



State Water Resources Control Board

April 25, 2022

Mr. Jim Harris



APPROVAL OF GROUNDWATER LOCAL COOPERATIVE SOLUTION FOR CALIFORNIA HERITAGE FARMS LLC

Dear Mr. Harris:

On August 17, 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted a regulation establishing drought emergency minimum flows in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 875-875.9) (Regulation). Under the Regulation, local cooperative solutions may be submitted by individuals or groups as alternative means of reducing water use. The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the proposed local cooperative solution and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with conditions. Additional details regarding the contents of the proposal and conditions are described below.

For overlying or adjudicated groundwater diversions for irrigated agriculture described in section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D), the Deputy Director for the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director) may approve a local cooperative solution totaling at least 400 irrigated acres where the proposal is based on a binding agreement, and it reduces water use in the Scott River watershed by at least 30 percent compared to 2020 or 2021 during the total irrigation season (April 1 – October 31), and specifically includes a 30 percent monthly reduction in water use for July through October. (See section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D) of the Regulation.) Such reductions may be demonstrated by a number of mechanisms, including pumping reports, conservation measures, electric bills, or planting decisions.

The State Water Board received a proposal from California Heritage Farms LLC (petitioner) for approval of a groundwater local cooperative solution that includes commitments to reduce water use by at least 30 percent as specified under Section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D)(ii). This proposal provides for reduced water use from groundwater wells on approximately 994 acres associated with Assessor Parcel Numbers 023-071-400, 023-971-420, 023-071-550, 023-090-040, 023-090-480,

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024-190-450, 024-190-460, 024-190-470, 024-190-300, 024-190-310, 024-190-320, 024-110-320, 024-110-330, 024-200-240, 024-170-350, and 024-170-360, based on the information provided in the petition as part of the request for approval of a groundwater local cooperative solution. These parcels comprise land that is leased by the petitioner and are supplied by groundwater. The proposal indicates that the lands are also served by Scott Valley Irrigation District surface water, but that such surface water will not be used to substitute for groundwater reductions. The proposal includes detailed “conservation plan” spreadsheets, spray maps, and a narrative description of conservation actions and a tracking method. The proposed local cooperative solution sets forth verifiable conservation measures to reduce water use by approximately 32 percent, relative to a 2020 baseline. The proposed conservation actions are: following 34.5 acres, dropping operating line pressure, reducing irrigation set runtimes, and forgoing cover crops on 194 acres.

The proposal includes a Binding Agreement (Agreement) with the Siskiyou Resource Conservation District (RCD) granting the Siskiyou RCD sufficient access to verify compliance with the proposal.

The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the local cooperative solution proposal and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with the following condition:

- To the extent surface water is available to the petitioner, surface water used in the 2022 irrigation season shall not exceed the amount of water used during the 2020 irrigation season, nor decrease the estimated 32 percent reduction in groundwater use approved as part of this local cooperative solution.

As determined by the Regulation under section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), continued diversions under this local cooperative solution are reasonable and will not result in injury to other legal users of water. Your local cooperative solution proposal, dated March 3, 2022, including the conservation plan, together with the terms of your executed Agreement dated April 6, 2022, are hereby approved, as conditioned. As described in Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(2), any violations of this approval are subject to enforcement as a violation of the Regulation. Any changes to the approved local cooperative solution or Agreement shall be submitted to the Deputy Director for review and approval prior to implementation.

So long as this approval and the terms of the proposal and the Agreement remain in effect, the curtailments associated with water rights SG003141, SG003358, SG003448, SG003715, SG003039, and SG003371 are rescinded as to the above-referenced properties that are leased by California Heritage Farms and part of this proposal. Please note that this approval does not affect the curtailment status of the surface water rights associated with the properties referenced in this proposal, which remain subject to applicable previously issued curtailment orders.

Thank you for your efforts to help support both farming and fisheries in the Scott River watershed during this drought emergency.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please reach out to staff by email at: ScottShastaDrought@waterboards.ca.gov or leave a message on our phone line at: (916) 327-3113.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Ekdahl", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Erik Ekdahl
Deputy Director
Division of Water Rights

ec: Siskiyou RCD
Email: chris@siskiyourcd.com