

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

In the Matter of Water Quality Certification for

**PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY'S
RALSTON AFTERBAY INLET AND OUTLET MAINTENANCE PROJECT**

Sources: Ralston Afterbay, Middle Fork American River, Rubicon River

County: Placer

**WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION
FOR FEDERAL PERMIT OR LICENSE**

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Abbreviations

ac-ft	acre-feet
Antidegradation Policy	<i>Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality Waters in California</i>
APMs	Avoidance and Protection Measures
Applicant	Placer County Water Agency
Bay-Delta Plan	<i>Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/ Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary</i>
BMPs	best management practices
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Valley Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
certification	water quality certification
cfs	cubic feet per second
Central Valley Regional Water Board	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Construction General Permit	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities
CYs	cubic yards
Deputy Director	Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights
Dredge or Fill Procedures	<i>State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State</i>
ESA	Endangered Species Act
Executive Officer	Executive Officer of Central Valley Regional Water Board
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Forest Service	United States Forest Service
Hydroelectric Project	Middle Fork American River Project
LLO	Low-level outlet
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NTU	Nephelometric Turbidity Unit
PCWA	Placer County Water Agency
Permittee	Placer County Water Agency
Project	Ralson Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project
Regional Water Boards	Regional Water Quality Control Boards
State Water Board	State Water Resources Control Board
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Water Boards	State Water Board and Regional Water Boards, collectively

1.0 Project Description

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA or Permittee) owns and operates Ralston Afterbay (impounded by the Ralston Afterbay Dam) as part of the Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project (Hydroelectric Project; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. 2079)¹. The Hydroelectric Project, including Ralston Afterbay, is located in Placer County approximately 45 miles northeast of Georgetown, California on approximately 3,268 acres of federal lands managed by the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) in the Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests.

Ralston Afterbay Dam is an 89-foot-high by 560-foot-long rock-fill dam that impounds the Middle Fork American River, the Rubicon River, and water diverted from the Middle Fork-Ralston Tunnel to form Ralston Afterbay. Ralston Afterbay Dam discharges flow through four outlets: (1) a 30-inch flow release pipe (155 cubic feet per second (cfs) maximum discharge capacity) that releases flow below the dam to the Middle Fork American River; (2) a 72-inch low-level outlet (LLO) pipe (1,132 cfs maximum discharge capacity) that releases flow below the dam to the Middle Fork American River; (3) a 232-foot-wide controlled spillway (171,200 cfs maximum capacity) located on the right abutment of the dam; and (4) the Ralston-Oxbow Tunnel Intake that releases up to 1,088 cfs of water to the Ralston-Oxbow Tunnel that supplies water to the Oxbow Powerhouse Penstock and Oxbow Powerhouse. Project maps can be found in Attachment A: Project Overview Maps.

In September 2022, the Mosquito Fire burned approximately 76,788 acres of land including the forest area surrounding Ralston Afterbay, resulting in sediment accumulation in front of Ralston Afterbay Dam and Ralston-Oxbow Tunnel Intake. Sediment accumulation affects safe operations of the Ralston Afterbay Dam LLO, the associated slide gate, and Oxbow Powerhouse.

The Ralson Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project (Project) consists of mechanical dredging of approximately 40,000 cubic yards (CYs) of accumulated sediment from Ralston Afterbay in the vicinity of the Ralston Afterbay Dam and the Ralston-Oxbow Tunnel Intake, as well as replacement of the existing LLO trash rack to facilitate safe operations. Generally, work associated with the Project includes:

- Lowering 3-5 barges into Ralston Afterbay via a crane from a temporary staging area alongside Ralston Afterbay Dam (Staging Area 2) for equipment and excavator access.
- Trimming vegetation as needed to accommodate crane and truck passage along the temporary staging area and Ralston Afterbay Private Boat Ramp Road.
- Mechanical dredging via clamshell or bucket excavator mounted on a floating barge. Dredged material will be offloaded to disposal barges and then trucks traveling on the Ralston Afterbay Private Boat Ramp Road for offsite disposal in the El Dorado-Big Reservoir Lake Sediment Disposal Area. A turbidity curtain will be used during all dredging activities to surround areas to be dredged, disposal barges, and the access ramp to prevent the discharge of sediment into the surrounding waters. If it is determined that dredged sediment will need to be

¹ FERC issued the new license for the Hydroelectric Project on June 8, 2020.

dried prior to transport, a 0.4-acre upland area in a previously disturbed overflow parking area (Staging Area 1) will be excavated to create a temporary 10-foot-deep detention basin. It is anticipated that the Project would require approximately 3,000 haul trips to remove the estimated 40,000 CYs of dredged material.

- Replacement of the Ralston LLO trash rack following dredging activities and during PCWA's fall maintenance outage. LLO replacement includes removal of the existing trash rack in sections by crane, installation of the new trash rack in sections by crane, and fixing the new trash rack via steel anchor bolts and underwater welding.

During Project sediment removal, the Ralston Afterbay water surface elevation will be maintained at an elevation no lower than the bottom of the spill gates (1,149 feet) to provide a refuge pool for reservoir fish. Oxbow Powerhouse will be shut down when the reservoir's water surface elevation drops below 1,167 feet. Minimum flows below Ralston Afterbay Dam required by the Hydroelectric Project's FERC license will be maintained by releases through the spill gates. The Project is anticipated to take place in one work season and require approximately 3-4 months.

2.0 Water Rights

Table A lists the Project-related water rights maintained by PCWA².

Table A. PCWA's Water Rights Related to the Project

Application ID/ Permit ID (Priority Date)	Sources	Purposes of Use	Diversion and Storage Details	Places of Use (Powerhouses)
A018084/ 013855 (4/7/1958)	• Duncan Creek, Middle Fork American River, North Fork Long Canyon, Rubicon River, South Fork Long Canyon	Power, Recreation	• Middle Fork American River: 1,225 cfs at Ralston Afterbay	• French Meadows • Middle Fork • Ralston • Oxbow
A018086/ 013857 (4/8/1958)	• Duncan Creek, Middle Fork American River, North Fork Long Canyon, Rubicon River, South Fork Long Canyon	Power, Recreation	• Middle Fork American River: 705 cfs at Ralston Afterbay	• French Meadows • Middle Fork • Ralston • Oxbow

² Information is from the State Water Resources Control Board's California Water Accounting, Tracking, and Reporting System. The table shows water right details that pertain to Ralston Afterbay, the Ralston Afterbay Dam, and Oxbow Powerhouse.

3.0 Regulatory Authority

3.1 Water Quality Certification and Related Authorities

The federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 et seq.) was enacted “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.” (33 U.S.C. § 1251(a).) The Clean Water Act recognizes, preserves, and protects “the primary responsibilities and rights of States to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution [and] to plan the development and use (including restoration, preservation, and enhancement) of land and water resource...” (33 U.S.C. § 1251(b).) In addition, section 101 of the Clean Water Act requires federal agencies to “co-operate with State and local agencies to develop comprehensive solutions to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution in concert with programs for managing water resources.” (33 U.S.C. § 1251(g).)

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) requires any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity which may result in a discharge into waters of the United States to provide the licensing or permitting federal agency with certification that the project will comply with specified provisions of the Clean Water Act, including water quality standards and implementation plans promulgated pursuant to section 303 of the Clean Water Act. (33 U.S.C. § 1313.) Clean Water Act section 401 directs the agency responsible for certification to prescribe effluent limitations, monitoring requirements, and other conditions necessary to ensure the project will comply with the Clean Water Act and with “any other appropriate requirement of State law.” (33 U.S.C. § 1341(d).) These certification conditions shall become conditions of any federal license or permit for the project. (*Ibid.*)

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is the state agency responsible for Clean Water Act section 401 certification in California. (Wat. Code, § 13160.) The State Water Board has delegated authority to act on applications for certification to the Executive Director of the State Water Board. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3838, subd. (a).)

Water Code section 13383 provides that the State Water Board may “establish monitoring, inspection, entry, reporting, and recordkeeping requirements” and obtain “other information as may be reasonably required” for activities subject to certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act. For activities that involve the diversion of water for beneficial use, the State Water Board delegated this authority to the Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director), as provided for in State Water Board Resolution No. 2012-0029. (State Water Board 2012.) In the *Redelegation of Authorities* memorandum issued by the Deputy Director on April 20, 2023, this authority is redelegated to the Assistant Deputy Directors of the Division of Water Rights. (State Water Board 2023a.)

3.1.1 Procedure, Application, and Noticing

Project implementation requires a non-reporting Nationwide Permit 3(a) from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water

Act, a USACE permit requires PCWA to obtain a water quality certification (certification) from the State Water Board.

On September 24, 2025, PCWA filed a certification application with the State Water Board under section 401 of the Clean Water Act and supplemented it via email on July 14, 2026, to include implementation details for the turbidity curtain. On October 24, 2025, State Water Board staff provided public notice of the application, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3858, by posting information describing the Project on the State Water Board's website. No comments were received in response to this notice.

On August 21, 2026, State Water Board staff forwarded the Project certification application and a draft certification to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Regional Water Board) (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3855, subd. (b)(2)(B)). No comments were received.

3.2 Water Quality Control Plans and Related Authorities

The State Water Board's certification for the Project must ensure compliance with applicable water quality standards in the Central Valley Regional Water Board's *Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento River Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin* (Central Valley Basin Plan) (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019) and the *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary* (Bay-Delta Plan). (State Water Board 2018³ and 2023b) and any amendments thereto.

Water quality control plans designate the beneficial uses of water to be protected (such as municipal and domestic supply, industry, agricultural, and fish and wildlife), water quality objectives for the reasonable protection of the beneficial uses and the prevention of nuisance, and a program of implementation to achieve the water quality objectives. (Wat. Code, §§ 13241, 13050, subds. (h), (j).) The beneficial uses, together with the water quality objectives contained in the water quality control plans and applicable state and federal antidegradation requirements, constitute California's water quality standards for purposes of the Clean Water Act. In issuing certification for a project, the State Water Board must ensure consistency with the designated beneficial uses of waters affected by the project, the water quality objectives developed to protect those uses, and anti-degradation requirements. (*PUD No. 1 of Jefferson County v. Washington Dept. of Ecology* (1994) 511 U.S. 700, 714-719.)

The nine California Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) have primary responsibility for the formulation and adoption of water quality control plans for their respective regions, subject to State Water Board and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approval, as appropriate. (Wat. Code, § 13240 et seq.) As noted above, the State Water Board may also adopt water quality

³ Based on the Project's limited scope, duration, and distance from the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary, impacts to water quality objectives listed for waterbodies in the Bay-Delta Plan are not anticipated to occur from Project activities.

control plans, which will supersede regional water quality control plans for the same waters to the extent of any conflict. (Wat. Code, § 13170.) The State Water Board and Regional Water Boards (collectively Water Boards) adopt these plans pursuant to their authorities under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Wat. Code, § 13000 et seq.) and the federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1313).

