

# Reactivating the Floodplains in the Sacramento River Basin

How three efforts within the Sacramento Valley aim to reconcile water supply security and flood protection with ecosystem function in the face of a changing climate.



## Addressing California's 21st Century Challenge?

California's defining 21st century challenge is to reconcile water supply security and flood protection with ecosystem function in the face of a changing climate. Central to this are efforts to restore populations of salmon amidst hotter and drier weather exacerbated by climate change. California recently released its first salmon strategy identifying six priorities and 71 actions to build healthier, thriving salmon populations in California. Within the Sacramento Valley, three major efforts are underway that are using science and engineering to develop multi-benefit solutions to restore salmon populations, while also reducing flood risk, increasing aquifer recharge, expanding recreational access, building agricultural sustainability, and improving the overall health and resilience of the Sacramento River ecosystem.

## Why Floodplain Reactivation Partnerships Exist

The Floodplain Forward Coalition, the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership and Floodplains Reimagined are rooted in collaborative efforts to educate, advocate and implement projects that are to the ultimate benefit of fish, people and wildlife in the Sacramento Valley. These efforts are focused on achieving sustainable water resources infrastructure through the beneficial integration of science, engineering and natural systems, while respecting historic floodplain land uses.



These three efforts overlay and build upon other initiatives including the Central Valley Joint Venture, Sacramento River Watershed Program, Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (previously called Voluntary Agreements), NRCS Rapid Watershed Assessment, Central Valley Flood Protection Plan's Conservation Strategy, Central Valley Salmon Habitat Partnership, and California's Salmon Strategy.



## Floodplain Forward Coalition

**Purpose:** Advocacy and Education of Floodplains

**Lead Agency:** Northern California Water Association

**Setup:** Larger footprint that encompasses the footprints of the implementing partnerships. Active at State and Federal Levels to promote floodplain investment and actions

The Floodplain Forward Coalition is a group of 27 landowners, growers, water suppliers, conservation non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies who are committed to restoring ecological function of the Sacramento River valley by investing in multi-benefit water projects that restore habitat for fish and wildlife while enhancing flood protection, improving aquifer recharge and sustaining farming and managed wetland operations.

These diverse groups have come together to dedicate their time, resources, and advocacy to champion a two-billion-dollar portfolio of nature-based solutions that reactivate floodplains and support vibrant landscapes, wildlife, cities, farms, rural communities, and river systems across the Sacramento Valley.



## Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership

**Purpose:** Project Implementation

**Lead Agency:** Central Valley Flood Protection Board

**Setup:** Coalition directed by the implementation of SB369, establishing governmental oversight and regulatory compliance; distinct footprint

The Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough Partnership is working to execute multiple-benefit projects that improve flood protection, fisheries and wildlife habitat, water supply and water quality, agriculture, and recreational opportunities.

Through direction set forth by Senate Bill 369, YBCS is working to develop programmatic and expedited approaches for regulatory compliance, identify funding mechanisms for project implementation and long-term operations and maintenance, and develop strategies to foster regional agricultural sustainability, recreational opportunities, and long-term water supply reliability.



