Form A

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

SCH # _____

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, PO Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 916/445-0613

Project Title: Delta Mendota Canal Recirculation Project

Lead Agency: Department of Water Resources/U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
Contact Person: Mr. Jacob McQuirk, Senior Engineer
Mailing Address: Bay-Delta Office, P.O. Box 942836
Phone: (916) 653-9883
City: Sacramento
Zip: 95836-0001
County: Sacramento

Project Location:

County: Multiple from Contra Costra to Kings
City/Nearest Community: Various
Cross Streets: N/A
Zip Code: N/A
Total Acres: N/A
Assessor's Parcel No. N/A
Section: N/A
Twp. N/A
Range: N/A
Base: N/A
Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: Multiple
Waterways: Multiple including San Joaquin and Merced Rivers and S. Bay-Delta
Airports: N/A
Railways: Southern Pacific
Schools: N/A

Document Type:

CEQA:
- [x] NOP
- [ ] Early Cons
- [ ] Neg Dec
- [ ] Draft EIR
- [ ] Supplement/Subsequent EIR (Prior SCH No.)_____
- [ ] Other _____

NEPA:
- [ ] NOI
- [ ] EA
- [ ] Draft EIS
- [ ] FONSI

Other:
- [ ] Joint Document
- [ ] Final Document
- [ ] Other_____

Local Action Type:

- [ ] General Plan Update
- [ ] General Plan Amendment
- [ ] General Plan Element
- [ ] Community Plan
- [ ] Specific Plan
- [ ] Master Plan
- [ ] Planned Unit Development
- [ ] Site Plan
- [ ] Rezone
- [ ] Prezone
- [ ] Use Permit
- [ ] Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)
- [ ] Annexation
- [ ] Redevelopment
- [ ] Coastal Permit
- [ ] Other_____

Development Type:

- [ ] Residential: *Units*_____ *Acres*_____
- [ ] Office: *Sq.ft.*_____ *Acres*_____ *Employees*_____
- [ ] Commercial: *Sq.ft.*_____ *Acres*_____ *Employees*_____
- [ ] Industrial: *Sq.ft.*_____ *Acres*_____ *Employees*_____
- [ ] Educational _____
- [ ] Recreational _____
- [ ] Water Facilities: *Type*_____ *MGD*_____
- [ ] Transportation: *Type*_____
- [ ] Mining: *Mineral*_____
- [ ] Power: *Type*_____ *Watts*_____
- [ ] Waste Treatment: *Type*_____
- [ ] Hazardous Waste: *Type*_____
- [x] Other: Water quality and flow improvement

Funding (approx.): Federal $ N/A State $ N/A Total $ N/A

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

- [ ] Aesthetic/Visual
- [x] Agricultural Land
- [x] Air Quality
- [x] Archeological/Historical
- [ ] Coastal Zone
- [x] Drainage/Absorption
- [x] Economic/Jobs
- [ ] Fiscal
- [x] Flood Plain/Flooding
- [ ] Forest Land/Fire Hazard
- [ ] Geologic/Seismic
- [ ] Minerals
- [ ] Noise
- [ ] Population/Housing Balance
- [x] Public Services/Facilities
- [x] Recreation/Parks
- [ ] Schools/Universities
- [ ] Septic Systems
- [ ] Sewer Capacity
- [x] Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading
- [ ] Solid Waste
- [ ] Toxic/Hazardous
- [ ] Traffic/Circulation
- [x] Vegetation
- [x] Water Quality
- [x] Water Supply/Groundwater
- [x] Wetland/Riparian
- [x] Wildlife
- [ ] Growth Inducing
- [x] Landuse
- [x] Cumulative Effects
- [ ] Other _____

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

Primarily agriculture-some urban.

