

**Central Valley Flood Protection Board Meeting
May 20, 2016**

**INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING – Merced County Streams Reevaluation Report
BRIEFING SUMMARY**

Background

Merced County is situated in the middle of the San Joaquin Valley (see Attachment A). The scope of the reevaluation is Merced County with a focus on the City of Merced (City). A reevaluation of the original 1970 authorization is necessary due to the Haystack Dam alternative not being implemented due to environmental concerns. Several areas of the City currently only have a 50-year level of flood protection. Flooding problems exist along the streams draining from the Sierra Nevada Mountains into Merced County.

As a result of severe flooding in 1998, the City and County of Merced suffered \$10 million in damages. In the last flood of 2006; resulting from flooding along Bear Creek, Black Rascal Creek, and the Black Rascal Diversion Channel (see Attachment B), there were more than \$12 million dollars in damages to residents, business owners and local government. Black Rascal Diverting Channel is located east of the City upstream of Bear Creek and diverts flows from Black Rascal Creek to Bear Creek. Bear Creek then flows through the City into the San Joaquin River. There is a continued threat of major flooding and its associated damages to public facilities and infrastructure, agriculture, residential, commercial, and industrial properties in the City and surrounding area. Flood damage within the Black Rascal and Bear Creek floodplains will likely continue if an adequate level of protection is not provided.

With a population of 81,102 people as of the 2013 census, the City is considered an urban area by definition outlined in the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. An urban area is an area with a population of 10,000 people or greater. Consistent with State legislation passed in 2007, urban areas are required to have a 200-year level of flood protection. The Black Rascal Diverting Channel is also a State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) facility and the City is within a State Levee Flood Protection Zone (see Attachment C) which is the estimated area that may be flooded if the Black Rascal Diverting channel fails at maximum capacity. The Levee Flood Protection Zone shows the area affected from a flood due to the failure of a nearby SPFC Facility. Due to the requirements set forth under Senate Bill 5 (2008) and the connection between the City and the nearby SPFC facility, it is in the State's best interest to participate in the evaluation of flood risk reduction alternatives for the City and its surrounding area.

History of Partnerships

Federal: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District (USACE)

State: Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Board), formerly The Reclamation Board

Local: Merced County Streams Group

A 1970 authorization was provided for Haystack Dam. After the 1970 authorization the project was delayed over ten years due to the inability to complete the Haystack Dam element due to environmental considerations. The Haystack Reservoir is the only component not completed at this time. USACE determined that environmental mitigation would make Haystack Dam difficult, if not impossible, to permit and build. Construction of the new University of California, Merced campus removed a large portion of the reservoir land that would have been inundated by Haystack Dam, and a new alternative analysis had to be performed.

USACE attempted to initiate a reevaluation in 2010 with funding allocations on hand, but never received adequate funding allocations to complete the project management plan and finalize the funding agreements. USACE is in the process of initiating the reevaluation with the limited funds that are available. USACE cannot secure the necessary federal funding to reinitiate the reevaluation without the non-federal support. Proposition 1E funding will be used to complete the Project Management Plan and feasibility agreements necessary for moving the reevaluation forward.

USACE Merced County Streams Reevaluation Report

The purpose of the Merced County Streams reevaluation is to investigate alternatives to improve the level of flood protection for the City and surrounding area. The improvements developed from the reevaluation are intended to ensure the affected urban areas achieve an urban level of protection consistent with the Urban Levee Design Criteria, and non-urban area are provided an appropriate level of flood protection related to the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program standard.

The current estimated reevaluation cost of \$3 million is cost-shared 50/50 federal/nonfederal, with the nonfederal costs shared 50/50 between the State and Local sponsors. The estimated State and local shares would be \$750,000 each. The estimate for the reevaluation was provided by USACE.

