



Annual Report

Kings River Conservation District 2024



Our Mission

Responsibly manage the water, energy, and environmental resources entrusted to the District.

Our Vision

Deliver the highest level of customer service and system reliability for the sustained benefit of our stakeholders.

Our Values



Excellence

Achieve a superior level of professionalism, leadership, management, teamwork, safety, and employee growth and development.



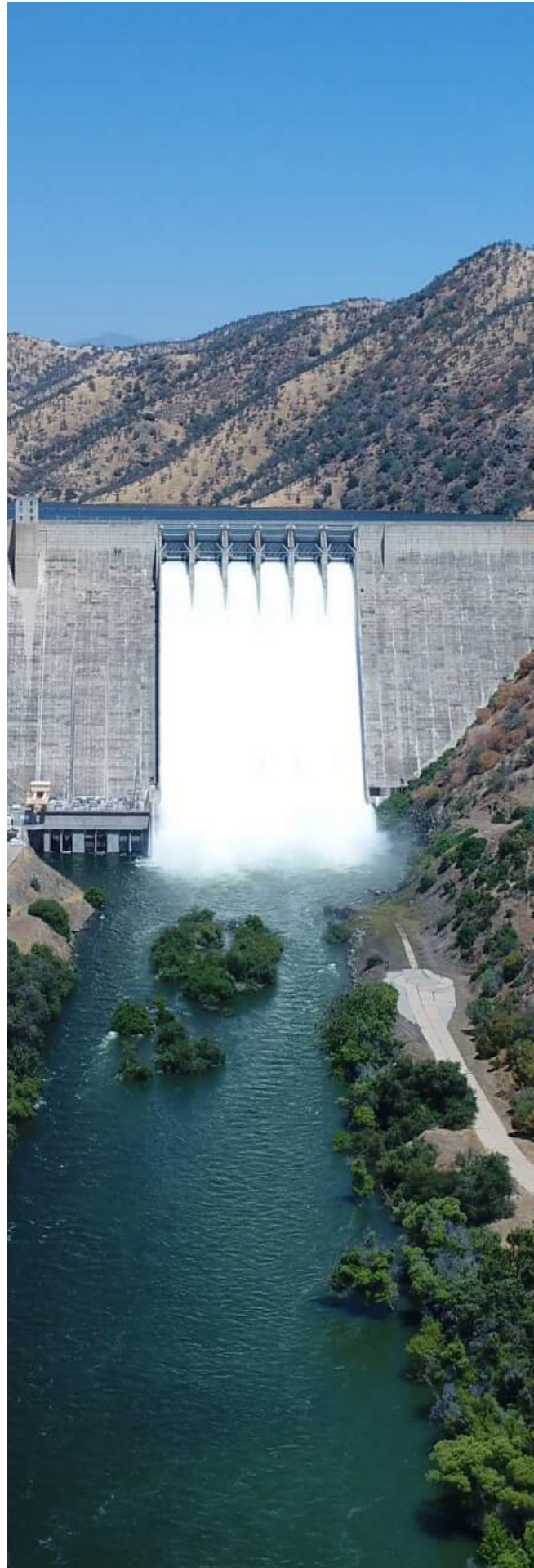
Innovation

Create new pathways to solutions that are functional, practical, politically and economically feasible, scientifically sound, and environmentally sensitive.



Integrity

Treat everyone with honesty, respect, and sincerity.



The year 2024 marked a significant milestone—the 40th anniversary of commercial operations at the Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant. Jeff L. Taylor, who served as KRCD’s General Manager from 1972 to 2002, played a pivotal role in the development of this hydroelectric facility. In recognition of his contributions, the KRCD Board of Directors renamed the plant in his honor on its 20th anniversary in 2004. It is a privilege to carry forward the vision of past leadership, and I look forward to expanding the power plant with the construction of a small hydroelectric unit on the existing turbine bypass system set to begin in late 2025. Additionally, our team is making steady progress on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process for the facility, with a new 50-year license expected by 2029.

The 2023–2024 water year (October 1–September 30) marked a rare hydrologic event. Runoff from the Sierra Nevada Mountains totaled approximately 1.6 million acre-feet—defined as “average”, an occurrence that has only happened 13 times since records began in 1897. From a flood operations perspective, the past year saw typical irrigation flows within the Kings River system. Our Flood Operations and Maintenance team remained active, focusing on invasive species removal, trash cleanup, erosion repair following the high flows of 2023, and ongoing maintenance to ensure the structural integrity of the flood project along the Kings River.

