

JAMES RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

Report to the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission

MSR 21-4 / USOI No. 202

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Adopted:

May 12, 2021

Profile: James Resource Conservation District		
Formation:	July 6, 1954	
Contact	Manny Amorelli, General Manager 8749 9th Street San Joaquin, CA 93660 (559) 693-4356 mamorelli@jamesid.org	
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 757 San Joaquin, CA 93660	
Website	http://www.jamesid.org/james-rcd/	
Principal Act	California Public Resources Code, section 9151, et seq.	
Board of Directors (5-member)	Board of Directors (5-member)	
	Micah H. Combs, President	Appointed 2019, expires 12/2022
	Riley Chaney	Appointed 2019, expires 12/2022
	Robert Motte	Appointed 2019, expires 12/2022
	Robert Barcellos	Term 12/2020 to 12/2024
Thomas Chaney	Term 12/2020 to 12/2024	
Board Meetings	Second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., as needed	
Staffing	One general manager	
Service Area	26,263 acres	
SOI update	Determine a SOI that coincides with the District's service area.	
Adopted Budget	\$200 (Fiscal Year 2019-2020)	
District Policies	No	
Formation:	July 6, 1954	

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Figure 1 - James Resource Conservation District Map



Figure 2 – 2007 consolidated SOI for the westside RCDs

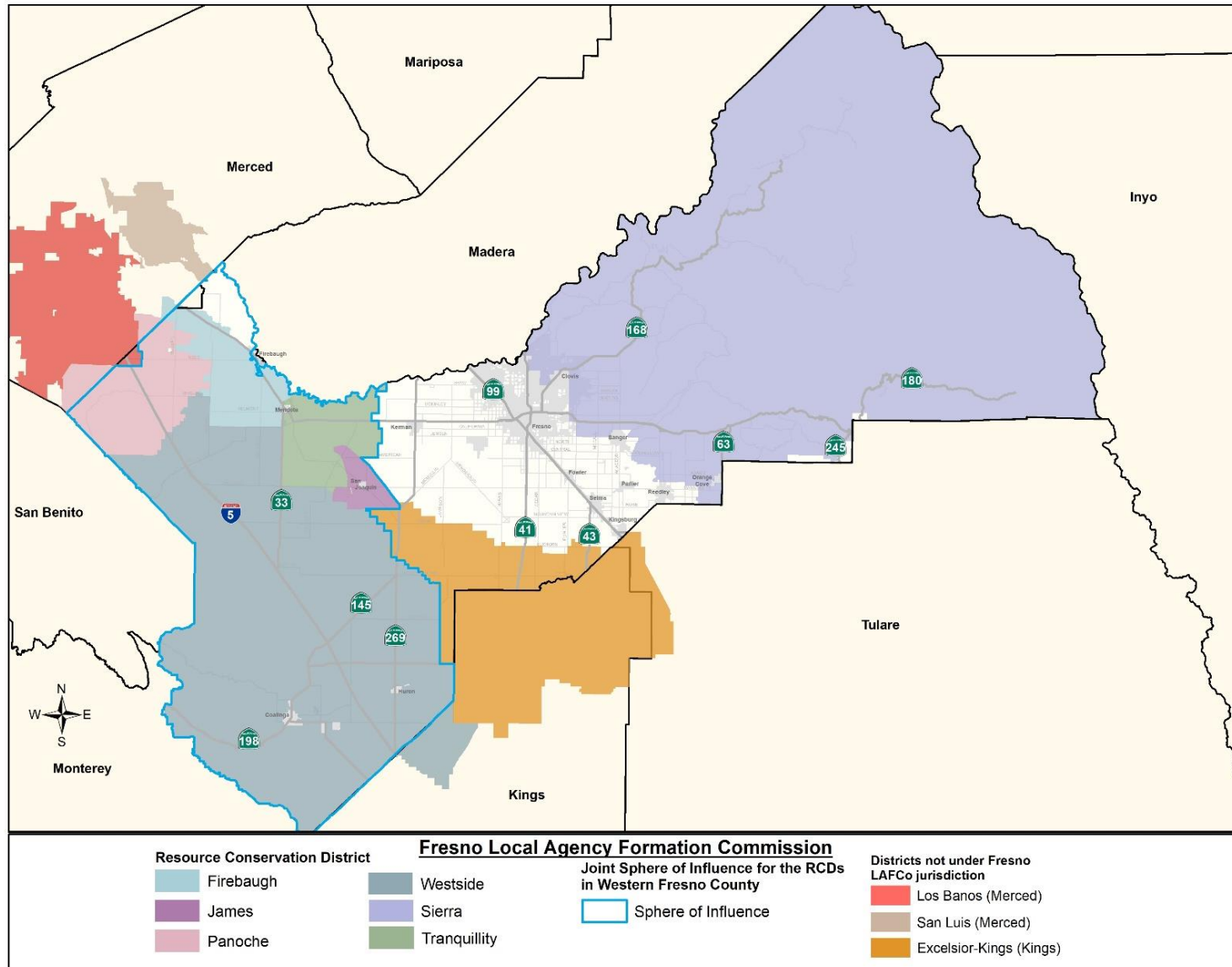
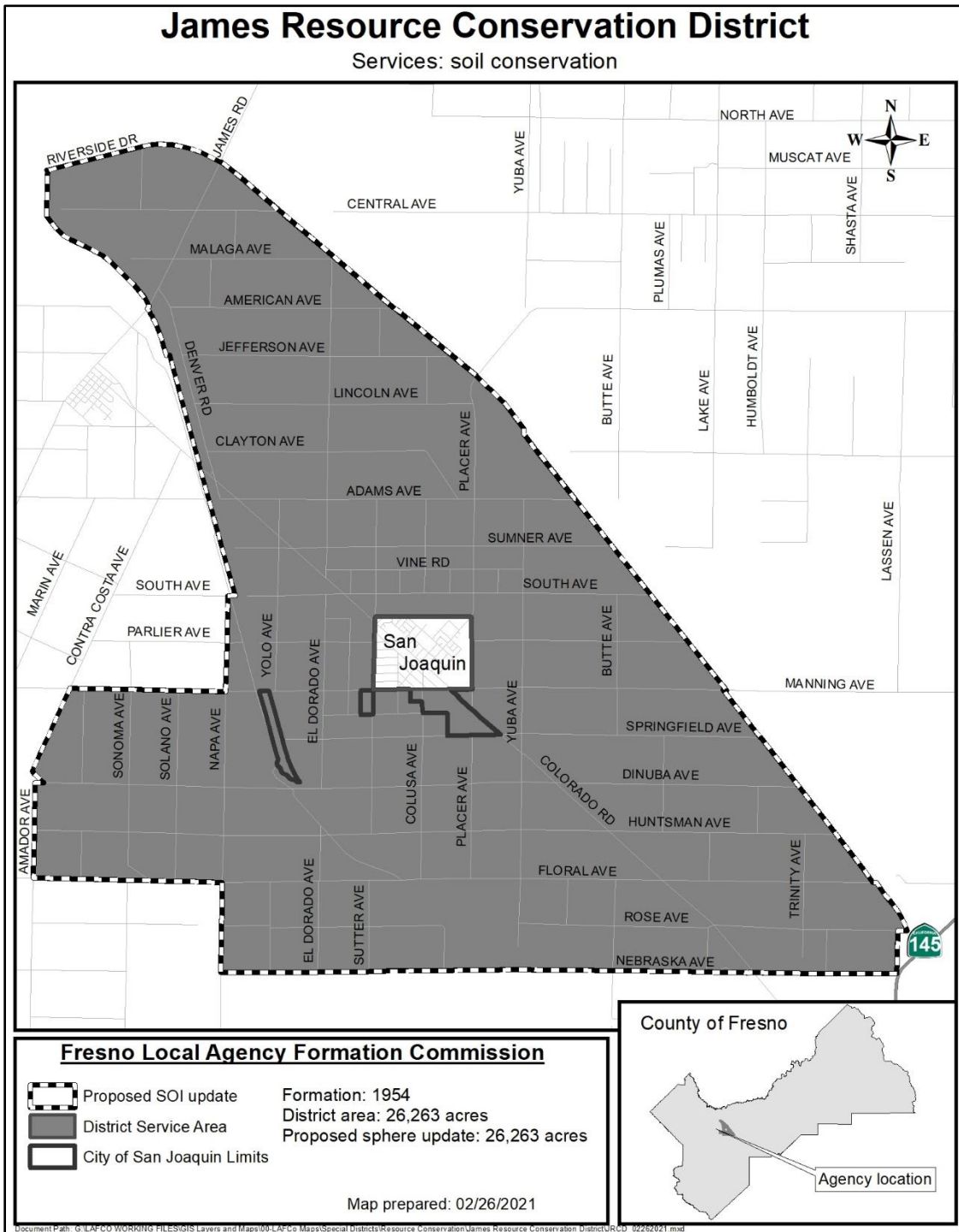


Figure 3 – Proposed SOI update for James RCD



1. Municipal Service Review

James Resource Conservation District (“James RCD” or “District”) was formed July 6, 1954, by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors as a Soil Conservation District.¹ The District’s initial purpose was to aid in the conservation of local resources near the City of San Joaquin.

The District operates in accordance with Public Resources Code (“PRC”) Division 9, Resource Conservation District Law.

Currently, the District’s primary purpose is to conduct outreach and technical assistance to growers, landowners, and land managers to voluntarily prevent soil erosion, irrigation management, and to protect agricultural water supplies within the District.

