



2024-25 Fresno COG One Voice Advocacy Trip

Regional Priorities Submittal Form

Submittal Deadline: Jan. 6, 2025

Keep your regional priority content to less than three pages long. Do not change the font (*Arial*). Contact Brenda Thomas at bthomas@fresnocog with questions.

One Voice Proposed Priority title:

Raising Pine Flat Dam Resiliency Project

Sponsoring agency/business:

County of Fresno

1. Request summary – provide specific priority “ask(s)”:

Funding is needed to support a 12-foot raise of Pine Flat Dam to increase storage capacity in Pine Flat Reservoir and mitigate the effects of climate variability by increasing flood protection, enhancing drought resilience, increasing water supply reliability, enhancing carbon-free electric power generation, and improving water storage management. The required U.S. Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study was included in the federal 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This important step is the beginning of the process to determine Estimated Timeline if a 12-foot raise is feasible. KRCD has prior submitted a funding request for the USACE fiscal year (FY) 2026 and will resubmit for FY 2027, if needed. If funding is secured, the feasibility study the USACE would perform is known as the ‘3X3X3 Rule’. The goal of this process is to complete feasibility studies within three years, at a cost of no more than \$3 million, and with three levels of the USACE engaged throughout, thereby reducing time and cost.

Funding Need: Estimated capital cost: \$1 billion; estimated feasibility study cost: \$3 million

2. **About the Priority:** (Provide specific information about your proposed priority. Include information you want included in the trip materials.)

Project climate change in the Kings River watershed would alter the volume and timing of inflows to Pine Flat Reservoir and affect the available water supply for the many downstream uses such as municipal, agricultural, rural communities and energy generation. Raising the dam 12 feet would add 120,700 acre feet of storage. This increased storage capacity at Pine Flat Reservoir will improve flood damage protection, water management, especially during the climate extremes of extended droughts and intense floods.

3. **Priority background** – (Include the priority issues, history and an explanation of the regional significance if not provided in question 1)

Pine Flat Dam is located in the Kings River watershed, 25 miles east of Fresno, California. Completed in 1954, it is owned, operated, and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The principal purpose of Pine Flat Dam is for flood control. Conservation and recreation are ancillary uses. Approximately 1,000,000 Californians live and work in the geographic area served by the Kings River. The river's water supply is used to irrigate over a million acres of farmland, supply municipal drinking water, and replenish a groundwater supply that serves rural residents and over 100 disadvantaged communities.

The benefits of this project to the surrounding region, when completed, include:

- increased flood protection
- groundwater sustainability
- municipal, industrial water supply, disadvantaged communities
- recreation
- river ecosystem improvement
- conservation, development of water and carbon-free power resources

4. **If your priority is not transportation related, are there any transportation policy connections?**

N/A

5. **Provide high-resolution photos, graphics or other explanatory attachments for the One Voice trip materials. Do not copy and paste them here, attach them as separate electronic files. Then, describe the attachments and include them with your submittal.**

See attachment(s)

- Talking points PDF
- Pine Flat Dam aerial image
- 2023 Tulare Lake flooding satellite image

6. **Contact** – Include the contact information for the priority submittal **and** the contact information of the person that will be attending the One Voice trip to speak on behalf of the priority:

Project Contact:

David Merritt, General Manager
Kings River Conservation District

dmerritt@krcd.org

Office: (559) 237-5567 x 111

Cell: (559) 476-0538

4886 E. Jensen Avenue

Fresno, CA 93725

One Voice Participant:

Name, Title

Organization

Email Address

Phone Numbers, Cell/Office

Address

City, CA Zip Code



Pine Flat Dam Raise

Talking Points

Overview

- **Project Purpose:** Improve flood protection, enhance water storage capacity, and support long-term water supply reliability in the Kings River region (portions of Fresno, Kings and Tulare County).
- **Proposed Raise:** Increase the dam's height by 12 feet, adding 120,000 acre-feet (AF) of additional storage capacity to the reservoir.



Benefits

1. Improved Flood Protection:

- Enhances flood control capabilities by increasing reservoir capacity to capture peak flood flows.
- Reduces downstream flooding risks, protecting communities, agriculture, and infrastructure.

2. Increased Water Storage:

- Provides additional capacity to store surplus water during wet years for use in dry years.
- Helps address groundwater overdraft and supports regional Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) compliance.

3. Support for Agriculture:

- Reliable water deliveries ensure agricultural viability, benefiting local farmers and the local economies and a range of businesses tied to agriculture.
- Mitigates water supply challenges during drought conditions.

4. Environmental Benefits:

- Provides water for managed ecosystems, including fish and wildlife habitats.
- Enhances operational flexibility to meet environmental and recreational needs.

