

# Program Management for Wastewater Treatment Facilities Expansion in City of Los Banos

Los Banos, CA



**Aerial view of the City's facultative wastewater treatment ponds**

EKI served as program manager for the preparation of a Strategic Plan (Plan) for the upgrade and expansion of the City of Los Banos' Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and collection system. The City's wastewater treatment process uses facultative ponds. In order to accommodate future growth, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) required that the City upgrade its treatment plant to meet "best practical treatment control" technology requirements.

EKI conceived the Plan process to meet the requirements of the RWQCB that included not only the technical evaluation, but also a rate component. This tactic allowed the design engineers to develop alternative approaches to increasing and upgrading the WWTP while obtaining feedback on the rate impacts and matching the City's ability to raise funds for the project.

As program manager, EKl performed the following:

- Managed the consultant selection process and facilitated regular communications with City staff and elected officials.
- Managed two phases of engineering design and construction. Phase I involved the retrofitting of the existing facultative ponds with surface aerators to enhance treatment capacity and the evaluation of alternative pretreatment options for processing high strength wastewater from an industrial discharger; and Phase II involved the design and construction of the activated sludge WWTP.
- Evaluated alternatives for pretreatment of processing wastewater from local industrial dischargers, coordinating with the RWQCB regarding the potential impacts on the area's shallow groundwater, and assisting in the acquisition of additional land for the disposal of treated wastewater.
- Responsible for overall integration of CEQA, master planning, permitting, and rate study.
- Interfaced with the planning firm preparing the new General Plan regarding future water demands and wastewater flows that will be generated at build out of the new General Plan.
- Conducted a Salinity Study to identify and quantify the sources of salinity in the wastewater and a groundwater study to evaluate shallow groundwater quality in the vicinity of the wastewater treatment plant. The salinity study included a comprehensive salt mass balance, including salt loads from water supply, self-generating water softeners, and industrial and commercial dischargers.