## Floodplains Reimagined

**Purpose:** Project Implementation and science advancement

**Lead Agency:** Reclamation District 108

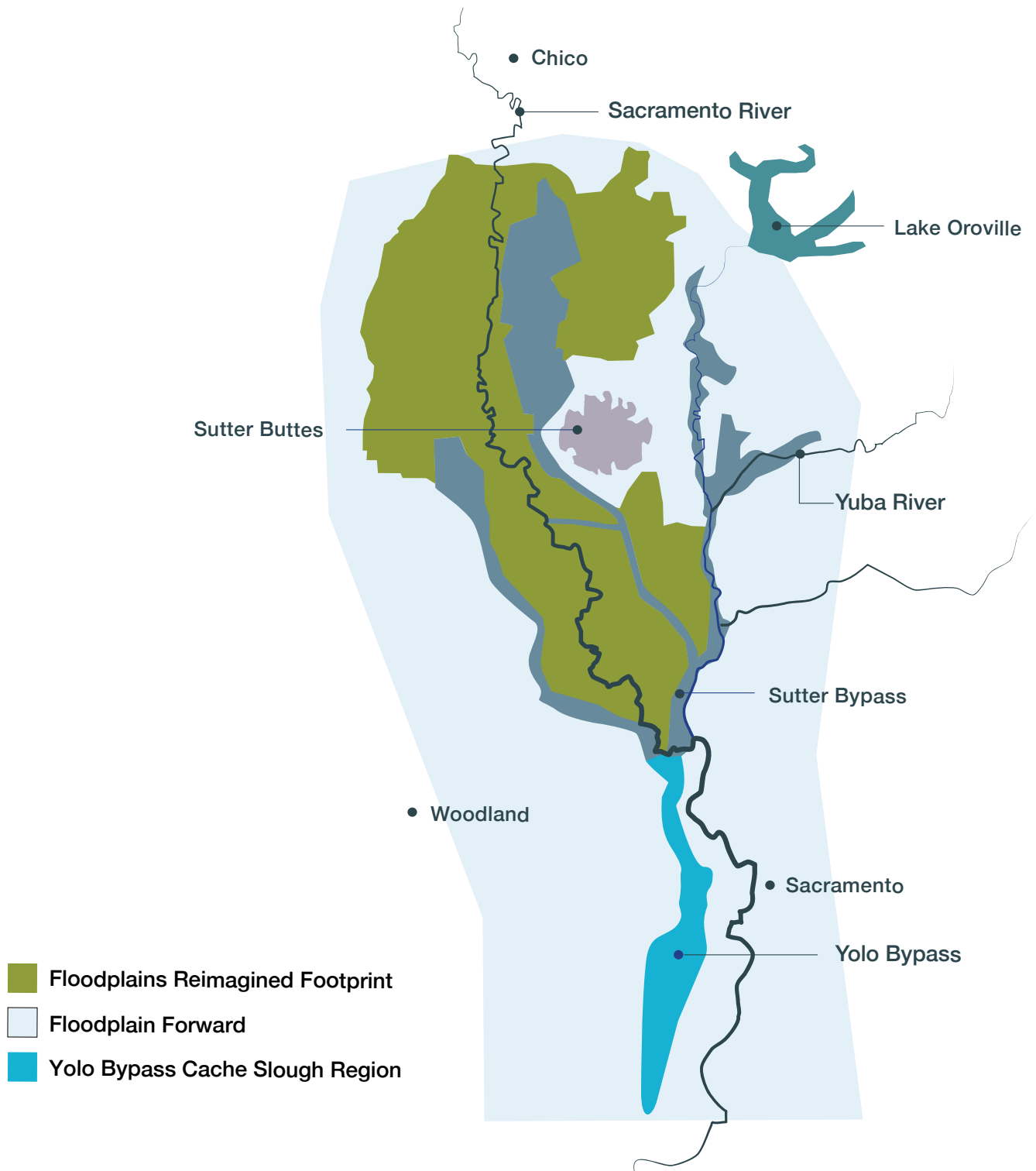
**Setup:** Coalition built on voluntary partnerships and involvement; distinct footprint

Floodplains Reimagined is a partnership that has come together across three distinct basins, Colusa, Butte, and Sutter, across half million acres, to improve floodplain function while honoring existing land uses and voluntary actions. The diverse stakeholder group is developing a shared vision and advancing floodplain science to manage historic floodplains for healthy rivers and landscapes while identifying and implementing projects as funding is available. Landowners and land managers have active roles in the development and implementation of this vision alongside their water agency and NGO partners.



# Floodplain Focused Across the Sacramento Valley

The efforts of the Floodplain Forward Coalition, the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership and Floodplains Reimagined cover the core of the historical floodplains located from Chico to the Delta.