The District is an independent special district, meaning that it functions independently from the County of Fresno, the City of San Joaquin, and James Irrigation District. A five-member board of directors elected at large governs all aspects of the District. The District’s daily operations are overseen by one appointed District Manager.

Principal Act

Resource Conservation Districts are authorized under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code (“PRC”, also known as the “Principal Act”). The James RCD operates pursuant to PRC section 9001 et seq. which was enacted for the following purpose:

To provide for the organization and operation of resource conservation districts for the purposes of soil and water conservation, the control of runoff, the prevention and control of soil erosion, erosion stabilization, including, but not limited to, these purposes in open areas, agricultural areas, urban development, wildlife areas, recreational developments, watershed management, the protection of water quality, and water reclamation, the development of storage and distribution of water, and the treatment of each acre of land according to its needs.²

There are 95 RCDs in California, serving rural, urban, and suburban communities throughout the State.³ According to California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (“CARD”), the 95 RCDs in the State are grouped into the following ten regions: Bay-Delta, Central Coast, Central Sierra, High Desert, Modoc Plateau, North Coast, Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, SoCal Inland, Southern Baja, and non-district regions. RCDs in Fresno County are identified in the San

¹ Fresno County Board of Supervisors action summary minutes of public hearing June 29, 1954.

² PRC section 9001(a)(2).

³ California Association of RCDs, <https://carcd.org/rcds/>.

Joaquin Valley Region. The San Joaquin Valley Region consists of 16 RCDs spanning from San Joaquin County down to Kern County.

As of 2020, the County of Fresno is the principal county to six local RCDs:

- Firebaugh Resource Conservation District
- James Resource Conservation District
- Panoche Resource Conservation District
- Sierra Resource Conservation District
- Tranquillity Resource Conservation District
- Westside Resource Conservation District

Most RCDs in the State originated in the 1950's as local Soil Conservation Districts. The State Legislature broadened the purposes of Soil Conservation Districts in the 1970's resulting in a name change to more accurately reflect the role of the RCDs within California. Each RCD operates independently with its own governing board and is authorized by the principal act to define its own local goals, objectives, and priorities based on the issues and needs within its service areas. Generally, RCDs promote programs dealing with various types of conservation efforts, bring environmental awareness, and watershed stewardship.

Service Area and the 2007 Consolidated RCD Sphere of Influence

The District is solely within County of Fresno a near the City of San Joaquin. Neighboring RCDs include Tranquillity RCD to the north and west, Westside RCD to the west and south, and the Excelsior-Kings RCD to the southeast. The District's boundaries are generally Riverside Drive to the north, Amador Avenue to the west, Nebraska Avenue to the south, and the James Bypass waterway to the east, as shown on **Figure 1**.

The James RCD service area contains approximately 26,263 acres. The first James RCD SOI was adopted by LAFCo in 1976 and remained coterminous with the District's service area until 2007.

In 2007, the Commission approved a consolidated SOI encompassing approximately 1,342,718 acres for the six RCDs in Fresno County's westside, shown as **Figure 2**.⁴ The purpose of determining a single SOI for the RCDs was to facilitate the eventual consolidation of the six westside RCDs. The Commission reaffirmed this intent in 2011 and waived all LAFCo fees associated with a future consolidation proposal application to LAFCo. However, none of the six RCDs followed up on the recommended consolidation.

In 2019, LAFCo ordered the dissolution of Poso Resource Conservation District as an inactive special district pursuant to the proceedings included in Senate Bill 448 (Wieckowski).

⁴ Firebaugh, James, Panoche, Poso, Tranquillity, and Westside Resource Conservation Districts.

Currently, the 2007 consolidated SOI bounds the remaining five RCDs in Fresno County’s westside.

Given the lack of interest on the part of the affected RCDs to consolidate, this MSR update revisited the 2007 consolidated SOI recommendation with the District. The District informed LAFCo that the board no longer supports LAFCo’s 2007 direction to consolidate the District with the other westside RCDs. The current District board believes that it has the ability provide and tailor its own resource conservation programs that promote the conservation of soil, water, and farmland within the District.

District Growth and Population Projections

Most of the land within the District is under active agricultural operation with sparse rural residences. According to LAFCo’s 1976 James RCD SOI report, the City of San Joaquin’s original incorporated limits are not inside the James RCD.⁵ There have been nine annexations to the City of San Joaquin between 1960 to 2020. Of the nine annexations, none were detached from the James RCD. Approximately 220 acres inside the City of San Joaquin also overlap with the James RCD.

