



Pine Flat Dam Spillway Enhancement

Overview

Project Purpose: Improve flood protection, enhance water storage capacity, and support long-term water supply reliability in Fresno, Kings and Tulare Counties.

Proposed Work: Increase the spillway's height by 12 feet, adding 120,000 acre-feet (AF) of reservoir storage capacity.



Benefits

Flood Protection:

- Increases reservoir capacity to capture peak flood flows.
- Reduces downstream flooding risks, protecting small cities and unincorporated communities, farms, dairies, small and large businesses, schools, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure relied upon for public needs such as potable and irrigation water supplies, transportation, and wastewater treatment and septic systems.

Water Storage:

- Provides additional capacity to store surplus water during wet years for use in dry years.
- Helps address groundwater overdraft and supports regional Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) compliance to ensure water security for roughly 100 downstream communities, half of which are considered severely economically disadvantaged.

Support for Agriculture:

- Ensures reliable water deliveries needed for agricultural viability for the benefit of local farmers and local economies through a range of businesses tied to agriculture such as produce processing, transportation, and equipment sales and repair.

- Mitigates water supply challenges during drought conditions.

Hydroelectric Power Generation:

- Additional water storage supports increased hydroelectric generation capacity, providing clean, renewable carbon free energy to the region and the State of California.

Environmental Benefits:

- Provides water for managed riverine ecosystems to preserve habitat for native fish, other aquatic species, and

recreational trout fishery.

- Enhances operational flexibility to meet environmental and recreational needs.

Regional Importance

- The Kings River region is a critical California agricultural and economic hub. According to the 2023 Annual Crop Report of the County of Kings¹, the gross value of all agricultural crops and products was \$2.155 billion.
- Increased storage capacity is essential to maintaining water reliability and supporting sustainable growth.

Challenges & Mitigation

Environmental Concerns:

- Comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will address potential impacts, with mitigation measures developed in consultation with stakeholders. No significant project impacts are expected.

Funding Needs:

- Federal, state, and local partnerships are essential to secure funding through programs like the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), and the President's USACE budget.

Call to Action

Legislative Support:

- Advocate for inclusion in federal funding programs and grants. An estimated \$3 million is needed to fund the authorized USACE feasibility study, and an estimated \$1 billion in 2025 dollars to construct a 12' dam spillway enhancement.
- Engage local, state, and federal stakeholders to emphasize the project's regional and statewide significance.

Community Engagement:

- Share the project's benefits with local communities to build awareness and support.

Key Statistics

- Current Capacity: Pine Flat Reservoir's storage capacity is approximately 1 million acre-feet.
- Proposed Increase: Dam spillway enhancement could add an additional 120,000 acre-feet of capacity, depending on final design.
- Flood Damage Reduction: The 2023 flood event caused approximately \$2 billion² in damages within Fresno, Kings and Tulare Counties. Nearly 1,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, displacing families, impacting schools, as well as small and large local businesses. Along with reappearance of the Tulare Lake, this additional Pine Flat Reservoir storage would have reduced those impacts by storing more water and allowing controlled release volumes to communities downstream.

- Economic Impact: Strengthens water reliability for a region responsible for roughly \$10 billion³ in annual agricultural output.

Investing in the Pine Flat Dam spillway enhancement ensures flood protection, water security, and a resilient future for the Kings River region and beyond.

Status Updates

Pine Flat Dam spillway enhancement accomplishments:

- Stantec was contracted by KRCD and in collaboration with Kings River Water Association, to update cost based on prior studies and provide updated models. - 2020-2025

Federal/State/Local Support:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Senator Padilla | • Congressman Gray |
| • Senator Schiff | • Fresno County Board of Supervisors |
| • Congressman Costa | • Kings County Board of Supervisors |
| • Congressman Valadao | • Tulare County Board of Supervisors |
| • Congressman Fong | |

2024 WRDA – the Pine Flat Dam spillway enhancement was listed as a project of importance and directs the Secretary to expedite the completion of a feasibility study or general evaluation report (Sec. 1201).

The Kings River Conservation District applied for federal funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 3x3x3 program for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

For additional information please contact:

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¹ <https://www.countyofkingsca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/35846/638627721929100000>

² <https://www.kvpr.org/local-news/2023-07-27/in-normally-dry-kings-county-tulare-lake-has-carved-a-long-soggy-road-ahead-for-farmers>

³ 2023 Fresno County and Kings County value