Chapter 7
Coordination and Public Involvement

Efforts to engage the public, stakeholders, federally recognized tribes, Native American tribal groups, public agencies, and other interested parties continue to play an important role in the Investigation. In addition to ongoing public and stakeholder outreach, the Project Coordination Team (PCT) continues to facilitate participation by the Investigation's numerous cooperating agencies.

This chapter describes the outreach and coordination approach for the Investigation, and continuing activities for communicating with the public and coordinating with stakeholders, federally recognized tribes, Native American tribal groups, cooperating agencies, and other interested parties.

Public Involvement Plan

From the inception of the Investigation in late 2001, the Investigation has maintained an active public and agency involvement program that has included a wide range of activities. A public involvement plan was initiated at the beginning of the Investigation that is designed to provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholder and public participation. Specifically, the public involvement plan is designed to address issues of interest and concern to the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties engaged in local and regional water resources planning. The plan supports Reclamation's efforts to work with interested parties to develop alternatives for increasing storage in the upper San Joaquin River Basin, and is consistent with Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations). Elements of the plan have evolved throughout the Investigation, and its principles continue to guide outreach and engagement conducted in support of the feasibility study.

The plan describes a system and set of activities through which four objectives are met:

1. **Stakeholder Identification** – This effort is ongoing and consists of identifying individuals, groups, and other entities that have an expressed or implied interest in the Investigation. No individual, group, or entity is to be excluded from the process, which includes complying with Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.

2. **Project Transparency** – Providing information and study results to the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties is an important practice to facilitate stakeholder understanding of the process and project. Distributing study information occurs through the media, Web postings, public meetings, stakeholder meetings, public presentations, mailings, and other means.

3. **Issues and Concerns Resolution** – Equally important as project transparency is gaining awareness of the issues and concerns of the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties, and establishing a mechanism for the Investigation team to learn of problems early. Using various public involvement processes, the Investigation team has addressed, and will continue to address, issues and concerns in an effective and timely manner.

4. **Project Implementation** – Critical to developing an implementable project is ensuring that planning objectives are met, and, to the greatest extent possible, that opportunities are also met. In addition, the project would need to address other issues, and not harm the environment, people, or people's property. Accordingly, one goal of the plan has been to build a communications network in which policymakers understand the objectives and benefits of the project, and can conclude for themselves that the project has met all requirements necessary to be implemented. Ensuring policymakers receive the necessary information to make this informed decision is an important component of the plan.

The public involvement plan maintains two primary themes, outreach and information, as discussed in the following sections. Associated with these themes are procedures that enable the overall Investigation to satisfy the public involvement requirements of NEPA and CEQA for development of an EIS/EIR.

Outreach

The interactive components of the public involvement plan facilitate participation of the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties and provide the opportunity for them to effectively participate in the development of the Investigation. Stakeholders in the study area bring a high level of experience and local knowledge to the process, and provide a variety of recommendations, responses, and reviews that likewise inform the plan formulation process. Outreach components are designed to provide information and materials to a broad group of interested parties.

Outreach elements include: stakeholder and public meetings and workshops, tribal coordination, Technical Working Group (TWG) coordination, and PCT and Study Management Team (SMT) activities.

- **Stakeholder/Public Meetings/Workshops** – Stakeholder and public meetings and workshops are important to enable the overall Investigation to satisfy the public involvement requirements of NEPA and CEQA, and also to afford the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties the opportunity to participate in development of the Investigation.

- **Tribal Coordination** – Specific outreach activities oriented toward communicating with federally recognized tribes and Native American tribal groups.

- **Technical Working Groups** – The TWGs provided critical support in defining and clarifying alternative plans and analyses for the prior phases of the Investigation. These TWGs were organized by key topics, including water operations and management, hydropower, economics, engineering, and environmental compliance. The participants and meeting frequency for each TWG vary, depending on needs identified by the SMT.

- **Project Coordination Team and Study Management Team Activities** – The PCT includes the Reclamation Project Manager and technical experts from various disciplines and organizations, while the SMT comprises key policy and decision makers with direct influence over policy guidance for the study. The SMT provides overall guidance, suggestions, and comments for the study.

Information Dissemination

To ensure project transparency and to keep the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties informed on study progress, study-related information is disseminated in a number of ways:

- **Investigation Updates** – Reclamation produces periodic informational brochures and distributes them to the study mailing list and on the Web. To date, the timing of these brochures have coincided with major Investigation milestones, provides "snapshots" about the feasibility study process, and highlights upcoming events related to the Investigation.

