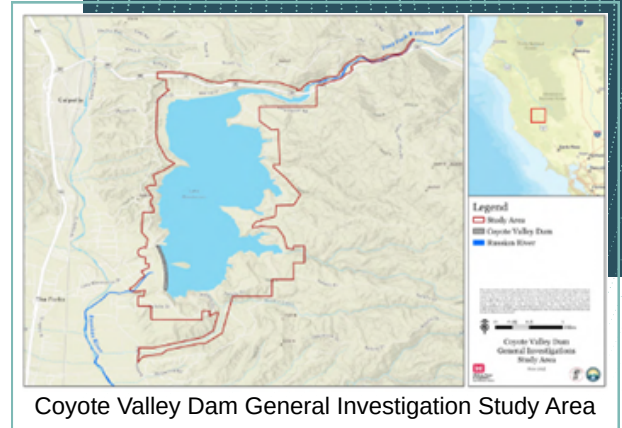




# Coyote Valley Dam General Investigation Study



## Modernizing Water Infrastructure to Meet Increasing Demands

Drought and the decommissioning of the Potter Valley Project (PVP) threaten the reliability of drinking and agricultural water supply for communities across Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. The region is expected to lose up to 90,000 acre-feet per year of water previously diverted from the Eel River due to the loss of the PVP. Increasing the capacity of Lake Mendocino, formed by Coyote Valley Dam (CVD), could be a solution to capture this water and build a more resilient water system.

## Federal, Local, and Tribal Partnership

The CVD General Investigation (GI) Study is a partnership between the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission (MCIWPC), Lytton Rancheria of California, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Authorized under Section 1201(3) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-322), the Study aims to evaluate potential modifications to CVD to enhance water supply, improve reservoir operations, and support ecosystem improvements.

## The Study provides an opportunity to:

- Expand storage capacity and modernize reservoir operations at Lake Mendocino.
- Adapt to the loss of PVP imports, which have historically made up over 30% of summer flows.
- Improve vulnerable ecosystems and downstream communities dependent on the Russian River in conjunction with water supply and flood risk management features.

## Modernizing Operations

Currently, Lake Mendocino provides drinking water for over 650,000 people in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin counties. It also protects communities downstream from flooding, supports endangered fish species through egg collection facilities, and welcomes over 970,000 visitors a year. Recommendations developed through this Study aim to preserve and enhance these critical functions. While the Study is ongoing, the dam is looking at modernizing operations under a new Water Control Manual (WCM). The proposed update would allow more flexible water storage, following Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) procedures tested over multiple years as part of a pilot project. This approach could store up to 11,650 acre-feet of additional water. The draft Environmental Assessment for the WCM update is currently available for public review through August 16, 2025. Any modifications made to CVD resulting from the current Study may require a WCM update.



*Modernizing Coyote Valley Dam is about more than infrastructure; it is about preparing for a future where our water supply is less predictable and more difficult to manage. This study is a critical step towards building a smarter, more resilient water system in the face of droughts and changes to our historic water supply... Modernization really means using science and collaboration to improve our water storage and delivery systems to better serve our communities and the environment for generations to come."*

— Janet Pauli, Chair, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission



## Upcoming Milestones

Below is the current schedule. As the Study progresses, the schedule will be modified based on new information.

March 2025	Study Initiated (Feasibility Cost Share Agreement Signed)
July 2025	PG&E Files Final Surrender Application for Potter Valley Project
December 2025	Alternatives Milestone (USACE Validates Initial Array of Alternatives)*
Spring 2026	Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone (USACE Validates Initial Selection of a Recommended Alternative)*
Summer 2026	Public and Agency Review of Draft Report*



*This agreement marks a critical step toward a more inclusive and sustainable approach to managing our region's water resources. The Lytton Rancheria is proud to partner in this effort, ensuring that tribal perspectives are part of the conversation as we work together to protect the water supply, restore ecosystems, and plan for the future."*

— Andy Mejia, Chairperson,  
Lytton Rancheria of California

\*Subject to the availability of Federal funds

## Overview of the Potter Valley Project

The Potter Valley Project (PVP) is an interbasin water transfer project diverting water from the Eel River to the Russian River. The Project is owned and operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). The project facilities include Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam, as well as a powerhouse and multiple water diversions. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, water supplied by the PVP was used by more than 600,000 people downstream of Potter Valley in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin Counties. Below Scott Dam, the Eel River flows 12 miles into Van Arsdale Reservoir, created by Cape Horn Dam. Water is then conveyed by a tunnel to the Potter Valley Powerhouse. In 2019, PG&E chose not to relicense the project, and the dams and hydroelectric facilities are to be removed. Ongoing water diversions into the Russian River through the PVP are critical to the health of the mainstem Russian River, to ongoing water supply, and to Russian River fisheries. Without the Eel River diversions, there could be water shortages at Lake Mendocino, which would impact the water availability to downstream users. However, the capacity of Lake Mendocino still needs to be increased to maintain adequate flood storage while meeting growing water supply demands.

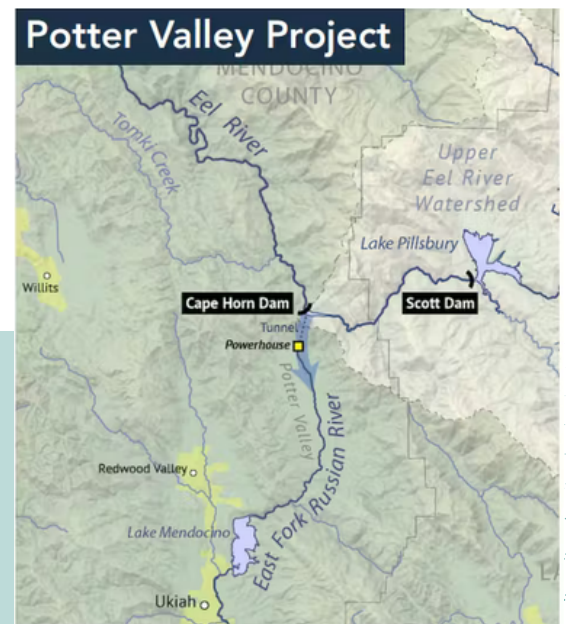


Image from: <https://www.rffc.net/potter-valley-project-a-northern-california-trans-basin-diversion>