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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Phoenix Area Office
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, Arizona 85306-4001




AUG 11 2008

PXAO-1500
ENV-6.00

MEMORANDUM

To: All Interested Parties, Organizations, and Agencies

From: Carol Lynn Erwin
Area Manager 

Subject: Notice of Public Scoping for Preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Proposed Community Water Company of Green Valley (CWC) Central Arizona Project (CAP) Water Distribution System and Recharge Facility (Action by September 12, 2008)

The Bureau of Reclamation has received CWC's final plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Reclamation is requiring preparation of an EA to describe the existing environment and anticipated environmental impacts from construction and operation of CWC's proposed CAP water system. Reclamation is inviting the public to provide input regarding issues and concerns that should be included in the EA.

BACKGROUND

On May 17, 1985, CWC entered into a CAP water service subcontract for 1,100 acre-feet (AF) of CAP water annually, with Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which operates the CAP. This CAP water service subcontract was later amended in 1997 when New Pueblo Water Company transferred 337 AF annually to CWC. CWC also was allocated 1,521 AF annually as a result of the 2005 Arizona Water Settlements Act, making CWC's total CAP water allocation 2,858 AF annually.

Prior to entering into its initial subcontract, Reclamation reviewed CWC's conceptual plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation and determined they would not result in significant impacts. Because CWC did not plan to implement those plans in the reasonably foreseeable future, Reclamation indicated that CWC would need to submit final plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation to Reclamation for review and final environmental clearances prior to commencement of construction.

Recently, CWC provided Reclamation with final plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation. The prior conceptual plans indicated CWC would treat and directly use its CAP water. The final plans indicate CAP water would be recharged and CWC would continue to pump and serve ground water. Reclamation has determined an EA is needed due to the following: The final plans include construction and operation of a recharge facility; there has been a substantial amount of time that has gone by since Reclamation's original review; and,

the areas to be impacted and environmental conditions have changed. Based upon the EA, Reclamation will determine whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate or an environmental impact statement must be prepared prior to approving CWC's plans.

COMMENTS AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The purpose of the EA is to describe the proposed project and environmental impacts that are anticipated to result from its implementation. Brief descriptions of the proposed action and the No Action alternative to be included in the EA are provided in the attachment to this memorandum. The impacts we currently anticipate addressing in the EA include, but are not limited to, biological resources, cultural resources, land ownership and use, water quality and quantity, air quality, and socioeconomic resources.

Reclamation is interested in receiving your input regarding potential impacts of the proposed action, alternatives that should be considered, and/or other concerns and issues that should be addressed in the EA. We will be holding a public scoping meeting to solicit your comments. At this meeting you will have an opportunity to view our exhibits, listen to a short presentation regarding the proposed project, and provide verbal and/or written comments:

<u>Date and Time:</u>	August 26, 2008, at 5:00 p.m.
<u>Location:</u>	Green Valley Recreation West Center, 520-625-0288
<u>Address:</u>	1111 South Villa Arco Iris, Green Valley, Arizona 85614

Hearing-impaired, visually impaired, and/or mobility-impaired persons planning to attend this meeting may arrange for necessary accommodations by calling CWC at 520-625-8409, by August 15, 2008.

Comments may also be sent by mail to Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office at the above address, Attention: PXAO-1500 (Ms. Sandra Eto). To be most helpful, comments should be as specific as possible and sent to Reclamation by September 12, 2008. Comments may also be submitted by faxogram to 623-773-6486. Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We anticipate a draft EA will be available for a 30-day public review and comment period in late 2008, at which time we will notify the public of its availability. Copies will be made available at that time; it also will be posted on PXAO's web site, <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/>.

If you have any questions, please call Ms. Eto at Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office, 623-773-6254, or write to her at the above address, Attention: PXAO-1500. Thank you for your interest in this project.

ATTACHMENT TO SCOPING NOTICE

Brief Description of the Proposed Community Water Company of Green Valley Central Arizona Project Water Delivery System Project

BACKGROUND

On May 17, 1985, Community Water Company of Green Valley (CWC) entered into a Central Arizona Project (CAP) water service subcontract for 1,100 acre-feet (AF) of CAP water annually, with Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which operates the CAP. This CAP water service subcontract was later amended in 1997 when New Pueblo Water Company transferred 337 AF annually to CWC. CWC also was allocated 1,521 AF annually as a result of the 2005 Arizona Water Settlements Act, making CWC's total CAP water allocation 2,858 AF annually.