- **Web Site** – An Investigation Web site hosted by Reclamation contains presentations used at public workshops and meetings, Investigation updates, contact information for Reclamation's Project Manager on the Investigation, and technical documents prepared to date, including the Phase 1 Investigation Report (Reclamation 2003), the IAIR (Reclamation 2005b), the PFR (Reclamation 2008a), and other Investigation-related documents. The Web site, which serves as a gateway for contacting the Investigation team, has been a key feature in outreach efforts and will continue to be used as the Investigation proceeds. The Investigation Web site address is: http://www.usbr.gov/mp/sccao/storage

- **Media Relations** – Media relations for the study have included news releases, media advisories, calendar activities, and editorial board visits. The media relations effort, which is led by Reclamation, is flexible to ensure prompt responses to comments, questions, or information regarding the Investigation.

- **Stakeholder and Agency Briefings** – The Investigation's SMT has presented information on study topics of interest at the request of stakeholder groups and agencies. The stakeholder briefing program will continue to serve as an outreach mechanism for disseminating information, gathering comments, and providing responses.

Public Engagement

Substantial efforts have been made to date to communicate with the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties about the Investigation. The following sections describe public engagement activities conducted for the Investigation to date.

Meetings

Since Phase 1 began in 2001, the Investigation team has conducted public meetings to provide participants with updates on progress of the Investigation. Public meetings and workshops have had, and will continue to play, a major role in the overall study process. Future public meetings and workshops will be scheduled at important points in the Investigation.

Workshops

A series of workshops and meetings were held during Phase 1 of the Investigation. Participants had opportunities to hear presentations by the study team, take part in discussions regarding preliminary plan formulation, and provide input about the planning process, analyses, and project documents. This process included six general workshops and one topic-oriented working session. Workshop participants included representatives of water agencies, counties, Federal and State agencies, water districts, environmental interest groups, and others with an interest in the Investigation. The workshops, which were held in a variety of locations within the study area, and were announced via e-mail, mailed postcards, and the project Web site, were well attended.

Environmental Scoping

Reclamation and DWR initiated an environmental compliance process for the Investigation consistent with NEPA and CEQA in February 2004 when the agencies issued an NOI and an NOP, respectively. During the week of March 15, 2004, Reclamation and DWR convened a set of public scoping meetings in Sacramento, Modesto, Friant, and Visalia, California, to inform interested groups and individuals about the Investigation and to solicit ideas and comments. An Environmental Scoping Report was prepared consistent with Reclamation guidance and in compliance with NEPA requirements, and released in December 2004 (Reclamation 2004d). The report describes the scoping process, comments received during scoping, and how these comments would be addressed as part of the Investigation.

Stakeholder Outreach

Meetings and workshops with the stakeholder community play a major role in the Investigation's overall study process. Each meeting or workshop has been scheduled at critical milestones of the investigation. However, between milestones, the PCT continues to conduct numerous focused meetings and presentations aimed at maintaining frequent stakeholder communication regarding study status, results to date, and direction.

Stakeholder outreach activities completed to date include briefings for congressional representatives, local elected officials, Native American tribal groups, immediate Study Area interests, water and hydropower interests, and environmental interests. Additionally, the following sections describe workshops, study area tours, interviews with local stakeholders, and ongoing stakeholder and agency briefings to support stakeholder outreach.

Study Area Tours

Several study area tours of Millerton Lake and the proposed Temperance Flat RM 274 Dam and Reservoir area were conducted for stakeholder groups during the Investigation.

Investigation representatives have participated in a number of tours of Millerton Lake, the upper San Joaquin River, and the Friant Division service area. Many of the tours were organized by groups with an interest in regional water resources issues, including the Friant Water Authority, California Agricultural Irrigation Association, California Latino Water Coalition, and State legislators and their staff. During each tour, Investigation staff provided updates on Investigation status and recent technical findings. The tours provided interested parties a firsthand view of several of the surface storage sites under consideration, the San Joaquin River, and other features of interest in the eastern San Joaquin Valley. As the Investigation proceeds, participation will continue in regional events that address water and other natural resources management issues to the greatest extent possible.