Authorizations

Federal: Flood Control Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-611, Sec. 201, 84 Stat. 1824)

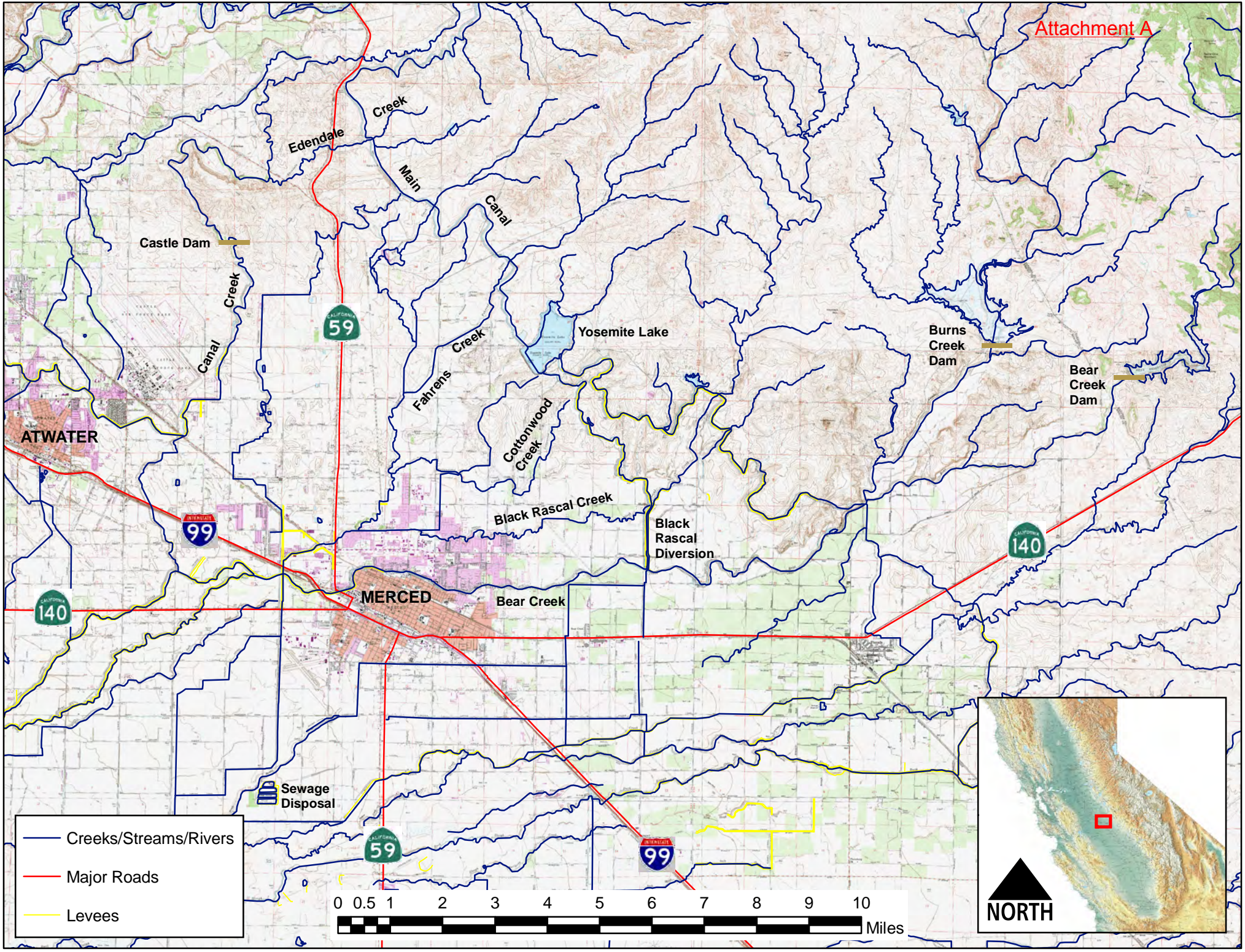
State: California Water Code Sections 12667 & 8615

Next Step

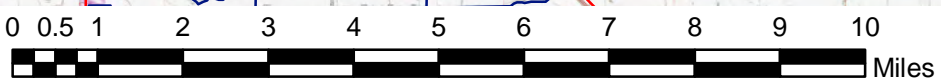
The next step is to determine the priority of the Merced reevaluation for the Board and the State in order to return at the June 24, 2016 Board meeting for approval of a Letter of Intent to participate in the reevaluation. A Letter of Intent from the Board (as the lead non-federal sponsor) is required to initiate the reevaluation.

