

Five local projects aim to preserve groundwater

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Five projects that could help protect groundwater supplies and reduce flood risks in the Fresno metropolitan area will proceed with the aid of state grants that will fund more than two-thirds of the \$12 million cost.

The largest of the projects, known as the Central basin, will add water percolation basins and monitoring wells on 100 acres south of Fresno at a cost of \$7.9 million. The project area is west of Highway 41, east of Elm Avenue, south of Central Avenue and north of American Avenue. Other projects on the eastern edge of Fresno and east of the city would move storm runoff into water basins and store water.

The projects are funded under state Proposition 1, which was approved by California voters in 2014. The projects were submitted by Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, which also will get financial help from the Fresno Irrigation District and city of Fresno.

In all, the three agencies will pay about \$3.62 million as a match for state funding of \$8.5 million.

The Central basin projects proposed to reduce overdraft of groundwater supplies. Building the basin will recharge an additional 2,592 acre-feet per year and much more during wetter years, according to Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District estimates.

A \$1.65 million pipeline also is proposed between the Gould Canal near Clinton and McCall avenues and the Fancher Creek basin to allow the Fresno Metropolitan



Water projects

1. Gould to Fancher pipeline
2. Fancher Creek detention basin
3. Basin 'DV'
4. Basin 'BK'
5. Central basin

Source: Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District
The Fresno Bee

Flood Control District to divert runoff from uncontrolled rural streams that flow into the Gould Canal to hook into the McCall and McKinley avenues basin. By diverting the water, it will reduce flooding risks while holding water in the area for recharge.

A \$1.3 million pump station also will be built in the Fancher Creek basin to move water from one basin cell to another and include a telemetry system, automated communications equipment to provide measurements to other locations for monitoring.

Two basin projects also are planned with the funding: A basin near Highway 180 and west of Temperance Avenue for \$845,000; and a basin near Kings Canyon Road, east of Clovis Avenue for \$840,000.

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District is unable to route stormwater and recharge water to the two basins on the eastern edge of the city from nearby canals. A basin relief pipeline will allow the district to pump water from the basins during critical storms and

route stormwater and recharge water from the canals to the basins during dry seasons.

To allow the basins to operate for flood protection and groundwater recharge, a pump station, internal basin pipelines and other structures will be built, district documents state.

"Using stormwater to recharge our depleted groundwater aquifers or replace precious drinking water to irrigate our green spaces are examples of how we can tackle water scarcity," State Water Board Chairwoman Fel-

icia Marcus said in a prepared statement announcing \$105 million in grants statewide. "We will learn a lot from these projects, which will benefit communities throughout California."

Proposition 1 provides more than \$7 billion for water projects around the state.

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Buckle blamed in shooting of deputy

The Fresno Bee

The sheriff's deputy who shot himself in the leg Nov. 4 likely did so because his weapon got caught on a holster buckle, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office said Tuesday.

The incident happened in southeast Fresno where the deputy was working. He was wearing the gun in a thigh holster when it

fired, striking him in the leg.

He was treated and released from Community Regional Medical Center the same day.

After inspecting the equipment, the training unit staff concluded that the buckle likely got caught between the holster and the trigger, causing the gun to go off. The staff believes the gun did not fire on its own.

The office's annual training plan for next year will include a synopsis of this incident and steps to avoid it.

The accidental shooting followed the accidental shooting death Oct. 31 of sheriff's Sgt. Rod Lucas. A bullet fired accidentally from a colleague's gun struck Lucas in the chest.

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FROM PAGE 9A

WEST FRESNO

said. "The community has spoken loud and clear for a vision that does not include industrial development." If existing industrial businesses ever close, Werner said the plan would require they be replaced with non-industrial land use.

More broadly, the plan calls for two "magnet cores" for development: one along Highway 180 and Marks Avenue geared toward retail, a major grocer, high-density housing and a medical facility; and a second near Jensen Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard for a possible community college, retail stores and a park.

Sprinkled elsewhere throughout the area are several smaller "satellite" cores of complete neighborhoods, each with single-family housing, neighborhood-oriented retail and parks.

Census tracts within the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan area are among the poorest in the city, with poverty rates ranging from

more than 35 percent to almost 60 percent, according to 2014 data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

If the council approves it Thursday, the next stage would be the preparation of an administrative draft of the Southwest Specific Plan, during which the city's staff and consultants would conduct an analysis to assess the plan's potential environmental effects on the city.

A draft environmental impact report would be expected in April or May, followed by a public comment period on both the environmental report and the plan itself.

A final version of the environmental report and the plan would likely be released in September, followed by public hearings before the Fresno Planning Commission and Fresno City Council in October and final votes to certify the environmental report and adopt the plan in November.

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