3.2.1 Central Valley Basin Plan

The Central Valley Regional Water Board adopted, and the State Water Board and USEPA approved, the [Central Valley Basin Plan](#)⁴. The Central Valley Basin Plan designates beneficial uses of water to be protected along with the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses. The Central Valley Basin Plan specifies that the beneficial uses of any specifically identified waterbody generally apply to its tributary streams. The Central Valley Basin Plan identifies existing beneficial uses for the Middle Fork American River, sources to Folsom Lake as: municipal and domestic supply, irrigation, stock watering, power, contact recreation, canoeing and rafting, other non-contact recreation, cold freshwater habitat, cold freshwater spawning, and wildlife habitat. Warm freshwater habitat is identified as a potential beneficial use.

3.2.2 Antidegradation Policy

The State Water Board's Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality Waters in California ([Antidegradation Policy](#))⁵ (State Water Board 1968) requires that the quality of existing high-quality water be maintained unless any change will be consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the state, will not unreasonably impact present or anticipated future beneficial uses of such water, and will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in water quality control plans or policies. The Antidegradation Policy further requires best practicable treatment or control of the discharge necessary to assure that pollution or nuisance will not occur and the highest water quality consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the state will be maintained. The state Antidegradation Policy incorporates the federal Antidegradation Policy, which requires "[e]xisting instream water uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect the existing uses shall be maintained and protected." (40 C.F.R. § 131.12 (a)(1).)

⁴ Central Valley Basin Plan available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_201902.pdf. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

⁵ State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16 and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/1968/rs68_016.pdf. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

3.2.3 Construction General Permit

Coverage under the State Water Board's *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities* ([Construction General Permit](#))⁶ (State Water Board 2022) is required for activities that disturb one or more acres of soil, or that disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres. Construction activities subject to the Construction General Permit include clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground such as stockpiling or excavation, but do not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. Coverage is required pursuant to Clean Water Act sections 301 and 402 which prohibit certain discharges of stormwater containing pollutants except in compliance with an NPDES permit. (33 U.S.C. §§ 1311, 1342(p); 40 C.F.R. pts. 122, 123, and 124.). PCWA must comply with the Construction General Permit in implementing the Project.

3.3 State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Materials to Water of the State

The *State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* ([Dredge or Fill Procedures](#))⁷ (State Water Board 2019 and 2021⁸) provide California's definition of wetland, wetland delineation procedures, and procedures for submitting applications for activities that could result in discharges of dredged or fill material to waters of the state. The Dredge or Fill Procedures ensure that State Water Board regulatory activities will result in no net loss of wetland quantity, quality, or permanence, consistent with California Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 28, sections 16200-16201. PCWA must comply with the Dredge or Fill Procedures when conducting dredge or fill activities that may impact waters of the state, including wetlands.

3.4 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Listing

The *2024 California Integrated Report* (Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List / 305(b) Report) (2024 Integrated Report) (State Water Board 2024b) was partially approved and partially disapproved by USEPA on December 13, 2024. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires total maximum daily loads to be developed for impaired waterbodies. Total maximum daily loads are control programs that define the maximum amount of a

⁶ State Water Board Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002, as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ, Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction/general_permit_reissuance.html. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

⁷ The Dredge or Fill Procedures and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/wrapp.html. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

⁸ Resolution No. 2021-0012 is available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/wrapp/rs2021_0012.pdf. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

pollutant that a waterbody can receive without exceeding water quality standards and establish waste load allocations and load allocations for point and nonpoint sources of pollution, respectively. The 2024 Integrated Report does not include any impairments for Ralston Afterbay or the section of the Middle Fork American River.

4.0 California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to discretionary projects that may cause a direct or indirect physical change in the environment. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) When proposing to undertake or approve a discretionary project, state agencies must comply with the procedural and substantive requirements of CEQA. For the Project, PCWA is the lead agency for the purposes of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.) The State Water Board is a responsible agency under CEQA.

PCWA determined that the activity is categorically exempt from the requirements to prepare environmental documents under California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301, Class 1(b) (Existing Facilities), and section 15304, Class 4(c) (Previous Disturbance), and Class 4(g) (Minor Alterations to Land). On August 27, 2025, PCWA filed a Notice of Exemption for the Project with the State Clearinghouse and the Placer County Clerk. (PCWA 2025b). Under recent changes to Public Resources Code, section 21080.1, this determination is final and conclusive on responsible agencies, including the State Water Board. (See Senate Bill 131 (2025-2026), filed June 30, 2025.)

5.0 Rationale for Water Quality Certification Conditions

This section of the certification explains that the grant of certification, as conditioned, is warranted and why the conditions in Section 7.0 are necessary to ensure that the Project will comply with water quality requirements. This section also includes, as necessary, citations to federal, state, or tribal laws that authorize the conditions and sets forth citations to applicable regulatory authority. Section 3.0 also sets forth citations to applicable regulatory authority. The explanation and citations should be evaluated in the context of the certification as a whole, but the certification conditions are set forth only in Section 7.0.

As explained in this section, the conditions in this certification are generally required pursuant to the Central Valley Basin Plan and other applicable plans and policies adopted by the Water Boards, as described in Section 3.0, Regulatory Authority.

The Dredge or Fill Procedures, adopted pursuant to Water Code sections 13140 and 13170, authorize approval of dredge or fill projects subject to satisfaction of specified requirements.

California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3830 et seq., set forth state regulations pertaining to certifications. In particular, section 3856 sets forth information that must be included in certification requests, and section 3860 sets forth standard conditions that shall be included in all certification actions.

As noted in Section 3.1, Clean Water Act section 401(d) authorizes state agencies responsible for certification to require monitoring to ensure the project will comply with the Clean Water Act and with “any other appropriate requirement of State law.” (33 U.S.C. § 1341(d).) Water Code sections 13267 and 13383 authorize the Water Boards to establish monitoring and reporting requirements for persons discharging or proposing to discharge waste to navigable waters. Water Code section 13165 authorizes the State Water Board to require a state or local agency to investigate and report on technical factors involved in water quality control, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall bear a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports. Water Code section 1051 additionally authorizes the State Water Board to investigate waters diverted for beneficial use. Moreover, this certification ensures continued monitoring, reporting, and assessment of water quality for Project activities that may impact waters of the state.

Fish and Game Code section 5937 requires any owner⁹ of a dam to allow sufficient water to pass over, around, or through the dam to keep in good condition any fish that may be planted or exist downstream. Section 5937 and requirements to maintain or monitor flow or other water quality characteristics as required to meet section 5937 are appropriate conditions of state law necessary to protect fishery beneficial uses.

The State Water Board has broad authority to prevent waste and unreasonable use pursuant to article X, section 2 of the California Constitution and Water Code sections 100 and 275. In addition, the State Water Board has both the authority and the duty to protect public trust uses whenever feasible under the public trust doctrine. (*National Audubon Society v. Superior Court* (1983) 33 Cal.3d 419, 446.) Under California’s public trust doctrine, public trust uses include, but are not limited to, navigation, fishing, recreation, environmental values, and fish and wildlife habitat. (Id. at pp. 434-435.)

In general, the code citations, plans, and policies that support issuance of this certification that are described in Section 3.0 are not duplicated in this section. The conditions in this certification were developed to ensure compliance with water quality standards and water quality requirements established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the federal Clean Water Act, including requirements in applicable water quality control plans, and other appropriate requirements of state law. The conditions in Section 7.0 of this certification are necessary to protect the beneficial uses of waters of the state identified in water quality control plans, prevent degradation of water quality, and help ensure compliance with state and federal water quality requirements and other applicable requirements of state law. When preparing the conditions in this certification, State Water Board staff reviewed and considered the following information:

- PCWA’s September 24, 2025, Project certification application as supplemented by email on July 14, 2026, that includes Avoidance and Protection Measures (APMs) and Forest Service best management practices (BMPs) listed in Attachment 7 of the certification application (PCWA 2025a) (PCWA 2026);

⁹ The Fish and Game Code defines “owner” to include “the United States . . . , the State, a person, political subdivision, or district (other than fish and game district) owning, controlling, or operating a dam or pipe.” (Fish & G. Code, § 5900, subd. (c).)

- PCWA's Notice of Exemption for the Project (PCWA 2025b);
- Existing and potential beneficial uses, associated water quality objectives, and implementation measures and programs described in the Central Valley Basin Plan (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019);
- Applicable water quality information, permits, policies, objectives, implementation measures, and programs (e.g., Dredge or Fill Procedures, Construction General Permit, etc.);
- Existing water quality conditions;
- Project-related controllable factors (e.g., timing of Project activities, discharges from Project facilities, controllable flow releases, etc.); and
- Other information in the record.

This certification is issued pursuant to the final Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Rule (88 Fed. Reg. 66,558-66,666 (September 27, 2023) [amending 40 C.F.R. Parts 121, 122, 124]) that went into effect on November 27, 2023 (2023 Rule), but as it pertains to documentation of conditions also generally complies with the previous USEPA Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification Rule, 85 Fed. Reg. 42,210 (July 13, 2020) (2020 Rule) that was in effect for portions of 2020-2023. Under section 401 of the Clean Water Act, when an activity requiring a federal permit or license "may result in any discharge into the navigable waters," the applicant is required to obtain a certification that states the activity will comply with applicable water quality standards and that also sets forth any "limitations" and "monitoring requirements" necessary to assure that the "applicant" will comply with water quality standards, other provisions of the Clean Water Act, and "with any other appropriate requirement of State law." (33 U.S.C. § 1341(a) & (d).) Certification is required for such activity as a whole, not merely for its point source discharges to waters of the United States. (PUD No. 1, supra, 511 U.S. at pp. 711-712.) As explained in this certification, each certification condition is authorized by applicable state and federal law and is necessary to ensure compliance with such laws. This paragraph is hereby incorporated as part of the explanatory statement for each condition of this certification.

Deputy Director approval of changes to plans and/or measures required by certification conditions allows the State Water Board to exercise its authority granted by the Clean Water Act to protect water quality at an appropriate time in the future. Section 401 anticipates that certifications will not only set limits on construction and/or operations but will also monitor construction and/or operations on an ongoing basis. (33 U.S.C. § 1341 (d).) Activities not included in the certification application and plans and measures that have not yet been created or submitted to the State Water Board cannot be specifically conditioned at the time of certification issuance. Ensuring flexibility for adaptive management via delegation of authority to the Deputy Director in these situations is necessary to ensure the Project is operated in a manner that is protective of water quality.

