NCWA

Northern California Water Association

Ridgetop to River Mouth Water Management

Strategic Planning and 2022 Priorities

Approved by Board of Directors on January 5, 2022

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and water leaders in the region continue to re-imagine our water system in the Sacramento River Basin* and we look forward to working with our many partners in 2022 to cultivate a shared vision in the region for a vibrant way of life. We will also work to harmonize our water priorities with state, federal, and other regions' priorities to advance our collective goal of ensuring greater water and climate resilience throughout California for our communities, the economy and the environment.

I. Introduction

This document provides our organizing ideas and roadmap for 2022. We call upon the leaders in the region and the breadth of experience we have in the Sacramento River Basin to advance these priorities. We continue to integrate fresh new ideas for water management into these priorities and we welcome additional partnerships to further explore and design a re-imagined water system and implementation of the various elements necessary for water and climate resilience.

Californians have built an amazing and highly managed water system. But this system is under strain as our values in California water continue to evolve and we face increasing recurrence of droughts, floods and fires. California's current population of 40 million will grow to 50 million by 2050. We have the most abundant agricultural bounty in the world, we are graced with a stunning landscape and related natural infrastructure, we are the 5th largest economy in the world, and people pursue endless recreational opportunities in every part of the state. Water is essential for all of these special features that define California. A balanced and contemplative approach that embraces and then enhances California's unique values in water is needed for this great state to continue to protect and enhance our communities, economy, and environment.

Successful comprehensive water management planning by local water agencies in the Sacramento River Basin has set our region on a path toward future resiliency. To be sure, conservation is a way of life in the Sacramento River Basin and comprehensive efforts are already underway for sagacious and efficient water management that will serve as a solid foundation for water resources managers to integrate these ideas and the modern priorities described below into local and regional water management efforts.

* For purposes of this document, the Sacramento River Basin is the northern part of the Great Central Valley, which includes the watershed that drains into the Sacramento River upstream of the Delta. The terms Sacramento River Basin, Sacramento Valley and Sacramento River Hydrologic Region are all used interchangeably and include the Valley floor, foothills, and headwaters, unless otherwise noted. See the Water District and Company Map.

II. The Pillars for Sustainable Water Management in the Sacramento River Basin

Advancing a water portfolio creates an opportunity to re-imagine our system by examining our current system and then working hard to evolve this system to reflect California's values now and into the future.

The following pillars embrace our culture and ethos in the Sacramento River Basin and guide our priorities and actions:

- Foster a **regional approach** among the water suppliers and local governments in the region. The NCWA leadership will work with water suppliers, local governments and landowners to aggressively and strategically implement these priorities and the NCWA vision to advance the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the Sacramento River Basin by enhancing and preserving its water rights, supplies, and water quality for the rich mosaic of farmlands, cities and rural communities, refuges and managed wetlands, and meandering rivers that support fisheries and wildlife. This regional approach safeguards water rights, contracts and area of origin principles—for today and future generations—through sustainable water management for all beneficial uses and users of water in the Sacramento River Basin.

- Focus on **population health and wellness** and the importance of enhancing our world so people can live healthier and more fulfilling lives. This moment in time provides an opportunity for introspection, a time to think about our families and friends, what is essential in our lives, and how we can contribute to population health and wellness. In the Sacramento River Basin, our team is working hard to envision the role that water suppliers and local governments can serve to help people live healthier and more fulfilling lives. We have learned and increasingly believe that population health is inextricably tied to climate resiliency and ecological health: our rivers, soils, air, trees, watersheds and floodplains—and the way they function together.

- **Fix not fight**. Sacramento River Basin leaders are committed to fixing problems rather than fighting over them. In this spirit, we believe the collaborative approach described below is central to water resources management in the region and is highly preferred to acrimony and litigation. As an example, an adversarial, regulatory approach to updating the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan will only delay and misdirect valuable resources away from the collaborative and innovative water management described in this roadmap. Instead, we are advancing Voluntary Agreements: The New Way Forward as a catalyst for all the creative and innovative actions described in this document,

including priority habitat and flow actions that will advance species recovery and continue the momentum and collaboration necessary to successfully implement a resilience portfolio.