List of Attachments

1. Attachment A – Reevaluation Area
2. Attachment B – State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document, Figure 3-13
3. Attachment C – Levee Flood Protection Zone



- Creeks/Streams/Rivers
- Major Roads
- Levees



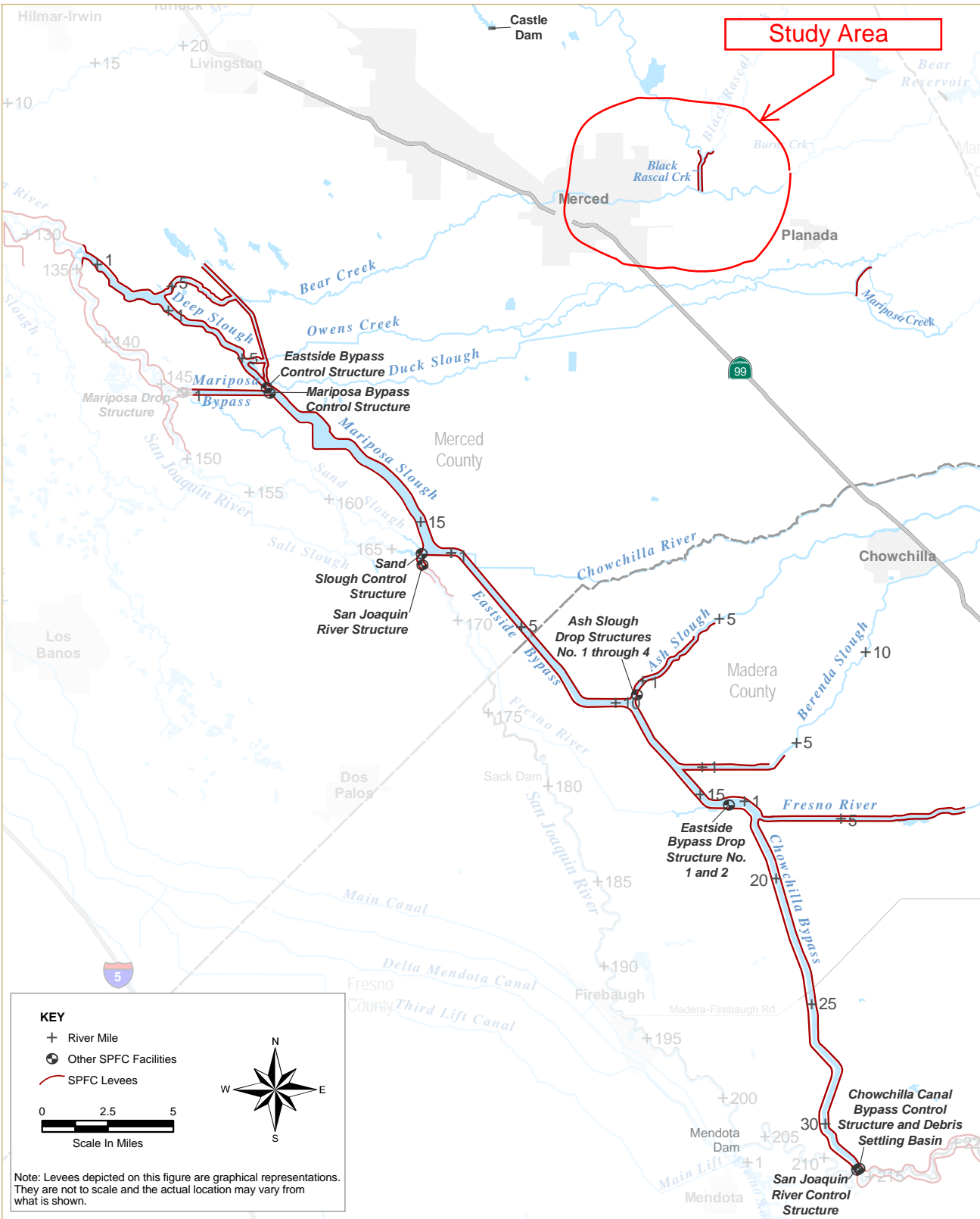


Figure 3-13. Chowchilla and Eastside Bypasses – State Plan of Flood Control Facilities Along the Chowchilla and Eastside Bypasses and Tributaries