LAFCo obtained geographic information system (“GIS”) files derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (“ACS”) five-year reports for year 2012 through 2016, to estimate a current population for territory inside the District. According to ACS data for the years 2012 through 2016, U.S. Census block group units located within the unincorporated portion of the District show that there is an estimated total population of 552 residents, while approximately 752 residents reside inside the portion of the City of San Joaquin that overlaps with the District. Thus, LAFCo estimates that the District’s service area has an approximate total population of approximately 1,304 residents with the proviso that this estimate may be higher because the census block group boundaries do not exactly match with the boundaries of the District.

According to a draft report performed by the Fresno Council of Governments, the City of San Joaquin’s population declined by 521 between 2014 (4,026) and 2019 (3,505).⁶

The County of Fresno is the land use authority for the unincorporated portion of the District, and the City of San Joaquin is the land use authority for the incorporated portion of the District. The Fresno County General Plan designates majority of the land within the James RCD for agricultural use.⁷ The City of San Joaquin’s General Plan designates urban land uses for the incorporated land also within the James RCD.⁸

⁵ LAFCO SOI Report James Resource Conservation District, LAFCo Resolution No. SOI-157, March 24, 1976.

⁶ “Fresno COG 2050 Growth Forecast,” Applied Development Economics, June 17, 2020.

⁷ Fresno County General Plan Figure 1-5 Current Land Use, Figure LU-1a, Countywide Land Use Diagram, 2000.

⁸ City of San Joaquin General Plan, September 2013.

Most of the land in the James RCD is identified under active agricultural contracts; therefore, no growth in population is anticipated within the James RCD boundaries.

Based on the LAFCo record, annexation into the City of San Joaquin have not detached from the James RCD. The City of San Joaquin may experience limited growth over the next 20 to 25 years; however, the District does not anticipate it will affect its service provisions.

District services

During the preparation of this MSR, the District experienced a change in management. The District informed LAFCo that all work programs have been temporarily suspended to allow the new District Manager to research the District's background and programs in the past recent years. The new District Manager plans to request policy direction from the District board during the 2021 calendar year.

The following section presents an informational narrative of the projects and services that the previous District Manger was working to reinstate prior to his departure.

The District board is interested in reinstating its technical assistance program and expanding its educational resources to promote the conservation of water, soils, and air quality within the District. In 2019, the District began the process to establish a vision for the various programs and workshops that the District could provide.

The District has been working alongside with the James Irrigation District ("James ID"), the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts ("CARCD"), and the California Department of Conservation ("DOC") to increase its effectiveness to provide better assistance to its constituents.

In the late 1970s and early 80s, the District had a rental program that allowed growers to rent equipment owned by the James Soil Conservation District. The use of the rental equipment allowed growers to complete several projects and implement a number of conservation measures on their farmlands. The rental equipment is no longer serviceable and has been replaced by equipment that is now owned by James ID. The program has since transitioned exclusively to James ID and the James RCD is no longer involved in equipment rental.

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

A disadvantaged unincorporated community ("DUC") is defined by Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH") as an inhabited territory (meaning territory within which there reside 12 or more registered voters), or as determined by LAFCo policy, that constitutes all or a portion of a "disadvantaged community" as defined by section 79505.5 of Water Code. The State Water Code defines a "disadvantaged community" as a community with

an annual median household income ("MHI") that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income.

On February 12, 2020, Fresno LAFCo comprehensively updated its Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities ("DUC") database based upon updates demographic datasets to estimate MHI levels within the County of Fresno.

The 2020 DUC database relies upon information collected through the Commission's MSR Program, sphere of influence update program, and demographic information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau Americans Community Surveys, five-year reports for years 2012-2016.

The statewide annual MHI reported for years 2012 through 2016 was \$63,783. Therefore, the calculated threshold for a DUC is any geographic unit with a reported annual MHI that is less than \$51,026. Census block group data was used to provide the economic and population backgrounds for this section of the MSR. The list below details LAFCo's DUC measures for the Census block groups within the District's service area and requested SOI update.

There are two census block groups within the District's service area that meet the Water Code definition of Disadvantaged Communities based on reported MHI levels. However, both census block groups are inside the City of San Joaquin. Most of the territory within the District does not meet LAFCo's DUC density criteria of at least 15 dwelling units at a density not less than one unit per acre.

District Infrastructure

The District informed LAFCo that it does not own or operate any public facilities, capital infrastructure, or equipment necessary to provide a direct service to its constituents. The James ID lends office space to the James RCD to provide a workplace for the District Manager and a conference room for the James RCD to convene its board meetings.

District Finances

This section of the MSR analyzes financial information provided by the District to determine if the District has enough revenue and financial systems in place to provide service to its constituents. The analysis is based on annual budgets, most recent audited financial statements, and supportive documents provided by the District.

The District's fiscal year starts January 1st and ends December 31st. The District Manager prepares an annual budget for the District's operation that is adopted by the board of directors on or before January 1st each year.

