

# WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants for FY 2023 and 2024

NOFO No. R23AS00109

## Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Plan



MAY 23, 2024

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION

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## 1.0 Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria

This funding application for the development of a Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Plan (Project) prepared by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District), is submitted to the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR or Reclamation) under the Department of the Interior in response to the WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109).

**Date:** 05/23/2024

**Applicant:** San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

**City, County, State:** City of San Luis Obispo, County of San Luis Obispo, California

**Task Area/Category:** Task C – Drought Contingency Planning Applicant (Develop New Plan)

### 1.1 Executive Summary

The District is respectfully requesting \$480,000 from USBR to leverage District funds to develop a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) to improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, which is generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in the County of San Luis Obispo (County). The project would provide secondary benefits within the larger region, County, and State. The District will convene a local Drought Planning Task Force (Task Force) and develop a comprehensive DCP that considers drought and shortage impacts and mitigation options for imported and local water supplies that will help Chorro Valley Pipeline (PWSID CA4010030) customers and other Chorro Valley stakeholders. A Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, partnering water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies overseeing health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health. The planning area has experienced multi-year droughts, especially from 2012-2016 and 2020-2022, that highlighted supply reliability issues in which some water users' supply portfolios were vulnerable because they rely heavily or solely on highly variable State Water Project (SWP) supply or exhausted local supply sources. Furthermore, during drought, lower flows in Chorro Creek contribute to water quality issues and negative impacts to riparian habitats. The District will build upon previous reports' assessments of these drought and water shortage issues and proposed solutions, but this DCP effort will take an updated approach and address reliability issues on a regional scale through collaboration with interested stakeholders. Related planning efforts include the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (1), San Luis Obispo County Watersheds Management Plan (2), Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Morro Bay estuary (3), San Luis Obispo County Master Water Report (4) and ongoing Data Information System (5), Regional Water Infrastructure Resiliency Plan (6), County Operations Center 2020 Water Master Plan (7), and County Operations Center Water Shortage Contingency Plan (8). Citations are shown as “(#)” for cross referencing in Section 6.0 References.



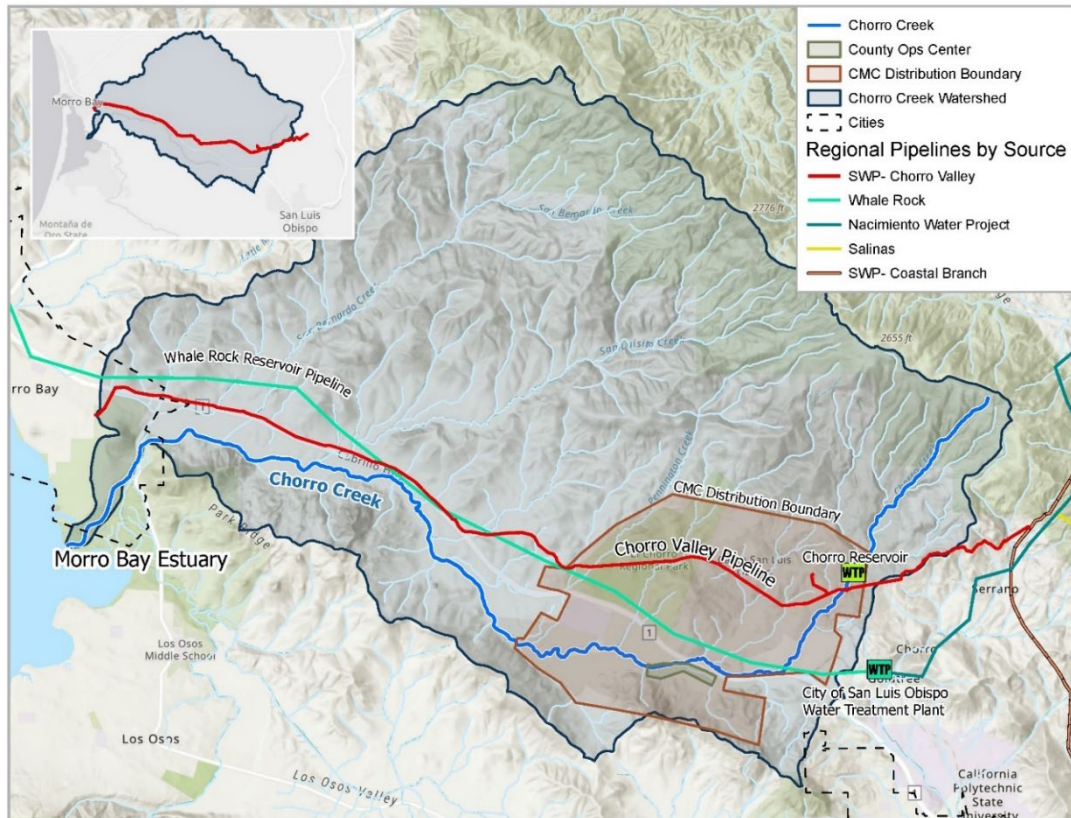
**Project Timeline:** The project is anticipated to begin in October 2024 and will be complete in September 2026, for a total of 24 months. Phase I of the project is expected to last six months; Phase II of the project is expected to last 18 months.

**Federal Facility:** The proposed planning efforts are not specifically focused on a project at a Federal facility or land but will involve Camp San Luis Obispo, a federal agency stakeholder, and their land in the plan area. In addition, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (Estuary Program) is a DCP stakeholder. The Estuary Program has developed an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and annual work plans for the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed that outline the challenges for the area and specific actions to address them. Several actions in the CCMP are supported by this DCP. Last, the main imported supply source in the plan area is the SWP. USBR and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) together operate the SWP under a Coordinated Operation Agreement which outlines water quality, water flow, and other operational issues, as well as cost sharing to meet joint responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, including monitoring and habitat restoration.

### 1.2 Project Location

The project plan area is generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in the County of San Luis Obispo, California along the Chorro Valley Pipeline and a large portion of the DWR-defined Basin 3-042, or Chorro Valley Groundwater Basin, which underlies Chorro Creek. The Chorro Creek USGS Hydraulic Unit 12 (HU-12: 180600060502) flows to the Morro Bay Estuary. Figure 1 shows the project location.

Figure 1. Project Location



### 1.3 Project Description

Several critical facilities, institutions, and other water users located in the Chorro Valley rely heavily or solely on imported SWP water originating from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay Delta) and delivered from the Chorro Valley Pipeline (Chorro Pipeline). The annual variability of the SWP supply, especially during drought, has emphasized the need for this proposed DCP effort to assess reliability issues and ways to alleviate them. In addition to the Chorro Pipeline, the Chorro Valley encompasses local surface and groundwater resources as well as multiple regional supply sources with complex supply contracts, management entities and policies, mutual aid agreements, exchange agreements, usage patterns, operations, and interrelated impacts on natural resources. A comprehensive plan for understanding and managing water resources in the Chorro Valley does not exist, so the proposed DCP project would establish a Task Force of diverse stakeholders to lead development of a DCP to establish a common understanding of how water is used and managed in the Chorro Valley. A shared understanding of regional supply and demand will inform preparation of strategies and projects to alleviate drought and shortage impacts.

The District proposes to develop a DCP that meets USBR requirements. The District will lead the effort, supported by an expert consultant to be hired and stakeholders. This effort will build upon previous and ongoing related plans and efforts discussed in the Executive Summary and in the following paragraph. As part of the planning process, the District will explore the availability and quality of existing data and models to help develop the proposed DCP.

A goal of the project is to cooperatively engage on water management policies and strategies in the Chorro Valley to provide a powerful resource for developing innovative and creative solutions to critical problems and for leveraging resources to ensure efficient and effective use of public funds. The project may achieve this goal by forming a diverse Drought Planning Task Force purposed for collaboratively developing recommendations, funding programs, and policies for the efficient and effective maintenance, protection, and enhancement of the water supplies and resources in the Chorro Valley watershed. An objective of the Task Force will be to produce a prioritized master project list with recommendations for response actions and drought mitigation projects from various formative documents that have been produced in the past decade that inform the need and objectives for the DCP.

The project will be split into two phases. Phase I will include hiring a consultant, establishment of a Drought Planning Task Force and Development of a Detailed Work Plan. Phase II will include development of the DCP, which will commence upon review and approval of the Phase I Detailed Work Plan by USBR. The District will work closely with the hired consultant and stakeholders to develop the DCP.

