

Agency: La Paloma Mutual Water Company
Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13
Self-Certification Form

BACKGROUND: Consistent with the March 28, 2022 Drought Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) developed this self-certification form to allow local agencies to submit their proposed recharge projects to DWR and that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. After reviewing the information submitted via this self-certification form, DWR will review and may concur. A list of activities eligible for the CEQA suspension is maintained on DWR's website at: <https://water.ca.gov/Water-Basics/Drought>.

INSTRUCTIONS: Entities carrying out a proposed recharge project that may meet the objectives of Executive Order N-7-22 Action 13 should complete this self-certification form as soon as possible to initiate DWR's review and potential concurrence that the project is eligible for the CEQA suspension. Please submit one self-certification form for each individual project. For questions, please email SGMPS@water.ca.gov.

- 1. Please provide a short description of the proposed recharge project in which you are seeking a CEQA suspension, demonstrating how it is consistent with Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 (include historical land use and current land use on the proposed project location):**

The Bear Creek Ranch is approximately 2,111 acres located in Merced County. This project would consist of permanently following 1,711 acres of the irrigated farm ground to be repurposed for groundwater recharge and interior wetland habitat restoration and/or creation. The project would convey approximately 1,300-acre feet of floodwater per year from Bear Creek through approximately 28,000 linear feet of new pipeline, 4 new 75 hp lift pumps and additional facilities from the Livingston Drain. The project would utilize floodwater from Bear Creek, Livingston Drain, and other purchased water.

- 2. Please describe the anticipated benefits and the basis of those benefits from implementing the proposed recharge project (in acre-feet/year or estimated volume of water, if possible):**

The benefits of reduced groundwater pumping demand of approximately 5,400 AFY, and an average annual recharge of 1,300 AFY for a net benefit of 6,700 AFY. In-addition, these lands are within the Pacific Flyway and are in a USFWS migratory waterfowl conservation easement so all ponds will benefit not only groundwater aquifer recharge but also waterfowl habitat enhancement and expand habitat connectivity.

- 3. Please identify the category this proposed recharge project would fall under (multiple answer can be selected):**

- Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge. (selected option).
- DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program.
- Other: Wildlife Habitat Enhancement. (selected option).

- 4. Please identify which of the objectives the proposed recharge project meets as described in the Executive Order (multiple answers can be selected):**

Projects is on Open Lands (which are those lands that are native or largely undeveloped from agricultural or industrial practices. These lands could include flood bypasses, natural areas, wildlife preserves, or existing managed wetlands.)

Project is on Working Lands (which are those lands that have been previously developed for agricultural or other industrial practices. These lands could include active or fallowed agricultural lands, gravel and sand operations, open storage fields, or other similar working lands.) (selected option).

5. Please describe how the proposed recharge project meets the following objectives as described in the Executive Order:

Project will help mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by the drought (To mitigate groundwater conditions impacted by drought, projects should include the replenishment of groundwater resources to the subsurface, especially shallow aquifers, for the purpose of storage, temporary or otherwise. Drought impacts to groundwater conditions would include lowering of groundwater levels that may have occurred due to lack of natural recharge or groundwater pumping that may especially impact shallow aquifers.) (selected option).

6. What funding sources are supporting the proposed recharge project? (Please list all local, state, federal, private or public funding sources):

DWR Prop 68 Grant.

7. Please provide the estimated project start date:

7/1/2023.

8. Please provide the estimated project end date or date project can be considered operational:

7/31/2026.

9. Please identify if the proposed recharge project requires a new water right permit to be issued by the State Water Board under their Groundwater Storage Water Rights Permitting process. If an existing water right is being used, please provide the permit number under the 'Other' category (For more information, visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/applications/groundwater_recharge/):

No new water right is needed; already have existing water rights or agreements for this proposed recharge project. (selected option).

Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (180 days).

Need a temporary water right for this recharge project (1 to 5 years).

Need a streamlined permit for a standard water right.

Need a standard water right for this recharge project.

Other.

10. When do you anticipate your proposed recharge project will be ready for construction phase (i.e. shovel ready)?

1/1/2025

11. Are there other permitting requirements necessary to carry out the proposed recharge project. If so, please describe.

Preliminary wetland and biological surveys are planned and based on results, endangered species and/or wetland permitting may be required. Also, all planning, design, and construction must be approved by USFWS based on terms of the easement.

12. Please describe if there are any anticipated water quality or other environmental impacts associated with the proposed recharge project (if so, please describe the mitigation measures that will be taken to remedy or offset those impacts):

We anticipate that water quality will be a benefit of this project. Potential impacts to sensitive species and wetlands will be evaluated through preliminary surveys. If needed, the appropriate permits would be obtained from USACOE, RWQCB, CA FWS, and/or USFWS. All mitigation measures required by the permitting agencies would be implemented.

13. Please provide the name of the Local Agency implementing the proposed recharge project:

La Paloma Mutual Water Company.

14. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact First and Last Name:

Brad Samuelson.

15. Please provide a Project Manager Point of Contact Email and Phone Number:

bsamuelson@waterandlandsolutions.com; (209)658-8487.

16. Please identify the groundwater basin in which the proposed recharge project will be located. If possible, please provide the proposed project location coordinates (latitude, longitude). (For more information, visit:

<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/index.jsp?appid=gasmaster&rz=true>):

Basin number: 5-022

Basin subbasin_number: 5-022.04

Basin name: SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Basin Subbasin_name: SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY-MERCED.

17. Please provide the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) or Alternative to a GSP that the proposed recharge project is associated:

Merced Subbasin GSA

Merced Subbasin GSP

18. Please provide any additional information you would like to include in your Self-Certification Form:

ITNs project is a multi-purpose land repurposing project that will be a model of future groundwater recharge, water quality, and wildlife enhancement. It is being implemented

through a collaboration of the La Paloma Mutual Water Company, Merced Subbasin GSA, River Partners, Ducks Unlimited, and USFWS.

In signing this self-certification form, I understand that the Department of Water Resources will rely on this signed certification form to determine if a concurrence with the Drought Executive Order N-7-22, Action 13 is granted for the project described and that false and/or inaccurate representations in this self-certification form may result in the invalidation of the CEQA suspension.

Furthermore, I understand that by receiving concurrence from the Department of Water Resources concerning eligibility for the CEQA suspension outlined in EO N-7-22, DWR makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the project feasibility, benefits claimed from the completed project, adequacy of the project, potential environmental impacts of the construction activities or completed project, and expressly disclaims liability for project performance, environmental impacts during and after construction, project construction disturbances, unmitigated environmental impacts post-construction, or project failures.

Original document signed by Brad Samuelson on 7/28/2023

Name of Authorized Representative	Signature	Date
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Title	Agency
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