

DRAFT TIERED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Coachella Valley Water District

Transfer of State Water Project Table A Water from Berrenda Mesa Water District to Coachella Valley Water District and Desert Water Agency

Project Description

The proposed Project is the permanent sale, assignment and transfer of up to 16,000 acre-ft per year of the Berrenda Mesa Water District's (BMWD) State Water Project (SWP) Table A Water to the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) in the amount of 12,000 acre-ft/yr and Desert Water Agency (DWA) in the amount of 4,000 acre-ft/yr. Subject to sufficient hydrologic and regulatory conditions, Table A Water is the contract base annual amount of SWP water that a SWP contractor is entitled to receive. CVWD and DWA have entered into a purchase agreement with BMWD, which has rights to SWP Table A amounts, purchased through Kern County Water Agency (KCWA). The transfer would take effect as of January 1, 2010. The parties recognize that additional initial study review may be required to determine changed circumstances or new information of substantial importance which may have not been known now, but revealed later.

The project would involve no construction of facilities; the transfer would be accomplished entirely in existing facilities. The water is surplus to BMWD current water use within its service area, as the associated land was fallowed 10 years ago. The purchased water would be conveyed via the SWP and delivered to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan). Metropolitan would then provide CVWD and DWA, in exchange, an equal amount of Colorado River water through Metropolitan's Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) at the Whitewater Turnout for groundwater recharge through the Upper Coachella Valley Whitewater Recharge Facility operated by CVWD since 1973. Water could also be diverted from the CRA at the Mission Creek turnout for groundwater recharge in the Mission Creek subbasin near Desert Hot Springs.

Project Location

The BMWD service area is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley in the northwestern corner of Kern County, California, approximately 45 miles northwest of Bakersfield. The closest towns are Lost Hills to the east and Devils Den to the north (**Figure 1**). San Luis Obispo County borders the service area on the west.

CVWD is located in the Coachella Valley of southeastern California, primarily in eastern Riverside County and in northern portions of Imperial and San Diego Counties adjacent to the Salton Sea. DWA borders CVWD on the east in Riverside County (**Figure 2**).

The SWP conveys water from Oroville Dam, through the Sacramento River Channel and into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, then south through the San Joaquin Valley, over the Tehachapi

Mountains and into southern California. There is no direct delivery of SWP water into the Coachella Valley.

Finding

The CVWD Board of Directors, having reviewed the Initial Environmental Study (IES) of this proposed Project and having reviewed the written comments received prior to the public meeting of the Board of Directors, including the recommendation of the District's staff, does hereby find and declare that the proposed Project, the permanent transfer of up to 12,000 acre-ft/yr of State Water Project Table A Water from BMWD to CVWD and up to 4,000 acre-ft/yr to DWA, will not have an additional significant effect on the environment of the CVWD or DWA.

The CVWD Board of Directors, having reviewed the Initial Environmental Study (IES) of this proposed Project and having reviewed the written comments received prior to the public meeting of the Board of Directors, including the recommendation of the District's staff, does hereby find and declare that the proposed Project, the permanent transfer of up to 16,000 acre-ft/yr of State Water Project Table A Water from BMWD to CVWD and DWA, will not have a significant effect on the environment of the BMWD.

Tiering

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis of potential impacts on the CVWD and its service area, the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta, the State Water Project, the Colorado River, and Metropolitan's Colorado River Aqueduct in the IES checklist tiers off the following document:

- CVWD, 2002. Program Environmental Impact Report for the Coachella Valley Water Management Plan and State Water Project Entitlement Transfer. Prepared by MWH. (SCH #2000031027 and SCH #1999041032).

The CEQA analysis of potential impacts on the BMWD and its service area in the IES checklist tiers off the following documents:

- BMWD, 1996. Final EIR. Transfer of Water Entitlements from Berrenda Mesa Water District for Use in the Dougherty Valley Area. Prepared by Montgomery Watson. (SCH #95033045).
- BMWD, 2002. Proposed Addendum to the EIR of the Transfer of Water Entitlements from Berrenda Mesa Water District for Use in the Dougherty Valley Area, including Exhibit A – Findings and Biological Resources Report. Prepared by Provost & Pritchard Engineering Group. (SCH #95033045).

The proposed Project has been examined in the light of the CEQA documents in the IES. The proposed activity is found to be within the scope of the programs approved earlier and the BMWD EIR and CVWD Program EIR and Addendum adequately describe the activity and its

impacts for the purposes of CEQA. The proposed activities have been found to have no significant effects beyond those analyzed in the Program EIRs.