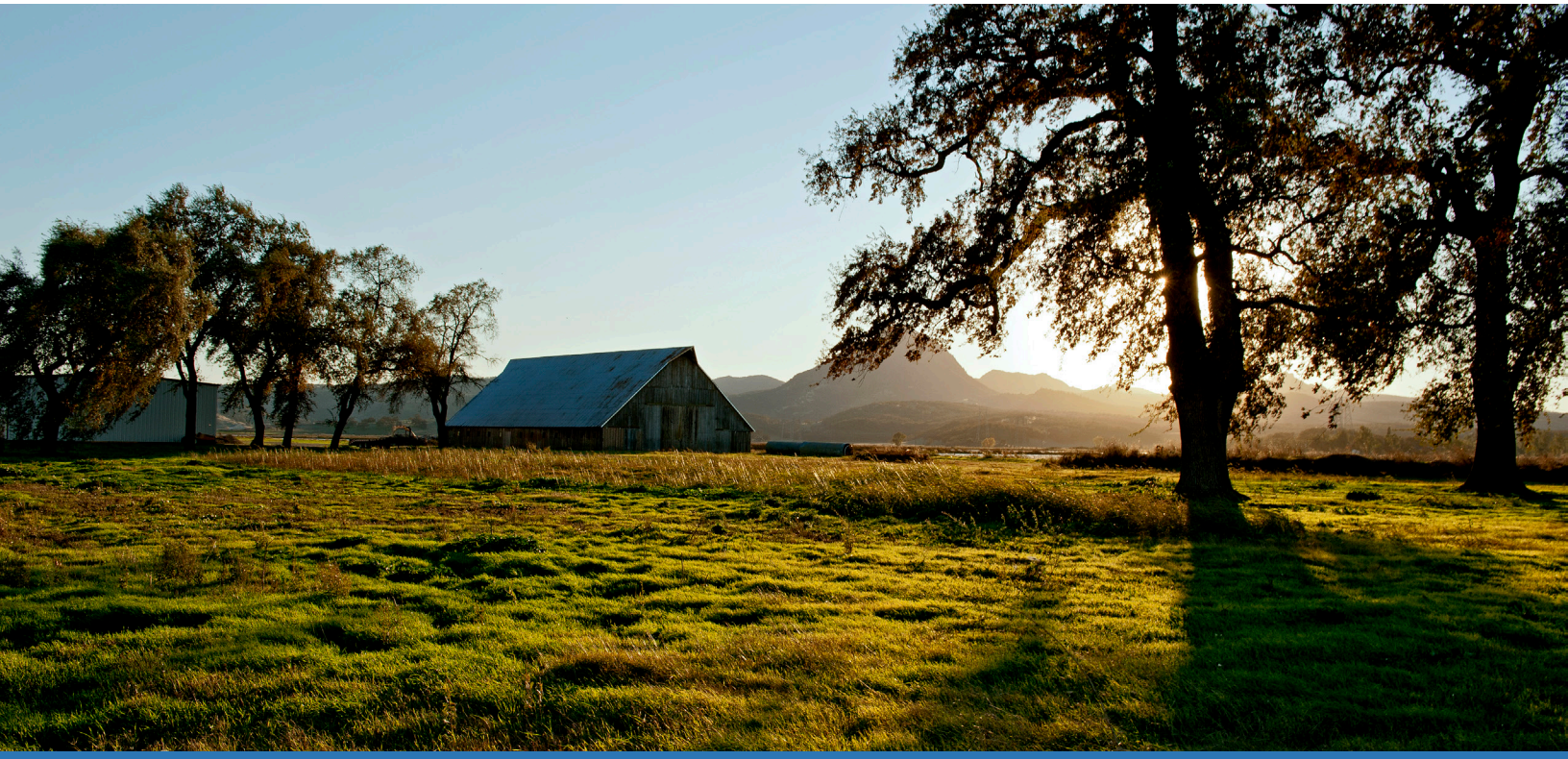
- Advance **multi-benefit water management** approaches that meet multiple needs at once, which include cities, farms, fish, birds, other wildlife, recreation, and hydropower. Multi-benefit water management is the hallmark of the Sacramento River Basin. See Managing Water in the Sacramento Valley for Multiple Benefits.