5.1 Rationale for Condition 1: Project Activities and Flows

As described in Section 5.0, this certification is granted based on the application and supporting information submitted, in accordance with the State Water Board's regulations and subject to requirements of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Condition 1 requires PCWA to implement the Project as described in its

September 24, 2025, certification application (PCWA 2025a), as updated via email on July 14, 2026 (PCWA 2026), and as modified by the conditions of this certification. Condition 1 will help ensure that the Project is implemented in a manner that protects water quality objectives and avoids unreasonable impacts to beneficial uses. Any changes to the Project description that are inconsistent with the Project application and supplemental information provided to the State Water Board prior to certification issuance could impact the findings, conclusions, and conditions of the certification and may necessitate the filing of a new certification application, as well as trigger additional environmental review.

Additionally, Condition 1 requires PCWA to comply with the flow requirements of the Hydroelectric Project's FERC license. Reduced flows could potentially impact water quality and associated beneficial uses of the Middle Fork American River from sources to Folsom Lake, as identified in the Central Valley Basin Plan. Beneficial uses that may be impacted by reduced flow or changes to the Project include but are not limited to: municipal and domestic supply; irrigation; stock watering; power; contact recreation; canoeing and rafting; other non-contact recreation; cold freshwater habitat; cold freshwater spawning; and wildlife habitat. Further, Fish and Game Code section 5937 requires any owner of a dam to allow sufficient water to pass over, around, or through the dam to keep in good condition any fish that may be planted or exist downstream.

5.2 Rationale for Condition 2: Biological Resource, Aquatic Habitat, and Wetland Protections

Project activities, such as dredging, site access, and staging, have the potential to adversely impact biological resources, aquatic habitat, and wetlands. PCWA's certification application (PCWA 2025a) includes correspondence from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service detailing threatened or endangered species that may occur in the vicinity of the Project. The correspondence concludes that no critical habitats overlap the Project area, but that the Project area does include wetlands and aquatic resource habitat for the following species:

- Red Hills soaproot (*Chlorogalum grandiflorum*; California Rare Plant Rank 1B.2);
- Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*; protected under Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, a Forest Service sensitive species, listed under California Endangered Species Act (ESA) as endangered, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) fully protected species);
- Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*; a Forest Service sensitive species, listed under California ESA as threatened);
- Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*; a Forest Service sensitive species, CDFW Species of Special Concern);
- Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*; proposed for listing under the federal ESA as threatened, a Forest Service sensitive species, listed under California ESA as a species of special concern);
- Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*; listed under California ESA as a species of special concern);
- American goshawk (*Astur atricapillus*; a Forest Service sensitive species, listed under California ESA as a species of special concern);

- Black swift (*Cypseloides niger*; a federally listed Bird of Conservation Concern, listed under California ESA as a species of special concern); and
- California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*; proposed for listing under the federal ESA as threatened and a Bird of Conservation Concern, a Forest Service sensitive species, listed under California ESA as a species of special concern).

APM and Forest Service BMPs for biological resources protections included in Attachment 7 of PCWA's certification application (PCWA 2025a) include worker environmental training (APM TRAIN 2: Environmental Training Program) and protections for riparian habitat (APM BIO 1: General Biological Resources Measures and APM BIO 3: Biological Clearance Survey).

Condition 2 requires PCWA implement biological resource, aquatic habitat, and wetland protection measures identified in PCWA's APMs and BMPs as modified by this certification and additional measures to prevent or minimize impacts to aquatic species and their habitat. Condition 2 includes provisions for compliance with the Dredge or Fill Procedures, and Water Code Division 7, Chapter 28, sections 16200-16201, and other avoidance and minimization measures to limit or avoid impacts to waters of the state.

Existing and potential beneficial uses of the Middle Fork American River from sources to Folsom Lake that may be impacted by Project activities include cold freshwater habitat, cold freshwater spawning, wildlife habitat, warm freshwater habitat.

5.3 Rationale for Condition 3: Water Quality Monitoring

The Project involves mechanical dredging, excavation, grading, and spoils disposal. Such activities could result in impacts to water quality and beneficial uses. Condition 3 requires PCWA to monitor temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and visual pollutants (e.g., oils, greases, fuels, turbidity plumes) and report any discharges that might violate water quality objectives. This is consistent with the Water Boards' authority to investigate waters of the state, including for quality, and to require necessary monitoring and reporting pursuant to Water Code sections 13267 and 13383. Condition 3 is required pursuant to Water Code section 13264, which prohibits any discharge that is not specifically authorized in this certification.

These monitoring requirements are necessary to ensure that the Project does not impact water quality or beneficial uses. Existing and potential beneficial uses for the Middle Fork American River from sources to Folsom Lake that may be impacted by Project-related water quality discharges include municipal and domestic supply, irrigation, stock watering, contact recreation, canoeing and rafting, other non-contact recreation, cold freshwater habitat, cold freshwater spawning, wildlife habitat, and warm freshwater habitat.

5.4 Rationale for Condition 4: Erosion and Sediment Control

Erosion and sedimentation can contribute to degradation of waters of the state; therefore, it is necessary to implement actions to eliminate or limit such discharges to protect water quality and associated beneficial uses. Project activities that have the potential to cause erosion and increased turbidity in Ralston Afterbay and the Middle

Fork American River include: mechanical dredging; transport of dredged material to staging and/or disposal areas; haul traffic through Ralston Afterbay Private Boat Ramp Road; vegetation trimming along Ralston Afterbay Private Boat Ramp Road and the Ralston Afterbay Private Boat Ramp; and replacement of the LLO trash rack. Increases in erosion and sedimentation can violate water quality objectives (e.g., turbidity) and adversely impact beneficial uses. Condition 4 requires PCWA to implement measures to protect water quality associated with Project activities with the potential to cause erosion or result in sediment discharges.

Existing and potential beneficial uses for the Middle Fork American River from sources to Folsom Lake that may be impacted by Project-related erosion and sedimentation include municipal and domestic supply, irrigation, stock watering, contact recreation, canoeing and rafting, other non-contact recreation, cold freshwater habitat, cold freshwater spawning, wildlife habitat, and warm freshwater habitat.

5.5 Rationale for Condition 5: Hazardous Materials Management

The Project involves use of heavy equipment that requires refueling and servicing. Site management requires implementation of BMPs to prevent, minimize, and/or clean up spills, including spills from construction equipment. Fuels and lubricants associated with the use of mechanized equipment have the potential to result in toxic discharges to surface water in violation of water quality standards, including the toxicity and floating material water quality objectives. Secondary containment around hazardous materials storage sites helps ensure that any leaks or spills of hazardous materials do not result in a discharge to waters. Condition 5 is required pursuant to Water Code section 13264, which prohibits any discharge that is not specifically authorized in this certification.

The Central Valley Basin Plan includes narrative water quality objectives for oil, grease, and other hazardous materials: “Waters shall not contain oils, greases, waxes, or other materials in concentrations that cause nuisance, result in a visible film or coating on the surface of the water or on objects in the water, or otherwise adversely affect beneficial uses.” (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019.) Condition 5 requires implementation of hazardous materials management measures to prevent hazardous material spills into waterways, including containment criteria pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 27, section 20320.

Condition 5 also requires PCWA to monitor for and report any discharges that might violate water quality objectives. This is consistent with the Water Boards’ authority to investigate waters of the state, including for quality, and to require necessary monitoring and reporting pursuant to Water Code sections 13267 and 13383.

Existing and potential beneficial uses for Middle Fork American River from sources to Folsom Lake that may be impacted by Project-related releases of hazardous materials include municipal and domestic supply, irrigation, stock watering, contact recreation, canoeing and rafting, other non-contact recreation, cold freshwater habitat, cold freshwater spawning, wildlife habitat, and warm freshwater habitat.

5.6 Rationale for Condition 6: Reporting

Condition 6 requires PCWA to notify Central Valley Regional Water Board and State Water Board staff prior to implementing Project activities and submit a Completion Report to document compliance with the certification requirements. The Completion Report will inform the Deputy Director of compliance with the certification conditions, and thereby compliance with water quality objectives and protection of beneficial uses.

Reporting requirements of Condition 6 are consistent with the Water Boards' authority to investigate waters of the state, including for quality, and to require necessary monitoring and reporting pursuant to Water Code sections 13267 and 13383. The reporting requirements of Condition 6 are necessary to ensure the Project does not impact water quality and associated beneficial uses during Project implementation.

Rationale for Conditions 7 through 27

This certification imposes additional conditions regarding Project approvals, monitoring, enforcement, and potential future revisions.

Condition 7 is necessary to comply with Water Code section 13167 and Conditions 8 through 11 contain important clarifications concerning the scope and legal effect of this certification, as well as other legal requirements that may apply to the Project.

Monitoring, reporting, and assessment actions, and the information developed through such actions, must be readable, shared, and coordinated with other appropriate entities, and accessible to ensure that an activity complies with water quality requirements. Water Code section 13167 requires the Water Boards to ensure that monitoring data and assessment information are available in a single location and that the information is presented in a manner easily understandable by the public. To fulfill this legislative mandate, Condition 7 requires electronic data submittal in a compatible format with existing system specifications. Compliance with this condition enhances the accessibility of data and transparency of regulatory actions. This allows regulatory agencies and the public to better assess compliance and understand water quality trends or data anomalies by compiling data and making it readily available.

Pursuant to the California ESA (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) and federal ESA (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), Condition 8 of the certification does not authorize any act which results in the taking of a threatened, endangered, or candidate species.

An applicant for certification is required to identify other licenses, permits, and agreements in the application. In the event an applicant for certification needs authorization from the state or federal authorities, California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3856, subdivision (e), requires that the applicant provide copies of "any final and signed federal, state, and local licenses, permits, and agreements (or copies of the draft documents, if not finalized) that will be required for any actions associated with the activity. If no final or draft document is available, a list of all remaining agency regulatory approvals being sought shall be included."

Water Code section 13160, subdivision (b)(1), allows the State Water Board to issue a certification when there is "reasonable assurance that an activity of any person subject

to the jurisdiction of the [State Water Board] will comply with applicable requirements” of state and federal law. To help ensure the integrity of the certification process and its focus on the protection of water quality and compliance with other applicable state requirements, Condition 9 serves to notify applicants that there may be additional applicable federal, state, or local laws or ordinances with which they must comply.

Because agency organization and authorities change over time, Condition 10 provides direction for continuity of oversight in the event an agency’s authority or responsibility is transferred to or subsumed by another agency.