The proposed Project will not result in any adverse effects which fall within the "Mandatory Findings of Significance" contained in Section 15065 of the CEQA guidelines. The facts supporting this finding are presented in the attached IES prepared for the project and in the reference materials cited in the IES.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

Conclusion

The CVWD Board of Directors hereby finds that the Tiered Negative Declaration was prepared pursuant to the CEQA and reflects its independent judgment. A copy of the IES is attached.

Custodian of the Documents

The location and custodian of the documents and any other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which the District based its decision to adopt this Negative Declaration are as follows:


Custodian:

Secretary to the Board of Directors
Coachella Valley Water District
85-995 Avenue 52
Coachella, CA 92236

Submitted by:

Mark Johnson
Coachella Valley Water District
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Date: November 22, 2005.



Steve Robbins

fw: General Manager-Chief Engineer

Date Received for Filing

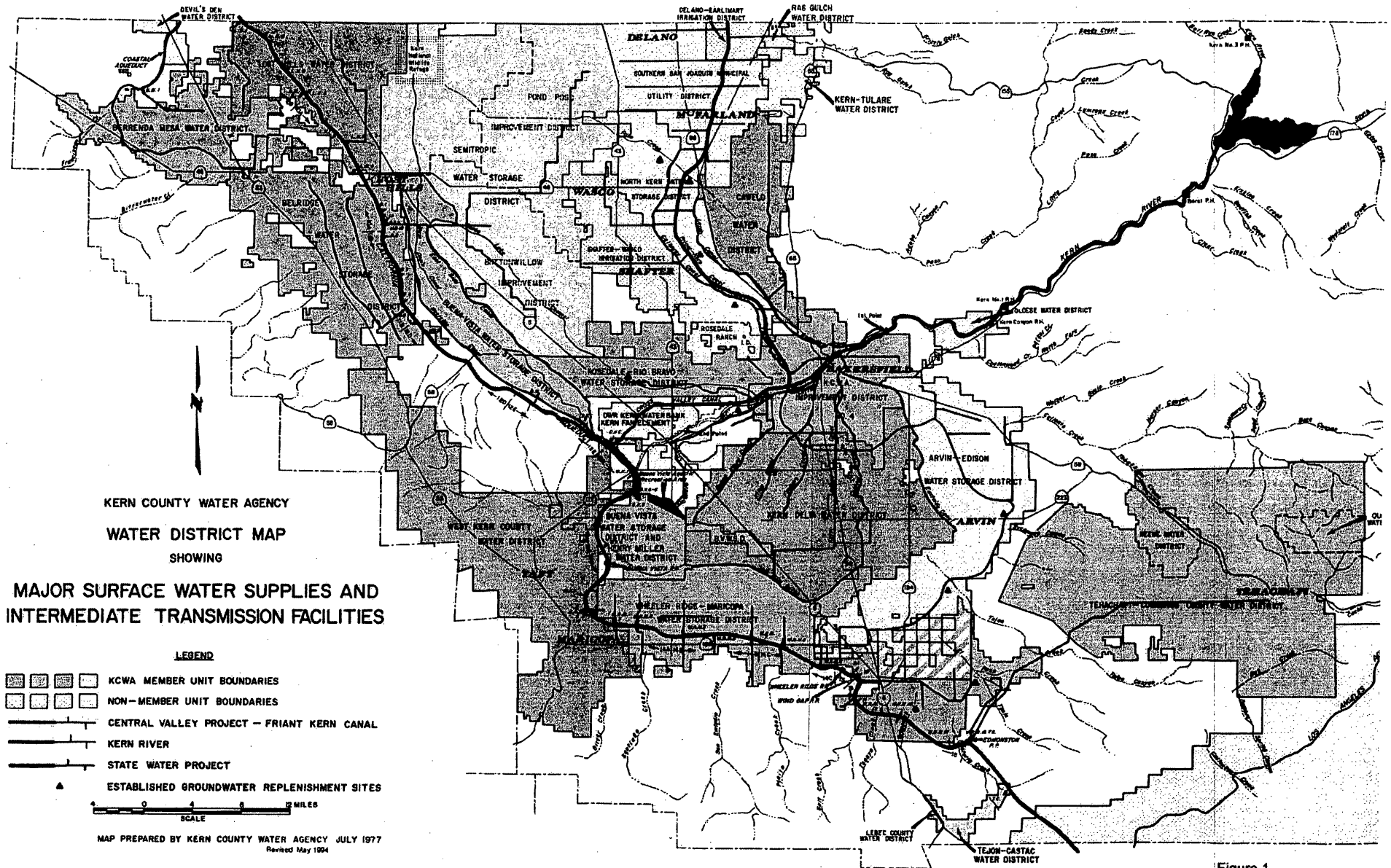
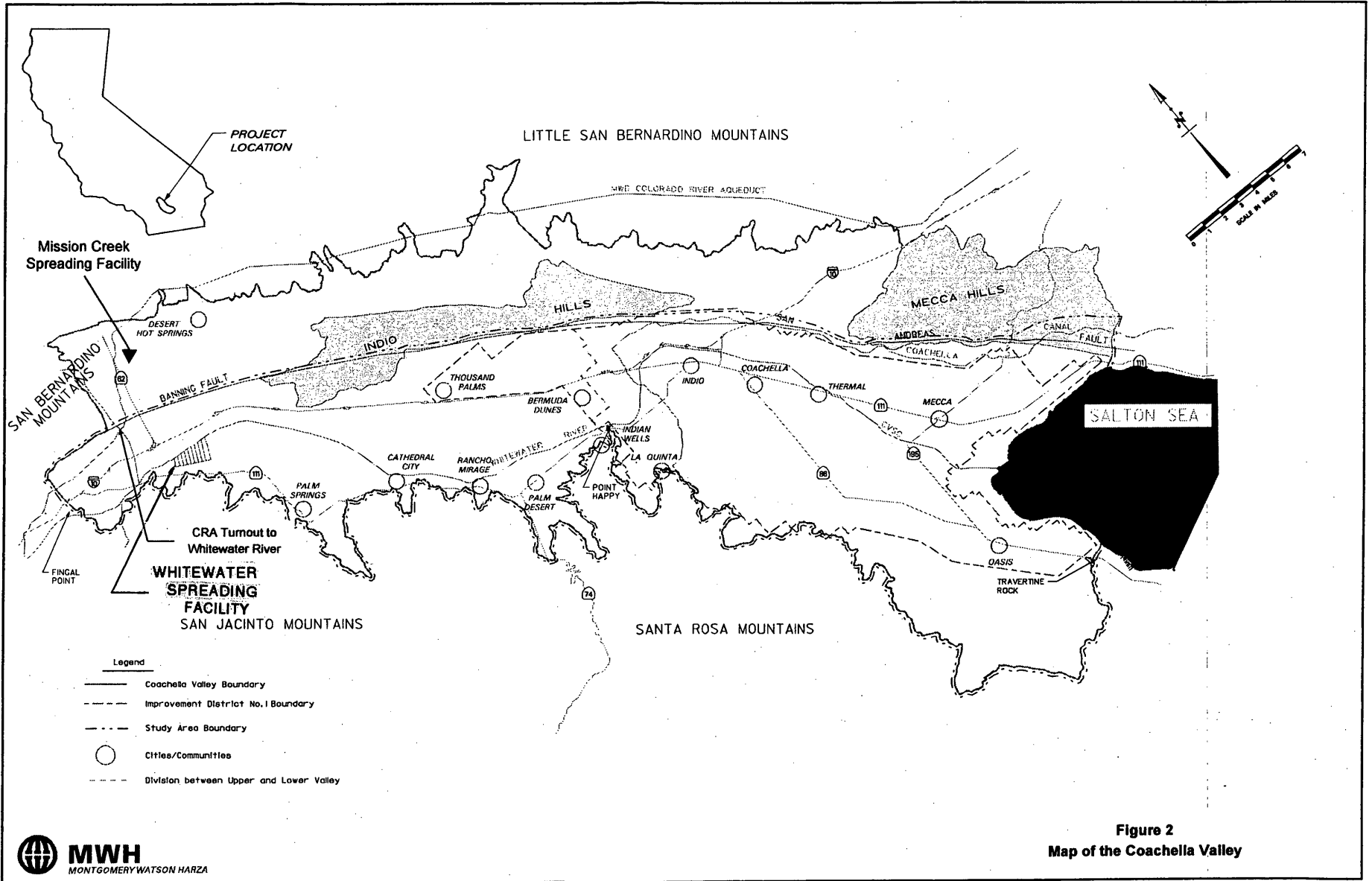


Figure 1



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