On the regulatory and environmental front, our team continues to work closely with irrigated agriculture to navigate evolving water quality regulations and promote sustainable resource management. KRCD remains committed to advocating for policies that safeguard and balance agricultural and environmental needs.

Looking ahead, we are prioritizing securing funding for critical projects, including the Pine Flat Dam Spillway Modification and key flood control infrastructure improvements. Strengthening partnerships with state and federal agencies will be essential as we address regulatory challenges and pursue opportunities to enhance regional water and energy resilience.

As we celebrate these milestones and set our sights on the future, I want to express my appreciation for our dedicated team and valued stakeholders. Together, we will continue advancing KRCD’s mission of responsible water, energy, and environmental stewardship to benefit our communities and future generations.

Sincerely,

David M. Merritt
General Manager



Board of Directors & General Manager



Standing (left to right): D. Paul Stanfield (Division 5), David Merritt (General Manager), Mark McKean (Division 4), Ceil W. Howe, Jr. (Division 6)

Seated (left to right): Jenifer Marshall (Division 7), Anthony Nonini (Division 3 - Vice President), Chris Kapheim (Division 1 - President), Masaru Yoshimoto (Division 2)

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Flood Control

KRCD's Flood Operations and Maintenance (Flood O&M) Division manages 70 miles of the Kings River's channels and 140 miles of adjacent levees along the system, ensuring that the river and its infrastructure are well-maintained to manage sediment, debris, and invasive plant species. Additionally, the levees are continuously monitored for such issues as erosion, seepage, subsidence and general structural integrity. This work is essential for supporting water flow, preparing for future flood events, and protecting downstream communities and surrounding lands.

Crescent Bypass Headgate

KRCD and the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District collaborated on headgate repairs for the Crescent Bypass, one of two pathways for directing floodwater to the South Fork of the Kings River. Concrete reinforcements, regular headgate maintenance, and vegetation removal ensure reliable functionality for future flood events.



North Fork Levee Regrading

In 2024, debris and invasive vegetation were removed along a levee section of the North Fork of the Kings River. This levee section was identified through routine inspections as having significant erosion. The section was regraded and reinforced to enhance flood control capabilities and maintain levee integrity.

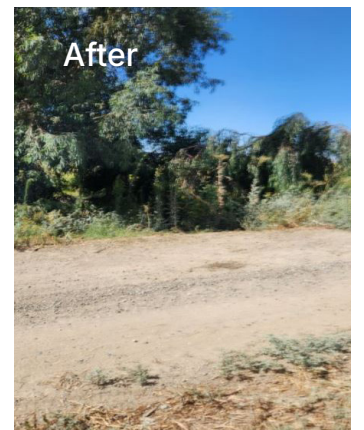
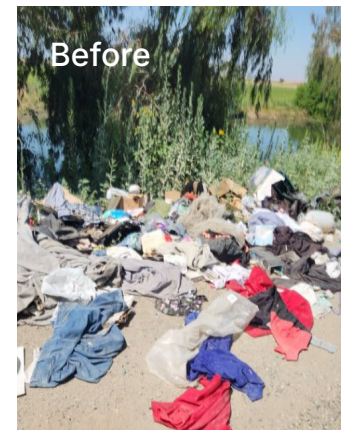
Prop 68: Riparian Corridor Restoration and Conservation Grant Program

KRCD's work under the Proposition 68 Riparian Corridor Restoration and Conservation Grant Program, in partnership with the Tulare Lake Resource Conservation District, continued in 2024. This multi-year effort focuses on removing invasive vegetation, like Arundo, Tobacco Tree, and Salt Cedar (destructive non-native species), and clearing trash along the Kings River. Ongoing removal and cleanup phases are scheduled through 2026 to ensure improved riparian health and water conveyance.



54,000
pounds of trash removed

17,200
hours of work



Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant



Watch the Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant 40th Anniversary Video



2024 marked the 40th anniversary of the Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant. Since its opening in 1984, the power plant has been a significant source of carbon-free energy. All energy produced by the plant is purchased by the California Department of Water Resources to power the State Water Project's pumping facilities, which deliver clean water to 27 million Californians, 750,000 acres of farmland, and businesses throughout the state.