Reclamation must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act prior to approving CWC's plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation. Reclamation has determined an environmental assessment (EA) is necessary. Based upon the EA, Reclamation will determine whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, or an environmental impact statement must be prepared prior to approving CWC's plans. The impacts currently anticipated to be addressed in the EA include, but are not limited to, biological resources, cultural resources, land ownership and use, water quality and quantity,¹ air quality, and socioeconomic resources.

Proposed Action - Pipeline and New Recharge Site

CWC has been working for a number of years to ensure the future water supply for residents of the Green Valley area. The service area of CWC covers approximately 8-square miles (Figure 1). A 2007 report completed by Pima County states "the water table in Green Valley has been declining in past years and expected to continue to decline as water demands increase." Drawdown of the local aquifer has caused concerns regarding quantity of available water in the future. Despite the current slowdown in the economy, future residential development is likely to occur, as evidenced by the interest in large master-planned communities in this region in recent years. In addition, CWC is concerned about the presence of a sulfate plume from the Phelps Dodge Sierrita tailing impoundment (now owned by Freeport McMoRan Sierrita, Inc.) and its potential impact to CWC's operating wells, underscoring the need for an alternative water source.

CWC plans to construct and operate a raw water delivery pipeline and underground storage facility (recharge site) to deliver and recharge CAP water in the Green Valley area (Figure 2). Under the proposed project, the pipeline would be sized to provide additional flow capacity should other water users make arrangements with CWC to utilize the system for delivery of CAP water.

¹ Although the recharge location is distant from most existing wells and other development, the potential effects, if any, of underground mounding of the water to be recharged in this area will be evaluated.

