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Northern California Water Applauds Federal Approval of Record of Decision for Sites Reservoir

Major milestone advances water reliability, drought resilience, and ecosystem improvements statewide

Sacramento, January 23, 2026 — The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) today applauds the federal administration's approval of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Sites Reservoir Project, a major milestone that moves the project closer to construction and strengthens California's long-term water supply reliability.

"This is a meaningful step forward for California," **said Roger Cornwell, Chair of the Northern California Water Association.** "The federal approval of the Record of Decision for Sites Reservoir reflects years of collaboration among federal, state and local water agencies, science-based planning, and engagement with local communities. Sites is a modern project that looks to the future by capturing water during wet periods—when the Sacramento Valley is generally seeing high flows—and storing it for critical uses during drier years."

As Sacramento River Basin water resources managers look to serve multiple benefits in the future, the importance and need for Sites Reservoir becomes clear. Sites Reservoir is an innovative 21st century water project: an off-stream regulating reservoir on the west-side of the Sacramento Valley that can store water for the future by capturing it during high runoff periods, then releasing it for various beneficial uses at a later time.

Located in Colusa and Glenn counties, Sites Reservoir is widely recognized as a key solution for improving water reliability throughout California by supporting state and federal goals for drought preparedness, ecosystem health, and emergency response.

A Reservoir Built for California's New Reality

As California faces more extreme swings between flood and drought, Sites Reservoir will provide flexible storage that helps manage water during wet periods and deliver supplies during prolonged dry periods for multiple benefits. By increasing system capacity during high-flow events, Sites will help reduce strain on existing reservoirs and improve drought resilience across the state.



Sourcing a vibrant future through responsible management of water—the essential resource that millions of people, thousands of farms, and our communities all depend upon, while also nourishing the millions of birds and fish that live in this region.

“Sites Reservoir has widespread and deep support from the people living, working, and playing in every corner of Northern California,” **said David Guy, President of NCWA**. “This support comes from a basic understanding that we need to more creatively manage our precious water resources into the future to serve cities and rural communities (many of which are disadvantaged), our farms and ranches, fish and wildlife, and recreation.”

Benefits for Northern California

NCWA emphasized that Sites Reservoir represents long-term value for Northern California and the statewide economy and environment, including:

- **Improved drought-year reliability** for farms, wildlife refuges, and communities throughout California
- **Greater ability to capture storm and high-flow water** when available
- **Support for groundwater recharge and long-term sustainability**
- **Enhanced operational flexibility** to meet water quality and ecosystem needs
- **Economic stability for rural communities** that provide food, jobs, and habitat stewardship
- **A collaborative path forward with** project partners, local leaders, water agencies to responsibly advance Sites Reservoir while addressing complex regulatory, engineering, and environmental considerations.

Sites Reservoir also complements a broader portfolio of Sacramento Valley solutions—including improved floodplain management, fish passage and habitat restoration, and integrated water planning—by adding supply flexibility when conditions allow.

NCWA looks forward to continuing to support Sites Reservoir as the project moves toward financing, final design, and construction.

About the Northern California Water Association

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) represents water agencies, irrigation districts, and communities across the Sacramento Valley committed to promoting reliable water supplies, healthy rivers and landscapes, and sustainable working lands that support local economies, fish and wildlife, and California's food system.



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