Power Generation

Following a significant year of power generation in 2023, the Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant saw another great water year in 2024. Snowfall in late 2023 and early 2024 contributed to near maximum capacity water levels in Pine Flat Lake for most of the run season. The plant began operations in 2024 on March 25, and remained in service through September 13, generating a total of 455,728 gross megawatt hours (MWhrs), with a net delivery of 450,748 MWhrs. While this is lower than 2023's historic output of 781,710 MWhrs, it still represents a very strong year for renewable energy production.

Safety

Throughout the year, the plant maintained full regulatory compliance with no lost-time injuries. Routine safety meetings, ongoing regulatory training, and annual facility inspections by an independent safety consultant helped ensure OSHA/Cal OSHA compliance and a safe working environment for all staff.

Facility Maintenance

The plant underwent annual maintenance to ensure continued efficiency and reliability of the plant's operations from October 28, 2024, to February 14, 2025. Major upgrades during this period included:

- Replacing all instrument transformers in the high voltage switchyard.
- Upgrading the 230KV Line Protection Relay.



Unit 4 Expansion: Increasing Renewable Energy Capacity

The Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant continued progress on its Unit 4 expansion project, which will further enhance sustainable hydropower generation. As of early 2025, design work for Unit 4 is already underway, with project completion anticipated by mid-2027. This new 6.3 MW hydro unit will allow the plant to generate electricity during drier years and periods of low water flow—primarily between October and February—when the larger units are typically not generating due to low river flow demand. Unit 4 will also qualify as a renewable energy source under the State Water Project, further supporting California's commitment to clean energy.



"Even after almost 40 years I am still so interested and impressed by this line of work. Doesn't matter how many plants and dams I see I am still interested in how it's built and functions. And I personally feel like our plant is a jewel in the industry."

Mike Moore
Senior Operator

Environment

The Kings River Fisheries Management Program (KRFMP) marked its 25th Anniversary in 2024. The program is a cooperative effort between Kings River Water Association, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and KRCD to enhance the lower Kings River watershed and fisheries habitat. KRFMP completed supplemental stocking of rainbow trout, hatched and reared rainbow trout fry, and conducted surveys to monitor the fish population and habitat health. Monthly river cleanup events, trout incubator care and fry release, and the annual fish population



survey in 2024 were successful because of private citizen volunteers, government agency partners, and non-profit partners. Volunteer work doubled as an opportunity for students from Reedley College and Fresno City College to learn about the Kings River while walking the Kings River. Together, all these interactions strengthened KRFMP and the impact of its work.



Kings River Cleanups

The Kings River Cleanups continue to protect and preserve the beauty and health of the Kings River, fostering community engagement and environmental responsibility. A total of 12 cleanup events were held from January through December.

Partner organizations, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fresno County, Kings River Conservancy, Kings River Water Association, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Yosemite Climbing Association helped ensure the program's success.

*Including debris such as tires, furniture, and other waste

Watch the Kings River Cleanup Video



134
volunteers

201
work hours

120
bags of trash*

Seasonal Rearing & Release of Rainbow Trout Fry

Volunteers dedicated 130 hours to assist with daily care, ensuring healthy fry growth and release into the river between Pine Flat Dam and Highway 180. The trout incubator building successfully incubated and hatched rainbow trout eggs in two rounds between January and April.

185,000
eggs incubated

Supplemental Rainbow Trout Stocking

The KRFMP also supported the trout population through supplemental stocking in two rounds. The first stocking occurred between January and May and the second between October and December.