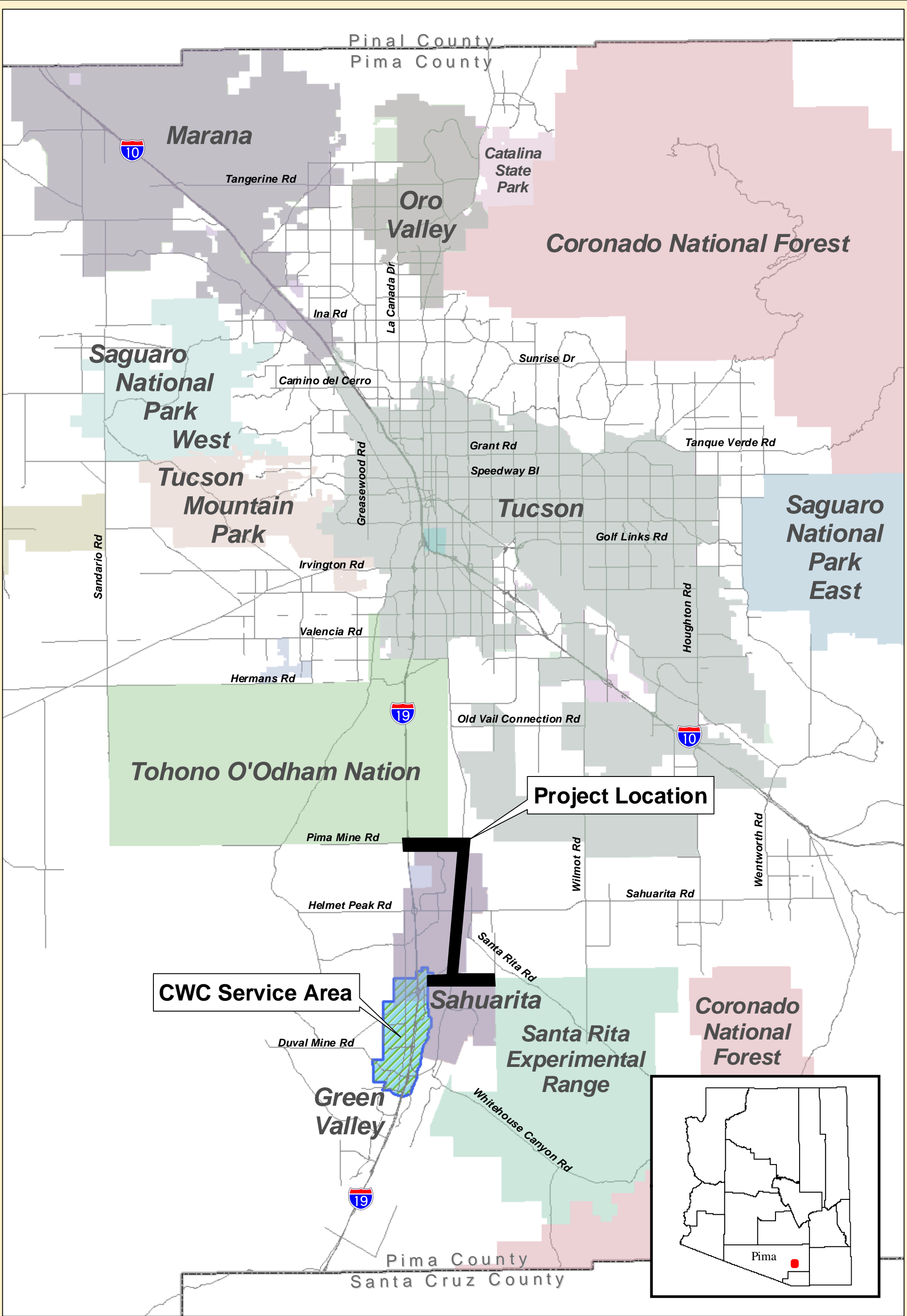
A proposed 36-inch, raw water pipeline would begin at the existing CAP pipeline terminus, which is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Interstate 19 and Pima Mine Road (Figure 2). It would proceed east along Pima Mine Road until turning south along Nogales Highway. At the intersection of the Nogales and Old Nogales Highways, the pipeline alignment would continue south along Old Nogales Highway approximately 0.9 miles. At this point, the pipeline size would be reduced to 20-inch pipe and would proceed easterly along the section line of Sections 31 and 32 of Township 17S, Range 14E (the extended alignment for El Corto Road) to a proposed 20-acre recharge site located in Section 29, T17S, R14E. Along this same alignment, a second 20-inch transmission pipeline from the recharge site would be constructed heading in a westerly direction along the section line to CWC's existing Well #11. Two booster stations would be constructed. The new pipeline would deliver up to 7,000 AF of CAP water per year to the recharge site for the first 15 years of operation (a total of 105,000 AF). After that, the rate of recharge may be reduced. Recovery wells would be constructed at the recharge site to recover CAP water after the first 15 years of operation, or sooner if the existing CWC wells become unusable due to sulfate contamination.

An agreement between CWC and Rosemont Copper Company (RCC) would provide the funding mechanism for the pipeline construction. The agreement would allow RCC to recharge CWC's CAP water allocation for a period of 15 years. RCC has made a commitment to the Green Valley community to recharge a total of 105% of any ground water withdrawn for the operation of its facilities. It is anticipated that this commitment, supplemented by additional sources, could result in a recharge volume of as much as 7,000 AF per year. Utilization of the CAP water supply for this recharge would help maintain the local aquifer and utilize renewable water sources.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would mean that no pipeline would be constructed in the near future for water conveyance and recharge of the aquifer. CWC is a member of a regional water planning group, the Upper Santa Cruz/Providers and Users Group. This group, formed in October 2007, has been studying ways to bring CAP and other renewable water resources to the greater Green Valley/Sahuarita region to address long-term water supply needs. It is anticipated CWC would continue to investigate ways to deliver its CAP water allocation for use within its water service area, either as part of a regional system, or as a discrete system. In the foreseeable future, however, CWC would continue to rely solely on pumped ground water for delivery to its customers. CWC's annual CAP water allocation of 2,858 AF would continue to be available for purchase as excess CAP water.


Without the delivery and use of its CAP water allocation—either directly or by recharge and recovery—CWC would not have an alternative potable water supply should its existing wells become contaminated by the sulfate plume from the mine tailing impoundment. In addition, without introducing a renewable water supply to the area, ground-water levels would continue to decline.