The State Water Board is responsible for the water rights, water quality, and drinking water functions of the California state government. (Wat. Code, § 174.) Certain certifications involve an appropriation of water subject to part 2 of division 2 of the Water Code or the diversion of water for certain beneficial uses. (See, e.g., Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 3855, subd. (b)(1)(A).) Condition 11 explains the State Water Board’s issuance of this certification is not adjudicating or approving the validity of water rights that may be related to the Project. It also recognizes the State Water Board’s authority, independent of its water quality authority, to prevent unauthorized or threatened unauthorized diversions of water. This helps to ensure that an applicant for a federal license or permit for any activity which may result in a discharge to navigable waters understands that, except as specified in the certification, the certification does not constitute or excuse the applicant from obtaining any other State Water Board approvals required for the activity.

Conditions 12 through 14 are necessary to assure that any Project activities authorized under the certification will comply with water quality requirements. These conditions are included to comply with California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, which sets forth conditions that must be included in all certifications.

Condition 12 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (a). This condition places the permittee on notice that the certification action may be modified or revoked following administrative or judicial review. Condition 13 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all water quality certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (b). This condition clarifies the scope of the certification’s application and ensures that any applicant for a federal license or permit, which may result in a discharge into navigable waters, is subject to the appropriate State certification. Condition 14 is a standard condition that “shall be included as conditions of all water quality certification actions” pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3860, subdivision (c). This fee requirement condition is also required pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3833, subdivision (b), which requires payment of fees by project proponents applying for certification. Fees are essential to support the Water Boards certification program, which includes the development of certifications and related inspections to ensure the protection of water quality and beneficial uses that may be impacted by a project.

Conditions 15 through 27 are necessary to ensure that the Project operates to meet water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law, or that

adjustments are made to ensure continued compliance with water quality standards in light of new information, changes to the Project, or changes to the standards themselves.

This certification requires monitoring, reporting, and analysis as important elements to ensure that Project activities will comply with state and federal water quality requirements and other appropriate requirements of state law.

Conditions 15, 16, and 17 provide for extensions of time to comply with requirements, prevention or remedy of violations, and notification of changed conditions to ensure compliance and prevent violations of water quality standards. In the event of non-compliance, modified conditions may be necessary to return the Project to compliance and prevent violation of water quality standards.

Conditions 18, 19, and 20 require the applicant to comply with the Central Valley Basin Plan and amendments thereto, and ensure all reasonable measures to protect water quality and beneficial uses in accordance with plans adopted pursuant to state and federal water laws.

Water Code section 13267 authorizes the State Water Board to require any person or entity who has discharged, discharges, or is suspected of having discharged or discharging, or who proposes to discharge waste to furnish, under penalty of perjury, technical or monitoring reports when necessary to investigate the quality of any waters of the state. Condition 21 requires such reports that are necessary to ensure compliance with water quality standards.

Condition 22 relates to site access requirements and is authorized pursuant to the Water Boards' authority to investigate the quality of any waters of the State, including specific site access authorized under Water Code sections 13267 and 13383. Site access is needed to ensure compliance with the certification and associated protection of water quality and beneficial uses.

Condition 23 requires site personnel and agencies to be familiar with the content of the certification and availability of the document at the Project's sites. This condition is required to ensure that site personnel are familiar with the conditions needed to protect water quality and any authorized discharge will comply with the terms and conditions of this certification, which requires compliance with water quality objectives and protection of beneficial uses adopted or approved under sections 13170 or 13245 of the Water Code, and with other appropriate requirements of state law.

Condition 24 requires that PCWA use analytical methods approved by California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, when available, to ensure that such analyses are done in a consistent manner.

Condition 25 provides that the State Water Board will provide notice and an opportunity to be heard in exercising its authority to add or modify certification conditions.

Condition 26 ensures the Permittee complies with the Dredge or Fill Procedures and the Project's activities result in no net loss of wetland quantity, quality, or permanence, consistent with Water Code sections 16200-16201.

In the event that any provision of this certification is found invalid, Condition 27 ensures that all other provisions will remain effective and water quality will still be protected. (Wat. Code, § 13160.)

6.0 Conclusion

The State Water Board finds that, with the conditions and limitations imposed by this certification, the Project will be protective of state and federal water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law.

7.0 Water Quality Certification Conditions

ACCORDINGLY, BASED ON ITS INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RECORD, THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD CERTIFIES that implementation of the Ralson Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project (Project) by the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA or Permittee) will comply with sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act, and with applicable provisions of State law, under the following terms and conditions.

CONDITION 1: Project Activities and Flows

Unless otherwise changed by conditions of this water quality certification (certification), or approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Deputy Director of the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director), the Permittee shall implement the Project as described in PCWA's September 24, 2025 certification application (PCWA 2025a), which includes PCWA's proposed avoidance and protection measures (APMs) and the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) best management practices (BMPs) listed in Attachment 7 of the Project certification application (PCWA 2025a), and as updated via email on July 14, 2026 (PCWA 2026). The Permittee shall not dredge more than the 40,000 cubic yards proposed in PCWA's September 24, 2025 certification application unless approved by the Deputy Director.

Additionally, throughout Project implementation, unless otherwise approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Deputy Director, the Permittee shall comply with all flow requirements below Ralston Afterbay Dam as required by the FERC license for the Middle Fork American River Project (FERC Project No. 2079).

CONDITION 2: Biological Resource, Aquatic Habitat, and Wetland Protections

Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, the Permittee shall implement the aquatic biological resource APMs and BMPs described in Attachment 7 of PCWA's certification application (PCWA 2025a), as updated via email on July 14, 2026, and as modified by this condition, including additional measures listed below to ensure protection of beneficial uses.

2(A) Biological Resource and Aquatic Habitat Protections

- **Worker Environmental Training Program:** Complementary with APM TRAIN 2, the Permittee shall retain a qualified biologist¹⁰ to develop and conduct mandatory worker environmental training about special-status species¹¹ and their associated habitat that could be encountered during Project activities. At a minimum, the worker environmental training shall include the following:

¹⁰ A qualified biologist is a biologist who is knowledgeable of and experienced with special-status species and their habitats that may be in the Project area.

¹¹ Special-status species include those protected by the United States or state of California as endangered or threatened, CDFW Species of Special Concern, CDFW Fully Protected species, or Forest Service sensitive species.

- A review of the California and federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) and the consequences of noncompliance.
- A review of the photographs, presence, life history, and habitat requirements of all special-status species, including any threatened or endangered species, that are known to occur or may occur in the Project areas.
- A review of APMs and BMPs that shall be implemented to minimize the potential for effects to these species and habitats.
- Actions that shall be taken and reporting procedures that shall be performed if special-status species are encountered.
- A review of applicable requirements of the Project certification to ensure personnel implement measures to protect water quality and beneficial uses.

The Worker Environmental Training shall be conducted prior to beginning Project activities and reviewed as appropriate throughout Project implementation. The Worker Environmental Training shall be provided to any new personnel prior to those personnel conducting on-site work.

- **General Biological Resource Protections:**

- Complementary with APM BIO 3, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-Project survey within 30 days prior to equipment mobilization to identify locations to be protected (e.g., riparian habitat, raptor nesting areas, special-status plant populations) with fencing or other high visibility materials. Fencing (if applicable) shall be installed with a gap between the ground and the bottom of the fence so that small animals do not become trapped inside the fenced area(s). The fencing or other high visibility materials shall be installed before Project activities are initiated, maintained throughout the Project, and removed when the Project is complete. Tightly woven fiber netting, plastic mono-filament, or similar materials shall not be used for fencing or erosion control measures.
- Work crews shall be restricted to designated and clearly defined work areas and access routes. Staging of equipment and material sites shall be restricted to designated areas. Vehicle access across streams and wetlands shall be limited to existing roads and designated crossings.
- A qualified biologist shall conduct regular inspections of the Project area to ensure biological resource protection measures are properly implemented. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work in the immediate vicinity if a special-status species may be harmed by Project activities. Upon implementation of the qualified biologist's measures to ensure special-status species protection, work in the immediate vicinity may resume if approved by the qualified biologist.
- The Permittee shall avoid temporary and permanent impacts to waters of the state to the maximum extent possible.
- To the extent possible, laydown and staging areas shall be located in previously developed or disturbed areas.
- The Permittee shall use existing ramps/roads or temporarily established routes to access the Project area. Riparian vegetation shall be avoided to the extent possible. If not possible, removal of riparian vegetation shall

- occur between August – March to avoid the riparian-nesting bird breeding season. (Consistent with APM BIO 2.)
- Visible mud, plants, fish, or animals shall be cleaned from watercraft and barges before entering and leaving the Project area. All watercraft, barges, and equipment that will be used in or near water shall be inspected for the presence of aquatic invasive species prior to entry into the water. All water shall be drained from equipment prior to entering or leaving the Project area. Equipment shall be dried prior to launching into and after leaving Ralston Afterbay (Consistent with APM AI 1).
- Any new discovery of aquatic invasive species shall be reported to the Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The Permittee shall include the source of the infestation, if known, and as applicable, measures for Deputy Director review and consideration of approval to prevent spreading the infestation. (Consistent with APM DISC 1.). The Deputy Director may require changes as part of any approval. The Permittee shall implement the measures upon Deputy Director approval and consistent with any other requirements.
- Aquatic invasive species observations and Deputy Director approved treatment measures shall be recorded, reported to the qualified biologist, and included in the Completion Report (Condition 6).

2(B) Wetland Protections

The Project is anticipated to have 2.133 acres of temporary impacts and no permanent impacts to Ralston Afterbay reservoir habitat. The Permittee shall notify and receive approval from the Deputy Director for any increase to these estimated temporary and permanent impacts.

Any permanent impacts shall be compensated for at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio consistent with the *State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* (Dredge or Fill Procedures) (State Water Board 2019 and 2021) and California Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 28, sections 16200-16201, and any amendments thereto. The Permittee shall request and obtain Deputy Director approval for any compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts and provide the Deputy Director with documentation of compliance with this mitigation provision for any permanent impacts as part of the Completion Report (Condition 6).

CONDITION 3: Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring shall be performed for the Project as described in this condition unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director. The Permittee shall monitor water quality during in-water and water adjacent work with the potential to result in a discharge to surface waters. At a minimum water quality monitoring shall be performed during installation and removal of the turbidity curtain, loading and unloading of barges into and out of Ralston Afterbay, dredging of Ralston Afterbay, any drying of sediment in the detention basin, and any other activities within or adjacent to Ralston Afterbay and the Middle Fork American River with the potential to impact water quality.