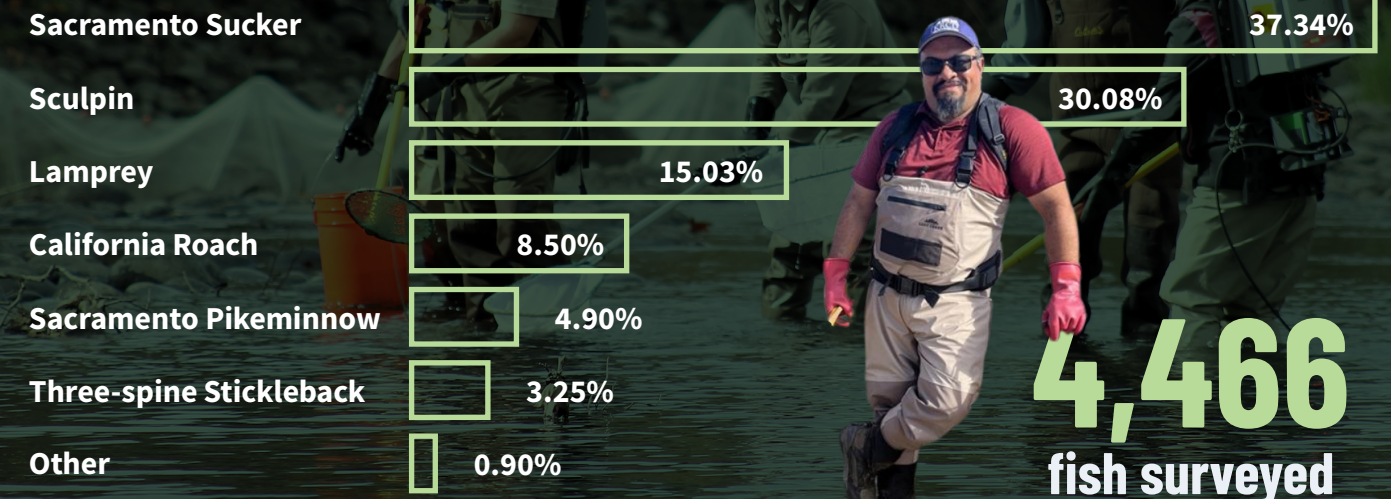
72,792
rainbow trout stocked



Fall Population Electrofishing Survey

KRFMP conducted its annual fall electrofishing survey to assess the fish population and overall health of the river. Volunteers and partners contributed 444 hours to support this effort. An estimated 4,466 fish were surveyed across six survey sites over six days. Through ongoing efforts like fish stocking, fry rearing, and monitoring, KRFMP continues to sustain and enhance the fishery habitat of the Kings River.

Watch the Electrofishing Survey Video





The Kings Basin Water Authority (KBWA), administered by KRCD, is a collaborative group of nearly 60 public, private, and nongovernmental agencies working together to manage water resources in the Kings Groundwater Subbasin. In 2024, the KBWA highlighted key achievements through project completion and active community engagement. Described below is a multiple public benefit water infrastructure project of one KBWA member.

Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD): Basin “CF” Stormwater Recharge and Flood Protection Project

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD) Basin “CF” Stormwater Recharge and Flood Protection Project in south Fresno received funding from DWR’s Proposition 1 IRWM Grant Program in January 2021. As droughts intensify, expanding facilities to replenish over drafted aquifers is crucial. Collaboration with Malaga County Water District to use the site for SGMA-required groundwater recharge will allow a small special purpose district that serves a disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged population (DAC/SDAC) to achieve groundwater sustainability and the ability to continue to meet water needs in the future.

The project includes basin improvements and a relief pipeline connecting to a nearby canal. This pipeline will 1) pump stormwater out during critical storms to reduce flooding and 2) direct stormwater or surface water into the basin for groundwater recharge. Additional infrastructure, including a pump station, internal basin pipeline, and outfall structure will enable this dual use. The project will recharge about 1,400 acre-feet of groundwater annually and enhance the wildlife habitat.

FMFCD continued project construction throughout 2024 and anticipates project completion by summer 2025.



2024 Summit for Equity & Resilience in Water

In March 2024, KBWA staff participated in the Summit for Equity and Resilience in Water, hosted in Alhambra, California, to share lessons learned from the Integrated Regional Water Management Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) Program. Staff member Soua Vang, shown above - center, facilitated a panel discussion on 20 years of IRWM engagement, highlighting challenges and successes.

Panelists provided insights into implementation of the IRWM Program as well as the challenges and success of navigating the DACTI Program. Additionally, Sonia Sanchez from Self-Help Enterprises presented on a community-led planning initiative that improved education, engagement, and participation among disadvantaged communities across Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern Counties.

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS



The Kings River Water Quality Coalition (KRWQC), administered by KRCD, continues to assist growers in the region with compliance under the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations. Established by growers as a non-profit joint powers agency, the Coalition is an important resource for monitoring, reporting, and regulatory assistance. In 2024, KRWQC represented 3,339 members and managed over 679,600 irrigated acres. In 2024, KRWQC outreach benefited from collaboration with University of California Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors who provided their expertise at various workshops and meetings, offering growers practical insights and innovative techniques.

Surface Water and Groundwater Quality Trend Monitoring

Staff ensures consistent surface water monitoring at the Coalition's nine monitoring sites, when water is present. Groundwater quality monitoring continued during the summer months, with 49 wells sampled as part of the ongoing groundwater quality trend monitoring program.

