

# HOW Water Management Investments

IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT  
IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



Water suppliers in the Sacramento River basin are working closely with federal and state agencies and conservation and community organizations to improve their operations and modernize infrastructure. Rural and urban organizations have joined together as the North State Water Alliance (Alliance) to manage water resources for future generations. The north state region is home to over three million people and California's state Capitol.

The American, Feather, Yuba and Sacramento rivers provide water for cities and urban areas, rural communities, farms and ranches, fish and wildlife and recreation benefits. It is critically important to guarantee reliable and high-quality water for a strong business climate, ready workforce, high quality of life, healthy environment and vibrant communities.



# NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

North State Water Alliance members have unique opportunities to use natural infrastructure to better manage our aquifers, forests and floodplains.



Photo: Brié Coleman / CWA

## Healthy Forests Have Multiple Benefits

Forests and meadows in the Sierra Nevada, Coastal Range and Cascade Mountains are primary water sources for the mountain and foothill communities, most of the Sacramento River basin and throughout California. Healthy headwaters:

- increase water supply reliability.
- improve water quality.
- reduce impacts from catastrophic wildfires.
- increase renewable energy supplies.
- enhance habitat.
- improve response to climate change and extreme weather.

Responsible and active forest management is a foundational element for watershed uses. Examples include:

- Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority Master Stewardship Agreement
- Placer County Water Agency's French Meadows Forest Restoration Program
- Yuba Water Agency's watershed restoration activities through Forest Resilience Bonds

## Reactivating Floodplains Protects Public Safety and Ecosystems

The Sacramento River basin is fertile ground to reactivate our floodplains, which can enhance river ecosystems and public safety during flood events. Through practical experience, flood and water resources managers, working with conservation partners, have developed the best available science to re-activate floodplains.

Through dynamic conservation strategies, partners collaborate to improve California's ecosystems and water systems to:

- sustain the return of migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway.
- revitalize river food webs to support recovery of salmon and other fish populations.
- recharge groundwater aquifers.
- improve flood protection from increasing storm severity and a changing climate.



Photo: Steve Beckley



## Groundwater Recharge Improves Dry-Year Benefits

Alliance members are developing natural infrastructure for active groundwater management and additional aquifer recharge. The Sacramento Regional Water Bank is an innovative groundwater storage program to store water in the underlying basin during wet periods for use during dry periods now and in the future.

The Sacramento region's unique, natural infrastructure is ideal for the Water Bank. We are situated at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers near Folsom Reservoir and the North American and South American river sub-basins.

The Water Bank and other programs actively recharge aquifers throughout the basin. Using a multi-benefit approach helps enhance climate resiliency, support environmental needs, provide improved water management flexibility and other benefits.



# 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE

Alliance members support new and improved 21st Century infrastructure to ensure climate resiliency and better prepare our region for floods, fires and droughts.



Photo: John Hannon

## ◀ Sites Reservoir Will Enhance Dry-Year Supply

Climate change is forecasted to drastically reduce snowpack and alter precipitation patterns. Water managers see a strong need for 21st century investments like Sites Reservoir to enhance:

- water management flexibility
- climate resiliency
- the ecosystem
- future dry-year supply

Sites new style of infrastructure as an off-stream, regulating reservoir will store water by capturing it during high runoff periods and releasing it when needed. With its location upstream of the Delta and near the Sacramento River, water from Sites will support multiple benefits in the Sacramento River basin, the Delta and the rest of California. This includes helping California's farms, businesses and cities have a reliable water supply.

## ▶ RiverArc Will Support Healthy Riverine Habitat

Residents in the Sacramento area receive most their water from the American River. Water purveyors in the region are looking "into other water supply sources to protect fish habitat in the scenic American River and provide alternate supply.

RiverArc will help Sacramento water providers follow through on water supply agreements, meet current and future drinking water demands, protect fish species and provide climate change resiliency. Using existing, modern fish screens with excess capacity, RiverArc will require two new facilities: a water treatment plant and pipelines to move water through the system.



# A FOCUS ON FIXING, NOT FIGHTING



Photo: Brië Coleman, PCWA

## ◀ Advancing Voluntary Agreements

The Alliance supports voluntary agreements as a better alternative to regulatory processes such as the State Water Board's Water Quality Control Plan Update. Alliance water providers are coordinating 15-year agreements with:

- California Natural Resources Agency
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- State and Federal water contractors

Natural infrastructure and Sites Reservoir are important elements of voluntary agreements.

The comprehensive proposal helps meet water quality objectives in the State Board's Bay-Delta Plan. This is a more collaborative alternative to the traditional adversarial State Water Board hearing process. The agreements include a portfolio of instream flows, reactivated floodplains and habitat restoration measures to benefit fish and wildlife.





## Northern California Plans for Their Water Future

CALIFORNIA'S NORTH STATE is a unique place to live, work and raise a family. Our region is on the leading edge of ecological and economical sustainability. The Sacramento River basin is world-renowned for its natural abundance of productive farmlands, wildlife refuges and managed wetlands, and rivers that support and feed fisheries and natural habitats.

The basin nourishes and sustains agriculture fields, fish and wildlife habitats, recreation and a high quality of life. Through planning and multi-use projects, North State Water Alliance members will provide water for California's future success and prosperity.



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