Intake Consolidation and Fish Screen Project
Sutter County, California

The Meridian Farms Water Company (MFWC) provides irrigation water to about 10,000 acres in three distinct service areas in Sutter County, bounded by Sutter Bypass on the east and north, Tisdale Bypass on the south and the Sacramento River. The average annual water use is about 35,000 acre-feet, provided by groundwater, drain water reuse, and surface water diversions from the Sacramento River.

MFWC has three diversions along the Sacramento River – Meridian, Drexler, and Grimes. All diversions were previously unscreened and posed potential entrapment risks for Federally-listed fish species.

Since 2001, MFWC has engaged local interest groups, resource and regulatory agencies, and funding agencies for the Intake Consolidation and Fish Screen Project. MFWC will consolidate the three diversions into two, and install state-of-the-art fish screens at each consolidated intake. Because of the significant fishery protection benefits, the project has qualified for funding from the State’s Ecosystem Restoration Program and the Federal Anadromous Fish Restoration Program under the Central Valley Project Improvements Act.

Due to a shortfall in federal appropriations, MWFC has only completed Phase 1 of the project with fish screen installation and associated conveyance improvement at the smaller Grimes intake, and conveyance improvements for Drexler Pipeline in anticipation of the Phase 2 project. The Phase 2 project is necessary to realize the full benefits of this project.
MFWC completed the environmental review and permitting process in 2014 for Phase 2 Implementation which includes a new 135-cfs Meridian Diversion with two retractable cylindrical screens capable of operating under the new low-flow criteria for Sacramento River, and rehabilitation of the existing conveyance system to provide additional capacity to eliminate the Drexler diversion. Construction contract documents have been updated and ready to bid the project in 2023. The current estimated cost for Phase 2 is approximately $57.5 million.

In January 2021, MFWC was awarded a grant from the State for $15.7 million to complete Phase 2.

In response, the US Bureau of Reclamation has committed $9 million towards completion of Phase 2.

Due to the post-pandemic inflationary impacts on material costs and the current bid environment, MFWC request an additional $19.3 million of federal funds in FY24 to construct the project.