#### ***Phase I – Establish Drought Planning Task Force and Develop Detailed Work Plan***

##### **Task A: Procure a Qualified and Experienced Consultant.**

The District will procure the services of a qualified and experienced consultant through a competitive bid process to assist with completing and preparing deliverables for Phases I and II. The purpose of Phase I is to (1) establish the Drought Planning Task Force, and (2) develop the Detailed Work Plan. Altogether, the proposed duration for completion of Phase I is six months.

### **Task B: Establish a Drought Planning Task Force – Phase I Requirement**

The District will lead efforts to establish a Drought Planning Task Force (Task Force) comprised of interested stakeholders within the planning area who wish to actively participate in the development of the DCP. The Task Force will have a diverse membership representing multiple interests in the planning area and will encourage collaboration and participation by interested stakeholders. The Task Force may be divided into working groups to better develop different aspects of the DCP.

### **Task C: Develop a Detailed Work Plan – Phase I Requirement**

The District, in consultation with its selected consultant, Task Force, and USBR, will develop a Detailed Work Plan that will describe how the various DCP tasks will be accomplished. In addition, a detailed work schedule and budget, and the responsibilities of USBR, the District, the consultant, the Task Force, and other interested stakeholders will also be outlined. The Detailed Work Plan, together with a detailed Communication and Outreach Plan describing how stakeholders and the public will be involved in the planning process, will be submitted to USBR for review and acceptance.

### ***Phase II – DCP Development***

All tasks in Phase II for the development of a new DCP will be completed by the District with support from the selected consultant and the Task Force. Altogether, the proposed duration for completion of the six required elements of Phase II is 18 months.

### **Task A: Drought Monitoring – Required Element 1**

The DCP will build on existing tools and data to establish a process for monitoring near and long-term water availability, and a framework for predicting the probability of future droughts or confirming an existing drought. This element will include the process for collection, analysis, and dissemination of water availability and other drought-related data (e.g., precipitation, SWP Table A allocations, and reservoir levels among other indicators). This data will be used to predict or confirm droughts including identifying metrics and triggers (e.g., SWP allocation and use of specific drought indices) that will be used to define levels of drought and response actions.

### **Task B: Vulnerability Assessment – Required Element 2**

The DCP will include a vulnerability assessment that evaluates the risks to various resources and impacts of drought and other shortage conditions. The assessment will be based on the risks to critical resources within the planning area and the factors contributing to those risks. A thorough review of past drought impacts and shortages, and analysis of historical water supply and demand will be completed. The assessment will be based on a range of future conditions, including uncertainties related to changing hydrologic conditions that may influence future water supply and demand. The assessment will provide data to drive the development of potential mitigation and response actions.

### **Task C: Mitigation Actions – Required Element 3**

The DCP will identify, evaluate, and prioritize mitigation actions and activities that will build long-term resiliency and mitigation of risks posed by drought and other shortages. Mitigation measures will be actions, programs, projects, and strategies implemented before drought to address potential risks and impacts.

**Task D: Response Actions – Required Element 4**

The DCP will identify, evaluate, and prioritize response actions and activities that can be implemented during a drought or other shortage to mitigate the impacts. These actions will be triggered during specific stages of drought or shortage to manage limited supplies and decrease the severity of immediate impacts.

**Task E: Operational and Administrative Framework – Required Element 5**

The DCP will develop an operational and administrative framework identifying responsible parties for undertaking the actions necessary to implement each element of the DCP, including communicating with the public about such actions. The framework will build on, or integrate with, existing regional forums and organizations. This element will include roles, responsibilities, and procedures necessary to: conduct drought and shortage monitoring, initiate mitigation actions, and initiate response actions including emergency response actions.

**Task F: DCP Development and Update Process – Required Element 6**

The DCP will describe the process that was undertaken to develop the DCP, including how stakeholders were engaged and how input was considered. The DCP will also include a process and schedule for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the DCP.

**1.4 Evaluation Criteria**

**Evaluation Criterion A – Project Benefits**

**Summary of Identified Threats**

Threats to Chorro Valley’s water supply, water quality, and river-based ecosystem and watershed health include the following issues, which are described in more detail in following sections: (1) drought conditions, (2) changes to stream conditions and water quality, (3) significant water shortages, and (4) other threats to the environment and watershed health. Climate change amplifies all threats to Chorro Valley water resources as described in each of the following subsections.

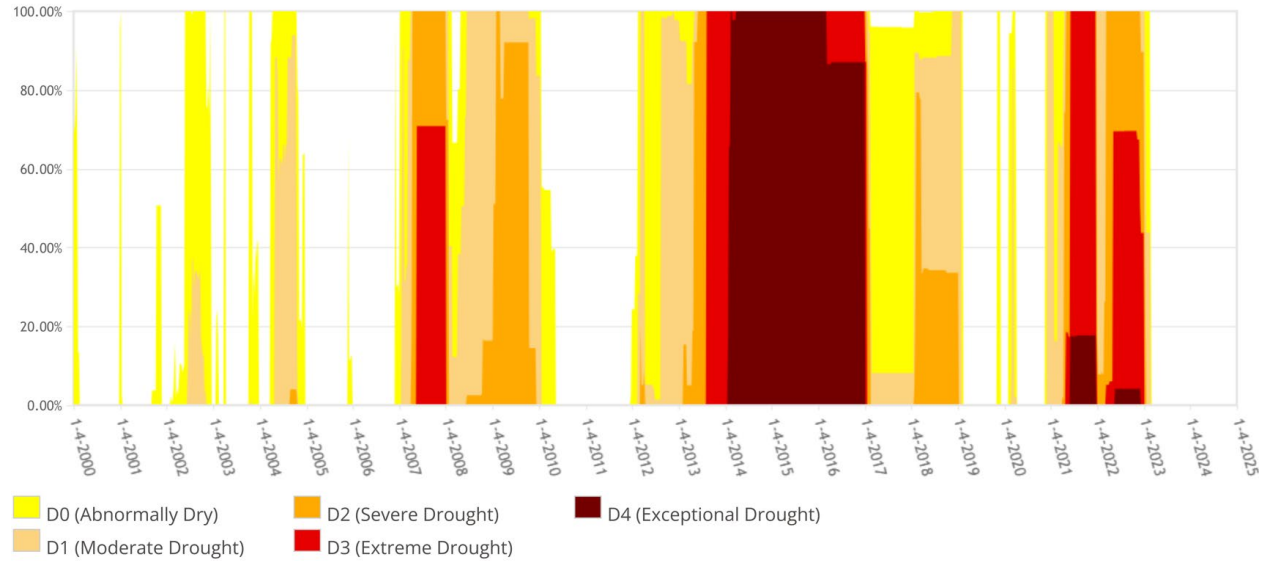
**Drought Conditions**

Statewide, California’s weather pattern is becoming more volatile, and the effects have been characterized as a kind of “climate whiplash.” We’ve had two historic droughts in recent years – the first was a five-year period spanning water years 2012 to 2016, and the second from 2020 to 2022 (the driest 3-years for California on record). In between those two droughts was the winter of 2017, one of the wettest years on record, and immediately following the 2020-2022 drought, California again saw record precipitation in 2023, largely driven by the weather phenomenon known as atmospheric rivers – short, intense events that bring a deluge of water. Data collected from the United States Drought Monitor (Figure 2) shows re-occurring statewide drought conditions have also impacted the County. During the last 20 years, the District has experienced significant periods of severe, extreme, and exceptional drought conditions.

**Imported water:** The District’s Chorro Pipeline water system is the backbone of the water supply network serving Chorro Valley and is used to import SWP water from other geographic regions in the state where supply is often more readily available. However, because of the changing climate patterns affecting statewide hydrology, the imported SWP supply delivered by the Chorro Pipeline is also particularly vulnerable to drought conditions.



