October 7, 2014

Dain Anderson, Environmental Services Coordinator
Marin Municipal Water District
220 Nellen Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Protecting Marin Since 1934

Re: MMWD Water Storage Improvement Project (WSIP) EIR

Mr. Anderson:

Marin Conservation League requests that the EIR for the WSIP provide information for the following:

Introduction and Project Description
Along with age and deterioration of current facilities, the project's stated need is based on the district's determination that the "operational and emergency water storage needs required of the … system, based on current water industry standards, are more than double the capacity currently available."

The EIR should describe the background for this conclusion. Do current storage standards differ from past standards? What other factors are involved in calculating needed storage capacity for treated water? These might include state mandates, emergency needs such as emergency fire flows, population projections for the service area, estimates of potable water demand as conservation measures increase and "purple" pipe systems are expanded, in the Ross Valley or elsewhere in the district.

Under Project Objectives, please explain what is meant by: ". . . if extensive new transmission pipeline construction were required in the watershed." Does 'extensive new transmission pipeline construction' denote an alternative to the storage tanks that was rejected due to greater environmental impact?

We are aware that considerable analysis of alternatives that might be done in an EIR was completed in advance of environmental review but it is essential to the public's understanding of the project that some of this information be repeated in this EIR, including the rationale for rejecting some alternatives.

Because the district must maintain critical operations utilizing the old facilities while replacing them with new facilities, the project will be phased over three or four years. The Project Description in the EIR needs to detail the likely phasing of various activities – what is occurring, where, and for how long. The word "temporary" (typically used in an EIR to identify construction impacts of short duration) needs further qualification: weeks, months, years of disturbance? Under environmental topics below, the EIR should quantify the duration of disturbance and the geographic scope of impact to the extent possible.

Aesthetics
Although partially burying the tanks will reduce their visibility, they will nonetheless need screening. The EIR should consider screening or coloring that would mask them from view to the greatest extent possible. What effective methods will the district utilize to avoid vandalism and tagging on the tanks

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and retaining structures, such as happened in Mill Valley, in these highly accessible locations?

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases
In addition to quantifying GHG emissions to satisfy CEQA guidelines, the EIR should report on pollutants, including diesel, particulates, and toxic air contaminants (TACs) from construction and transporting of materials that would adversely affect workers or recreational users on the watershed, and also residents along roadways where trucks with excess materials excavated from the sites will be traveling. An overlay map of the dispersal pattern for substances from the work sites and from loaded trucks traveling onto local roadways through Ross Valley towns could be helpful for the public. What measures would be taken to insure emissions are not a health or nuisance concern for residents and recreational users?

Biological resources
In addition to the spotted owl population, other listed species (flora and fauna), habitat and travel corridors for native non-listed wildlife that could be affected by the project should be identified. A project map should show these populations and describe measures to avoid, relocate or otherwise mitigate for loss of native species, habitat, and travel corridors as necessary.

Any of the following that could be found on site should be identified, based on lists maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: species listed, proposed for listing, or candidates under the federal and state endangered species acts, species listed as fully protected or identified as of Special Concern.

It would be helpful for the public if a map also noted location and identification of trees that are to be removed and plans for their replacement – at a minimum of three to one scale.

In the course of construction-related earth movement, soil containing seeds of weeds and invasive plants, or contaminants from oaks or other hosts infected by Sudden Oak Death, may be uncovered, disbursed and/or transported. What measures will be taken to insure that the project does not spread or create populations of plants that are damaging to native habitat or that create a fire threat?

Hydrology and Water Quality
We note that for each of the three affected sites, the district will prepare Storm Water Pollution Prevention BMPs in the first year of construction. Describe how the project, during construction or in its completed state, could affect creeks and their resident species due to earth movement, sediment flow, altered drainage, stream crossings by construction vehicles, etc., for example at Phoenix Lake, San Anselmo Creek and tributaries such as Carey Camp Creek. Could excavation at either tank site intercept shallow groundwater? What is the plan for eventual discharge of water currently stored in the Pine Mountain Tunnel? Where would it go and how get there? Where would water used for construction be released and how would it be treated prior to dispersion?

The EIR should also describe the current and anticipated flow regimens from Bon Tempe to Five Corners to the Ross Reservoir tanks and subsequent distribution to households and businesses. Will a portion of the stored water be used to replenish distribution tanks in Ross Valley or Fairfax? Doubling the amount of storage when storage deficiencies in the existing system were not apparent to the public raises a concern that a quantity of the water stored in the new facilities might sit

unused for a period of time, requiring treatment, e.g. disinfectant and inducing circulation, to maintain its quality. What measures are proposed to insure that stored water maintains good water quality?

Noise
Noise from construction will occur at the construction sites, staging areas, and along routes taken by trucks and equipment, some through residential neighborhoods. Given the three-to-four-year construction period, noise may be recurring (not 'temporary' as characterized in the Notice of Preparation) and should be evaluated against local general plan standards or ordinances, and measures described as needed to insure compliance with these policies and regulations. Mitigation measures should be identified and incorporated into construction phasing plans and contract documents to ensure that disturbance in inhabited areas is minimized.

Recreation
Describe how construction and subsequent relocation of supply facilities, trail and roadway closures and realignments will affect recreational uses and for how long. For example would Deer Park and Phoenix Lake areas be closed, and for how long? Are alternative road and trail changes possible that would reduce the impacts on recreational users?

Transportation and Traffic
The EIR should fully analyze traffic that would result from the proposed construction, particularly effects on peak hour traffic, such as during commute hours. Would the increased traffic due to construction through Fairfax, San Anselmo, Ross, and the lower Valley be substantial in relation to existing traffic load and street system capacity, in either the number of vehicle trips, or congestion at intersections? This would be reduced if, as suggested, much of the spoils are taken on internal roads to Bullfrog Quarry.

The following information should be provided: volume of materials graded from sites, estimated capacity of Bullfrog Quarry to accommodate excavated materials and surplus volume that will have to be hauled off the watershed, size of trucks and number of truckloads that would be transported, trucking schedules for proposed construction, earth-moving equipment that would be used, and impact of laden trucks on road surfaces through local municipalities.

The proposed storage upgrade is a large project with the potential for significant environmental impacts. In resolving environmental issues related to the construction we hope the Marin Municipal Water District will also use this project to accomplish environmental benefits for the watershed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

Jon Elam

Jon Elam
President