5. Renewable Energy Generation:

- Additional water storage supports increased hydroelectric generation capacity, providing clean, renewable carbon free energy to the region and the State of California.

Regional Importance

- The Kings River region is a critical agricultural and economic hub for California.
- Increased storage capacity is essential to maintaining water reliability and supporting sustainable growth.

Challenges & Mitigation

1. Environmental Concerns:

- Comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will address potential impacts, with mitigation measures developed in consultation with stakeholders. No significant impacts are expected because of this project.

2. Funding Needs:

- Federal, state, and local partnerships are essential to secure funding through programs like the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act.

Call to Action

1. Legislative Support:

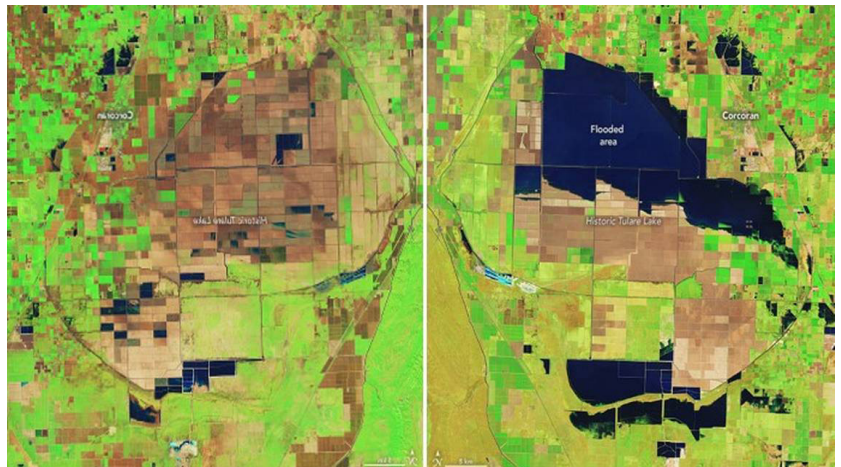
- Advocate for inclusion in federal funding programs and grants. An estimated \$3 million is needed to fund the required USACE dam raise feasibility study, and an estimated \$1 billion in 2025 dollars to construct a 12' dam raise.
- Engage local, state, and federal stakeholders to emphasize the project's regional and statewide significance.

2. Community Engagement:

- Share the project's benefits with local communities to build awareness and support.

Key Statistics

- Current Capacity: Pine Flat Reservoir's storage capacity is approximately 1 million acre-feet.
- Proposed Increase: Raising the dam could add an additional 120,000 acre-feet of capacity, depending on the final design.
- Flood Damage Reduction: Based on the 2023 Tulare Lake flood event, the damages within Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties total [approximately \\$2 billion](#)¹. Nearly 1,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, displacing families, impacting schools, as well as small and large local businesses. This additional Pine Flat Reservoir storage would have reduced those impacts by storing more water and allowing controlled release volumes to communities downstream.
- Economic Impact: Strengthens water reliability for a region responsible for approximately \$10 billion² in annual agricultural output.



NASA satellite images of Tulare Lake, before and after historic flooding in 2023

By investing in the Pine Flat Dam raise, we ensure flood protection, water security, and a resilient future for the Kings River region and beyond.

¹ <https://www.kvpr.org/local-news/2023-07-27/in-normally-dry-kings-county-tulare-lake-has-carved-a-long-soggy-road-ahead-for-farmers>

² 2023 Fresno County and Kings County value

Status Updates

Prior Pine Flat Dam Raise accomplishments:

- USACE Study - 1989
- Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation - 2003
- Rogers Crossing / Pine Flat Raise Feasibility Update – Stantec was contracted by KRCD and in collaboration with Kings River Water Association - 2020 – 2025

Legislators' support:

Through our federal lobbyist, The Ferguson Group, we have worked with the following legislators in support of this project:

- Senator Padilla
- Congressman Costa
- Congressman Valadao
- Congressman Fong
- Former Congressman McCarthy
- Former Congressman Duarte
- Former Senator Feinstein
- Former Senator Butler

We submitted the project into the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) for both the 2023 and 2024 reports to Congress, in which it was listed. This further confirms the existing authority to study this project; however, does not provide an appropriation.

2024 Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) – the Pine Flat Raise was listed as a project of importance and directs the Secretary to expedite the completion of a feasibility study or general evaluation report.

The Kings River Conservation District has applied for federal funding through the US Army Corps of Engineers for their fiscal year 2026 and we will submit in March 2025 for fiscal year 2027 if the FY 2026 is not received. This request was for their 3x3x3 program.

For additional information please contact:

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2023 Tulare Lake Flooding Satellite Image