- Support **nature-based solutions** that use our natural and working lands to sustain our economy, support our unique biodiversity and contribute to the global food supply. These working landscapes, which provide essential benefits for our economy, health and quality of life—including clean water, nutritious food, outdoor recreation—and contribute to the state's climate goals and protecting our communities from wildfire, floods, droughts and extreme heat. These programs will "advance multi-benefit, voluntary and cooperative approaches that protect and restore biodiversity while stewarding natural and working lands, building climate resilience, and supporting economic sustainability" as called for by the Governor.

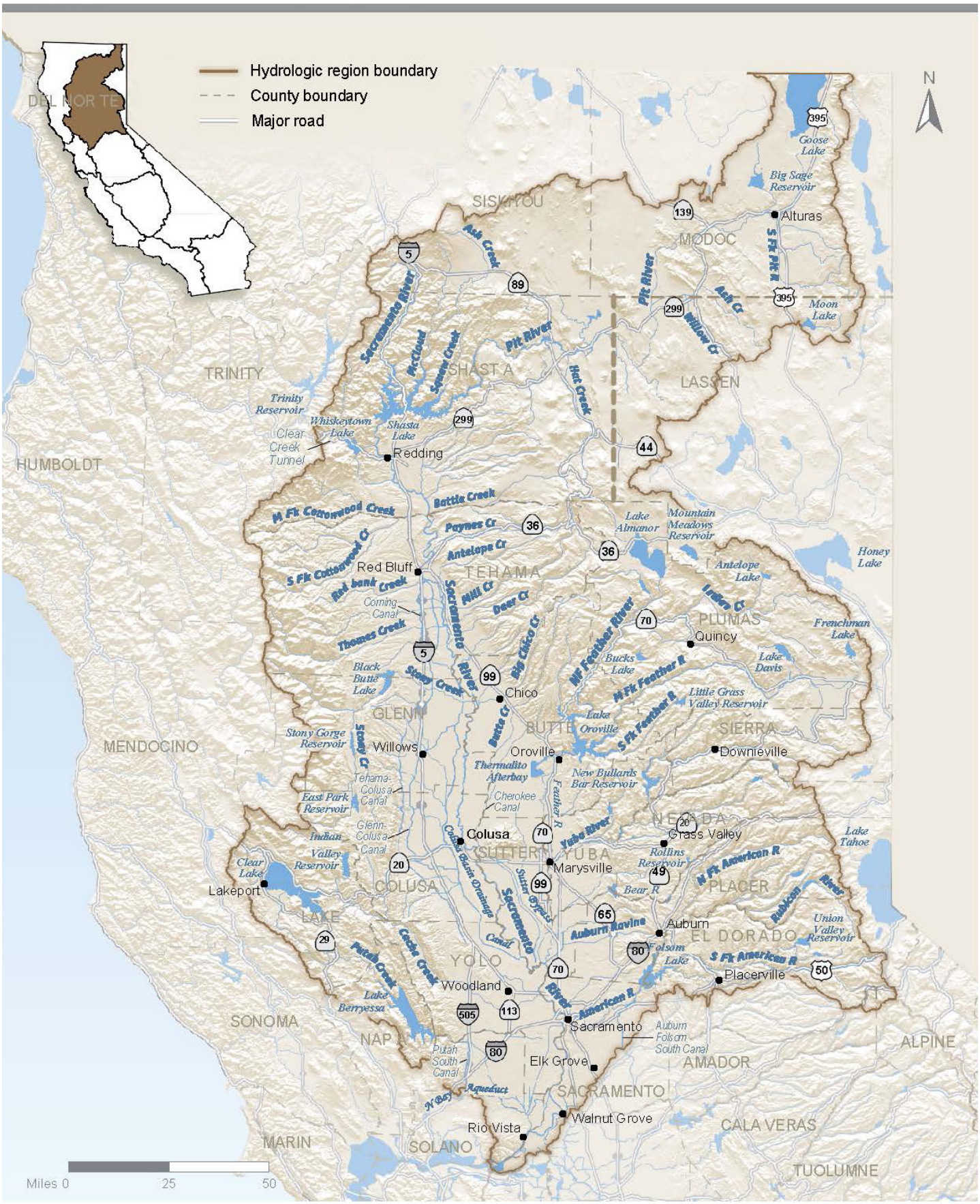
- Prepare for **dry years**. Every element of this portfolio is designed to provide improved resilience during dry years, yet there are other specific measures that we will take in 2022 to better prepare for dry years. NCWA has a Northern California Coordination Task Force that convenes in dry years to improve communication, help implement the water rights priority system and ensure water for all beneficial uses. The Task Force works with the State Water Board to implement the water rights system and to better prepare for the next dry period and water resources managers are coordinating with state and federal agencies to prepare for and work together in these drier years.