The Year Ahead

KRWQC staff remains committed to assisting members with technical reports, trend analysis, and on-farm inspections while actively seeking grant opportunities to support growers in the region. Additionally, the coalition continues to maintain three drinking water fill stations in Kerman, Hanford, and Dinuba, ensuring access to free and safe drinking water for residents in need.



Watch the Board Member
Spotlight Video



The Kings Water Alliance (KWA) is a non-profit community benefit organization administered by KRCD. KWA is addressing nitrate contamination in residential drinking water wells across the Kings and Tulare Lake Subbasins, ensuring safe and reliable drinking water for rural communities.

Making an Impact

In 2024, KWA conducted 225 free private well tests, bringing the total number of well tests performed since program inception to over 1,100. Families with wells testing above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for nitrates continue to benefit from bi-weekly bottled water deliveries, with over 720 households currently enrolled in the program.



Community Engagement

KWA participated in over 55 community events, furthering awareness of well contamination issues and available resources for safe drinking water. KWA partnered with local non-profit organizations such as Binational of California and The Children's Movement, California Food Bank, as well as local school districts, community colleges, and universities throughout the year.

The Year Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025, the Kings Water Alliance will begin rural residential well water quality testing for the Tulare Lake subbasin portion of our service area in Kings County, while continuing efforts in the Fresno and Tulare Counties to ensure safe drinking water for those in need and progressing with long-term drinking water solutions.

External Affairs

KRCD's External Affairs department provides support for areas of responsibility within the 1.2-million-acre service area, and the regulatory programs KRCD administers. External Affairs oversees communications, public outreach, interagency collaboration, state and federal legislative advocacy, and pursues grant funding. These efforts are carried out in close coordination with KRCD staff across all program areas, and with local partner agencies, community groups, and other stakeholders.

Legislative Advocacy

The 2023-2024 legislative year saw a continued focus on the critical importance of water and its effective, efficient management when it comes to flood control, water storage, water quality, and riparian health. External Affairs reviewed and analyzed draft legislation for potential impacts on known and emerging local needs, communicated with the offices of elected officials who represent the lands within KRCD, and coordinated with KRCD stakeholders and legislative advocacy groups such as the Association of California Water Agencies and the Valley Ag Water Coalition.

Funding Advocacy

In 2024, External Affairs worked to identify and pursue funding for projects to improve the resilience of water supplies, hydroelectric power, and natural resources for Central Valley residents. Four high priority projects:

Airborne Snow Observation (ASO)

Annually, approximately \$2.2 million is required to fund 10 ASO flights. ASO is critical to data gathering on snowpack conditions used for precise flood control and water resource management decisions.

Levee System Improvements

Funding is sought to offset local costs for levee side slope armoring and levee crown improvement, invasive plant species removal, tile line interceptors and pump station installation, and exploration of expanded sediment removal.

Pine Flat Hydropower Unit 4

A fourth hydroelectric generating unit at the Pine Flat Power Plant to expand renewable energy sources has been selected for \$5 million in funding so far, with more being pursued.

Kings River Fisheries Project

Funding is sought to offset local costs for gravel augmentation and habitat enhancement – design completion and project construction, and ongoing annual maintenance.



Jeff L. Taylor Pine Flat Power Plant

April 2024 marked the 40th anniversary of the start of operations. The Power Plant's history and community value were illustrated with a 4-minute video, news release, and social media campaign.



Provided ongoing outreach strategy and implementation to reach rural residential well users within KWA's 1,500,000-acre service area and coordinated with government agencies and nonprofit organizations. KWA was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the Central Valley Community Foundation to develop three inventories to support rural communities' ability to manage their own critical water supply needs while strengthening local economies and seeding a locally-grown crop of skilled water sector professionals.



Supported outreach to the nearly 3,400 agricultural land-owning members within a 2,740,000-acre area, who join together for cost-effective compliance with the State's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Interviews, team member spotlights, layout, and print and email distribution of the quarterly newsletter were among services provided.



Coordinated with the KRFMP Technical Steering Committee on a news release to market the 25th anniversary of KRFMP's creation. The annual fish population survey was highlighted with another news release and a media package prepared for local news outlets. A consistent social media presence was maintained throughout 2024 to build public awareness and boost volunteer recruitment.

