

Voluntary Agreements

Adapting Water Management for Thriving Fish, Wildlife and Communities

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and its members work collaboratively to deliver vital water supply and water quality for millions of Sacramento Valley residents, farms and businesses, while at the same time stewarding ecosystems to benefit endangered species. California water suppliers, farmers, cities, conservation organizations and state and federal agencies have developed an innovative approach to restore the ecosystem of the Bay-Delta watershed by balancing environmental and water supply needs through an unprecedented and promising initiative called Voluntary Agreements.

Simply providing vast flows through the Delta for the past decades has proven ineffective and futile. A different approach is necessary. Best ecological practices have shown land for habitat carefully integrated with water is critical to restore fish and other endangered species and are front and center of the Voluntary Agreements. Voluntary Agreements provide a robust and science-based portfolio of funding, strategically managed flows, habitat enhancements, floodplain utilization and close collaboration amongst stakeholders. Participants of Voluntary Agreements are already at work with early implementation projects, making habitat enhancements and activating floodplain acreage to benefit fish and wildlife in each of the region's four rivers.

Adaptively Managed Flows

Based on annual hydrology and science-based evaluations, this contemporary approach will improve habitat conditions for salmon, steelhead and hundreds of other wildlife species.

► *Water suppliers on the American, Feather, Sacramento and Yuba rivers will deliver up to 250,000 acre-feet of water for tributary flows and the Delta*

Floodplain Reactivation

Dedicated water for out-of-stream floodplain reactivation will support recovery of endangered species by producing needed food resources and suitable habitat acreage for fish and wildlife.

► *Nearly 180,000 acres of enhanced floodplain habitat identified in the Sacramento River Basin for salmon rearing, spawning and fish food production*

Habitat Enhancements

Science-driven habitat enhancement projects with expedited permitting will nurture endangered salmon and other species throughout their lifecycles and support water-dependent species along the Pacific Flyway, including ducks, geese and shorebirds.

► *More than 85 projects identified by Sacramento River Basin water suppliers*

Committed Funding

At least \$5 billion over fifteen years contributed by water suppliers across the state, state bond funds and the federal government.



Core Values of Voluntary Agreements



Collaboration and regional governance for effective decision making

- California Natural Resources Agency
- Federal, state and local agencies
- Conservation organizations



Robust and Structured Science Program to guide flows and habitat cultivation

- Field studies and data reviews
- Testable hypotheses
- Informed decision making



Integration of rivers operations

- Communication and resource sharing maximize support for fish and wildlife
- Reliable supply for cities, rural communities and farms

California must get past differences on water. Voluntary agreements are the path forward.

Governor Gavin Newsom
CalMatters, Feb 4, 2020

To learn more, visit
VoluntaryAgreements.org




voluntary agreements
A fresh approach to California's water