- Prepare for a **changing climate**. Recent studies have shown that California's winters are likely to be warmer and the hydrology is likely to be more concentrated in fewer months of runoff. Slowing water down as it moves through the Sacramento River Basin, more effectively utilizing floodplains, groundwater and surface storage reservoirs will help adapt working landscapes and ecosystems to climate variability.

- A **new culture of partnerships** building on the model for success that has emerged over the past decade, with state and federal agencies encouraging, facilitating and supporting regional and local agencies with the capability, expertise and local knowledge to design and implement the essential elements of a water portfolio. Every policy priority described here would benefit from an approach where state and federal agencies support local agencies or joint powers authorities.
- Build **trust and credibility** across the different communities engaged in water through honest discourse and mutual respect, while working with various technical experts to develop and make decisions based on credible information and data.
- We are an **inclusive organization** that values the perspectives, contributions, and experiences of all Californians. These values are reflected in our work. We have an active water leaders' program where we seek diverse participation from leaders with a both a passion and interest in Northern California water issues and making the Sacramento River Basin a better place. We will continue to find solutions to ensure safe, reliable and affordable water for all communities through our Drinking Water Solutions Network. As we move forward, we will continue to listen to, engage with, and learn from our fellow Californians.
- Our strategic goal is to inspire **thoughtful public discourse and collaboration** that points positive and brings people together—working towards a re-imagined water system that will assure reliable, affordable and high-quality water supplies will be available to serve multiple benefits in the Sacramento River Basin now and for future generations.
- Although our priorities are set in the Sacramento River Basin where we devote our time and energy, these ideas hold promise to help address **statewide needs** and we will integrate our priorities with other regions as part of a statewide solution.



Sacramento River Hydrologic Region



CA Water Plan Update 2013, Vol. 2, CA Dept. of Water Resources

III. Policy Priorities: A Roadmap for Climate Resilience and Multi-Benefit Water Management

We offer the following priority areas from our vantage in the Sacramento River Basin. In arriving at these priorities for 2022, we focus on areas that show great promise for California's future and can immediately add value to California's current water system in a manner consistent with NCWA's mission and our shared vision in the region for a vibrant way of life.

A. The Importance of Voluntary Agreements: The Fix Rather Than the Fight

California water suppliers from throughout the state have advanced a "Collaborative Framework for the Voluntary Agreement Program to Update and Implement the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan" that builds upon the State's "Framework for Voluntary Agreements" presented by the state team and is a robust program that can be immediately implemented for the benefit of fish, wildlife, farms and cities. As described in the *Roadmap for Achieving Voluntary Agreements*, the implementation of the Voluntary Agreements (VAs) is central to a successful Water Resilience Portfolio and the VAs are the cornerstone for local and regional agencies to continue ridgetop to river mouth water investment and management and to resolve conflict by bringing the state and federal agencies together to solve California's water challenges.