**Figure 2. Historic Drought Levels in San Luis Obispo County, 2000 to 2023 (by Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories)**



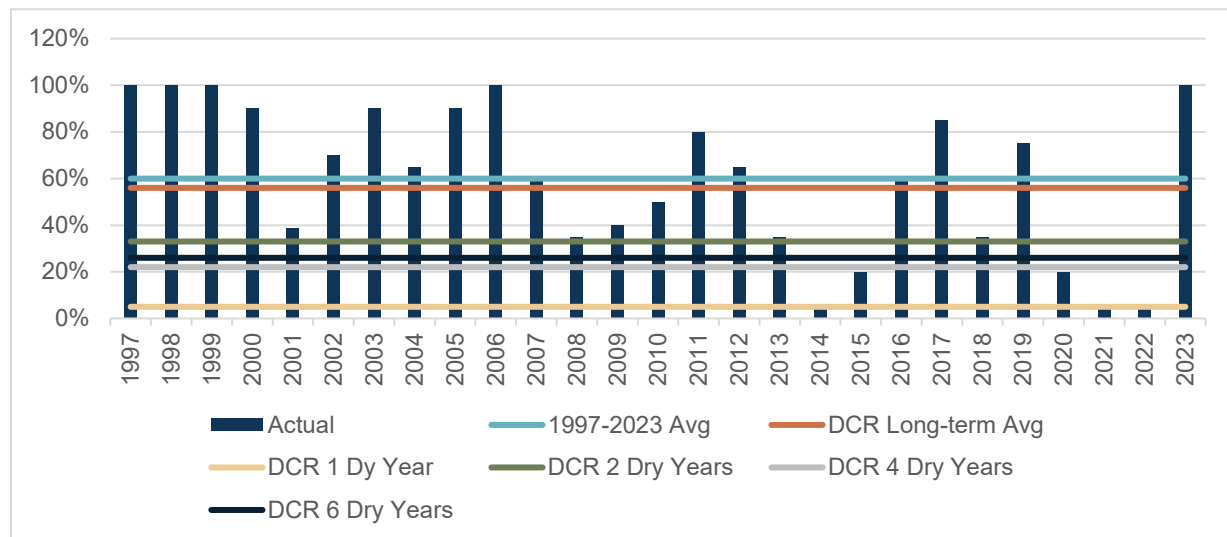
From the U.S. Drought Monitor website, <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DmData/TimeSeries.aspx>, 4-9-2024



Source: NOAA National Integrated Drought Information System, retrieved on April 9, 2024, from <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DmData/TimeSeries.aspx>.

Drought impacts are clearly reflected in 1997-2023 SWP water allocations (Figure 3). The three lowest allocations of 5% SWP “Table A” water contracts occurred in 2014, 2021, and 2022 (in 2022, limited amounts of additional water were available to supplement human health and safety needs). The threat of drought conditions poses the greatest risk to municipal agencies directly served by the Chorro Pipeline: the California Men’s Colony (CMC), the County Operations Center (Ops Center), Cuesta College (Cuesta), and the City of Morro Bay (Morro Bay).

**Figure 3. Historical SWP Allocations and DWR SWP Reliability Projections**

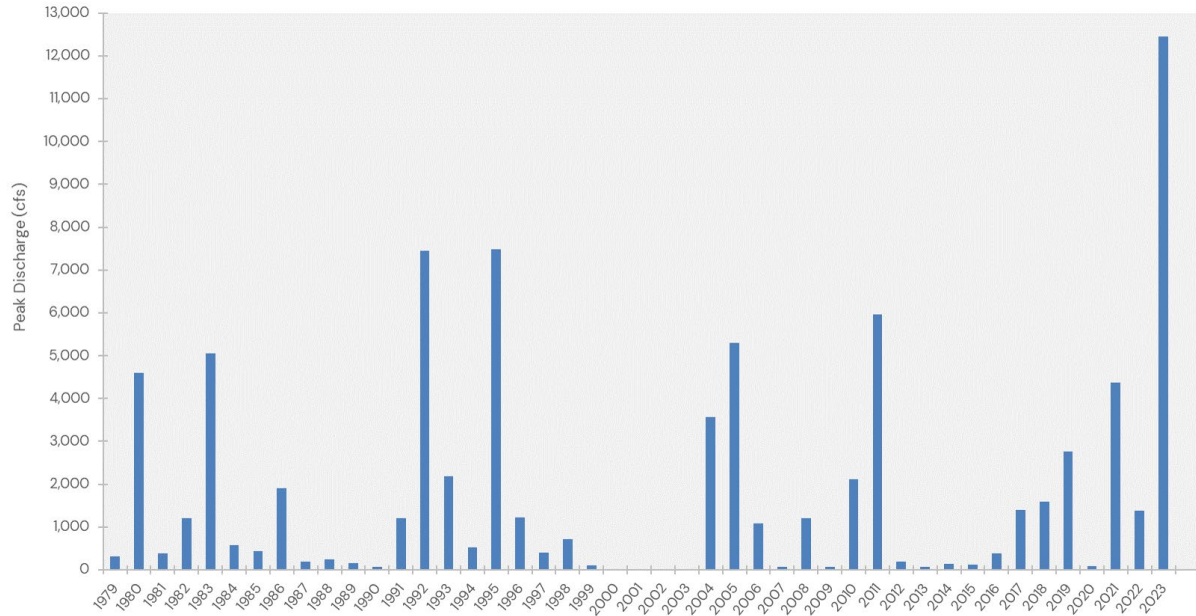


Source: State Water Project 2021 Delivery Capability Report (DCR) (9)



**Local supplies:** Other supplies used in Chorro Valley include Chorro Reservoir, Whale Rock Reservoir, other creeks, and groundwater. It’s assumed that these sources experience the same drought and climate change impacts as Chorro Creek. Chorro Creek provides supply for municipal and environmental uses in the Chorro Valley. Chorro Creek flows (Figure 4) capture local drought conditions and generally reflect the similar SWP drought periods.

**Figure 4. Chorro Creek Peak Flows at Canet Road Gauge**



Source: Morro Bay National Estuary Program data from [mbnep.org](http://mbnep.org)

**Changes to Stream Conditions and Water Quality**

As described in the previous sections, drought and climate change threaten stream conditions and water quality, which will worsen conditions for human uses and for the environment. With increasing strain on SWP availability exacerbated by drought and climate change, some Chorro Pipeline users and other water uses will rely more on other available local sources, which impacts local creek-based ecosystems and watershed health. Many entities and environmental demands in the planning area rely on surface water and groundwater from Chorro Creek and the greater watershed that feeds the Chorro Reservoir and ultimately flows into Morro Bay. In addition to less creek flow and natural recharge in Chorro Creek, CMC wastewater plant discharges, which provide additional water for stream flow and groundwater pumping, are reducing due to closure of half of its facilities, thereby reducing the volume of discharge to the creek. The changes in CMC operations are impacting downstream water quantity and quality. Lower quality and quantity flows in Chorro Creek contribute to high densities of benthic algae, low dissolved oxygen, bacteria impairment in the creek and the downstream Morro Bay Estuary, and seawater intrusion into drinking water wells. Climate change effects, growing levels of sedimentation, increased runoff, and rising temperatures will all contribute to increased water contamination risks. These water resources threats have harmful effects on ecosystems, and they also limit other important beneficial uses of these water bodies.

## Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program’s (Estuary Program) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) indicates that sustained creek flows are important for wildlife and that more hydrologic data is needed to effectively manage Chorro Creek as a resource:

*“High quality, freshwater flow sustains diverse wildlife in the estuary and the creeks that feed it. Steelhead rely on fast flowing waters as spawning habitat. Riparian vegetation, like willows and oaks, need a consistent water source. Estuarine species, such as tidewater gobies and salt marsh plants, require a variable mix of fresh and saline water. Despite understanding these needs, little information exists on the precise freshwater flow required to sustain these public trust resources. As such, effective management approaches that recognize the needs of public trust resources cannot be developed without more sophisticated hydrologic data” (3).*

Climate models reviewed for the Estuary Program’s State of the Bay 2023 report and the County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) indicate that local climate change projections suggest longer and drier summers, an increased frequency and severity of droughts, increased evapotranspiration rates, increased temperatures, increased winter runoff, increased storm severity, more frequent wildfires, sea level rise, and reduced groundwater recharge (10) (11). These climate change impacts will contribute to lower flows in Chorro Creek and less groundwater recharge during droughts while demands will likely increase. During wet years with severe storms, Chorro Creek will experience lower water quality challenges and increased sedimentation from increased runoff impacting human and environmental uses. Low creek flows and groundwater recharge in dry years combined with increasing sedimentation and sea levels will worsen seawater intrusion and environmental impacts.

### **Significant Water Shortages**

The CCMP indicates that freshwater is “critical for the wide variety of land uses in the watershed, including farming, ranching, and urban communities. Competition among domestic, agricultural, and environmental uses for scarce freshwater resources is a priority issue in the Morro Bay watershed” (3).