The District has a modest budget with revenues largely being retained from local contributions. Revenue that is retained funds the District's expenditures for the upcoming year. Once a budget is adopted by the District board, it can only be amended by resolution action of the District. All budget appropriations lapse at the end of each the fiscal year.

For fiscal year ("FY") 2020, the James RCD budget amounted to \$200. For the same year, the District's expenditures amounted to \$200. The main expenditure was attributed to District's meeting expenses.

For FY 2021, the District's budget projects \$200 in revenue and expenditures are not expected to exceed revenues. For both FYs 2020 and 2021, the District's budgets are balanced, meaning that enough revenues were received to fund expenditures.

At the time this MSR was prepared, the District informed LAFCo that outside of the small contributions made to the District it does not have another source of regular income to fund projects. The District's ability to increase its service capacity relies on its ability to secure project-specific grant funding.

The District provided LAFCo with its most current independent financial statements for the years ended on June 30, 2000; 2005; 2010, and 2015 prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant. The District's finances are minimal and are audited once every five years.

Government Code section 26909 provides local agencies the ability to prepare financial audits on a five-year cycle subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors. A special district may request to replace the required annual audit with an audit covering a five-year period if the special district's annual revenues do not exceed the amount specified by the Board of Supervisors. In 1983, Fresno County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution that established \$5,000 as the operative budget limit for special districts.⁹ LAFCo observes that the next scheduled James RCD audit is due in 2021, for the five-year period of 2015 through 2020.

As part of adopting an annual budget, the District establishes a work plan for the upcoming year. The District's work plan is focused on grower education programs; for example, irrigated land regulations, irrigation system efficiencies, and providing quarterly information mailers to growers in the District.¹⁰

The previous District Manager informed LAFCo that he was working to develop new partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies that may facilitate future grant funding opportunities for the District.

⁹ County of Fresno, Resolution 83-242 adopted on May 24, 1983.

¹⁰ Email communication, James RCD General Manager Steven Stadler, February 24, 2020.

Public Facilities, Opportunities for Shared Facilities

It has been noted in this MSR that the James RCD enjoys use of James ID facilities. Historically, the District appoints the James ID's District Manager to also oversee the James RCD's programs. At the time this MSR was prepared, there were no opportunities identified for additional shared facilities that would present a benefit to the District. The District's service area overlaps or is proximate with the following local agencies:

Agencies that overlap with James RCD:

- City of San Joaquin (portion)
- Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District
- Fresno County Library District
- Fresno County Fire Protection District
- James Irrigation District
- Kings River Conservation District
- Reclamation District No. 1606
- West Fresno County Red Scale Protective District

Agencies adjacent to James RCD:

- Fresno Slough Water District
- Mid-Valley Water District
- Stinson Water District
- Westlands Water District
- Tranquillity Resource Conservation District
- Westside Resource Conservation District
- Excelsior-Kings Resource Conservation District

Nearby Groundwater Sustainability Agencies:

- Central Delta-Mendota Region Multi-Agency Groundwater Sustainability Agency (adjacent)
- County of Fresno GSA - Delta-Mendota Management Area (adjacent)
- James Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Overlapping)
- McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (adjacent)
- North Fork Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (adjacent)
- Westside Westlands Water District Groundwater Sustainability Agency (adjacent)

Government Accountability

Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies is evaluated as part of the MSR Program to encourage the orderly formation of local government agencies, create logical boundaries, and promote the efficient delivery of services.

The District operates under the authority granted by California's Resource Conservation District Law (Public Resources Code section 9151 *et seq.*) Among many services, the District's principal act empowers RCDs to conduct surveys, investigations, research items relating to the conservation of resources, the preventative, the control measures, and works for improvement when needed, and to publish the results of such surveys and disseminate the information.

The District's principal act mandates directors to seek the cooperation of local, state, and federal agencies in order to avoid duplication of surveys, investigations, and research activities.¹¹ A list of all the powers and duties granted to RCDs can be found under section 9401 of the PRC.

A five-member board of elected officials serves as the governing body of the James RCD. The five members of the board are elected by the voters within the District boundaries to serve four-year terms. The expiration of the term of any director does not constitute a vacancy, and the director holds office until his or her successor has qualified.¹² According to the District, due to a series of uncontested elections, current board members have been appointed in lieu of an election by Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Supervisorial District 1, consistent with requirements of the California Elections Code.

Each trustee is required to take the oath of office prior to being appointed to the District's Board and file a Form 700s – Statements of Economic Interests—upon taking office, annually, and upon leaving office. Form 700s are disclosures of personal economic interest, help to ensure that financial conflict of interest is avoided. Every two years, board members are required to participate in training that cover general ethics principles and specific laws concerning conflict of interest, prerequisites for of office and government transparency. The District informed LAFCo that all board members have satisfied these training requirements.