- **Ridgetop to River Mouth Water Management**. In the Sacramento River Basin, the VAs will enable the various parties to advance ridgetop to river mouth water management, with holistic watershed management for multiple benefits as described below in more detail.
- **Resolution of Litigation and Regulatory Challenges**. There is currently a quagmire of litigation surrounding the Biological Opinions (BiOps), Incidental Take Permit (ITP), and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) proceedings on the Yuba and other rivers. The VAs are a mechanism to help resolve these disputes in a coordinated way that ensures adequate measures for fish and wildlife, while providing the regulatory stability necessary to advance water management as described below.

Sacramento River Basin leaders are committed to fixing problems rather than fighting over them. In this spirit, we support the Governor's vision to create a collective effort "to cross the finish line on real agreements to save the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta. We must get this done for the resilience of our mighty rivers, for the stability of our agricultural sector, and for the millions and millions of people that depend on this water every day."

B. Ridgetop to River Mouth Water Management

There are unique opportunities in the Sacramento River Basin to advance ridgetop to river mouth water management, which can best be envisioned by looking holistically at: 1) salmon recovery, 2) headwaters and forest health management, 3) floodplain reactivation for public safety and fish and wildlife, 4) sustainable groundwater management (including groundwater recharge and banking), 5) bird and snake recovery programs, 6) Sites Reservoir, 7) water quality for communities, ecosystems, and all beneficial uses, and 8) water transfers. This holistic approach is described in detail in Ridgetop to River Mouth.

These opportunities are central to the Water Resilience Portfolio and embody Governor Newsom's Executive Order for nature-based solutions that "advance multi-benefit, voluntary and cooperative approaches that protect and restore biodiversity while stewarding natural and working lands, building climate resilience, and supporting economic sustainability." The necessary investments are described in more detail in the North State Water Alliance's *How Water Management Investments Improve the Environment in Northern California*. These opportunities not only prepare our landscapes for periodic drought cycles, but also help adapt them to climate variability.

1. Salmon Recovery

Ridgetop to river mouth water management is essential for the recovery of the four runs of salmon in the Sacramento River Basin, as significant efforts are underway to improve conditions for every freshwater life-stage of salmon as they migrate up and down the river systems, and to avoid a weak link in the salmon life-cycle.

The Sacramento Valley Salmon Recovery Program will benefit all fresh-water life stages of salmon through the implementation of projects in the upper, middle and lower reaches of the regions' rivers and creeks, as well as the historic floodplain as described below. This includes a concerted effort to improve all freshwater life-stages for salmon: spawning gravel, temperature management for incubation, rearing habitat, migratory corridors, and nourishment, as well as avoiding predation. The Sacramento Valley Salmon Recovery Program will continue to be used to coordinate and prioritize salmon recovery actions with a focus on advancing the NOAA Fisheries Recovery Plan and the California Natural Resources Agency's Sacramento Valley Salmon Resiliency Strategy. Many other water management actions from ridgetop to river mouth will also help improve salmon conditions.

2. Headwaters and Forest Health

The forests and meadows of the Sierra Nevada, Coast Range and Cascade Mountains are the source headwaters for the Sacramento River Basin and much of the State of California. Healthy headwaters can increase water supply reliability, improve water quality, reduce impacts of catastrophic wildfires, protect our small rural communities, increase renewable energy supplies, enhance habitat, and improve resilience to climate variability and extreme weather.

Unfortunately, the past eight years California has experienced a statewide wildfire emergency of unprecedented scale, with the Sacramento River Basin completely surrounded by fires. In total, more than 4.3 million acres—over 6,800 square miles covering four percent of the state's surface area—burned in a single year. Combined with the dramatic impacts and tragic loss of life from recent fires, these events have left Californians with a new awareness of wildfire risks and underscore the need for additional efforts to mitigate and manage the risks of wildfire and protect California's headwaters.