Interviews with Local Stakeholders

As part of the approach to identify and evaluate conjunctive management opportunities that have the potential to support Investigation purposes, DWR staff conducted one-on-one interviews with local stakeholders regarding regional, cooperative opportunities for groundwater storage and banking. These interviews identified a high level of interest among the stakeholders. During the interviews, some possible projects were identified that could be considered for their applicability to support Investigation objectives and opportunities. In addition,

many stakeholders made note of important physical and legal constraints that could affect implementation of conjunctive management options and suggested programmatic concepts to address institutional and financial barriers to increasing conjunctive management.

Ongoing Stakeholder and Agency Briefings

Outreach and briefings for the Investigation have been organized by Reclamation and at the request of agencies and stakeholder groups to present information on study topics of interest. The purpose of the briefings is to update stakeholders on completed analyses and evaluations, upcoming efforts and studies, and overall project status and schedule. Briefings also serve as a mechanism for gathering comments and providing responses to interested parties.

Agency Coordination

Agency consultation and involvement has occurred throughout the study to date, both informally and formally. The Investigation study management structure includes the active participation of numerous cooperating agencies pursuant to NEPA, representatives from resources agencies, and other stakeholders.

Key elements of agency coordination activities are the Draft EIS/EIR, the Planning Aid Memorandum and Coordination Act Report (documents to be issued by USFWS), and documents to be issued by USACE under CWA Section 404. Cooperating agencies are participating in coordination meetings and are being requested to comment on Draft EIS/EIR sections under development that are within their jurisdiction, expertise or authority. The USFWS submitted a Planning Aid Memorandum outlining areas of potential concern to Reclamation (2007). During June 2009 and July 2011, USACE provided verification of jurisdictional determination of waters of the United States for the Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir Area and Area of Project Features, respectively, in accordance with CWA Section 404.

Coordination with Tribal Governments and Native American Representatives

Several tribes in the vicinity of Millerton Lake and elsewhere in the study area have expressed interest in the Investigation. Since the Investigation's initiation, representatives have met periodically with Native American tribes to provide updates on progress and to receive input on issues of concern. In general, tribal briefings coincide with public meetings at key Investigation milestones. As the Investigation proceeds, coordination will continue with the tribes in accordance with Federal guidance.

Public and Agency Review and Comment

Public and agency outreach and involvement in the Investigation for this Draft Feasibility Report, the separate pending Draft EIS/EIR, and their appendices will include stakeholder workshops to brief attendees on key findings.

As the Investigation progresses toward completion of the Draft and Final EIS/EIR, public involvement and coordination with stakeholders and agencies to improve understanding of the Investigation, benefits, and impacts will intensify. These activities, particularly those to support preparation of the EIS/EIR, will be geared toward continued compliance with NEPA, Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), and the president's April 29, 1994, memorandum regarding the engagement of federally recognized tribal governments.

Once the Draft EIS/EIR is available, a Notice of Availability will be published in the Federal Register and select newspapers, in compliance with NEPA and CEQA, and formal workshops and public hearings will be held at that time to receive comments. The Feasibility Report and EIS/EIR will be finalized considering responses to public and agency comments.

Chapter 8
Findings

This chapter summarizes major findings of the Draft Feasibility Report. In conjunction with this Draft Feasibility Report, a Draft EIS/EIR is being prepared for separate distribution and public review. At this stage of the planning process, none of the alternatives have been selected or recommended for implementation, or identified as a preferred alternative.

Feasibility

The Investigation is a joint feasibility study by Reclamation, in cooperation with DWR, and includes development, evaluation, and comparison of alternatives consistent with the P&G (WRC 1983). This section summarizes major findings of related to evaluations of the technical, environmental, economic, and financial feasibility of the alternative plans.

Technical Feasibility

The alternative plans are projected to be technically feasible, constructible, and can be operated and maintained:

- Designs and cost estimates of project features in this Draft Feasibility Report have been developed primarily to a feasibility-level, but will not be suitable for use for congressional authorization and appropriation until the Final Feasibility Report.

- Additional review, including a feasibility-level DEC review, will be completed once Draft Feasibility Report comments on engineering features from the public, public agencies, stakeholders, and other interested parties have been addressed.

- Operations of the representative plan are technically feasible under existing laws, infrastructure, and operating agreements. Potential refinements to the operations of the representative plan may include further consideration of the balance between active storage and carryover storage, and/or additional scenarios that balance economic and financial feasibility based on stakeholder input.