Two board seats are set to expire in December 2024. Three board seats are set to expire in December 2022. The District's board members serve as volunteers and do not receive compensation for attending district board meetings; however, consistent with the PRC, board members are entitled to be compensated for expenses incurred while performing their duties as board members, such as travel time for training seminars, workshops, or conferences.¹³

The District's board meetings are held on a quarterly schedule and on an "as-needed" basis when District business requires board action. The District board meets at the James ID office located at 8749 Ninth Street, San Joaquin, CA 93660. The District's board meetings are generally scheduled to occur on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. Generally, the James RCD meetings are held right after the James ID board meetings.¹⁴

¹¹ Public Resources Code section 9402.

¹² PRC section 9314.

¹³ PRC section 9303.

¹⁴ Email communication with the previous James RCD General Manager Steven Stadler, February 24, 2020.

Meetings are noticed consistent with Brown Act requirements, which include posting agendas and notices of hearings in public places. Public notices and agendas listing items to be considered by the board are displayed outside of the District office at least 72 hours before each meeting. District board meetings are open to the public. Landowners, residents, and the public may attend the board meetings.

Meetings of the board of directors are conducted by the District president in a manner consistent with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order. The James RCD board annually elects one of its members to serve as the District president and another member to serve as a vice-president. The District president presides at all meetings of the board, announces the Board's decisions on all subjects, decides all questions of orders, subjects, and signs all board ordinances, resolutions, and contracts approved by the District board. The president also performs any other duties imposed by the board, after first receiving approval by at least three members of the board. In the absence of the president, the vice-president assumes all duties of the president.

The James RCD has one appointed full-time District Manager that serves as the Board's executive secretary. The executive secretary is the custodian of all records of the proceedings taken by the board of directors and the District's financial records. The District Manager is responsible for the daily operations of the district.

Currently, the James RCD and James ID share a District Manager. The District Manager reports directly to the District board, oversees the work plan, monitors potential grant opportunities, schedule board meetings, and oversees the District's annual budget. Customers communicate with District either in person, by phone, or by emailing the District Manager.

A brief District narrative can be found on James Irrigation District's website (<http://www.jamesid.org/james-rcd/>). The new District Manager informed LAFCo that he was not aware that the District had a designated tab on James ID's website, or whether the previous manager planned to post additional information on this webpage. The District Manager plans to assess whether this temporary webpage assists the District meet the requirements of Senate Bill 929 (McGuire), the Special Districts Transparency Act of 2020.

The District is a member of the California Association of Resource Conservation District ("CARCD"). The CARCD advocates for its member districts with State and Federal agencies, policy makers, and individuals to ensure the resilience and health of California's water, soil, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources — today and for generations to come. The CARCD also provides legislative representation, educational resources, and district support and collaboration.

Any other matters related to effective or efficient service delivery

The goal of the MSR program is to provide local agencies with an assessment of their provision of services, make recommendations regarding areas of improvement, and determine whether an agency is equipped to effectively provide services within the updated SOI.

In 2007 through 2011, LAFCo found that the District was inactive because it did not have a work program or policies in place that reinforced a District mission. Several District accomplishments have occurred since the preparation of this MSR update that support a new vision for the District.

In 2017, a new District Manager was hired to the James ID. During his three-year tenure at James ID, the then District Manager of the James ID worked with the Fresno County Elections Department to fill vacancies on the James RCD board of directors. Currently, four out of the five District director seats are held by directors that are also on the James ID board.

In 2018, the District board met four times (February 13, June 12, August 14, and November 13). In 2019, the District board met three times (January 8, September 16, and November 19). At these meetings, the previous District Manager informed LAFCo that staff requested direction on various conservation topics related to potential District services that would benefit local growers.

The District board met on a quarterly basis to consider the various topics, including but not limited to:

- 2007 & 2011 LAFCo's Municipal Service Review Update for James RCD.
- Developing a vision and understanding for the James RCD.
- Identifying collaboration possibilities with CARCD and James ID.
- Establishing a work plan for James RCD.
- Adopting an annual budget.

2. Municipal Service Review Determinations

The LAFCo has prepared this MSR in accordance with Government Code section 56430. State law requires LAFCo's to identify and evaluate public services provided by the District.

The following provides LAFCo's written statements of its determinations with respect to each of the following seven topics:

- 1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.**
 - The County of Fresno is the land use authority for the unincorporated portion of the District, and the City of San Joaquin is the land use authority for the incorporated portion of the James RCD.
 - The Fresno County General Plan designates majority of the land within the District for agricultural use. The City of San Joaquin's General Plan designates urban land uses for the incorporated land also within the James RCD.