Project Description:

The intent of the proposed project is to lower salinity, increase dissolved oxygen, and meet and/or augment flow requirements on the lower San Joaquin River by utilizing excess capacity in the Delta-Mendota Canal while reducing reliance on the New Melones Reservoir water supplies. The project will provide greater flexibility in meeting existing water quality and flow standards.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Form A, continued

KEY
S = Document sent by lead agency
X = Document sent by SCH
✓ = Suggested distribution

✓ **Resources Agency**
✓ Boating & Waterways
✓ Coastal Commission
✓ Coastal Conservancy
___ Colorado River Board
✓ Conservation
✓ Fish & Game
___ Forestry & Fire Protection
✓ Office of Historic Preservation
✓ Parks & Recreation
✓ Reclamation Board
✓ S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Commission
✓ Water Resources (DWR)

Business, Transportation & Housing
___ Aeronautics
___ California Highway Patrol
___ CALTRANS District #___
___ Department of Transportation Planning (headquarters)
___ Housing & Community Development

✓ **Food & Agriculture**

Health & Welfare
___ Health Services ___

State & Consumer Services
___ General Services
___ OLA (Schools)

Environmental Protection Agency
✓ Air Resources Board
___ California Waste Management Board
___ SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
✓ SWRCB: Delta Unit
✓ SWRCB: Water Quality
✓ SWRCB: Water Rights
✓ Regional WQCB # 2 and 5 (___)

Youth & Adult Corrections
___ Corrections

Independent Commissions & Offices
✓ Energy Commission
___ Native American Heritage Commission
___ Public Utilities Commission
___ Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
✓ State Lands Commission
___ Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

___ Other ___

Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date ___ / ___ / ___

Ending Date 30 days after Receipt of NOP

Signature ___

Date 03/28/07

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):
Consulting Firm: ___
Address: ___
City/State/Zip: ___
Contact: ___
Phone: (___) ___

Applicant: ___
Address: ___
City/State/Zip: ___
Phone: (___) ___

For SCH Use Only:
Date Received at SCH ___
Date Review Starts ___
Date to Agencies ___
Date to SCH ___
Clearance Date ___
Notes:

Memorandum

Date: March 28, 2007

To: Governor's Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, California 95814

From: **Department of Water Resources**

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) and Notification of Public Scoping Meetings for the Proposed Delta Mendota Canal Recirculation Project

Lead Agencies: California Department of Water Resources and the U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

Background

The San Joaquin River and its eight major tributaries drain approximately 32,000 square miles of the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin River flows into the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta. As part of the Central Valley Project (CVP), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) operates the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC), which transports water from the Delta to the San Joaquin Valley. The DMC is located on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley beginning near the City of Tracy and terminating at the Mendota Pool on the San Joaquin River. A map of the study area is attached.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) establishes water quality objectives for the Delta in its Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (WQCP). The SWRCB implements some of the Delta objectives by imposing conditions on Reclamation's and Department of Water Resources' (DWR) water rights through the SWRCB Water Rights Decision 1641 (D-1641). These conditions may affect Reclamation's operation of the CVP, including its C.W. "Bill" Jones Pumping Plant (Jones Pumping Plant) and the DMC, and DWR's operation of the State Water Project (SWP), including its Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant.

Under D-1641, the SWRCB required Reclamation, in consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, DWR, and the South Delta Water Agency, to prepare a Plan of Action to evaluate the potential impacts of recirculating water from the DMC through the Newman Wasteway (see attached study area map). Reclamation has completed the Plan of Action and submitted it to the SWRCB.

A federal project feasibility study for recirculating water from the DMC was authorized under Title 1, Section 103 of the CALFED Bay-Delta Authorization Act, Public Law 108-361 (PL 108-361). The project, if feasible, would implement a plan to recirculate water via the DMC through one or more flow paths to the San Joaquin River upstream of Vernalis. The objectives of the project would be to utilize excess capacity in the DMC to provide flow, reduce salinity concentrations in the San Joaquin River, and reduce reliance on New Melones Reservoir water supplies to meet water quality and fishery flow requirements.