Responsible and active forest management is a foundational component of efforts to promote healthy headwaters. As California shifts its focus from immediate emergency response needs to longer-term efforts to enhance and expand the active management our forested headwaters, the actions taken by Sacramento River Basin water managers and their partners provide scalable models for improving the health of our headwaters and reducing wildfire risk. Examples of these management activities include the Placer County Water Agency's French Meadows Forest Restoration Program in the American River watershed and the Yuba Water Agency's pioneering efforts in forest protection and watershed restoration, including financing these activities through Forest Resilience Bonds. These programs are leading examples of innovative, collaborative, and replicable models for improving forest health that will continue in future years.

3. Reactivating our Floodplains

The Sacramento River Basin is fertile ground for developing a new path to reactivate our floodplains as a new way forward. We strongly support the *Floodplain Forward Coalition* approach to protect public safety and integrate best available science about how river ecosystems function with the practical know-how of farm, flood and wildlife refuge managers. Implementing these dynamic conservation strategies will build resiliency in California's ecosystems and water systems by sustaining the abundant return of migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway, revitalizing river food webs and supporting the recovery of salmon and other fish populations, recharging groundwater aquifers, and improving flood protection in an era of increasing storm severity and climate variability. To further advance these efforts, we have a working group of diverse partners pursuing efforts to reactivate the floodplain in the Sacramento River Basin on both the wet and dry sides of the levees.

4. Sustainable Groundwater Management

Recent assessments of both groundwater levels and quality show that the Sacramento River Basin is generally in balance and sustainable with respect to our groundwater resources. This is a result of the concerted, long-term efforts by local agencies working with landowners and state and federal agencies to promote sustainable water management in the region. There are, however, pockets in the region that need additional monitoring, scrutiny, and management to ensure that local entities can keep our groundwater resources sustainable, both for quantity and quality. The experience in 2014-15 and 2020-21 with dry years and lack of surface water supplies brought this into focus, with additional wells, increased water demands, and water quality issues throughout the Valley. Ongoing conjunctive management of surface water and groundwater has long played an important role in the balanced use of these resources and will continue to play an increasingly important role as groundwater use expands and intensifies in certain parts of the Sacramento Valley.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) provides important opportunities for local agencies to manage water resources in a sustainable manner. With local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) submitting Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in early 2022, the NCWA Groundwater Management Task Force will continue to coordinate with GSAs and their consultants throughout the region and with the Department of Water Resources. The objective is to support GSAs (counties, cities, water agencies and other special districts) and landowners throughout the region to help them implement the foundational GSPs for the Sacramento Valley, including coordinating efforts across the Valley floor, providing education, and fostering mutual respect among agencies. Active management by GSAs through the GSPs across the entire Sacramento Valley floor will be essential for regional sustainability by 2042.

NCWA will help provide technical support to add value to local GSPs to address issues that cut across local agencies, such as surface water/groundwater interconnections, land use linkages, and groundwater quality information developed through the Coalition's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program requirements. This will also include a coordinated monitoring program for both surface water (i.e., through the revitalized stream gage network envisioned by SB 19) and groundwater resources.

Active groundwater recharge utilizing the region's natural infrastructure will be important in many parts of the Sacramento River Basin to maintain and help achieve sustainability, particularly where groundwater levels may be declining in localized areas, or not recovering during wet periods as quickly as they have in the past. Because groundwater plays such an important role in supporting working landscapes and ecosystems during drought and under potential future climate scenarios, we will continue to focus efforts to assist local agencies in advancing groundwater recharge to maintain or achieve sustainability.

5. Bird and Terrestrial Recovery Programs

The Sacramento River Basin has an amazing ecosystem that is closely integrated with farmlands and rural communities. There is a concerted effort to improve and bring this ecosystem to life as follows:

We will work with the Central Valley Joint Venture and our partners to advance its Implementation Plan, which will include efforts to improve water supplies for refuges, ricelands and managed wetlands that provide vital habitat for birds and other terrestrial species. We will also seek to incorporate voluntary conservation programs that would support/encourage the use of nesting cover crops on farm fields that could be idled or fallowed.

We will also work with federal and state fish and wildlife agencies to help local agencies and landowners improve conditions for the Giant Garter Snake (GGS) by helping implement the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2017 Recovery Plan for the Giant Garter Snake. This will include helping ensure water for "habitat block pairs" as described in the recovery plan.