- According to LAFCo’s 1976 James RCD SOI report, the City of San Joaquin’s original incorporated limits are not inside the James RCD. Between 1960 to 2020, the City of San Joaquin has annexed nine times. Approximately 220 acres inside the City of San Joaquin overlap with the James RCD.
 - The District’s service area contains approximately 26,263 acres. Most of the land in the District is identified under active agricultural contracts; therefore, no substantial growth in population is anticipated in the District’s boundaries.
 - The City of San Joaquin may experience limited growth over the next 20 to 25 years; however, the James RCD does not anticipate it will affect its service provisions
 - According to ACS data for the years 2012 through 2016, U.S. Census block group units located within the unincorporated portion of the District show that there is an estimated total population of 552 residents, while approximately 752 residents reside inside the portion of the City of San Joaquin that overlaps with the James RCD.
- 2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**
- There are two census block groups within the District’s service area that meet the Water Code definition of Disadvantaged Communities based on reported MHI levels.
 - Most of the territory within the District does not meet LAFCo’s Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (“DUC”) density criteria of at least 15 dwelling units at a density not less than one unit per acre.
- 3. Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged, unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.**
- The District does not own or operate any public facilities, capital infrastructure, or equipment necessary to provide a direct service to its continuance.
 - James Irrigation District shares its office location with the James RCD to provide a workplace for the James RCD’s District Manager and a facility for the James RCD board of directors to convene.
- 4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.**
- The District has been working alongside with the James Irrigation District, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, and the California Department of Conservation to increase its effectiveness to provide better assistance to its constituents.

- The District is interested in reinstating its technical assistance program and expanding its educational resources to promote the conservation of water, soils, and air quality within the District.
 - During the preparation of this MSR, the District experienced a change in management. The District informed LAFCo that all work programs have been temporarily suspended to allow the new District Manager to research the District's background and programs in the past recent years.
 - The District's fiscal year starts January 1st and ends December 31st. The District Manager prepares an annual budget for the District's operation that is adopted by the board on or before January 1st each year. As part of adopting an annual budget, the District establishes a work plan for the upcoming year.
 - The District has a modest budget of \$200 with revenue largely from contributions. The largest expenditures are attributed to the planning and conducting the District's board meeting. For both Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, the District's budgets are balanced, meaning that enough revenues were received to fund expenditures.
 - The District Manager informed LAFCo that the District's finances are audited by an independent certified public accountant once every five years. The District provided LAFCo with its most current independent financial statements for the years ended on June 30, 2000; 2005; 2010, and 2015. The next scheduled James RCD audit is in 2021, for the five-year period of 2015 through 2020.
- 5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.**
- There were no opportunities identified for additional shared facilities that would benefit the District.
- 6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.**
- The District operates under the authority granted by California's Resource Conservation District Law. The District is an independent special district, meaning that it functions independently from the County of Fresno, City of San Joaquin, or the James Irrigation District.
 - A five-member board of elected officials serves as the governing body of the James RCD. According to the District, due to a series of uncontested elections, current board members have been appointed in lieu of an election by Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Supervisorial District 1, consistent with requirements of the California Elections Code.

- District board meetings are held on a quarterly schedule and on an “as-needed” basis when District business requires board action. The District board meets at the James ID office located at 8749 Ninth Street, San Joaquin, CA 93660. The District’s board meetings are generally scheduled to occur on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.
 - Meetings are noticed consistent with Brown Act requirements. Public notices and agendas listing items to be considered by the board are displayed outside of the District office at least 72 hours before each meeting.
 - The James RCD has one appointed full-time District Manager that serves as the Board’s executive secretary. The executive secretary is the custodian of all records of the proceedings taken by the board of directors and the District’s financial records.
 - The District Manager is responsible for the daily operations of the district. Currently, the same person that serves as James RCD’s District Manager also oversees James ID. The District Manager reports directly to the District board, oversees the work plan, monitors potential grant opportunities, schedule board meetings, and oversees the District’s annual budget.
 - A brief District narrative can be found on James Irrigation District’s website (<http://www.jamesid.org/james-rcd/>). The District Manager plans to assess whether this temporary webpage assists the District meet the requirements of Senate Bill 929 (McGuire), the Special Districts Transparency Act of 2020.
 - The District is a member of the California Association of Resource Conservation District (“CARCD”).
 - The District’s governance structure is appropriate to ensure adequate services are provided and managed. At the time of MSR preparation, the District’s government structure appears to be adequately structured to operate and fulfill its role as a services provider in the community.
- 7. Any other matters related to effective of efficient service delivery**
- In 2007 through 2011, LAFCo found that the District was inactive because it did not have a work program or policies in place that reinforced a District mission. Several District accomplishments have occurred since the preparation of this MSR update that support a new vision for the District.
 - In 2017, a new District Manager was hired to the James ID. During his three-year tenure at James ID, the then District Manager of the James ID worked with the Fresno County Elections Department to fill vacancies on the James RCD board of directors. Four out of the five District director seats are held by directors that are also on the James ID board.

