



March 17, 2020

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Dear Community Members,

Everyone living in California knows how important water is for our families, businesses, and environment. To address the future of water reliability in our region, the Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (Exchange Contractors) are studying the feasibility of constructing a local, public water agency owned storage facility—the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir. Our purpose is to provide a reliable water supply to thousands of acres of highly productive farmlands in Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Merced, Fresno, and Madera counties and to ensure that surrounding communities and the environment benefit.

While Patterson’s economic base has grown in the last decade (Amazon, CVS, Kohl’s, and WW Grainger distribution facilities, to name a few) agriculture remains the cornerstone of the local economy. It brings \$7.15 billion annually—\$19 million a day—into Stanislaus County.

We know that some members of the community have expressed concerns about the proposed reservoir. We have heard questions and suggestions on several topics, such as safety and flooding, the resources of Del Puerto Canyon, recreation needs, and construction impacts on the community. We are committed to providing answers to address concerns and improve our proposed project. We are also aware that misinformation about the proposed reservoir has made its way around town and onto social media sites. In an effort to provide you with the most accurate information we’ve included answers to some of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and misunderstandings in the community. Please send any questions or issues not answered here or on our website ([www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com](http://www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com)).

### Why are we evaluating the proposed Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir?

A new reservoir would provide valuable benefits for our Districts, Patterson, and the region. A few of those benefits are:

- **Water storage** to provide water supply reliability to local agriculture and the environment.
- **Reduced reliance on groundwater pumping** during droughts, supporting the sustainability of our groundwater basins, which are essential to the drinking water supplies for west side communities, including Crows Landing, Dos Palos, Firebaugh, Grayson, Gustine, Los Banos, Mendota, Newman, Patterson, and Westley.
- **Flood protection and reduced flood insurance requirements** for Patterson residents and businesses within the Del Puerto Creek floodplain.
- **Groundwater recharge** supporting the City of Patterson’s water supply.

### What stage are the planning studies in?

Our proposed project is in its environmental studies phase, which is a step in determining whether the project is feasible to construct. After a year of technical analysis, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was published in December 2019. We are developing written responses to comments on the draft report, as well as other issues brought up by interested parties. In cases where more information is needed, we continue to do field work and exploration to inform this process and evaluate project feasibility.

### What happens next?

By mid-2020, the project partners hope to release the Final EIR (FEIR), which will include responses to the public comments. By the end of 2020, a Feasibility Study to describe the technical, environmental, and financial feasibility of the project will be completed. If the project is deemed feasible and ultimately approved, a design and permitting phase would follow in 2021 and 2022, leading to construction.

### How do I stay informed?

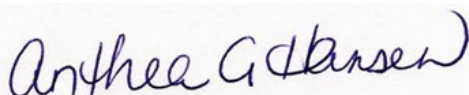
We want to help you stay informed about this important project. Here are some things you can do to learn more and receive updated information as it becomes available:

- Visit the project website at [www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com](http://www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com). The website is filled with reports and information about the project, including a Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions in both English and Spanish.
- Sign up to be on the project mailing list by clicking “Get Updates” on the bottom of any page of the project website.
- Ask a question or tell us about an issue you want to know more about by going to the “Contact Us” page of the website.
- Attend a community meeting. Sign up on the website or watch the Patterson Irrigator to receive future community meeting notices.
- Review the Final EIR and responses to comments. Notices will be emailed to those on our contact list when the Final EIR becomes available.

We have a long and successful history of implementing multi-benefit regional water projects, which has in turn protected the viability of local agriculture, the environment, and the groundwater basin for communities in the area.

We look forward to keeping you informed and are committed to sharing factual information about the proposed Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir as we proceed with our current study effort.

Very Sincerely Yours,



Anthea G. Hansen  
General Manager  
Del Puerto Water District



Christopher White, P.E.  
Executive Director  
San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority



# Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir



## Frequently Asked Questions

The following are just some of the Frequently Asked Questions available on the project website at [www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com](http://www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com). Additional questions about recreation, roadway, and construction traffic and dust are addressed on the website. As new information is developed, we will add it to the website.

### How will a new reservoir help manage water to benefit the region?

A reliable water supply is key to the vitality of our region. Water supplies would be stored in the reservoir at times when they are available to the project partners and released back to the Delta-Mendota Canal when needed for agricultural irrigation and wildlife refuges. The reservoir would store Central Valley Project water supplies originating from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and delivered to the districts via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

### What benefits will the reservoir project provide residents of the area?

The reservoir will provide a local, public water agency controlled storage facility that benefits farmlands, wildlife refuges, and area communities. The project will:

- Capture and manage Del Puerto Creek storm flows to increase flood protection and reduce insurance requirements for residents and businesses in the Del Puerto Creek floodplain, in north Patterson.
- Improve local water supplies. The stored storm water will be used to improve infiltration in the creek, improve local groundwater, and increase the City of Patterson water supplies.
- Improve water supply reliability for agriculture, which in turn supports the local and regional economy.
- Improve regional groundwater conditions. Using water stored in the reservoir for irrigation will reduce groundwater pumping and improve drinking water supplies for west side communities, including Crows Landing, Dos Palos, Firebaugh, Grayson, Gustine, Los Banos, Mendota, Newman, Patterson, and Westley. Many of these are disadvantaged communities with limited resources to address their water supply issues.
- Provide water for wildlife refuges in the area, which provide critical habitat for birds and animals and recreation for the region.

