KNOW THE FACTS

STOP THE PACHECO DAM PROJECT

Protect Taxpayers and the Environment

THE PACHECO DAM PROJECT WOULD DESTROY EIGHT MILES OF PACHECO CREEK, FRAGMENT CRITICAL WILDLIFE CORRIDORS, AND SHRINK OPEN SPACE.

A completely new and much larger dam is proposed 1.8 miles upstream from the existing Pacheco dam. It would flood irreplaceable, sensitive habitats in the upper watershed; directly impact Henry Coe State Park, Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area, the Nature Conservancy's Romero Ranch conservation easement, fragmenting an important wildlife corridor; and destroy irreplaceable cultural and historic resources.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report admits that the project would cause 13 "significant and unavoidable" environmental impacts and require at least $59.7 million in mitigation. This is a massive and destructive undertaking that would include:

A new 9.5 foot in diameter pipeline that would run over 2 miles

8 years of construction that emits 91.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide

35.2 miles of new roads across remote areas

Eliminating one of the most important remaining stands of California Sycamore Alluvial Woodlands remaining in the state

4.1 miles of new transmission lines

A 17,500 Hp pumping station

Inundate 8.3 miles of creek in exchange for potentially restoring 1.8 miles of creek under current reservoir footprint

Waste about 4,900 acre feet of water each year due to evaporation

Approximately 1,500 acres of open space would be flooded, which would destroy large areas of riparian forest, alluvial woodlands and chaparral habitat, areas where old-growth Sycamore and Valley Oak forests thrive. It would also jeopardize animal species and their habitats, which are either protected through the federal or state Endangered Species Act or are regarded as a special status/rare species that exist within a limited range.

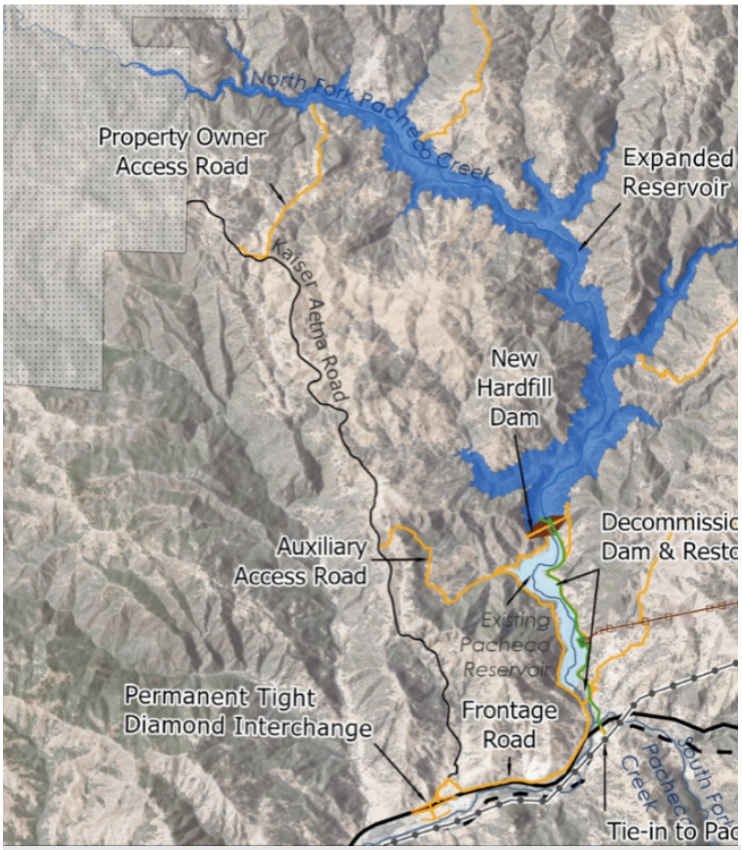
Rather than avoid these impacts on protected species, Valley Water proposes an unlikely scheme that appears to require thousands of acres of compensatory mitigation habitat outside of the county. Valley Water has not provided concrete evidence that such mitigation opportunities exist, or that potentially available mitigation lands would have any long-term habitat value to the species impacted by the project.