3(A) Water Quality Parameters

At a minimum, the Permittee shall monitor for turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and construction-related visible pollutants (e.g., oils, greases, fuels, turbidity plumes).

3(B) Monitoring Frequencies

Monitoring for turbidity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen shall be conducted in 15-minute or more frequent intervals using an automated sensor system. Visual monitoring for visible pollutants shall be conducted continuously throughout the active Project work area.

Monitoring shall be conducted both prior to and during turbidity curtain installation, movement within the Project area, and removal. The turbidity curtain shall not be moved and/or removed until turbidity measurements inside the turbidity curtain indicate that curtain movement and/or removal will not violate the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin* (Central Valley Basin Plan) (Central Valley Regional Water Board 2019 and any amendments thereto).

3(C) Monitoring Locations

The Permittee shall monitor turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and temperature at the following locations:

- Within Ralston Afterbay at a location representative of impoundment water quality unaffected by Project activities, at least 300 feet away from the turbidity curtain.
- Within Ralston Afterbay outside the turbidity curtain and no further than 150 feet away from the turbidity curtain.
- Middle Fork American River, no more than 300 feet downstream of Oxbow Powerhouse.

The Permittee shall take a global positioning system point and photograph for each proposed water quality monitoring location and provide them to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Regional Board) and State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff at least one week prior to starting water quality monitoring. The Deputy Director may require the Permittee to use other or additional locations if the submitted locations are inadequate.

3(D) Water Quality Objectives

The Permittee shall ensure that Project activities comply with Basin Plan water quality objectives. The current water quality objectives for turbidity, pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and visible pollutants are provided below for reference and apply unless incorrectly referenced or updated by an amendment to the Central Valley Basin Plan:

Turbidity. The Permittee shall not increase turbidity to levels that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses. Increases in turbidity attributable to controllable water quality factors shall not exceed the following limits:

- Where natural turbidity is less than 1 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU), controllable factors shall not cause downstream turbidity to exceed 2 NTUs.
- Where natural turbidity is between 1 and 5 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 1 NTU.
- Where natural turbidity is between 5 and 50 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 20 percent.
- Where natural turbidity is between 50 and 100 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 10 NTUs.
- Where natural turbidity is greater than 100 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 10 percent.

Consistent with the Central Valley Basin Plan, an exception to the above turbidity limits may be considered for a dredging operation that is reasonably anticipated to cause increased turbidity, provided that the Permittee has fully implemented all practicable BMPs to minimize turbidity and turbidity levels nevertheless exceed the applicable limitations. Upon request of the Permittee, a zone of dilution, may be considered for review and consideration of approval by the Deputy Director. Deputy Director review and consideration of approval will consider if the Permittee has implemented all feasible actions to control Project-related turbidity.

Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, in determining compliance with the above limits, an appropriate averaging period, not to exceed 24 hours, may be applied, provided that beneficial uses will be fully protected.

Temperature. The Permittee shall not allow temperature to rise more than 5° Fahrenheit above natural receiving water temperature.

Dissolved Oxygen. The Permittee shall not allow dissolved oxygen to fall below 7.0 milligrams per liter.

Visible Pollutants. Waters shall not contain oils, greases, waxes, suspended sediment material, or other materials in concentrations that cause nuisance, result in a visible film or coating on the surface of the water or on objects in the water, or otherwise adversely affect beneficial uses.

3(E) Water Quality Monitoring Reporting

As part of the Completion Report (Condition 6), the Permittee shall submit water quality monitoring results and related information. Monitoring results and related information shall include: (1) monitoring results including raw data; (2) a description of monitoring methods, including equipment, frequency of data collection, quality assurance/quality control protocols implemented; and (3) description of any water quality exceedances or information necessary to understand the results.

3(F) Exceedances of Water Quality Objectives

If the Project results in an exceedance of any water quality objective described in the Central Valley Basin Plan, the Permittee shall notify the Deputy Director and the Central Valley Regional Water Board Executive Officer (Executive Officer) promptly, and in no

case more than 24 hours following an exceedance. The notice shall include the cause of the exceedance, measures taken to correct the exceedance (if appropriate), and measures the Permittee will implement to prevent future exceedance (if appropriate). Regardless of when such notification occurs, activities associated with the exceedance shall cease immediately upon detection. Work activities may only resume after corrective actions have been implemented, water quality has met the Central Valley Basin Plan water quality objective, and the Deputy Director has provided approval to proceed. The Deputy Director may require additional actions to help prevent similar exceedances in the future.

3(G) Water Quality Monitoring Adaptive Management

Based on monitoring results and environmental conditions, the Permittee may request changes to water quality monitoring requirements in this condition. Changes may be requested by the Permittee following consultation with State Water Board and Central Valley Regional Water Board staff. The Permittee shall submit the request to the Deputy Director for review and consideration of approval at least two weeks prior to the requested start date to implement the proposed changes. The request shall include the proposed changes and supporting rationale. The Deputy Director may require additional changes as part of any approval. The Permittee shall not implement the changes unless approved by the Deputy Director.

CONDITION 4: Erosion and Sediment Control

Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, the Permittee shall implement the erosion and sediment control and road construction APMs and BMPs described in Attachment 7 of PCWA's certification application (PCWA 2025a), as updated via email on July 14, 2026, as modified by this condition, including the additional measures listed below. In accordance with its Project Description, the Permittee shall enroll and comply with the *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit)*¹² (State Water Board 2022). The following measures shall be implemented prior to, during, and after any ground-disturbing activities or any other Project activities that could result in erosion or sediment discharges to surface waters:

- Ground disturbance shall not exceed the minimum amount necessary to complete work and shall be confined to Ralston Afterbay Dam, Ralston–Oxbow Tunnel Intake, and previously disturbed or developed upland areas to the extent feasible.
- The turbidity curtain, BMPs, and other control measures for erosion, excessive sedimentation, and sources of turbidity shall be implemented and in place prior to

¹² State Water Board Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002, as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ, Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, and any amendments thereto. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction/general_permit_reissuance.html. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

the commencement of, during, and, as applicable, after any Project activities that could result in erosion or sediment discharges to surface water.

- The turbidity curtain shall be sized appropriately to encompass the work area and ensure water quality and beneficial use protections.
- The Permittee shall implement measures to minimize the number of fish and wildlife trapped in the area enclosed by the turbidity curtain during installation, operation, and relocation/removal.
- If the CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement contains provisions for fish protection related to the turbidity curtain use, the more stringent requirements between this certification and those of the Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement shall apply.
- The turbidity curtain shall be inspected regularly for holes, snags, or other issues, and any needed repairs shall be made promptly and described in the Completion Report required by Condition 6.
- The turbidity curtain shall only be moved or removed if water quality monitoring (Condition 3) indicates that turbidity curtain relocation and/or removal will not result in an exceedance of a Central Valley Basin Plan turbidity water quality objective.
- The Permittee shall report, in the Completion Report (Condition 6), if water from saturated dredged material removed as part of the Project was discharged outside of the turbidity curtain during Project dredging, transportation, or stockpiling activities.
- Unless otherwise modified by the Deputy Director, the Permittee shall ensure the transfer of dredged material from the transport barge(s) to the hauler trucks occurs in the area enclosed by the turbidity curtain. The Permittee shall report, in the Completion Report (Condition 6), if the transfer of dredged materials off of a barge occurred outside the area enclosed by the turbidity curtain, and provide detailed information regarding why the deviation occurred and what measures were implemented to ensure no discharge or impacts to beneficial uses.
- The Permittee shall inspect hauler trucks before, during, and after transport of dredged material. If a hauler truck is observed leaking dredged material, the Permittee shall take appropriate measures to prevent the discharge of dredged material to waters of the state, including repairing or replacing the leaking truck before continuing transport, as practicable. Any dredged material discharged from a hauler truck shall be promptly contained and cleaned up, as applicable. The Permittee shall ensure that leaking water draining from saturated dredged material at the dredging and loading area is discharged into the area enclosed by the turbidity curtain. The Permittee shall report any discharge of turbid water or dredged material from a hauler truck outside of the turbidity curtain. The report shall be made as part of the Completion Report (Condition 6) and include: (a) the location; (b) estimated amount of observed leakage of dredged material; (c) what steps were taken to clean up the leakage of dredged material; and (d) what steps, if any, the Permittee will implement moving forward to avoid such discharges from the trucks.
- Stockpiles (including potential sediment drying locations) shall be located outside of wetlands, surface waters, and riparian habitat. Dredged or excavated material shall be stored at least 100 feet from any waters of the state and in a manner that does not result in runoff discharges to surface waters. Stockpiles and dredged

materials shall be regularly inspected to ensure no water runoff or sediment discharge to surface waters is occurring. If discharge is observed, the Permittee shall immediately implement appropriate BMPs (including but not limited to turbidity curtains, berms, and erosion control measures) to eliminate discharges and notify the Deputy Director within 24 hours of identifying the discharge. The notification shall include: (1) when the discharge was identified; (2) actions, including any ongoing actions, implemented by the Permittee to eliminate the discharge; (3) proposed future actions the Permittee will implement as part of the Project to prevent additional discharges. The Deputy Director may require additional information, monitoring, or actions to address ongoing and/or future discharges or impacts resulting from such discharges.

- If Project-related work has not been completed at the end of the work season, the work area shall be prepared for overwintering, and all construction equipment shall be removed from the site.
- No vehicles or equipment shall drive off-road through wetlands or riparian areas. For any surface water crossings, the Permittee shall monitor water quality and implement appropriate BMPs to ensure water quality objectives are met.
- The Permittee shall inspect all access points for sediment track out and include in the Completion Report (Condition 6) any additional measures implemented to minimize sediment track out.
- The Permittee shall conduct a final inspection to ensure that cleanup and stabilization activities are satisfactorily completed following Project completion. The Permittee shall include the final inspection findings in the Completion Report (Condition 6).
- Complementary to BMP-1, disturbed areas (e.g., Staging Area 1) shall be restored to pre-Project conditions including, as appropriate, use of native seeding and/or plantings and sloping to prevent future runoff and erosion.
- Certified weed-free hay, mulch, straw, or rice shall be used for erosion control, as necessary.
- The Permittee shall conduct work during the dry season. The Permittee shall operate equipment when soil compaction, displacement, erosion, and sediment runoff will be minimal. The Permittee shall avoid equipment operations on unstable, wet, or easily compacted soils and on steep slopes unless operation can be conducted without causing excessive rutting, soil puddling, and runoff of sediments into surface waters. Throughout Project implementation the Permittee shall evaluate site conditions to assess and address changing conditions. (Consistent with BMP 1)
- If 0.5 inch or more of precipitation is forecasted within a 24-hour period during Project activities, all stockpiles shall be covered and surrounded with appropriate sediment control measures (e.g., berms) to prevent sediment runoff.
- Fill shall be properly compacted to avoid and/or minimize erosion. (Consistent with BMP 1.)
- The Permittee shall implement suitable drainage measures, including necessary erosion and sedimentation control measures, during any earthwork at Staging Area 1 to ensure any discharge to surface waters does not exceed the Central Valley Basin Plan water quality objectives. (Consistent with BMP-2.)
- The Permittee shall implement mechanical treatments on the contour of sloping ground to avoid or minimize water concentration and subsequent accelerated

erosion. To reduce gully and sheet erosion and associated sedimentation, mechanical equipment shall be restricted to slopes generally less than 35 percent. Within meadow habitats, mechanical treatments shall be minimized on moderate slopes (15-30 percent) and restricted to slopes less than 30 percent. (Consistent with BMP-2.)