- In 2018, the District board met four times (February 13, June 12, August 14, and November 13). In 2019, the District board met three times (January 8, September 16, and November 19). The new District Manager plans to request policy direction from the District board during the 2021 calendar year.

3. Sphere of Influence Determinations

LAFCo staff reviewed the District SOI update in light of the data collected during the MSR process, as well as from conversations with the District in order to provide the Commission a sound SOI update recommendation for its consideration.

Based on the District’s interest to reinstate services, its adopted budget, and work plan, LAFCo staff recommends the Commission to remove the District from the 2007 consolidated RCD SOI and issue the District its own SOI that is coterminous with the District’s 26,263-acre service area.

The District Manager informed LAFCo that the District board no longer supports LAFCo’s 2007 direction to consolidate the District with the other westside RCDs. Currently, the District board believes that it has the ability provide and tailor its own resource conservation programs that promote the conservation of soil, water, and farmland within the District. In summary, the service review found that the District is positioning itself to provide services within its service area, and it has adequate planning efforts in place that supports an update to the District SOI.

In determining the SOI of each local agency, the commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following items pursuant to Government Code Section 56425 (e):

- 1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agriculture and open space.**
 - The Fresno County General Plan designates majority of the land within the District for agricultural use. The City of San Joaquin’s General Plan designates urban land uses for the incorporated land also within the James RCD.
 - The District’s service area contains approximately 26,263 acres. Most of the land in the District is identified under active agricultural contracts; therefore, no substantial growth in population is anticipated in the District’s boundaries. There is no proposed change to the present or planned land uses in the affected area.
 - The City of San Joaquin may experience limited growth over the next 20 to 25 years; however, the James RCD does not anticipate it will affect its service provisions

- 2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.**
 - The District does not own or operate any public facilities, capital infrastructure, or equipment necessary to provide a direct service to its continuance.
 - The District is committed to reinstate conservation programs such as: to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to growers, landowners, and land managers to voluntarily prevent soil erosion, irrigation management, and to protect agricultural water supplies within the District.
 - The District is working with James Irrigation District, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, and California Department of Conservation to increase its effectiveness to provide better assistance to its constituents.
- 3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.**
 - The District operates in accordance with Public Resources Code Division 9, Resource Conservation District Law. Among many services, the District's principal act empowers RCDs to conduct surveys, investigations, research items relating to the conservation of resources, the preventative, the control measures, and works for improvement when needed, and to publish the results of such surveys and disseminate the information.
 - The James Irrigation District lends office space to the James RCD to provide a workplace for the District Manager and a conference room for the James RCD to convene its board meetings.
 - The District is working to develop new partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies that may facilitate future grant funding opportunities for the District.
- 4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.**
 - There are no relevant social or economic communities of interest in the District's service area.
- 5. For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, that occurs pursuant to subdivision (g) on or after July 1, 2012, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.**
 - The District does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

4. Recommendations

In consideration of information gathered and evaluated in this Municipal Service Review, it is recommended the Commission:

1. Receive this report and any public testimony regarding the proposed Municipal Service Review and proposed sphere of influence update.
2. Find that the Municipal Service Review is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15306 (Information Collection).
3. Approve the recommended Municipal Service Review determinations, together with any changes deemed appropriate.
4. Approve the recommended sphere of influence update determinations, together with any changes deemed appropriate.
5. Find that as a Lead Agency, Fresno LAFCo, it can be seen with certainty that the proposal does not have the potential to result in a significant effect on the environment, and that the proposal is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3).
6. Omit the James Resource Conservation District from the 2007 consolidated SOI for the westside Resource Conservation Districts
7. Determine a SOI for the District that is coterminous with the District's 26,263-acre service area, **as depicted in Figure 3** of the MSR.
8. Recommendations to the James Resource Conservation District:
 - a. Request that the District evaluate its temporary suspension of its work program/s and services, consider existing district goals, provide the District Manager policy direction whether resource conservation programs are attainable within James RCD.
 - b. That the District assess whether this temporary webpage on James Irrigation District's website assists the District meet the requirements of Senate Bill 929 (McGuire), the Special Districts Transparency Act of 2020.
 - c. Direct the District to report its actions in writing to the Fresno LAFCo no later than May 12, 2022.

5. Acknowledgements

This MSR and SOI update was prepared by Fresno LAFCo. Supporting documentation was made available through the effective partnership with the James Resource Conservation District. LAFCo extends its appreciation to James Resource Conservation District's District Manager for assisting in the development of this Municipal Service Review.

Available Documentation – documents used for the preparation of this report consist of public records and are available at the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission Office located at:

Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission
2607 Fresno Street, Suite B
Fresno, California 93721

The Municipal Service Review is available on Fresno LAFCo's website:

<http://www.fresnolaftco.org/MSR.asp>

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