Because SWP facilities may be used in the implementation of a recirculation project, DWR has partnered with Reclamation to analyze alternatives and their associated environmental impacts. Although DWR has no on-stream reservoirs on the San Joaquin River system from which San Joaquin River water can be released to meet water quality or flow requirements, DWR has invested considerable funds towards the reduction of impacts from saline discharges to the San Joaquin River. However, these measures, including installation of temporary barriers and aeration technology, do not address San Joaquin River flow and cannot provide reliable reductions in salinity in the southern Delta, an objective of the WQCP. Therefore, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DWR will serve as the State Lead Agency to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed DMC Recirculation Project. Reclamation will serve as the Federal Lead agency for the proposed Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and is preparing a separate Notice of Intent. A draft EIS/EIR pursuant to the NEPA and CEQA is expected to be available for review in 2008. Additional project information, and project updates will be provided at: http://www.usbr.gov/mp/dmcrecirc/index.html

Project Description

As directed by PL 108-361, the intent of the proposed project is to lower salinity, increase dissolved oxygen, and meet and/or augment flow requirements on the San Joaquin River in a manner that utilizes excess capacity in the DMC and reduces reliance on the New Melones Reservoir. The proposed DMC Recirculation Project will provide greater flexibility in meeting the existing water quality and flow standards and reduce demand on New Melones Reservoir water supplies.

The project area includes the lower main stem of the San Joaquin River below its confluence with the Merced River; the areas served by the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers on the western side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains; the areas served by the DMC, including approximately 30 irrigation and water districts; and the south Delta where the San Joaquin River becomes part of the Delta and serves as a source of water supply for Delta agricultural and urban uses.

The DMC is located on the western side of Central California's San Joaquin Valley and runs for approximately 120 miles, beginning near the City of Tracy at the southern edge of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and terminating at the Mendota Pool on the San Joaquin River, at the town of Mendota. The areas served by the DMC are primarily agricultural lands on the western side of the San Joaquin Valley, from the City of Tracy in the north, to Kettleman City in the south. The DMC is part of the federal CVP Delta export facilities that also include the Jones Pumping Plant, Westley and Newman Wasteways, as well as joint use facilities with the SWP, such as O'Neill Pumping Plant, O'Neill Forebay, and the San Luis Reservoir. The facilities and features likely to be directly incorporated as part of the project include, but are not limited to, the Jones Pumping Plant, the DMC, Westley and Newman Wasteways, and the San Joaquin River below its confluence with the Merced River. The project may also impact the operations of other SWP and CVP facilities either directly or indirectly, including the San Luis Reservoir and the New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River.

A range of alternatives, including physical conveyance and operational methods, will be developed and evaluated during the EIS/EIR process. Some proposed alternatives already identified include:

- No Action–Continue to meet water quality and flow objectives through releases from New Melones Reservoir.
- Recirculation using the Westley Wasteway.
- Recirculation using the Newman Wasteway.
- Recirculation during the 31-day spring pulse-flow period, in lieu of releases from tributary reservoirs.
- Recirculation from February through June, other than the 31-day spring pulse-flow period, in addition to releases from the New Melones Reservoir.
- Recirculation from July through August to meet flow and salinity requirements at Vernalis and water level and salinity targets in the Delta.
- Implementation of a recirculation plan during a period when additional pumping is not simultaneous with discharges to the San Joaquin River. Consequently, water for recirculation would have to be pumped/exported in advance and stored, presumably in the San Luis Reservoir, for later release.
- Implement recommendations of the San Joaquin River Regional Water Quality Management Group for meeting salinity objectives at Vernalis.
- A combination of components from two or more of the above alternatives.

Previous recirculation studies consisted of modeling efforts and physically discharging water from the DMC to the San Joaquin River via the wasteways connecting the DMC to the river. Ongoing studies which may affect the DMC Recirculation Project include the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan, CALFED Conveyance Program – South Delta Improvements Program, the New Melones Revised Plan of Operations, and the West Side Regional Drainage Plan. A recent litigation settlement concerning the portion of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam to the Merced River may also affect the DMC Recirculation Project.

Potential Environmental Effects

The EIS/EIR will analyze potential physical and biological impacts to the environment associated with implementation of the project alternatives. An assessment of potential cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the project will also be included.

