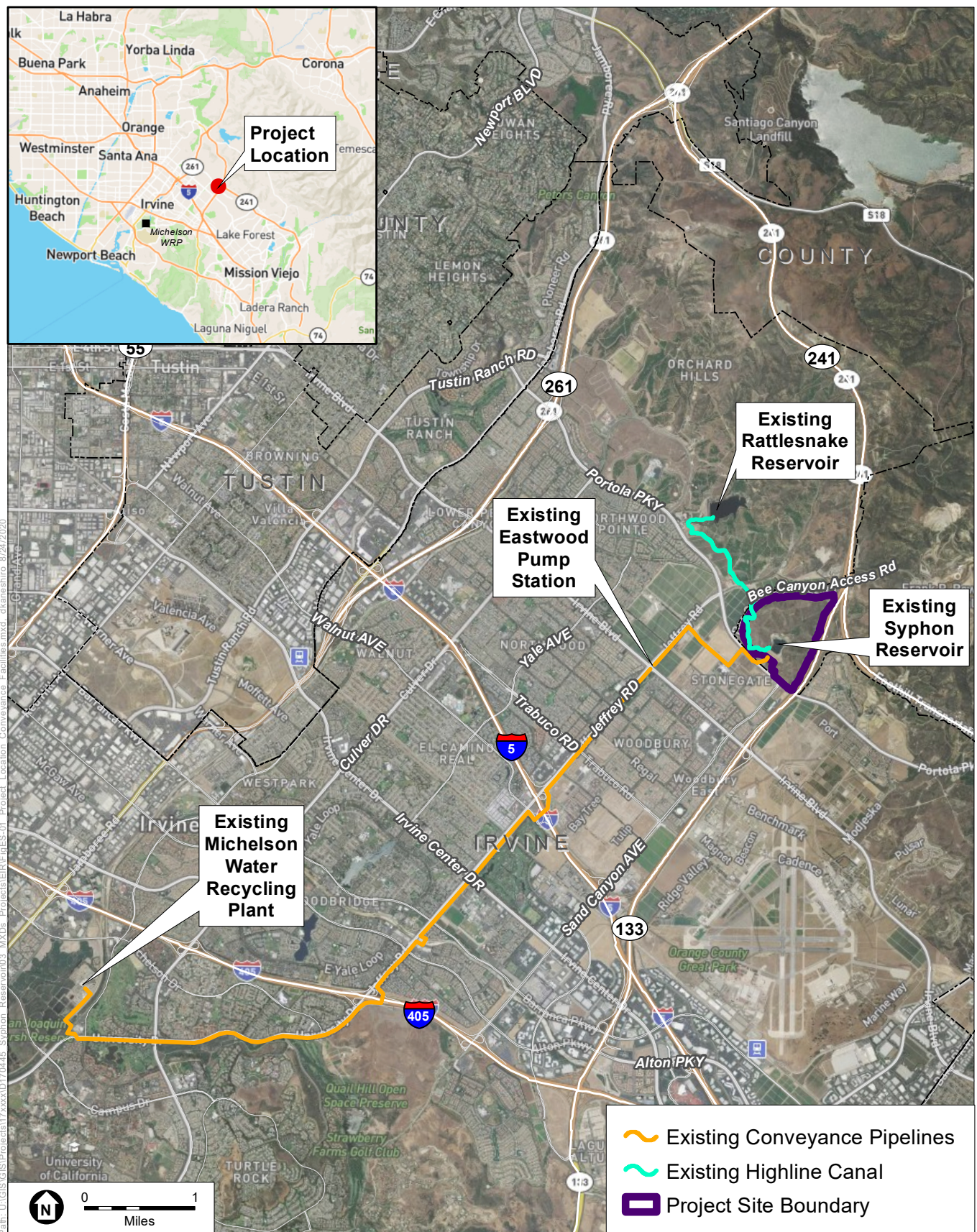
If participating online, please register for the meeting prior to joining by providing your name and email address. For the best experience it is recommended that the public download and install Zoom on your computer before the meeting begins. The free Zoom software can be downloaded in advance, or at the moment you join the meeting at: <https://zoom.us/download>; however, it is not required to install the Zoom

software on your computer to participate and provide comments. When you click on the meeting link provided at registration, a new browser tab or window will open (depending on your browser settings).

If participating by phone, you will not be able to see the visual content presented, but you can listen and participate. When instructed to do so, please press *6 to mute and unmute yourself, and press *9 to raise your hand.