We have learned from recent experience that planning in advance to further develop and refine freshwater ecosystem budgets will be essential to serving water for multiple beneficial uses, particularly during drier years. Freshwater ecosystem budgets offer a new approach to integrate environmental water management into our water system to provide specific, targeted benefits rather than the old model of constraining water rights during critical periods with the hope that this action alone will save species. This approach, in turn, will allow us to work collaboratively to evolve from reactive efforts to prevent species decline into a more proactive program to actively promote species recovery in a more comprehensive manner. These opportunities are described in more detail in Freshwater Ecosystem Budgets in the Sacramento River Basin.

6. Sites Reservoir

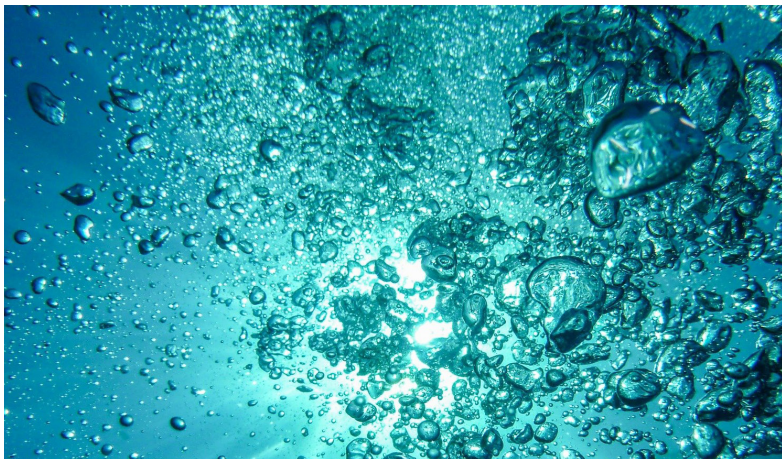
As Sacramento River Basin water resources managers look to serve multiple benefits in the future, the importance and need for Sites Reservoir becomes clear. Sites Reservoir is an innovative 21st century water project: an off-stream regulating reservoir on the west-side of the Sacramento Valley that can store water for the future by capturing it during high runoff periods, and then releasing it for various beneficial uses at a later time. With its location upstream of the Delta and near the Sacramento River, water in Sites Reservoir would serve multiple benefits in the Sacramento River Basin, as well as the Delta and the rest of the state. Recent dry years have shown the value that these off-stream reservoirs provide California communities and regional water management.

Sites Reservoir would be a dramatic enhancement to California's water system and the first storage project in California with a dedicated supply for the environment. This facility would provide multiple benefits to improve aquatic habitat conditions and withstand dry year conditions. This reservoir would be operated to accommodate and address the uncertainties created by a changing climate and improve environmental and water supply system resilience. Sites Reservoir can provide a freshwater ecosystem water budget (described above) that would help provide flexibility and make water available during drier years--which would help ensure water availability for the ecosystem. Most importantly, Sites Reservoir would significantly improve the state's water management system in drier periods and restore much needed flexibility and reliability that have been lost in the system.

Recent climate studies have shown that California's winter runoff is likely to remain similar in volume but come in fewer months of the year, concentrating runoff and increasing flood risks. Adapting to this challenge requires infrastructure that can store surplus water when it is available and deploy it for ecosystem and human uses when water is not available. Sites is one of the best opportunities to re-imagine our water system in the 21st century, prepare for future climate variability, and add value to our current water system by providing high-quality water to enhance natural infrastructure, the environment, public safety, the economy, and quality of life for Californians.

7. Protecting and Enhancing Water Quality for Communities, Ecosystems, and All Beneficial Uses

NCWA is committed to a comprehensive set of actions to protect and enhance water quality in the Sacramento River Basin, including work to ensure access to safe drinking water for all communities. These actions include the ongoing implementation of programs to address the full scope of water quality issues in the region, as well as supporting efficient and effective policies to support this work.