Morro Bay has had to restrict water use during droughts. Rural residential wells in the region have gone dry and at least one residential area has become dependent on hauling in water from a filling station at the Ops Center. To some extent, low creek flows are understood to have contributed to water shortages for a variety of uses (in addition to municipal uses), which the CCMP describes as follows:

*“Creek flow naturally diminishes in the summer and autumn due to low rainfall during these times and shallow wells drawn for agriculture and domestic use can directly affect creek flow (particularly in the Chorro Creek watershed). Parts of Chorro Creek are fully appropriated (as regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board (The California State Water Board), indicating strong competition for scarce freshwater resources in this area...*

*As water resources become scarcer throughout the state, use of local water resources may increase. Sea level rise may increase the likelihood of saltwater intrusion into groundwater aquifers (particularly in Los Osos), adding complexity to municipal water*

*planning. Overall, these changes are likely to reduce freshwater flow into the estuary and make the timing of inputs more unpredictable.*

*Significant reductions in freshwater flow, and differences in seasonal patterns, threaten habitat and living resources. Reduced freshwater supplies also impact a wide variety of beneficial uses, including domestic water supply, irrigated farming, recreation, and fishing” (3).*

In addition to drought, climate change, and stream conditions threats, some SWP users are solely or heavily dependent on SWP water. There are mandatory SWP maintenance shut-down periods when SWP water is not available and the District’s SWP supply is at risk to vulnerabilities including climate change, natural disasters, infrastructure failures, and potential regulatory and environmental constraints (Water Systems Consulting, Inc., 2021).

### **Other Threats to the Environment and Watershed Health**

Water resources threats and competition for water resources worsen creek flows, water quality, seawater intrusion, and environment and watershed health. The Estuary Program’s CCMP indicates that:

*“Freshwater is critical to the health of the estuary. Estuarine habitats such as saltwater marshes require regular inflows of freshwater to function properly. Creeks must have adequate flows to provide habitat for a variety of water-dependent plants and animals and to accommodate steelhead passage... flows in the watershed have a direct impact on a wide variety of beneficial uses. As noted above, freshwater is a critical element of several rare habitat types. In addition, reduced flows can impede the migration and spawning of steelhead; low flows that contribute to higher water temperatures can directly affect the viability of steelhead. Freshwater is essential to other special status species found in the watershed, including the red-legged frog and Southwestern pond turtle” (3).*

### **Threats Impacting Water Uses and Sectors**

Impacts and benefits for various water use sectors are not well understood currently, so additional analysis will be conducted as part of the DCP to better understand impacts to identify and prioritize projects to address the most significant threats as described in the following sections.

***Municipal Water Supplies*** – Approximately 30,000 people in the Chorro Valley are impacted by all aforementioned threats.

The District has annual contracts to deliver up to 2,338 acre-feet of treated SWP water for municipal use to its four SWP subcontractors via the Chorro Pipeline water system: (1) CMC, (2) Ops Center, (3) Cuesta, and (4) Morro Bay.

Morro Bay enacted its Severely Restricted Stage 3 water shortage level (15%-25% shortage) and actions restricting water use in 2014-2017 and 2021-2022.

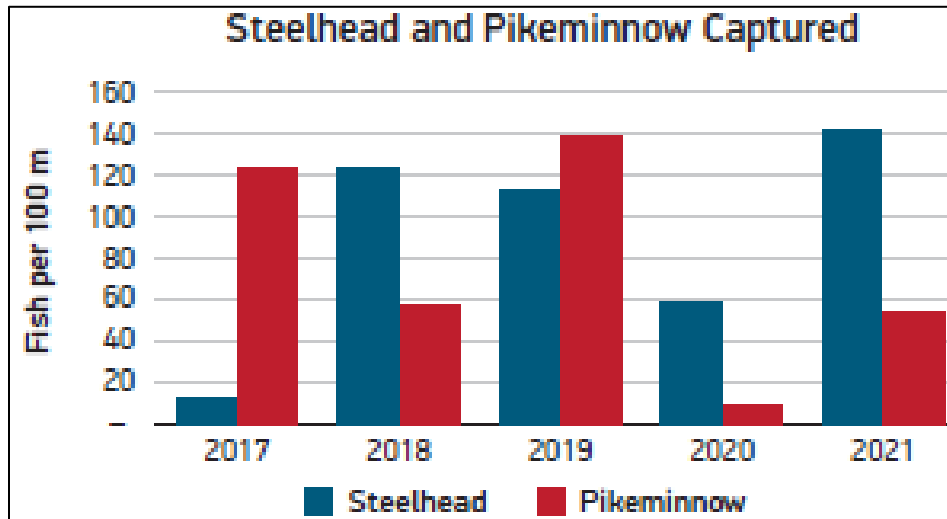
SWP allocations for the District considering climate change are expected to be 46% on average, which is 8% lower than historical conditions, which will likely require SWP users to reduce water use or use alternative supplies.

According to well completion reports, a trend of new and deeper well drilling peaked in 2021. As described previously, some wells in the region went dry and rural residential areas are trucking water from a filling station at the Ops Center.

Water shortages and competition for water resources worsen creek flows, water quality, seawater intrusion, and environment and watershed health, which negatively impacts suppliers' ability to use groundwater and surface water.

**Environment and Watershed Health** – The environment within the Chorro Creek Watershed is impacted by all previously mentioned water resources threats. Monitoring of insects, macroinvertebrates, water temperatures, and water quality by the Estuary Program indicates that drought and climate change have significant impacts on the environment within the Chorro Creek Watershed resulting in low counts of threatened Steelhead (Figure 5) and Fair to Very Poor average health scores for the creek (Figure 5), meaning that the creek may not be able to support any sensitive macroinvertebrates. Furthermore, the creek has Poor oxygen levels and Very Poor nitrate levels, which means these conditions make it difficult for the most sensitive wildlife to thrive (11).

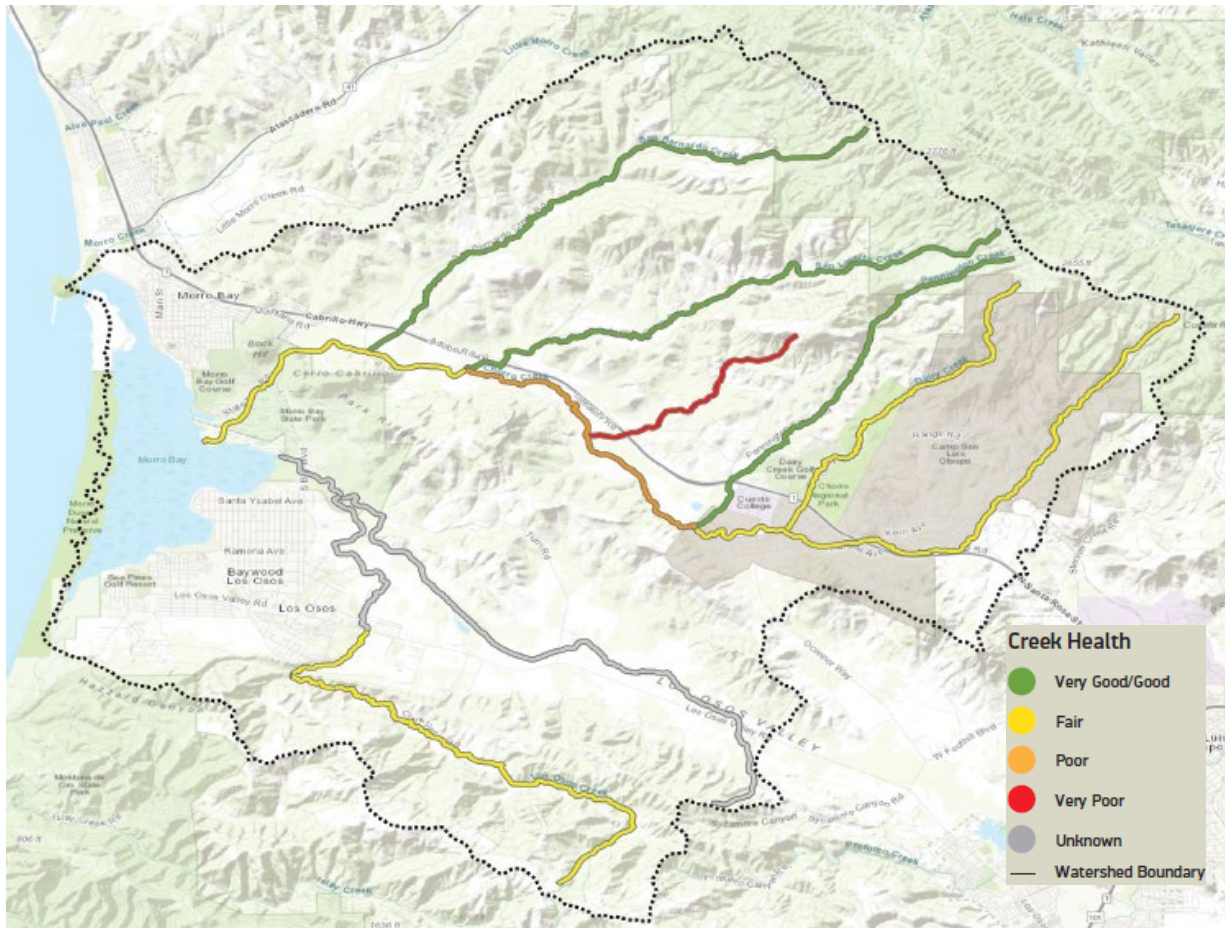
Figure 5. Steelhead Counts



Source: (12)