- Barriers shall be installed, as applicable, at all laydown sites to ensure construction equipment, workers, and runoff do not enter surface waters.

CONDITION 5: Hazardous Materials Management

Unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Director, the Permittee shall implement the hazardous materials management APMs and BMPs described in Attachment 7 of PCWA's certification application (PCWA 2025a), as modified by this condition, including the additional measures listed below. These measures shall be implemented prior to the commencement of, during, and after any Project activity that involves the storage, use, or management of hazardous materials.

5(A) Training

- Project-related personnel, including contractors and subcontractors, shall be trained in proper hazardous material management and shall be able to access safety data sheets for all hazardous materials in the Project area. Additionally, all staff shall receive training on the appropriate work practices necessary to comply with applicable environmental laws and regulations, including hazardous materials management.

5(B) Vehicles and Equipment

- All power equipment and vehicles shall be free of petroleum residue, kept in good working order, and inspected each day for leaks prior to use. Leaks shall be repaired immediately in an area at least 100 feet away from waterbodies.
- Equipment shall be staged overnight in areas with secondary containment or with other suitable barriers to prevent accidental leakage of fuel, oil, or other liquid hazardous materials from soaking into the soil or being discharged to surface waters.
- Commercial washing facilities that have proper wastewater treatment systems shall be used whenever possible. All equipment shall be thoroughly cleaned of dirt, grease, etc., prior to entering the Project area and shall be inspected to ensure that it is in proper functioning condition. All suspect hoses and hydraulic lines shall be replaced prior to entering the Tahoe National Forest. (Consistent with BMP-2.)
- With the exception of barges and equipment on barges, vehicle refueling shall occur at least 100 feet away from any surface waters and in an area with secondary containment measures to prevent discharges. Drip pans and/or absorbent pads shall be used during equipment fueling. Vehicle refueling shall be performed by trained personnel.
- Refueling of equipment located on the barges shall have local secondary containment to protect against spills or leaks and refueling shall be monitored to identify and prevent any potential surface water discharges.

5(C) Storage of Hazardous Materials

- All hazardous materials, including petroleum-based materials, shall be contained in appropriate spill-proof containers and/or have secondary containment and be stored in designated areas at least 100 feet away from surface waters, and shall not be stored in or near a floodplain, wetland, or riparian habitat.
- Bulk fuel storage tanks shall be double-walled or placed in secondary containment areas.
- Hazardous materials and waste generated onsite, such as grease cartridges and oil-soaked absorbent materials, shall be placed in proper containers, labeled appropriately, and transported from the job site to an authorized hazardous waste consolidation site or appropriate landfill for proper disposal in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. (Consistent with BMP-2.)
- The Permittee shall use suitable measures around vehicle service, storage, and refueling areas, chemical storage and use areas, and waste dumps to fully contain spills and avoid or minimize soil contamination and seepage to groundwater. Temporary fuel tanks shall have adequate local containment consisting of berms and plastic sheeting to protect against accidental spills or leaks. (Consistent with BMP-2.)
- All containment structures shall comply with the California Code of Regulations, title 27, section 20320.

5(D) Hazardous Materials Release

- Solvents, adhesives, fuels, dirt, gasoline, and other hazardous materials shall not be rinsed or washed into Ralston Afterbay or other aquatic habitats, wetlands, or riparian habitat.
- During underwater welding activities, welding slag, spent electrodes, metal fragments, grinding residue, and other debris shall be recovered to the maximum extent practicable.
- If coated steel is identified and disturbed during underwater welding activities, paint or coating debris shall be prevented from entering Ralston Afterbay to the maximum extent practicable.
- If 0.5 inch or more precipitation is forecast within a 24-hour period during Project activities, the site shall be secured to avoid discharges until the precipitation event is over.
- The Permittee shall create and implement a chemical spill prevention and contingency plan (in accordance with Forest Service Handbook 2109.14, chapter 60 and 40 C.F.R. § 112) that includes actions to be taken and/or containment features to be installed to prevent contamination of water resulting from accidental spills of hazardous materials. The plan shall include notification lists, persons responsible for cleanup, requirements for notification, and guidelines for spill containment and cleanup. A copy of the chemical spill prevention and contingency plan shall be retained onsite and shall be reviewed by all personnel and contractors involved in the Project. (Consistent with BMP-2.)
 - The Permittee shall report spills and initiate suitable cleanup action in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. If an accidental release of sediment, fuel, oil, or other hazardous material

occurs, immediate containment and cleanup shall be implemented, and appropriate agencies shall be notified. (Consistent with BMP-2.)

- If Project-related hazardous materials are released with the potential to impact surface waters, the Permittee shall immediately cease any activities associated with the Project that resulted in the release and implement measures to limit and clean up the release. The Permittee shall notify the Deputy Director and the Executive Officer promptly, and in no case more than 24 hours, following the release. The notice shall include the type and quantity of material released, cause of the release, corrective measures taken, and measures the Permittee will implement to prevent future releases. The Deputy Director may require additional actions to help prevent similar releases in the future or to address impacts associated with the reported release. Work activities may only resume after corrective actions have been implemented, if applicable, and the Deputy Director has provided approval to proceed.
 - Any spills shall be cleaned up immediately using absorbent material or, if necessary, by constructing berms, and shall not be buried or washed with water. Contaminated soil shall be excavated, contained, and transported to an approved disposal site. All media affected by a spill, including soils, shall be cleaned up and disposed of offsite in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Spill response kits shall be maintained at all active work areas. The Permittee shall ensure that hazardous spill kits are adequately stocked with necessary supplies and are maintained in accessible locations. Spill kits shall be required in all Permittee and contractor vehicles on site and at locations where hazardous materials are stored. (Consistent with BMP-2.) These kits shall be clearly marked and include oil-absorbent material and tarps to contain and control any minor releases.

CONDITION 6: Reporting

6(A) Initial Report and Updates to Project Schedule

At least five days prior to starting Project activities, the Permittee shall notify the Central Valley Regional Water Board and State Water Board staff that Project activities are anticipated to begin and provide an anticipated schedule for the Project. Throughout Project implementation the Permittee shall provide staff with updates to any major changes to the Project schedule within five business days of when PCWA becomes aware of the schedule change.

6(B) Completion Report

Within 60 days of Project completion, the Permittee shall provide the Deputy Director with a Completion Report. The Completion Report shall comprehensively summarize:

- Project activities performed.
- Compliance with each condition of this certification and details of any failure to meet the certification requirements.
- Summary of initial or site preparation activities that include any relocated or fenced-off aquatic species or sensitive habitat.

- Final inspection information with details and documentation (e.g., photos) to demonstrate that Project area cleanup was satisfactorily completed.
- Details of any environmental protection measure inadequacies found during Project implementation.
- Details of Project-related adverse impacts to beneficial uses, if applicable.

Upon request from the Deputy Director or State Water Board staff, the Permittee shall provide additional information or meet with staff to discuss the Completion Report.

The Deputy Director may require the Permittee to implement corrective actions in response to the information provided in the Completion Report, new information in the record, or as part of approval of additional measures to protect water quality.

CONDITIONS 7 – 27

CONDITION 7. Unless otherwise specified in this certification or at the request of the Deputy Director, data and/or reports shall be submitted electronically in a format accepted by the State Water Board to facilitate the incorporation of this information into public reports and the State Water Board’s water quality database systems in compliance with California Water Code section 13167.

CONDITION 8. This certification does not authorize any act which results in the take of a threatened, endangered, or candidate species or any act which is now prohibited, or becomes prohibited in the future, under either the California ESA (Fish & G. Code, §§ 2050 – 2097) or the federal ESA (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 – 1544). If a “take” will result from any act authorized under this certification or water rights held by the Permittee, the Permittee must obtain authorization for the take prior to any construction or operation of the portion of the Project that may result in a take. The Permittee is responsible for meeting all requirements of the applicable ESA for the Project authorized under this certification.

CONDITION 9. This certification shall not be construed as replacement or substitution for any necessary federal, state, and local approvals. The Permittee is responsible for compliance with all applicable federal, state, or local laws or ordinances and shall obtain authorization from applicable regulatory agencies prior to the commencement of Project activities.

CONDITION 10. Any requirement in this certification that refers to an agency whose authorities and responsibilities are transferred to or subsumed by another state or federal agency, will apply equally to the successor agency.

CONDITION 11. Nothing in this certification shall be construed as State Water Board approval of the validity of any water rights, including pre-1914 or riparian claims. The State Water Board has separate authority under the Water Code to investigate and take enforcement action, if necessary, to prevent any unauthorized or threatened unauthorized diversions of water.

CONDITION 12. This certification is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including but not limited to review and amendment pursuant to Water Code section 13330 and California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28, article 6 (commencing with section 3867).

CONDITION 13. This certification is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a FERC license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent application for certification was filed pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 3855, subdivision (b), and that application for certification specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.

CONDITION 14. This certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required under California Code of Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 28.

CONDITION 15. Notwithstanding any specific provision of this certification, any plan or report developed as a condition of this certification requires review and approval by the Deputy Director, unless otherwise specified. The State Water Board's approval authority, including authority delegated to the Deputy Director or others, includes the authority to withhold approval or to require changes of a proposal, plan, or report prior to approval. The State Water Board may take enforcement action if the Permittee fails to provide or implement a required item in a timely manner. Notwithstanding any other condition of this certification, if a time extension is needed to submit an item for Deputy Director approval, the Permittee shall submit a written request for the extension, with justification, to the designated approver no later than 15 days prior to the deadline. The Permittee shall not implement any plan, proposal, or report until after receiving State Water Board approval and any other necessary regulatory approvals.