# A Formula for Fish, People, & Wildlife

## Setting Policy

Agreements to Support  
Healthy Rivers & Landscapes



+

## Executing



**Implementing**  
YBCS Partnership



**Educating**  
Floodplain Forward



**Implementing**  
Floodplain Reimagined

=

## Success

Vibrant Rivers & Landscapes



## Creating a Functioning River System

The projects and efforts underway represent the common ground between many local, state and federal projects that are working concurrently in the Sacramento Valley to support fish, people and wildlife. These are no regrets, landscape-scale, shovel-ready projects supported by the entire political community. These coalitions recognize that modernizing outdated water infrastructure improves the resilience of both California's aquatic ecosystems and water supply for people as we contend with increasingly extreme weather patterns which result in more devastating floods and droughts.

We are now poised to make monumental change to achieve our ultimate goal of creating a healthy river and landscape in California's Sacramento Valley and believe further partnerships, funding sources and permitting will lead to a new found resiliency in the coming decades.

# Building Upon Strategic Initiatives

The Floodplain Forward Coalition, the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership and Floodplains Reimagined, overlay and build upon other initiatives including:

## The Central Valley Joint Venture

**(landowners, water districts and State of California):** The Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) was formally organized in 1988 and was one of the original six priority joint ventures formed under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Renamed the Central Valley Joint Venture in 2004, the Management Board now

consists of nineteen public and private members. The CVJV is currently administered through a coordination office within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and is guided by a Management Board that receives input and recommendations from a variety of working committees. [Learn More >](#)

## Sacramento River Watershed Program

**(landowners, water districts and State of California):** This effort is led by the SRWP and 34 North. SRWP brings together dozens of groups and thousands of people concerned about the health of the Sacramento River and its watershed. With a proven track record of

success, SRWP operates through consensus-based collaborative partnerships, coordination of research and monitoring, and enhancing mutual education among the stakeholders of the Sacramento River Watershed. [Learn More >](#)

## Healthy Rivers and Landscapes

**(landowners, water districts and State of California):** A comprehensive, multi-year solution (sometimes referred to as the “Voluntary Agreements”) that brings together dozens of water agencies with the state and federal governments to pool resources and take concrete actions to provide targeted river flows

and expand habitat in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and Bay Delta. These environmental improvements are guided by scientific monitoring and collaborative decision making. [Learn More >](#)

## Rapid Watershed Assessment

**for the Floodplain Forward Partnership in the Sacramento River Watershed**

**(NRCS):** This Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) assessed the watershed’s physical attributes, existing watershed scale efforts, and proposed conservation

efforts within the watershed footprint. The Floodplain Forward Partnership developed some background resources and a Portfolio of 33 proposed projects to which NRCS assessed for USDA funding. [Learn More >](#)

## California's Salmon Strategy

To restore populations of salmon amidst hotter and drier weather exacerbated by climate change, California recently released its first salmon strategy identifying

six priorities and 71 actions to build healthier, thriving salmon populations in California.

[Learn More >](#)

## Central Valley Salmon Habitat Partnership

Through science-based objectives and prioritized actions to implement them, the Salmon Partnership will advance recovery and maintenance of viable, self-sustaining spring-run and winter-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead populations, and also help restore and maintain robust and commercially and recreationally

viable numbers of fall-run and late-fall Chinook salmon, in perpetuity for the benefit of those species and the public. The Salmon Partnership focuses on the conservation and management of wild, native salmon and steelhead, but integrates the needs of other native fish species as well.

[Learn More >](#)

## Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Conservation Strategy

The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) Conservation Strategy (Conservation Strategy or Strategy) is a primary component of the CVFPP. It aligns with and contributes to the attainment of all CVFPP goals, while

focusing on improving ecosystem quality, quantity, function, and sustainability within the State Plan of Flood Control.

[Learn More >](#)