Figure 6. Creek Health Scores



Source: (12)

**Commercial, Recreational, Fishing, and Tourism** – Commercial, recreational, fishing, and tourism uses within the Morro Bay Estuary are impacted by all mentioned water resources threats. Monitoring of water quality issues and sedimentation by the Estuary Program indicates that drought and climate change have significant impacts on large shifts in Morro Bay Estuary habitat impacting commercial, recreational, fishing and tourism. Upstream human activities can greatly increase erosion and stormwater runoff, sending an excess of sediment and bacteria into the bay, which clogs gravel that certain species need for their eggs and pollutes water for other environmental and human uses. Additionally, bacteria levels impacted by upstream factors can impact Morro Bay’s aquaculture and tourism industries.

**Agriculture** – There are approximately 838 acres of agricultural land in the Chorro Valley. Drought exacerbated by climate change is anticipated to increase agricultural water demands while available subsurface flows and soil moisture are reduced (1). Surface water and groundwater used for irrigation are subject to reductions in water quantity and quality with drought and climate change, which cause water shortages and competition for water resources.

## Benefits of Planning to Address Threats Identified

**Municipal Water Supplies** – Planning for development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and strategic management of conjunctive use options to reduce water shortages and seawater intrusion.

Additionally, DWR’s SWP 2021 Final Delivery Capability Report (DCR) acknowledged the risks posed by climate change to future hydrologic and water supply conditions and has committed to elevate consideration of climate change in projections of long-term SWP deliverability capability (9). The forthcoming update to DWR’s DCR is expected to account for the climate change impacts, and so the development of a DCP would enable the District to incorporate this update to support local water supply management and resource planning considerations.

DCP planning would also assist the District with identifying drought mitigation opportunities to improve local SWP management opportunities and understand better when and how it can best use SWP supplies to address local drought conditions impacting the Chorro Valley – particularly in times when there is a surplus of SWP supplies.

**Environment and Watershed Health** – Planning for development of more supply options or creek floodplain management would allow for strategic conjunctive use management of surface water and groundwater to protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health. The Task Force can leverage work and relationships that the Estuary Program has established. The Estuary Program works with landowners in the watershed on projects that prevent excess erosion and trap sediment before it can degrade downstream habitats, thereby reducing the amount of sediment flowing to the estuary to improve creek water quality, support groundwater recharge, and create habitat for sensitive species like steelhead and red-legged frogs.

**Commercial, Recreational, Fishing, and Tourism** – As mentioned previously, the Task Force can leverage work and relationships that the Estuary Program has established to improve creek water quality, support groundwater recharge, and improve water quality in the bay for its recreational uses that are aligned with commercial uses, fishing, and aquaculture industries.

The Estuary Program’s CCMP indicates that: *“Many uses in the watershed and estuary depend on local natural resources – shellfish farming, commercial fishing, farming, ranching, tourism, and water-based recreational activities are just some examples... the Estuary Program now recognizes the priority issue inherent in the challenge of balancing important economic and social uses with the needs of the ecosystem... Stormwater runoff from a variety of land uses can degrade water quality that is essential for shellfish farming operations and recreational activities”* (3).

**Agriculture** – Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving water resources. Development of plans for storage ponds, interconnections, and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and strategic management of conjunctive use options allowing higher base flows in local creeks and better groundwater recharge to mitigate threats. The Task Force can leverage

work and relationships that the Estuary Program has established with agricultural stakeholders. The Estuary Program works with landowners in the watershed on projects that benefit environmental and agricultural uses.

### **Domestic Water Supply for Tribe, Insular Area, or DAC**

The DCP plan area does not include tribes, insular areas, or disadvantaged communities (DACs) that do not have reliable access to water supplies; however, domestic supplies are provided to critical prison facilities, emergency operations facilities, law enforcement facilities, a National Guard base, and animal shelters that are not addressed within traditional Census DAC resident income criteria. Some of these critical facilities directly serve financially disadvantaged transient occupants that are not captured in Census data used to determine DAC status, and other facilities provide critical regional services to DACs throughout the County. According to the District's Domestic Water Supply Permit for the Chorro Pipeline, there are approximately 15,000 transient individuals served at these facilities.

These facilities are solely or heavily dependent on SWP water and some do not have interconnections with neighboring agencies for alternative supplies delivery capability. CMC is solely responsible for distributing water to these facilities. If SWP water and/or CMC's distribution system are interrupted, most facilities would have to truck water or use bottled water for health and safety.

The DCP would assess opportunities to address these supply reliability vulnerabilities. According to reports submitted to the State, deliveries to these facilities ranged between 550 to 942 AFY and averaged 770 AFY from 2012-2021. The amounts of demand to be met and supply available during a supply interruption are not yet quantified and would be a key part of the DCP's evaluation.

### **Nature-based Features**

The DCP is not proposed to improve any nature-based features directly. However, work from the DCP may be used by the Estuary Program or the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (RCD) to further their plans, programs, and projects. For example, the Estuary Program has used studies in the past to inform floodplain management projects, implementing various planting programs, and implementing various invasive species eradication efforts.

### **Existing Environmental Mitigation or Compliance**

The DCP is not proposed to meet environmental mitigation or compliance obligations directly. However, work from the DCP may be used by the Estuary Program or the RCD to further their plans, programs, and projects. For example, the Estuary Program has used studies in the past to inform education and outreach programs to support meeting State water quality requirements for constituents' total maximum daily load.

## Evaluation Criterion B – Inclusion of Stakeholders, Stakeholder Support, and Previous Planning Efforts

### Sub-Criterion B1: Task C - Drought Contingency Planning

#### Meeting Needs of a Large Geographic Area

The project will help meet supply needs within the Chorro Creek Watershed (27,670 acres) and may have additional benefits for the region, County, and State. Stakeholders have a long history of actively addressing water quality and ecosystem health through initiatives such as the Chorro Flats Enhancement Project (CFEP) (128 acres), Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve (CCER) project (5 acres), Chorro Pipeline development, CMC wastewater treatment plant improvements, and continued monitoring and management of the watershed. Stakeholders in Chorro Valley include approximately 15,000 full-time residents and a transient population of 15,000 people at critical prison facilities, emergency operations facilities, law enforcement facilities, a National Guard base, Cuesta College, and animal shelters.

#### Existing Related Planning Efforts

The project is not identified in a previous plan specifically, but the CCMP and RWIRP indicate that more data and analysis are needed to improve water resiliency in the Chorro Valley and should be integrated with other local and regional water supply resiliency initiatives. The District will build upon over 8 previous reports and initiatives (Section 1.1), but this DCP effort will take an updated approach to address reliability issues on a regional scale through collaboration with all interested stakeholders in the plan area. The project would also build on water shortage contingency plans, emergency response plans, and other resource planning documents. As described at the end of Section 1.3, a comprehensive plan for Chorro Valley water resources does not exist, so the proposed DCP project would involve diverse stakeholders to establish a common understanding of water resources and initiatives to alleviate drought and shortage impacts.

#### Participating Stakeholders

***Stakeholders in the planning area committed to being involved in the planning process.***

The District is in the beginning process of identifying its stakeholders and their involvement in the DCP. The plan is to encourage further stakeholder involvement through the Task Force that will be developed in Phase I. The Task Force is expected to include existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, partnering water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, agricultural sustainability, and regulatory agencies overseeing the health and safety of drinking water systems. There are approximately 14 stakeholders that have expressed interest in participating and supporting the DCP and Task Force:

- San Luis Obispo County – County Operations Center (Water Utilities Division)
- Cuesta College – Administrative Services, Facilities
- California Men’s Colony (CMC) – California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation
- City of Morro Bay – Public Works, Utilities Division
- O’Connor Way Water Association
- Los Osos Community Services District



## Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria

- Cambria Community Services District
- City of San Luis Obispo – Water, Utilities Department
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) – Division of Drinking Water, District 06
- San Luis Obispo County – Environmental Coordinator (CEQA Lead; Tribal Outreach)
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (Soil/Natural Resources, Agriculture)
- Morro Bay National Estuary Program (Watershed Conservation/Restoration, and Education)
- Los Osos Community Services District
- Cambria Community Services District

Seven of those committed to participation also provided a letter of support as described in the Letters of Support section.