Environmental Feasibility

Environmental analyses conducted to date suggest that the alternative plans would be environmentally feasible:

- Environmental analysis conducted to date includes terrestrial biological resources analyses, wetland delineations, aquatic biological resources analyses, and cultural resources analyses.

- Environmental impacts of the alternative plans will be evaluated further in the pending Draft EIS/EIR, and the analyses are anticipated to further demonstrate environmental feasibility.

- Environmental effects will be evaluated and mitigation measures for each alternative plan will be identified. An environmentally preferable alternative, consistent with NEPA, will be identified in the Final EIS/EIR.

Economic Feasibility

The alternative plans are estimated to be economically feasible:

- All alternative plans would provide estimated benefit values that exceed the estimated costs, with the exception of Alternative Plan 3 under high SAR conditions.

- Alternative Plan 4 has the highest net benefits of the alternatives evaluated in this Draft Feasibility Report and is currently estimated to be the most economically feasible.

- The monetary valuation of ecosystem benefits is challenging, but the range of benefits clearly illustrates that the ecosystem benefits are sufficient to demonstrate economic feasibility.

- Additional monetary benefit categories could be analyzed for the Final Feasibility Report, if any are identified, and a valuation methodology agreed upon.

- Potential supplemental refinements to alternative plan features, hydropower mitigation strategies, and their associated cost estimates for the Final Feasibility Report will also have an effect on the relative economic feasibility of the alternatives.

Financial Feasibility

Based on preliminary analyses of the representative plan, the alternative plans are projected to be financially feasible, depending upon the approach to recover costs. Financial feasibility analyses will be refined for the Final Feasibility Report.

- For CVP agricultural water supply, the marginal increase in the cost of water for existing agricultural contractors would be approximately $3.95 per acre-foot ($3 for repayment and $0.95 for other annualized costs). If new contracts were required, agricultural water costs would be approximately $212 per acre-foot ($161 for repayment and $51 for other annualized costs). Based on current CVP and SWP operational assumptions and studies to date with the representative plan, agricultural water supply beneficiaries only have the ability to pay the marginal increase in the cost of water.

- For M&I water supply, if new contracts were required, M&I water costs for the project would be approximately $1,305 per acre-foot ($1,054 for repayment, and $251 for other annualized costs).

- The benefits of the alternative plans affect more than one party and implementation of an alternative plan would require non-Federal partner(s).

Alternatives

Key findings related to iterative formulation and evaluation of alternative plans in this Draft Feasibility Report are summarized in this section. Consideration of comments received on the Draft Feasibility Report and pending Draft EIS/EIR related to the alternative plans will be reflected in the Final Feasibility Report.

Alternatives Formulation

- The alternative plans were formulated to provide a representative range of potential features, operations, and benefits of Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir.

- All alternative plans include constructing Temperance Flat RM 274 Dam and Reservoir in the upstream portion of Millerton Lake. The alternative plans vary based on operations (conveyance routing of new water

supply, potential water supply beneficiaries, and minimum carryover storage targets) and intake feature configurations (fixed low level or selective level). Variations in other physical features were considered during the development of feasibility designs and cost estimates, but the preferred approaches were identified during feasibility-level design and are reflected consistently in the alternative plans.

- The formulation of potential operations scenarios for Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir is based on meeting the primary planning objectives of water supply reliability and ecosystem improvements, followed by secondary objectives of hydropower, recreation, flood damage reduction, and water quality. Accordingly, operations are intended to balance the primary and secondary objectives, which can be challenging with many trade-offs between competing objectives. Each alternative plan addresses the planning objectives in varying degrees.

- The alternative plans evaluated in this report were formulated to be largely independent of Delta export operations with a focus on development of San Joaquin River water supplies only. Plan formulation involved balancing traditional economic benefits dependent on active storage capacity (water supply and flood damage reduction) and public benefits influenced by minimum carryover storage target (cold-water pool, emergency water supply, recreation, and hydropower). This balancing was intended to increase net benefits and potential public benefits, and incorporate the various planning objectives.

Alternatives Evaluations – Accomplishments and Benefits

- All alternative plans would provide accomplishments and benefits for water supply reliability, enhancement of the San Joaquin River ecosystem, emergency water supply, hydropower, recreation, and flood damage reduction.