Financial Statements

2023/2024 Fiscal Year

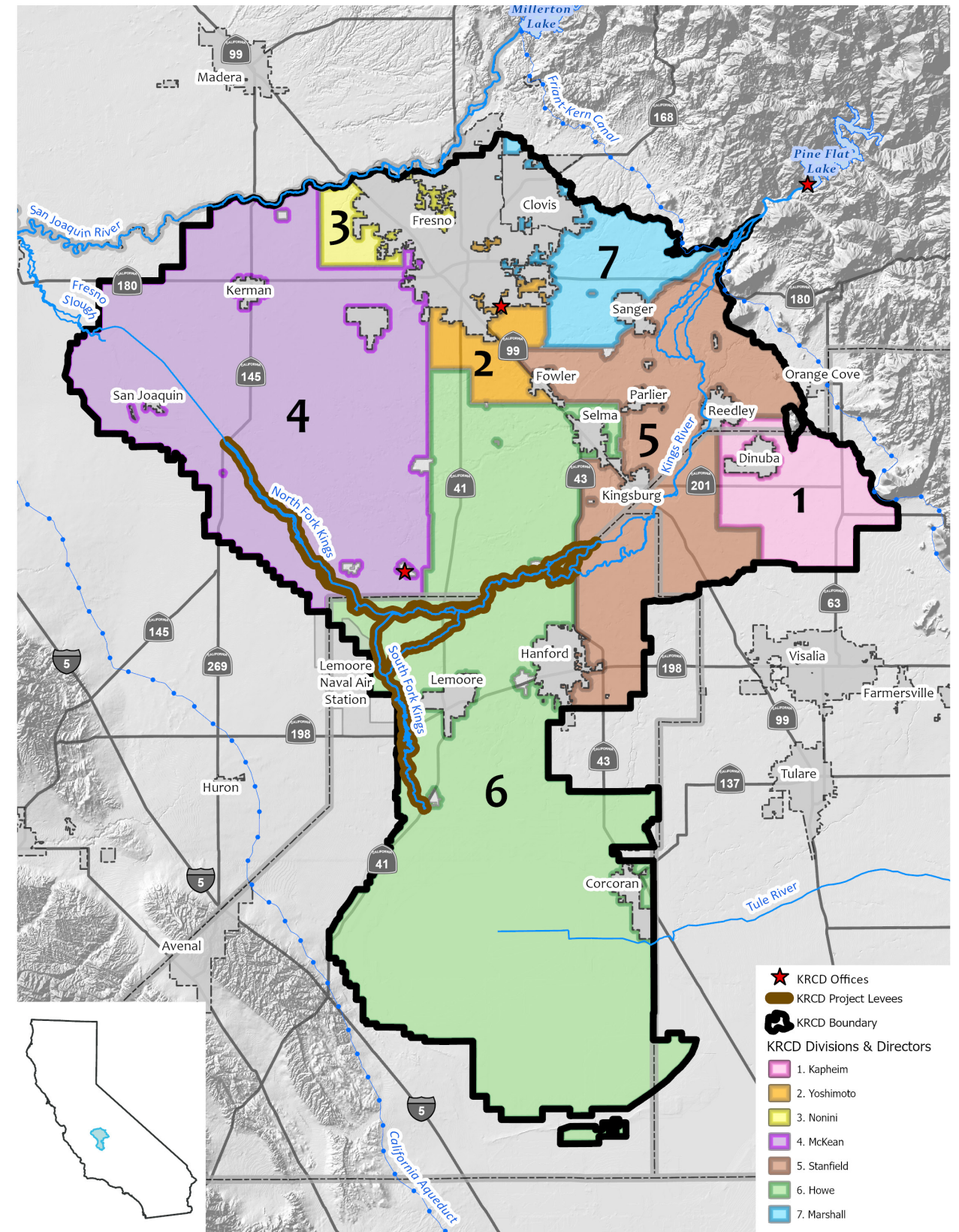
Sources of funds

Pine Flat Power Benefit	\$2,641,583
Pine Flat O&M	\$12,007,232
Fiscal Agent, Program Coordinator Reimbursements	\$1,392,822
Other Revenue	\$3,237,255
Grant Revenue	\$327,173
Taxes, Subventions and Abatements	\$1,618,970
Interest Income	\$1,232,226
Total	\$22,457,261

Uses of funds

General and Administrative	\$2,172,615
Pine Flat O&M	\$11,798,010
Grant Expenditures	\$473,923
River Maintenance	\$1,678,162
Capital Improvements	\$249,045
Water, Power Resources Development	\$2,356,718
Total	\$18,728,473

KRCD Division Map





Reliable resources for the Valley

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