### ***Collaboration with entities external to a Tribe.***

There are no tribal stakeholders identified for this project currently. If a tribal stakeholder is identified or becomes otherwise involved, they will be incorporated as a stakeholder at their desired level of involvement.

### ***Ensuring participation by a diverse array of stakeholders in the development of the DCP.***

The District will provide updates on the project to the larger community of stakeholders through the District’s State Water Subcontractors Advisory Committee (SWSAC) and County Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) as needed. The SWSAC and WRAC meetings are open to the public, and comprised of a wide range of members representing the County supervisorial districts, cities, special districts, resource conservation districts, agricultural interests, and environmental stewardship, and resource management & planning entities. These committees are key forums for the District to communicate with the public, gather input from the community, and welcome a diversity of stakeholder participation.

### ***Opposition to the proposed planning effort.***

Opposition to the project has not been expressed and there has been overwhelming positive feedback from local stakeholders during initial outreach efforts for interest in developing the DCP. If opposition to the DCP efforts arise during Phase I, then the Task Force will assess feedback received and determine how best to proceed with the DCP and account for concerns or issues identified during Phase I.

## **Evaluation Criterion C – Ability to Meet Program Requirements**

The District is committed to USBR’s established planning framework and to the six required elements of the DCP. The District’s anticipated activities for each required element are outlined in the Section 1.3. As described in Section 1.3, the District will lead the effort, supported by an expert consultant and stakeholders, especially those in the Task Force.

The project will be split into two phases. Phase I will include hiring a consultant, establishment of a Task Force and Development of a Detailed Work Plan. Phase II will commence upon review and approval of the Detailed Work Plan by USBR. The District will then work closely with the hired consultant and stakeholders to develop the DCP.

**Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria**

Figure 7 shows a proposed schedule. If selected for funding, a finalized detailed project schedule, broken down by tasks and subtasks, will be prepared with input from the Task Force, consultant, and USBR. The budget and budget narrative associated with tasks shown in the schedule are described in Section 2.0. This effort will build upon previous and ongoing related plans and efforts discussed previously in this section and in Section 1.1, but those resources are already complete and won't impact the schedule.

**Figure 7. Project Schedule**

Task	Year 1												Year 2											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>Phase I</i>																								
Task A: Procure a Qualified and Experienced Consultant	■	■	■																					
Task B: Establish a Drought Planning Task Force	■	■	■																					
Task C: Develop a Detailed Work Plan	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■													
<i>Phase II</i>																								
Task A: Drought Monitoring																								
Task B: Vulnerability Assessment																								
Task C: Mitigation Actions																								
Task D: Response Actions																								
Task E: Operational and Administrative Framework																								
Task F: DCP Development and Update Process																								

**Availability and quality of existing data and models applicable to the DCP.**

As part of the planning process, the District will explore the availability and quality of existing data and models to help develop the proposed DCP. It is anticipated that the San Luis Obispo County Master Water Report Data Information System (5) will be a great resource of models and data for the DCP for water supply and demand and projections, water quality, climate, demographics, economic, vulnerabilities and resilience evaluation, and many other factors. Additionally, it is anticipated that the Estuary Program has valuable models and databases for water quality, climate, recreational water needs, environmental water needs, and other helpful models.

**Staff qualifications and additional USBR technical assistance needed.**

**Supervising Engineer:** Wes Thomson, PE – Supervising Engineer, Water Utilities Division, SLO County Public Works. Wes is a licensed Civil Engineer with an M.S. in Water Engineering and over 13 years of experience. He provides strategic and technical leadership and has the engagement skills required for developing and implementing the DCP. His experience with the SWP, Chorro Pipeline, County Ops Center, and relationships with Chorro Valley stakeholders makes him uniquely qualified to serve as the District’s Project Manager for the DCP.

**Program Manager:** Laura Holder – Program Manager II, Water Utilities Division, SLO County Public Works. Laura has a B.A. in Liberal Arts and over six years of experience working collaboratively with government agencies, other County departments, and local organizations. Laura has managed multiple grants, demonstrating her ability to handle complex funding and regulatory compliance. Her leadership in developing and overseeing Utilities Division programs, along with her skills in information dissemination, outreach, and advocacy will be crucial for effective Task Force coordination and project execution.

**Division Manager:** Nola Engelskirger, PE – Water Utilities Division Manager, SLO County Public Works. Nola is a licensed Civil Engineer with a B.S. in Environmental Engineering and over 24 years of public agency experience. She has extensive technical, administrative, and capital

project management experience, as well as demonstrated leadership in delivering the District's Waterway Management Program for the Arroyo Grande Creek Channel, a program that includes complex stakeholder initiatives. Her ability to advise technical staff on inter-agency coordination and outreach will be leveraged to navigate the DCP development process and evaluate policy-level water supply reliability considerations.

**Environmental Specialist:** Kate Shea – Principal Environmental Specialist and Division Manager, County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department. Kate has a B.A. in Biogeography and over 24 years of experience working in a variety of environmental and resource planning roles for public agencies (local and state level). Her abilities will empower the project team to collaborate with a more diverse range of stakeholder perspectives and be ready to consider specialized planning concerns such as resource law, biodiversity, watershed health, and regulatory permitting related to public infrastructure.

**USBR Assistance:** The District will work with USBR to develop and review the DCP, especially in the development of a Detailed Work Plan.

***New policies or administrative actions required to implement the DCP.***

No new policies or administrative actions are required to implement the DCP.

### **Evaluation Criterion D – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities**

#### **Sub-Criterion D1: Climate Change**

As described in Sections 0-0, climate change threats, impacts, and benefits addressing those threats and impacts are critical components of the DCP. The DCP will incorporate climate data and models from previous efforts described in previous sections and other available climate change resources will be considered as deemed appropriate by the District and Task Force. This data and the four goals of USBR's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will be used to evaluate existing and projected supply and demand within Chorro Valley to determine appropriate projects and programs that the DCP recommends for implementation. USBR's four goals of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy include: Increase water management flexibility; Enhance climate adaptation planning; Improve infrastructure resilience; and Expand information sharing.

The communities within the Chorro Valley that rely on the imported SWP water for their municipal supply are particularly vulnerable to the changing hydrologic patterns in California and the development of a DCP would establish a regional plan that would significantly strengthen local water supply sustainability critical to achieving increased resilience to climate change. The District, consultant, and Task Force will work with USBR to establish evaluation criteria suitable for the development of water budgets and impacted water sectors so that the most sustainable and resilient mitigation and response actions are given appropriate weight, ranking, and consideration.

#### **Sub-Criterion D2: Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities**

The DCP plan area does not include DACs as defined using full-time residents' income data; however, supplies are provided to critical facilities with transient populations that provide critical regional services to DACs throughout the County. There are approximately 15,000 transient individuals served at these facilities, including a prison, county jail and juvenile detention, county emergency operations center, law enforcement facilities, a National Guard

## Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria

base, a community college campus, and animal shelters – populations that are not captured using traditional Census DAC resident income criteria.

These facilities are solely or heavily dependent on SWP water and some do not have interconnections with neighboring agencies for alternative supplies delivery capability. CMC is solely responsible for distributing water to these facilities. If SWP water and/or CMC's distribution system are interrupted, most facilities would have to truck water or use bottled water for health and safety.

The DCP would identify and assess opportunities to mitigate water supply reliability vulnerabilities. The existing demand and supply available during an extended supply reduction or interruption are not yet quantified and would be a key part of the DCP's evaluation.

### **Sub-Criterion D3: Tribal Benefits**

A District Environmental Resource Specialist will participate in the Task Force to understand and identify when Tribal consultation is recommended and should be pursued in accordance with CEQA. The District would perform Tribal outreach on behalf of the Task Force to incorporate Tribes as stakeholders at their desired level of involvement.

A benefit of advancing the DCP is that dependence on imported surface water supplies may be reduced or adjusted to reduce impacts on other SWP users. Improved management and/or reduction in imported SWP water has the potential to reduce impacts on Tribes relying on surface water supplies that originate from watersheds that support the SWP.

### **Evaluation Criterion E – Nexus to Reclamation**

The proposed planning efforts are not specifically focused on a project at a USBR facility or land. However, see Section 1.1 for an explanation of USBR's relation to the SWP. The DCP is not in the same basin as a USBR project and there are no USBR contracts with entities in the Chorro Valley.