Potential environmental impacts could affect the following resources: surface water quality and supply, hydrology, land use, public utilities and power consumption, biological resources including wetlands and rare and sensitive plant and animal species, socioeconomics, air quality, cultural resources, flood protection, and recreation.

Scoping Process

In accordance with CEQA, DWR will conduct a scoping process that includes a request for comments and public scoping meetings. DWR requests comments from State and federal agencies with respect to the scope and content of the EIS/EIR for the proposed Delta Mendota Canal Recirculation Project. In order to ensure that a full range of alternatives is included in the EIS/EIR and that all pertinent issues are addressed, DWR also invites written comments from all other interested parties. All comments received, including names and addresses, will be made available to the public. CEQA Guidelines -Section 15082(b) state that written comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this NOP. Please send comments to:

Jacob McQuirk, Senior Engineer
California Department of Water Resources
Bay-Delta Office
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, California 95836-0001

A series of scoping meetings has been scheduled to solicit agency and public input on the scope of the project, proposed alternatives, and to ensure incorporation of any issues and concerns that should be addressed in the EIS/EIR. Meeting dates, times and locations are as follows:

- April 16, 2007, 10 a.m. – 12 Noon, Sacramento, California
  Federal Building, 2800 Cottage Way, Cafeteria Conference Rooms C-1001 and C-1002

- April 16, 2007, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., Los Banos, California
  Miller and Lux Senior Center Building, 830 6th Street

- April 17, 2007, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., Modesto, California
  Modesto Centre Plaza, 1000 L Street, Pistache Room

If special accommodation is required, please contact Jacob McQuirk at (916) 653-9883 or jacobmc@water.ca.gov as far in advance of the workshops as possible to enable DWR to secure the needed services.

03/28/07
Date

Katherine F. Kelly, Chief
Bay-Delta Office
California Department of Water Resources

Attachment

Copies sent by certified mail to attached list.

Copies sent via certified mail to:

California Reclamation Board
Jay Punia, General Manager
3310 El Camino Avenue, Room LL40
Sacramento, California 95821

Raynor T. Tsuneyoshi, Director
Department of Boating and Waterways
2000 Evergreen Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, California 95815-3888

Ryan L. Broddrick, Director
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1416 Ninth Street
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William Loudermilk
Regional Manager
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1234 E. Shaw Avenue
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Chuck Armor
Regional Manager
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11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, California 95670

Rudy Schnagl, Chief
Agriculture Regulatory and Planning Unit
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, California 95670

Bruce H. Wolfe
Executive Officer
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay St., Suite 1400
Oakland, California 94612

Linda Fiack, Executive Director
Delta Protection Commission
14215 River Road
Post Office Box 530
Walnut Grove, California 95690

A. G. Kawamura, Secretary
Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, California 95814-5607

B.B. Blevins
Executive Director
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street, MS-29
Sacramento, California 95814

Bridgett Luther, Director
Department of Conservation
801 K Street, MS 24-01
Sacramento, California 95814

Susan Moore
Field Supervisor, Region 1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825

Mark Littlefield, Chief
Watershed Planning Branch
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825

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Long Beach, California 90802-4213

Russell M. Strach
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National Marine Fisheries Service
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650 Capitol Mall, Suite 8-300
Sacramento, California 95814-4700

Colonel Ronald L. Light
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Kevin Richardson
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
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Kirk C. Rodgers, Regional Director
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation, Mid Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825

Ruth Coleman, Director
California Department of Parks and Recreation
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Milford Donaldson, SHP Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
California Department of Parks and Recreation
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1442-7
Sacramento, California 95814

John Herrick, Manager
South Delta Water Agency
4255 Pacific Avenue, Suite 2
Stockton, California 95267

Will Travis, Executive Director
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission
50 California Street, Suite 2600
San Francisco, California 94111

Michael Pool, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825

Catherine Witherspoon
Executive Officer
California Air Resources Board
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Peter M. Douglas
Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
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San Francisco, California 94105-2219

Sam Schuchat
Executive Director
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612

Paul D. Thayer
Executive Officer
State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento, California 95825-8205