Public Review and Comments: IRWD is soliciting comments from the public regarding the content of the environmental information provided in the Draft EIR. Written comments on the Draft EIR must be received by the IRWD, at the address provided below no later than 4:00 P.M. on May 18, 2021.

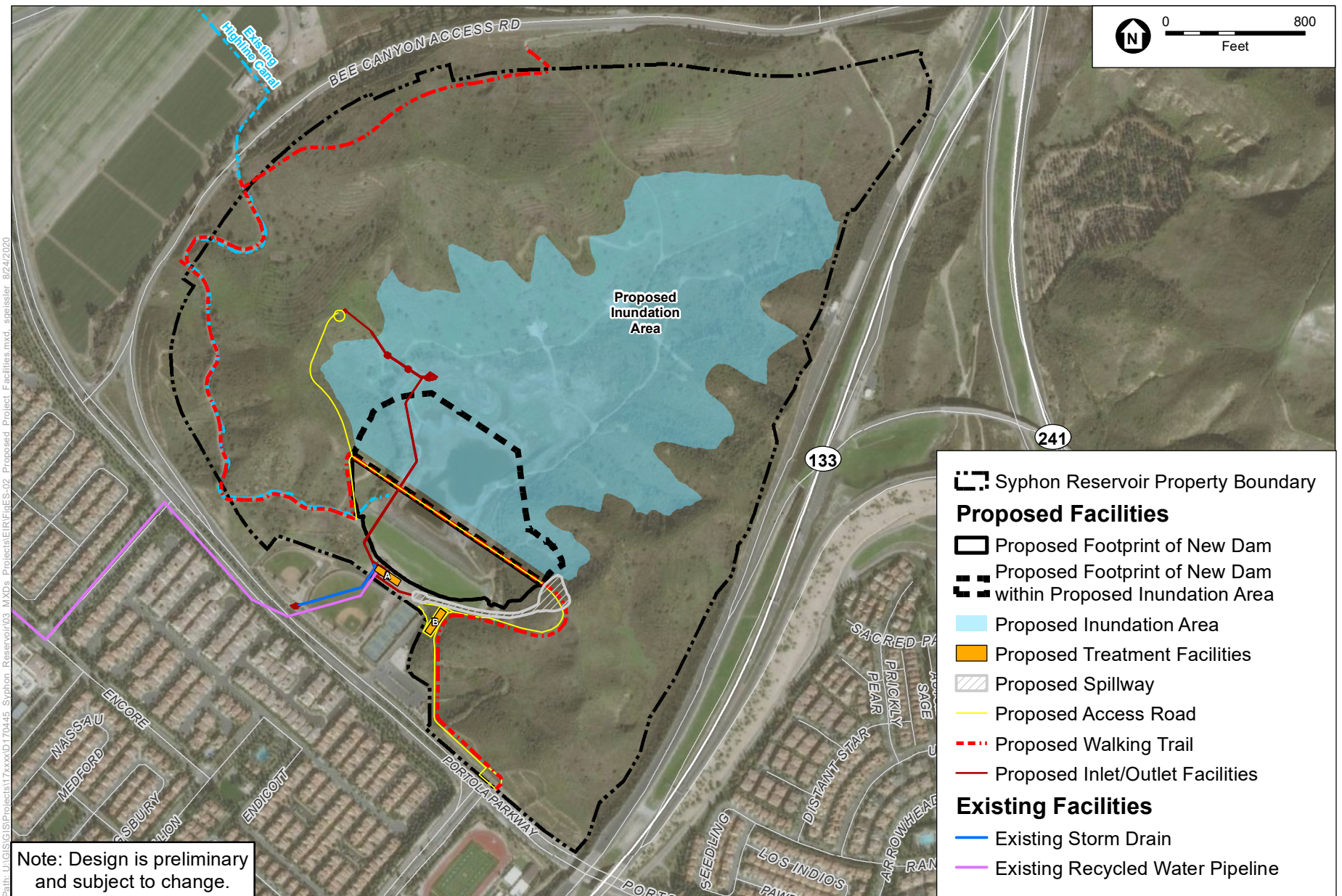
Irvine Ranch Water District
Water Resources & Policy Department
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
P.O. Box 57000
Irvine, California 92619-7000
Attn: Jo Ann Corey, Environmental Compliance Analyst
SyphonEIR@irwd.com



SOURCE: ESRI, 2016; OC LAFCO, 2018

Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project

Figure 1
Existing Syphon Reservoir Location and Conveyance Facilities



SOURCE: ESA, 2020; ESRI, 2020.

Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project

Figure 2
Proposed Project Facilities