## 2.0 Project Budget

### 2.1 Funding Plan and Letters of Funding Commitment

The total project budget is \$480,000, and the funding plan is summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Funding for the DCP will come from this USBR grant and the District. There will be no additional funding sources. District budget reserves are sufficient, and there are no constraints on the availability of funds during the projected 2-year project schedule.

#### Budget Proposal

**Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources (Phase I and II)**

Funding Sources	Amount
<b>Non- Federal Entities</b>	
San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District)	\$240,000
<b>Non- Federal Subtotal</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>
<b>REQUESTED Reclamation Funding</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>

**Table 2. Budget Proposal (Phase I Only)**

Budget Item Description	\$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Total Cost
<b>Personnel</b>				
Supervising Engineer	\$76.34	124	hours	<b>\$9,466.00</b>
Program Manager	\$49.74	62	hours	<b>\$3,084.00</b>
Water Utilities Div. Mgr.	\$82.55	78	hours	<b>\$6,439.00</b>
Environmental Specialist	\$74.60	36	hours	<b>\$2,686.00</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup></b>				
Supervising Engineer	\$38.17	124	hours	<b>\$4,733.00</b>
Program Manager	\$24.87	62	hours	<b>\$1,542.00</b>
Water Utilities Div. Mgr.	\$41.28	78	hours	<b>\$3,219.00</b>
Environmental Specialist	\$37.30	36	hours	<b>\$1,343.00</b>
<b>Travel</b>				

**Project Budget**

Budget Item Description	\$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Total Cost
N/A				\$ 0
<b>Equipment</b>				
N/A				\$ 0
<b>Supplies</b>				
N/A				\$ 0
<b>Contractual</b>				
Consultant (TBD)				\$ 50,000
<b>Construction</b>				
N/A				\$ 0
<b>Other Direct</b>				
N/A				\$ 0
<b>Indirect</b>				
De minimis		10%	Percentage	\$ 8,251
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs Phase I</b>				<b>\$ 90,763</b>

1. The District's fringe benefits costs are estimated at 50% of employee compensation costs and consists of FICA, unemployment insurance, workers compensation, medical and dental, retirement, and annual/sick leave/holidays.

**Table 3. Total Project Cost Table**

Source	Amount
Cost to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$ 240,000
Cost to be paid by the applicant	\$ 240,000
Value of third-party contributions	N/A
<b>TOTAL project cost</b>	<b>\$ 480,000</b>

## 2.2 Budget Narrative

The following sections describe Phase I budget details. Phase II budget details will be developed as part of the Phase I Detailed Work Plan. Preliminary assumptions for the Phase II budget are included in Attachment B submitted via grants.gov.

## Personnel

Total salaries for District staff of \$21,675 are anticipated for Phase I of the project (Months 1-6) and include the following key personnel:

1. **Supervising Engineer** – This position is the project manager, leading the project team to scope and execute the work plan to deliver a successful project. The Phase I budget estimate allocates 124 hours for the Supervising Engineer to coordinate with USBR, procure the technical consultant, form the Task Force, and lead the project team to complete the development of the detailed Work Plan.
2. **Program Manager** – This position provides support with Task Force coordination, stakeholder communication and outreach, and grant administrative oversight to ensure the DCP meets program requirements upon completion. The Phase I budget estimate allocates 62 hours for the Program Manager.
3. **Water Utilities Division Manager** – This position will assist with Task Force formation, stakeholder communication and outreach. It also provides the project team with the direct County management-level engagement needed to support plan development, including the technical expertise to evaluate policy-level water supply reliability considerations. The Phase I budget estimate allocates 78 hours for the Water Utilities Division Manager.
4. **Environmental Specialist** – This position will empower the project team to collaborate with a more diverse range of stakeholder perspectives and be ready to consider specialized planning concerns related to public infrastructure. The Phase I budget estimate allocates 36 hours for the Environmental Specialist.

## Fringe Benefits

The District's fringe benefits costs are estimated at 50% of employee compensation costs for a total of \$10,837. Fringe benefits include FICA, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, medical and dental, retirement, and annual/sick leave/holidays.

Fringe benefits in Phase I, based on a percentage of compensation costs for each of the key District personnel, are as follows:

1. Supervising Engineer:  $\$9,466 \times 50\% = \underline{\$4,733}$ .
2. Program Manager:  $\$3,084 \times 50\% = \underline{\$1,542}$ .
3. Water Utilities Division Manager:  $\$6,439 \times 50\% = \underline{\$3,219}$ .
4. Environmental Specialist:  $\$2,686 \times 50\% = \underline{\$1,343}$ .

## Travel

Not Applicable. There are no anticipated travel costs in this budget estimate.

## Equipment

Not Applicable. There are no anticipated equipment costs included in this budget estimate.

## Supplies

Not Applicable. No supply costs are anticipated for preparing the DCP.

## Contractual

The District will contract with a qualified technical consultant to be a project team member supporting the Task Force and assisting with the development of the detailed Work Plan. The estimated cost for Phase I (based on District research) is \$250 per hour x 200 hours = \$50,000.

## Construction

Not Applicable. No construction costs are required for preparing the DCP.

## Other Direct Costs

Other expenses associated with the DCP include the following assumed reporting requirements for the grant which are accounted for in personnel and contractual costs:

- Semiannual Financial Reports
- Annual Performance Reports
- Final Performance Report

## Indirect Costs

A 10% de minimus rate for indirect costs is included in Table 2.

## Total Costs

The total eligible cost of the DCP under this NOFO is \$480,000. Of this, the District is committed to a cost share of \$240,000 (50% of the total eligible project costs). Expenses will be covered directly by the District and/or from other non-federal funding sources secured for the project.

We respectfully request \$240,000 from USBR under this NOFO. This represents 50% of the eligible Federal cost share. Please see Tables 1 and 3 for the Proportion of Non-Federal Funding.

### **3.0 Environmental & Cultural Resources Compliance**

Not Applicable. The proposed DCP development project does not include any field measurement, monitoring, or other ground-disturbing activities.

### **4.0 Required Permits or Approvals**

No permits or approvals are required for the planning activities proposed for the grant.

### **5.0 Statements**

#### **5.1 Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

The proposal submitted for consideration under this program does not in any way duplicate any proposal or project that has been submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source—whether it be Federal or non-Federal.

#### **5.2 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

In accordance with 2 CFR §1402.112, the District is providing a statement that no actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of this application submission.



## 6.0 References

1. **San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District** . *2019 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan* . 2020.
2. **Resource Conservation Districts of San Luis Obispo County**. *San Luis Obispo County Watersheds Management Plan*. 2014.
3. **Morro Bay National Estuary Program**. *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan*. 2022.
4. **Carollo Engineers, Inc.** *San Luis Obispo County Master Report* . May 2012.
5. **County of San Luis Obispo**. Master Water Report and Data Information System. [Online] April 1, 2024. <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Current-Public-Works-Projects/Master-Water-Report-and-Data-Information-System.aspx>.
6. **Water Systems Consulting, Inc.** *Final Draft Regional Water Infrastructure Resiliency Plan*. 2021.
7. —. *County Operations Center 2020 Water Master Plan* . 2020.
8. —. *County Operations Center Water Shortage Contingency Plan*. 2023.
9. **California Department of Water Resources**. *The State Water Project Final Delivery Capability Report 2021* . 2022.
10. **San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District** . *San Luis Obispo County Final 2019 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan* . 2020.
11. **Morro Bay National Estuary Program**. *State of the Bay 2023*. 2023.
12. —. *State of the Bay 2023*. 2023.
13. **Stantec**. *Technical Memorandum - CalSim 3 Results for 2070 Climate Change and Sea Level Projections and Sensitivity Analysis*. s.l. : California Department of Water Resources, 2023.

## Official Resolution

- The executed Official Resolution authorizing the District, or Designee, as the authorized representative to prepare, review, approve and file an application and execute agreement(s) for the U.S Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants for FY23 and 24 Funding Opportunity will be provided if selected for an award.

## Letters of Support

No.	Letters of Support
1	Los Osos Community Services District
2	Cambria Community Services District
3	Cuesta College
4	O'Connor Way Water Association
5	Morro Bay National Estuary Program
6	Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District
7	California Men's Colony (CMC) – California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation



April 19, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**SUBJECT: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning Application**

**President**  
Marshall E. Ochylski

**Vice President**  
Christine M. Womack

**Directors**  
Charles L. Cesena  
Matthew D. Fourcroy  
Troy C. Gatchell

**General Manager**  
Ron Munds

**District Accountant**  
Robert Stilts, CPA

**Unit Chief**  
John Owens

**Battalion Chief**  
Paul Provence

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 6064  
Los Osos, CA 93412

**Offices:**  
2122 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 110  
Los Osos, CA 93402

**Phone:** 805/528-9370  
**FAX:** 805/528-9377

[www.lososocsd.org](http://www.lososocsd.org)

Dear Sheri:

The Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSO) is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109). The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County (County), California. In Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.