**Figure 1
Location Map**

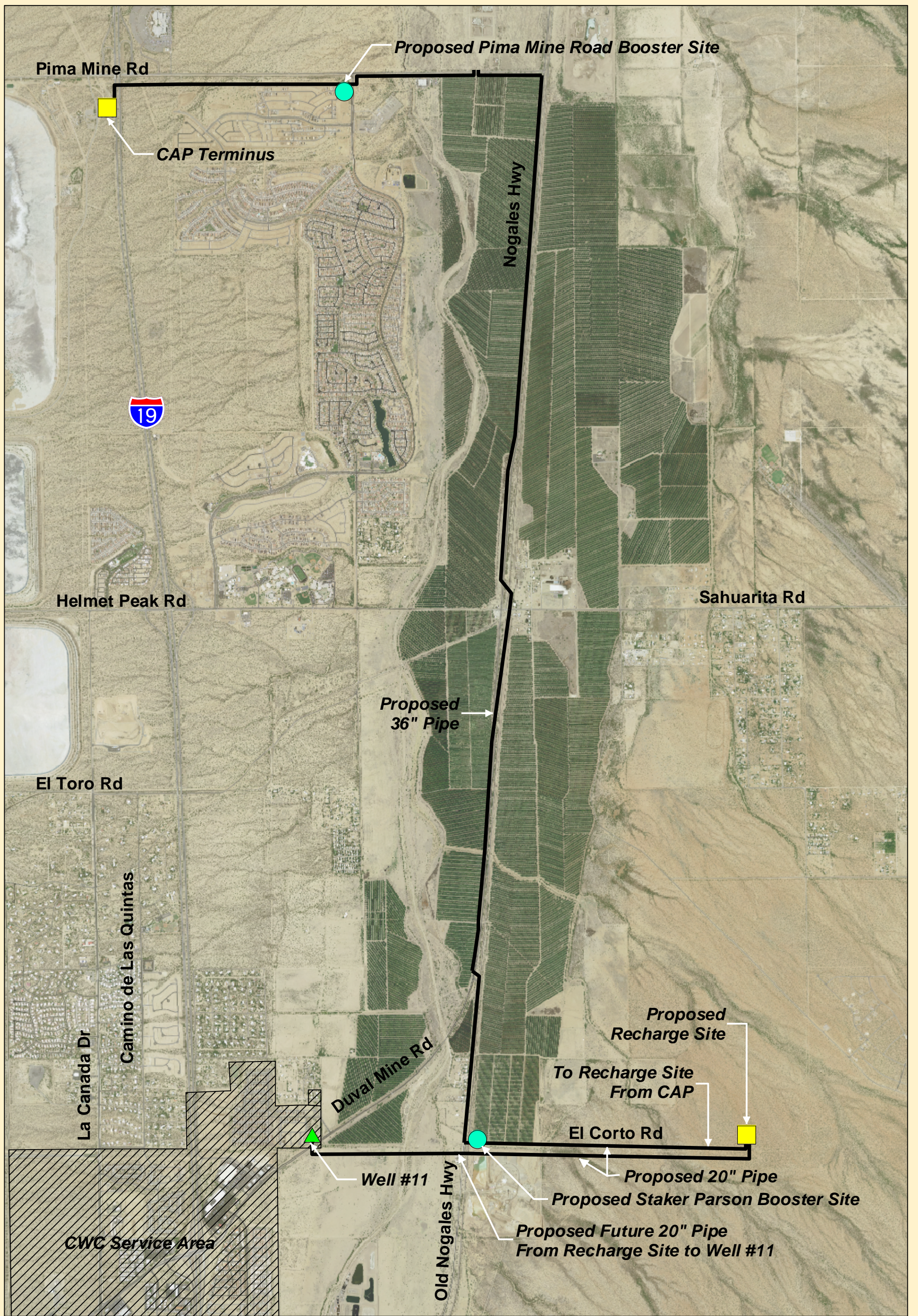
**CWC  CAP
Water Delivery System**

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**Figure 2
Proposed Project
Components**

**CWC CAP
Water Delivery System**

Pima County Index Map



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