### Will the dam be designed to withstand an earthquake?

Yes. The dam will be designed and built to meet all current requirements of the California Division of Safety of Dams, and all applicable federal dam safety requirements. The design will be based on a detailed seismic hazards analysis for several nearby faults, the closest being the San Joaquin Fault, which runs north-south near the I-5 alignment. Other nearby faults are the Ortigalita Fault and Greenville Fault, 25 miles and 30 miles away, respectively. None of these faults is considered active, as none has had activity along them within the last 11,000 years. A seismic monitoring system will be built into the dam and remain in service throughout its life to monitor structural integrity continuously.

### What measures would be in place to protect Patterson from flooding?

If built, the new reservoir would reduce flooding along the creek and in north Patterson. This area could then be removed from the FEMA 100-year flood maps (1% probability of flooding each year), which would eliminate mandatory flood insurance requirements for residents and businesses in the Del Puerto Creek floodplain.

It is important to note that the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir would be an off-stream facility, unlike many reservoirs in the State that are located on major rivers such as the Sacramento, Feather, American, and San Joaquin Rivers. Being an off-stream reservoir means it is located in a very small watershed and filled by pumping water up into the reservoir from a downstream source. An analysis of the potential for extreme storm flows, known as the Probable Maximum Flood, is used to establish the design of the dam and spillway, ensuring safe operation even during extreme flood conditions.

Dam designers are also required to simulate the potential inundation zones if a dam were to fail. This information is extremely important because it is then used to identify the safety factors that must be incorporated into the dam design to ensure that it doesn't fail. To protect Patterson and its residents, the dam would be required to be designed to the most stringent current federal and state dam design standards. The design, construction, and operation of the project would be overseen by the California Division of Safety of Dams. These design standards apply to more than 60 similar dams in California.

The State of California has permitting, inspection, and enforcement authority for dams in the state. The State reviews plans and specifications for dam construction and major repair work; inspects construction work on new and existing dams; and reviews and approves Emergency Action Plans. In addition to regular inspections, the dam would include a monitoring system to proactively report any issues before they develop into a risk.

### Will flood insurance be required because of the Project?

No, FEMA does not require persons downstream from a dam to purchase flood insurance. The dam would reduce flooding in lower portions of Del Puerto Creek, which would reduce flood insurance requirements for residents and businesses currently located within the FEMA 100-year flood zone for that creek. The project partners will carry flood liability insurance, which will cover third parties, including Patterson residents.

## A Sample of Misunderstandings in the Community

Not all of the discussion going around about the project is accurate. The following facts are presented to address some of the misunderstandings.

**Comment:** *"These things are not built to last, especially when they are not built on bedrock – which the proposed Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir would not be."*

**Fact:** If the project is built, it will be built to be durable for 100 years. The main dam and both saddle dams will be built on bedrock.

**Comment:** *"If built, the dam would be located almost directly upon the San Joaquin fault, which last experienced an estimated 6.0 magnitude earthquake in the 1860's."*

**Fact:** The San Joaquin fault is a Quaternary fault and has not had activity in the last 11,000 years. The dam will be designed to withstand the maximum credible earthquake in the region.

**Comment:** *"This dam is to make profit for corporations. This isn't about small family farmers. This is about massive profit for contractors."*

**Fact:** All the farmers receiving water from DPWD are small family farmers, with the average farm size of 287 acres. The average farm size in the Exchange Contractors service area is less than 100 acres. Many of our customers have been operating their businesses locally for several generations or more.

**Comment (to the City Council):** *"You are spending \$400 million for what? You are being pressured by the water companies instead of using the \$400 million on something our community could use."*

**Fact:** The City of Patterson is not sponsoring this project, thus there are no obligations for the City to pay for it. If constructed, the project will likely reduce future costs to the City for meeting some of its water supply needs.

**Comment:** *"You have not contacted the Native Yokut people (about the Native American heritage issues in the canyon)."*

**Fact:** The project consultants sent a letter to Ms. Katherine Perez, Chairperson of the North Valley Yokuts Tribe, dated July 18, 2019. The Bureau of Reclamation sent a similar certified letter to Ms. Perez on August 2, 2019, which was signed for on August 27, 2019. The Tule River Nation Indian Tribe, the Southern Miwuk Nation Indian Tribe, the Sierra Miwuk Nation Indian Tribe, and the Tachi-Yokut Tribe were also contacted. The project team has conducted a site tour with Tribal representatives and continues coordination to treat all cultural resources with appropriate respect.