LOCSO is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the District in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force.

Sincerely,

Ron Munds  
General Manager  
Los Osos Community Services District

# CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

## DIRECTORS:

TOM GRAY, President  
DEBRA SCOTT, Vice President  
HARRY FARMER, Director  
KAREN DEAN, Director  
MICHAEL THOMAS, Director



## OFFICERS:

MATTHEW MCELHENIE, General Manager  
TIMOTHY J. CARMEL, District Counsel

Physical address: 1316 Tamsen Street, Suite 201, Cambria, CA 93428 \$  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 65 • Cambria, CA 93428 \$  
Telephone (805) 927-6223 • Facsimile (805) 927-5584 \$

April 25, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

## **SUBJECT: ) WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning Application**

Dear Sheri:

Cambria Community Services District (“CCSD”) is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109). The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County (County), California. In the Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

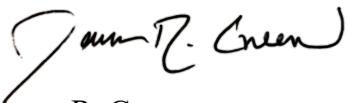
The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.



CCSD is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the District in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force.

Sincerely,

CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "G".

James R. Green  
Utilities Department Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew McElehenie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Matthew McElehenie  
General Manager



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

*Build Your Future*

April 23, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**Subject: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning Application**

Dear Sheri:

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109). The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County (County), California. In the Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.

April 23, 2024  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Page 2

San Luis Obispo County Community College District is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the District in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Troy".

Daniel J. Troy  
Assistant Superintendent/Vice President  
Administrative Services

April 24, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation

Water Resources and Planning Office

Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper

Mail Code: MP – 400

2800 Cottage Way

Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought  
Contingency Planning Application

Dear Ms. Looper,

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of the O'Connor Way Water Association from San Luis Obispo, CA. We are a small neighborhood organization located in an area that has low water groundwater levels during droughts. Consequently, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisor approved a resolution on November 6, 2018 allowing the establishment of a water fill station at the County Operations Yard in the Chorro Valley to be accessible to our designated group of residents. This water source has been vital to us, particularly during the warmer months and during drought years when low producing wells are unreliable. As a stakeholder in the Chorro Valley, the O'Connor Way Water Association is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for Federal Funding from the WaterSMART program Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO – R23AS00109).

The Chorro Valley in San Luis Obispo County California generally lies between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay. The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan that would improve water reliability, sustainability and management within the Chorro Valley. The Chorro Valley relies in part on water from the California State Water Project, which will experience increasing demands in the future according to existing conditions and projections. Water security for this region is vitally important and identifying strategies to proactively address drought and

potentially other water shortages is prudent. A Drought Planning Task Force consisting of representatives of current and potential stakeholders, also including water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies will be established. Additionally, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies responsible for the health and safety of the drinking water systems will be included in a collaborative effort. Development of drought mitigation projects, interconnections, and alternative water supplies could potentially increase water supply resiliency while preserving environmental resources.

The O'Connor Way Water Association is very supportive of this collaborative planning effort to support regional drought planning efforts in the Chorro Valley and plan to be a participant in the process through the Drought Planning Task Force. We are excited about the possibilities and opportunity the grant funding will bring to this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlotte Gorton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charlotte Gorton - Manager

O'Connor Way Water Association





# MORRO BAY

## NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

May 10, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**SUBJECT: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning Application**

Dear Sheri:

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109).

The MBNEP is one of 28 National Estuary Programs established by the US Congress through the Clean Water Act Section 320. As such, the MBNEP is a non-regulatory program funded in part by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The MBNEP has developed an EPA-approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and annual work plans for the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed that outlines the challenges for the area and specific actions to address them. Several actions in our CCMP are supported by this project including addressing impacts of climate change on freshwater sources and participating in efforts to define water budgets for Chorro Creek and Los Osos Valley watersheds to better inform water conservation and freshwater flow management.

The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County (County), California. In Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental

resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.

The MBNEP is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the District in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force and technical assistance on habitat restoration and water conservation projects and planning. Through our EPA approved work plans and CCMP, we can provide additional support to the District in connecting the regional plan to a federal nexus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melodie Grubbs', written in a cursive style.

Melodie Grubbs, Executive Director, Morro Bay National Estuary Program



## Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

1203 Main Street, Suite B, Morro Bay, CA 93442  
805-772-4391 | [www.coastalrcd.org](http://www.coastalrcd.org)

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May 6th, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

**SUBJECT: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning Application**

Dear Sheri:

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (CSLRCD) is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109). The District is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County (County), California. In Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.

CSLRCD is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the District in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Szeliga*

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Jennifer Szeliga, Executive Director, CSLRCD






# CSLRCD. LOS. Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning

Final Audit Report

2024-05-06

Created:	2024-05-06
By:	Hallie Richard (hrichard@coastalrcd.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAPpcLqg3T_WpaaytRMK8Yld5tJfUJ-jk3

## "CSLRCD. LOS. Chorro Valley Drought Contingency Planning" History

-  Document created by Hallie Richard (hrichard@coastalrcd.org)  
2024-05-06 - 5:16:06 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Jennifer Szeliga (jszeliga@coastalrcd.org) for signature  
2024-05-06 - 5:16:35 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Jennifer Szeliga (jszeliga@coastalrcd.org)  
2024-05-06 - 7:03:18 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Jennifer Szeliga (jszeliga@coastalrcd.org)  
Signature Date: 2024-05-06 - 7:03:44 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.  
2024-05-06 - 7:03:44 PM GMT



**CALIFORNIA MEN'S COLONY**

P.O. Box 8101

San Luis Obispo, CA 93409-8101



May 10, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper  
Mail Code: MP-400  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants, Chorro Valley Drought Contingency  
Planning Application

Dear Sheri Looper:

Facility Planning, Construction and Management is in strong support of the application by the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) for Federal funding from the WaterSMART program for Planning and Project Design Grants for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO - R23AS00109). The district is requesting funding to support the planning, outreach, and development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) that would improve water reliability and management within the Chorro Valley, generally located between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County, California. In the Chorro Valley, existing conditions and future projections indicate that water security is decreasing as state-wide demands increase and the availability of supplies from year to year becomes more variable – especially for this region of the county that relies on imported water from the State Water Project.

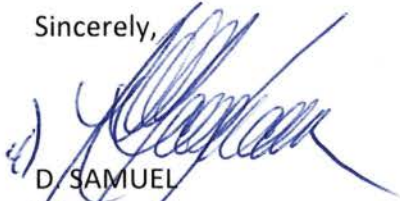
The proposed comprehensive DCP would assess impacts to imported and local water supplies and infrastructure that will help Chorro Valley stakeholders identify useful strategies to proactively address drought and other water shortage conditions. A Drought Planning Task Force will be established that includes existing and potential users of the Chorro Valley Pipeline, water purveyors with nearby infrastructure and alternative water supplies, local environmental resource groups dedicated to watershed enhancement, and regulatory agencies purposed for health and safety of drinking water systems. Collaborative stakeholder development of drought mitigation projects will increase water supply resiliency while also preserving environmental resources. Development of interconnections and alternative water supplies would diversify supply portfolios and conjunctive use options. More supply options would allow for strategic management of surface water and groundwater to reduce seawater intrusion and protect water quality and quantity in creeks for habitat and estuary health.

Facility Planning, Construction and Management is particularly supportive of this collaborative planning effort as it will support regional drought planning efforts to increase the sustainable use

of water resources in the Chorro Valley. The impact of this effort is critical for building long-term resiliency to drought and impacts of climate change. We are excited to be a part of this important program, and we look forward to providing assistance to the district in developing the DCP through the Drought Planning Task Force.

If you have any questions, please contact S.E. Buffaloe, Correctional Plant Manager II at 805-547-7926.

Sincerely,



D. SAMUEL  
Warden  
California Men's Colony

Cc: John Buoni, Facilities Planning Construction Management, Regional Manager  
Danny Samuel, Warden  
Nathan Gaughan, Chief Deputy Warden  
Luis Martinez, Associate Warden Business Services  
Jeff Black, Correctional Business Manager I  
Scott Buffaloe, Correctional Plant Manager II  
Ian Johnston, Correctional Plant Supervisor