CONDITION 16. In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, including if monitoring results indicate that Project activities could violate water quality objectives or impair beneficial uses, the violation or threatened violation is subject to any remedies, penalties, process, or sanctions as provided for under applicable state or federal law. For the purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any state law authorizing remedies, penalties, process, or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to ensure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this certification. In response to any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, the Permittee shall, by a deadline required by the Deputy Director, submit a plan that documents why the violation occurred and steps the Permittee will implement to address the violation. The Permittee shall implement the plan upon approval from the Deputy Director, and the Deputy Director may require changes as part of any approval to ensure the protection of water quality and beneficial uses or compliance with water quality control plans, policies, or other appropriate requirements of state law.

CONDITION 17. The Permittee shall submit any change to the Project, including operations, facilities, technology changes or upgrades, or methodology, which could have a significant or material effect on the findings, conclusions, or conditions of this certification, to the State Water Board for prior review and written approval, unless

otherwise specified. The State Water Board shall determine significance and may require consultation with state and/or federal agencies. If the State Water Board is not notified of a change to the Project, it will be considered a violation of this certification. If such a change would also require submission to FERC or the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the change must first be submitted and approved by the State Water Board unless otherwise delegated in this certification or other State Water Board approval.

CONDITION 18. This certification is contingent on compliance with all applicable requirements of the Central Valley Basin Plan and any amendments thereto.

CONDITION 19. Reports and plans submitted by the Permittee for approval under this certification shall consider the effects of the Project in relation to compliance with all applicable water quality control plans and policies and, as necessary, propose updates to the Project to ensure protection of water quality and beneficial uses and compliance with other appropriate requirements of state law. The Deputy Director may identify the need for, and set a deadline for, submittal of a report and/or plan focused on additional assessment of potential impacts to water quality and beneficial uses that may have changed from the baseline assumptions used to develop the conditions of the certification, along with recommended changes to address the new or changed water quality control plan or policy beneficial uses and/or water quality objectives. The Deputy Director may include recommendations regarding potential actions that shall be considered by the Permittee in this report and/or plan to ensure ongoing protection of water quality and beneficial uses and compliance with other applicable requirements of state law. The Permittee shall implement the plan upon approval by the Deputy Director and any other required approvals, and the Deputy Director may require changes as part of any approval.

CONDITION 20. Unless otherwise specified by conditions in this certification, Project activities shall be conducted in a manner consistent with all water quality standards and implementation plans adopted or approved pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and section 303 of the Clean Water Act. The Permittee shall take all reasonable measures to protect the beneficial uses of waters of the state, including the Middle Fork American River, Ralston Afterbay, and the Rubicon River.

CONDITION 21. In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this certification, the State Water Board or Central Valley Regional Water Board may require the holder of any federal permit or license subject to this certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the State Water Board deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall bear a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports. (Wat. Code, §§ 1051, 13165, 13267, and 13383.)

CONDITION 22. Upon request, a construction schedule shall be provided to the Deputy Director. The Permittee shall provide State Water Board and Central Valley Regional Water Board staff access to Project sites to document compliance with this certification.

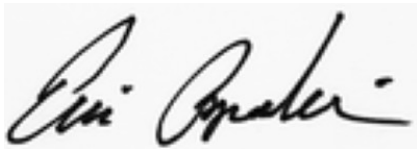
CONDITION 23. A copy of this certification shall be provided to all contractors and subcontractors conducting Project-related work, and copies shall remain in their possession at the Project site. The Permittee shall be responsible for work conducted by its contractor, subcontractors, or other persons conducting Project-related work.

CONDITION 24. The Permittee shall use analytical methods approved by California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, where such methods are available. Samples that require laboratory analysis shall be analyzed by Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program-certified laboratories.

CONDITION 25. The State Water Board shall provide notice and an opportunity to be heard in exercising its authority to add to or modify the conditions of this certification.

CONDITION 26 The Permittee shall ensure no net loss of wetland or riparian habitat functions and is responsible for compliance with the Dredge or Fill Procedures (State Water Board 2019b and 2021) and any amendments thereto, and Water Code sections 16200-16201.

CONDITION 27. Certification that the Project will be protective of water quality and beneficial uses in compliance with state and federal water quality standards and other appropriate requirements of state law is dependent upon the conditions and limitations imposed by this certification; however, to ensure the validity of this certification upon any challenge that is not addressed by another condition of this certification, the provisions of this certification are severable. If any provision of this certification is found invalid, affects the validity of the certification, or would result in a determination that the State Water Board has waived its section 401 certification authority for the Project, the remainder of this certification shall not be affected. Upon remand from determination on administrative or judicial review that a provision of this certification is invalid or affects the validity of the certification the State Water Board may adopt an alternative term that addresses the water quality issue while avoiding the invalidity.



Eric Oppenheimer
Executive Director

September 23, 2026
Date

8.0 References

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- State Water Board. 2023b. San Francisco Bay/Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta) Program - Update of the Bay-Delta Plan: Delta Outflows, Sacramento River and Delta Tributary Inflows, Cold Water Habitat and Interior Delta Flows Webpage. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/comp_review.html. Accessed July 28, 2026.
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- State Water Board. 2024b. *California Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 303(d) and 305(b)*. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2024-integrated-report.html. Accessed on August 21, 2026.