Wayne Nastri, Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, California 94105

James D. Keselburg
Regional Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, California 95630-4710

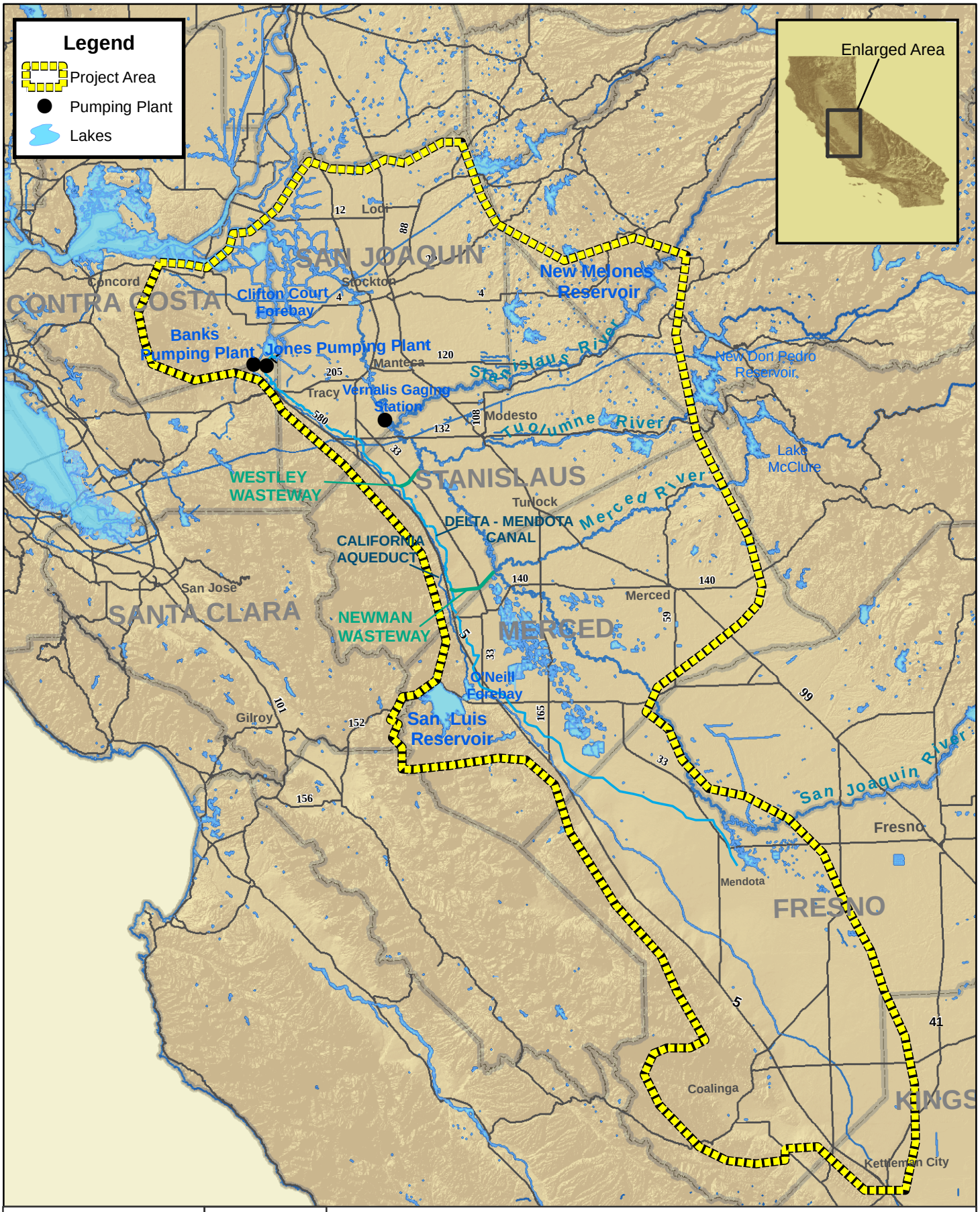

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Figure 1-1: Delta-Mendota Canal Recirculation Project Area

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