Irreplaceable Cultural Resources

The Pacheco Dam project would destroy or damage culturally sensitive areas within what is known as the "Pacheco Complex". This area was extensively settled, and cultural sites in the area are over 3,000 years old. There is a strong potential for presence of undiscovered artifacts. Archaeological surveys have documented at least 32 cultural sites that would be degraded or destroyed by the construction of the Pacheco Dam. For instance, unique "cupule rock art" would be in the inundation area and permanently destroyed. Tribal communities have promoted traditional methods of stewardship that would allow for the restoration of Steelhead habitat while also preserving sensitive sites and artwork. Inundation of these culturally significant sites would preclude understanding of these past inhabitants of the Diablo Range.

HENRY COE PARK: A portion of Henry Coe State Park and other areas preserved for wildlife and open space uses would be lost due to the expansion. This would run counter to efforts to conserve at least 30% of U.S. land and ocean by 2030 to protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change impacts.

There are better alternatives to the project that Valley Water has identified in its Water Supply Master Plan 2040, including groundwater recharge and storage, potable reuse, desalination and other infrastrucure upgrades.



Map from the August 2021 Valley Water presentation to CWC detailing the inundation of the eastern portion of Henry Coe State Park.

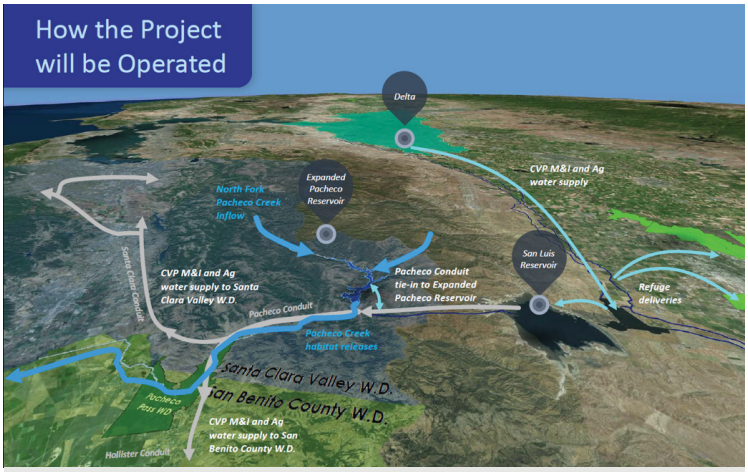


Figure from the Aug 2021 Valley Water presentation to CWC detailing the numerous connections and infrastructure necessary to operate and manage the new dam, which would be primarily filled with water pumped from the Delta.

Pacheco Dam would be filled primarily with water from the already stressed Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

History shows dam development projects have negative impacts on fish populations, and this project is no different. The water in the new reservoir would likely be too warm for native fish, and the imported Delta water may confuse fish attempting to migrate. Any Steelhead fishery improvements would be experimental and unlikely to yield the promised benefits.

The dam's impacts to existing functioning habitat are a terrible tradeoff for this gamble.

Pacheco Creek's annual natural inflow volumes would be less than 50 acre-feet in the driest years, making the dam massively oversized for the watershed. The often meager inflows from Pacheco Creek make it unlikely that a large proportion of the stored water would come from Pacheco Creek. Given the reliance on primarily imported water from the Delta to fill the reservoir. The filling of Pacheco would be subject to the same supply risks as its other Delta water imports.

Environmental costs have not been properly deducted from possible environmental benefits, and public benefits are overstated.

Valley Water has underestimated the project's negative impacts on the environment and failed to disclose those negative impacts as required by the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program. Valley Water Ratepayers would ultimately pay. The high environmental costs of the Pacheco Dam are not justifiable.