- The accomplishments and benefits of the alternative plans highlight trade-offs between traditional benefits related to total active storage and public benefits related to carryover storage. Agricultural, M&I, and refuge water supply increase with greater active storage, which

would capture more San Joaquin River flood flows. For ecosystem improvements, greater active storage correlates to more new water supply and, therefore, more potential flow-related improvements, while greater carryover storage can support better water temperature-related improvements. San Joaquin River ecosystem improvements are also related to water supply routing, and increase when using the river as a water supply conveyance route.

- The alternative plans formulated in this Draft Feasibility Report are estimated to be feasible, but have been formulated conservatively and independent of Delta operations. The amount of new water supply that could be developed by Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir is strongly influenced by a variety of factors, including minimum carryover storage, CVP and SWP operating conditions in the Delta, and conveyance improvements. Results from sensitivity evaluations were included to demonstrate the range of variability that could be expected under a wider range of operations conditions.

- Integration of Temperance Flat RM 274 Reservoir operations with the CVP and SWP is not included in the alternative plans; however, previous evaluations show that doing so would significantly increase water supply and other benefits under potential future conditions with increased flexibility for Delta export operations.

- Climate change could affect water supply reliability and other resources in the No Action Alternative and all alternative plans.

Alternatives Evaluations – Four Accounts

- The alternative plans were evaluated according to the four accounts established in the P&G (WRC 1983). Economic benefits were quantified for NED and RED accounts, and additional unquantified economic benefits of alternative plans were discussed under the EQ and OSE accounts, or under other unquantified benefits.

- All of the alternative plans provide positive NED benefits, with the exception of Alternative Plan 3 under high SAR conditions. The total estimated average annual NED monetary benefits of the alternative plans

range from $81.3 to $100.9 million without ecosystem benefits and from $94.8 to $160.5 million with ecosystem benefits (California level). The resulting net economic benefits for alternative plans (with the exception of one condition for Alternative Plan 3) range from $0.6 to $41.0 million, with ecosystem benefits.

- A recommended plan is not identified in this report; Alternative Plan 4 is the alternative plan with the greatest net NED benefits of those evaluated and is used as a representative plan for financial feasibility and other analyses. Alternative Plan 4 was not optimized for accomplishments, benefits, or repayment, and was not maximized for net NED benefits.

- The RED, EQ, and OSE accounts are not estimated to have a material bearing on the plan selection process for the Investigation.

- For the RED account, all alternative plans provide positive employment and personal income RED benefits to the southern San Joaquin Valley region and the State. Short-term estimated average annual jobs supported by construction activities in the southern San Joaquin Valley would range from 1,605 to 1,656 with the alternative plans. Long-term estimated average annual additional jobs supported by increased agricultural production, recreational visitation, and O&M activities in the southern San Joaquin Valley would range from 456 to 472 with the alternative plans. Long-term estimated average annual jobs supported by increased agricultural production in the State under the alternative plans would range from 256 to 303.

- For the EQ account, all alternative plans are similar in the types of potential environmental effects, although the level of some effects would vary in the primary study area and across different portions of the extended study area depending on water operations for alternative plans. Generally, the adverse effects would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with prescribed mitigation measures.

- Both the beneficial and adverse effects in the OSE account are expected to be similar across all alternative plans.

Alternatives Evaluations – Effects on Other Programs

- The alternative plans would not interfere with implementation of the SJRRP, but would change water management at Friant Dam and would provide beneficial effects in support of the Restoration Goal and Water Management Goal of the Settlement being implemented through the SJRRP.

- For the Restoration Goal, the alternative plans would improve operational flexibility in the management of Restoration Flows; reduce gravel replenishment requirements, sediment accumulation, and gravel pit connectivity; and enhance San Joaquin River habitat for anadromous fish through providing a larger cold-water pool, improving the capability, reliability, and flexibility to release water at suitable water temperatures downstream from Friant Dam, and providing additional flow from Friant Dam to Mendota Pool (for water supply exchanges). The overall net effects of the alternative plans on the Restoration Goal and San Joaquin River ecosystem would be positive; however, the beneficial effects of the alternative plans from providing improved water temperatures and additional flow could be slightly offset by a reduction in floodplain rearing habitat for salmonids in Reaches 1 and 2.

- For the Water Management Goal, the alternative plans could increase the volume of Restoration Flows eligible for downstream recapture, but could reduce the availability of $10 water under Paragraph 16(b) of the Settlement.

- The alternative plans may have effects on other projects or programs, and the potential effects will be evaluated in the Draft EIS/EIR.

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Chapter 9
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