**RALSON AFTERBAY INLET AND OUTLET MAINTENANCE PROJECT
WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

**ATTACHMENT A:
PROJECT OVERVIEW MAPS**

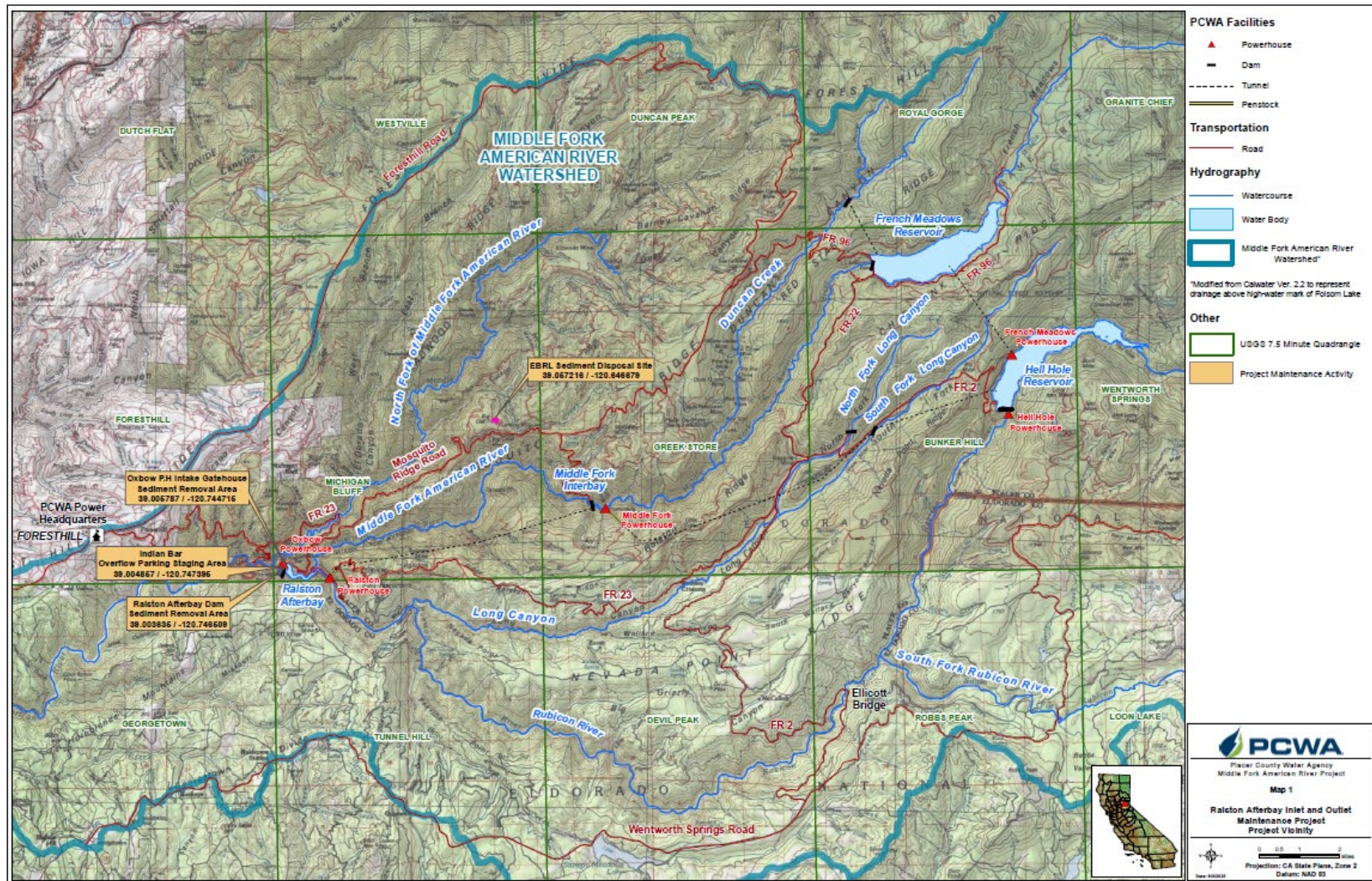


Figure 1. Middle Fork American River Project Area and Facilities

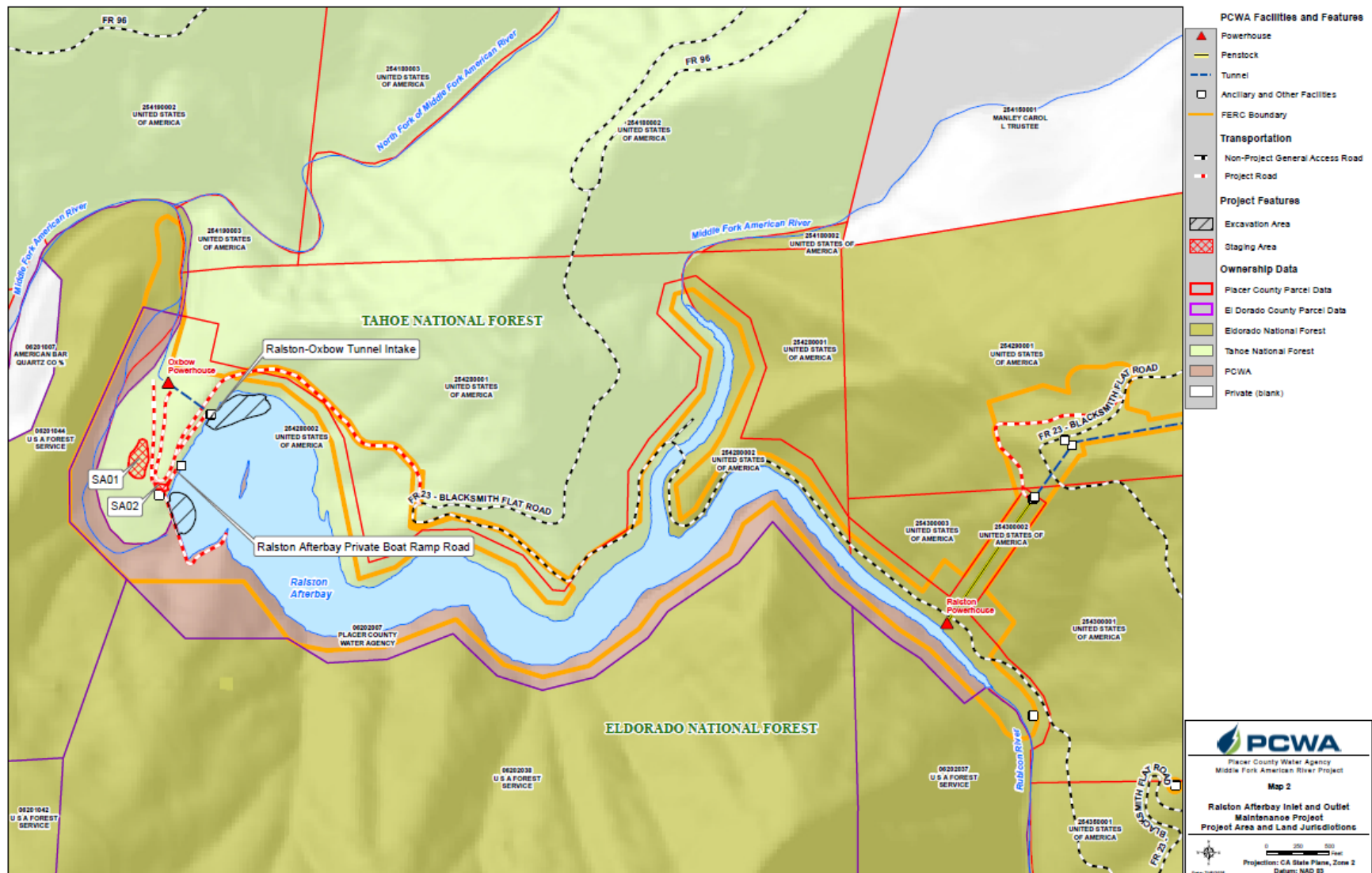


Figure 2. Ralson Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project Area and Land Jurisdictions

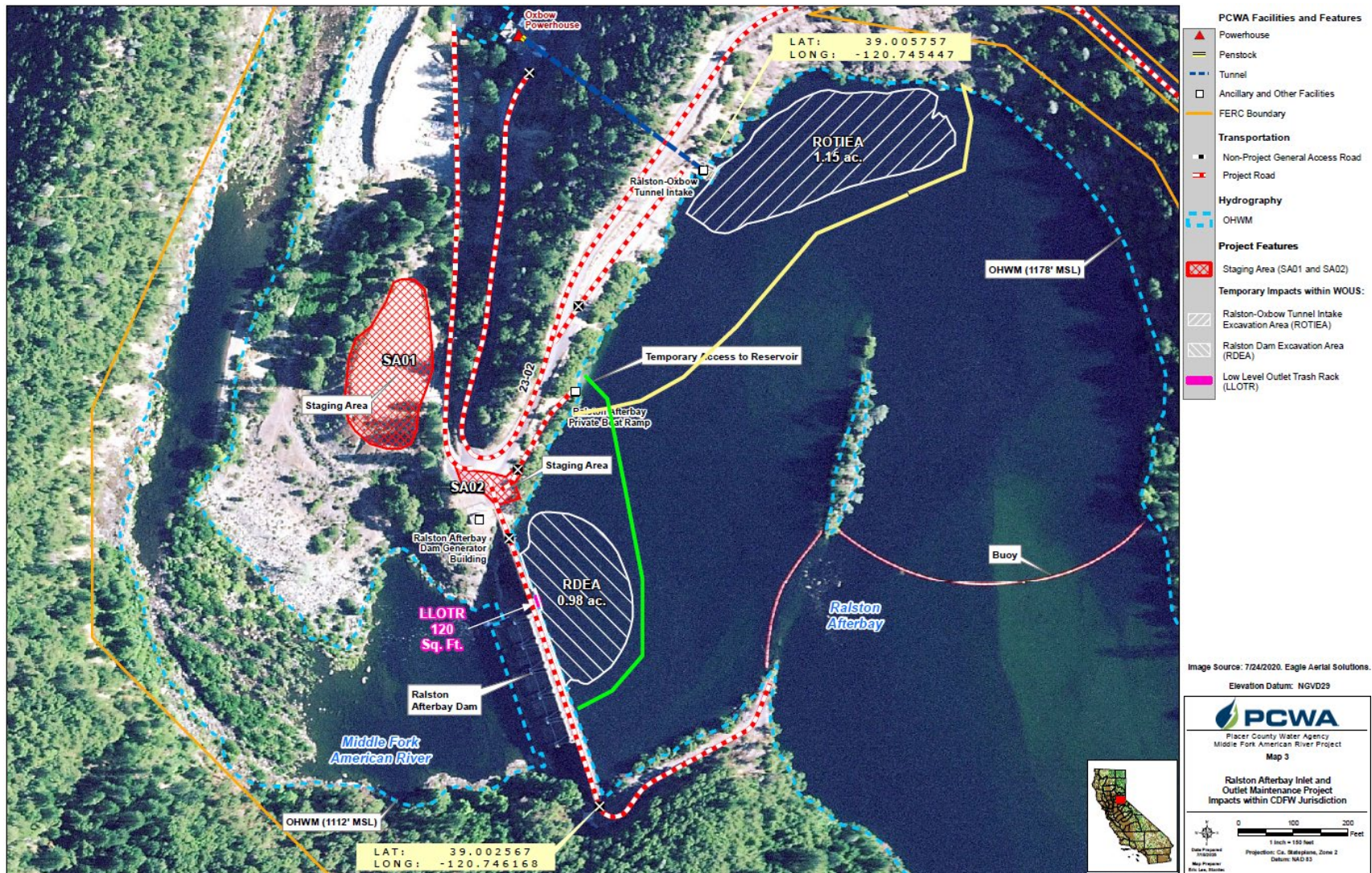
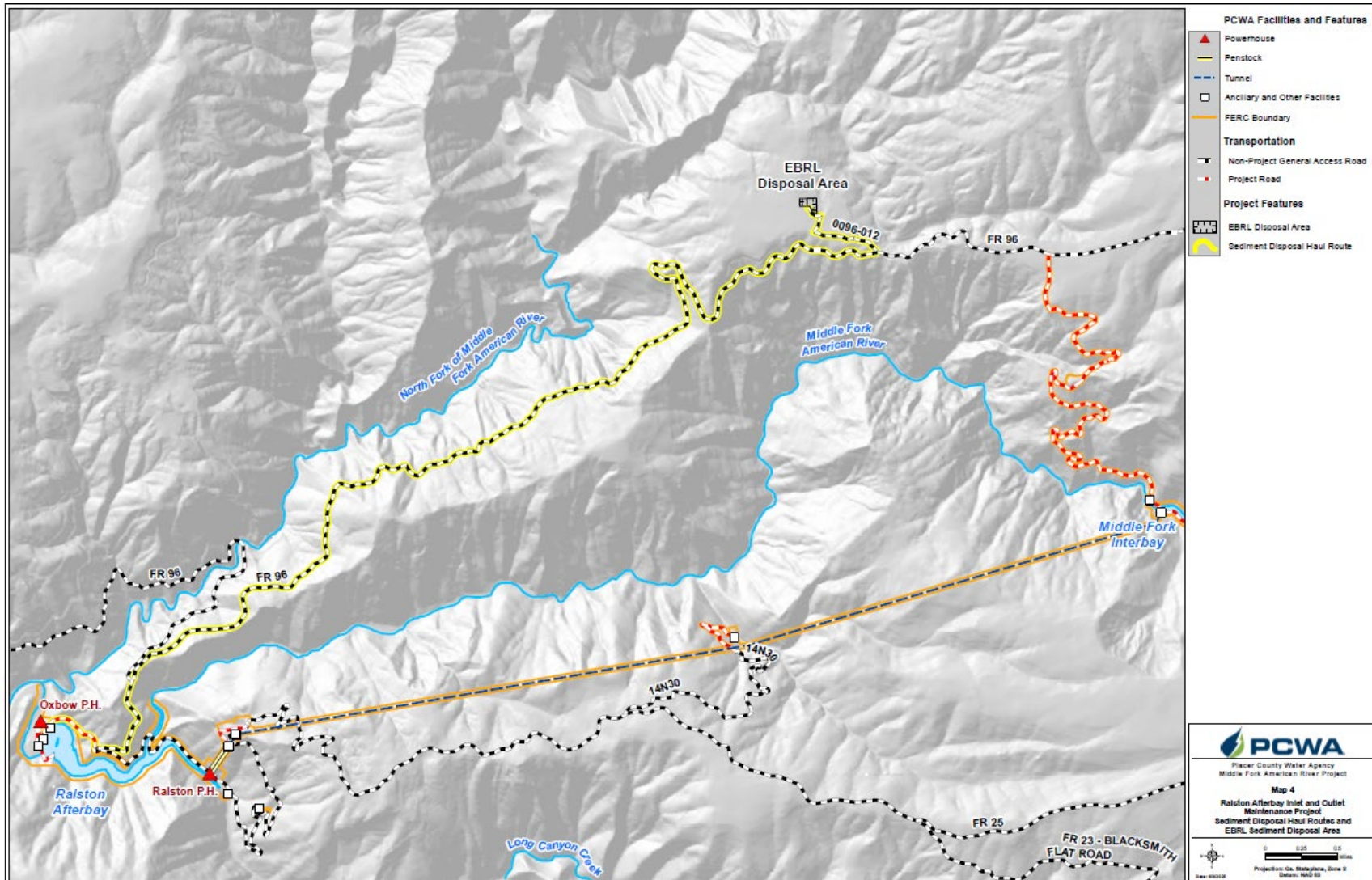


Figure 3. Ralston Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project Impacts within California Department of Fish And Wildlife Jurisdiction and Turbidity Curtain



**Figure 4. Ralson Afterbay Inlet and Outlet Maintenance Project
El Dorado-Big Reservoir Lake Sediment Disposal Area and Haul Routes**