- **Protecting Source Water Quality: The Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition**

  NCWA will coordinate the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition and assist its members and subwatershed groups in comprehensive efforts to protect and enhance water quality. The goal is to protect and ensure the availability of high-quality water in the Sacramento River Basin for drinking water, aquatic species and farming, now and into the future. This is described in Ensuring High Quality Water in the Sacramento River Basin for Communities, Ecosystems and Farms and the related video. This work is focused on continued implementation of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) for both surface water and groundwater quality and the Basin Plan Amendment for CV-SALTS, as well as groundwater quality issues arising under SGMA.

  The Coalition will: 1) continue to develop a robust set of surface and groundwater quality data that can be utilized to advance water management priorities across the region, including safe drinking water and SGMA implementation; 2) develop and advance partnerships with commodity groups (e.g., walnuts, almonds, alfalfa), UC Cooperative Extension Crop Advisors, state and local agencies

(e.g. CDFA, Agricultural Commissioners, Resource Conservation Districts) and NGOs to advance the understanding of healthy soils, nitrogen management practices and cover cropping in protecting water quality; 3) initiate stakeholder discussions in the Yolo Basin to provide equitable access to safe drinking water to economically disadvantaged communities and formulate the Early Action Plan and Management Zone Structure for CV-SALTS; 4) advance the understanding of management practices that reduce nitrogen to groundwater basins; 5) identify opportunities to update risk of impairment in groundwater basins through the State Water Board's Domestic Well Needs Assessment and Aquifer Risk Assessment; and 6) capitalize on State funding (e.g., Environmental Farm Incentives) to contain costs of the Irrigated Lands Program on agriculture. The Coalition will continue to coordinate with the California Rice Commission in these efforts.

- **Ensuring Access to Safe Drinking Water: The North State Drinking Water Solutions Network**

All Californians have a right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water under the "human right to water" established in state law in 2012. While significant progress has been made toward realizing this right in recent years, there is both an urgent need and an important opportunity to take additional long-term actions to ensure that all communities in the Sacramento River Basin have access to water that meets the health-based standards of the state and federal Safe Drinking Water Acts.

Sacramento River Basin leaders are committed to advancing a comprehensive approach to expand and ensure access to clean, safe and affordable drinking water for all communities. This approach is described in detail in Ensuring Access to Safe Drinking Water for All California Communities. NCWA convenes the North State Drinking Water Solutions Network as a forum to share information and coordinate efforts aimed at ensuring that all communities in the Sacramento River Basin have access to safe drinking water. Successful implementation of sustainable drinking water solutions will require utilization of both the policy tools and financial resources available to state agencies as well as the knowledge and expertise of local communities and water managers. By emphasizing partnerships with local agencies and administrators, the state will be best positioned to identify and help implement sustainable, locally-appropriate solutions that addresses the various challenges (i.e., technical, managerial and financial issues) that result in a lack of safe and reliable drinking water for communities in the Sacramento Valley and statewide. These efforts to return water systems to compliance through local actions under new and existing state programs will continue with a goal to have no systems out of compliance within the next several years.

8. Facilitate Water Transfers

Water transfers are an important tool that provide California's water system with water management flexibility and resilience, and can optimize our existing and planned water infrastructure. Water transfers—both intra- and inter-basin—are a basic and yet important element of a water portfolio aimed at meeting the needs of California's communities, economy, and environment through the 21st century. The transfers allow water resources managers to work collaboratively to address water needs on a regional and/or statewide basis, especially during dry periods. The State's Water Resilience Portfolio provides the state will "ease movement of water across the state by simplifying water transfers [and] substantially reducing approval time for transfers while providing protections for the environment and communities." (§21). We will continue to work with the Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Reclamation, and the State Water Board to expedite their water transfer processes for all these beneficial purposes.

9. Delta Conveyance

Although improved and modern Delta conveyance is not a priority action for Sacramento River Basin water resources managers, we believe it could be important for California and thus Sacramento River Basin water resources managers welcome the opportunity to work with the state and federal agencies and project proponents on modern Delta conveyance that does not redirect impacts (including water supply, environmental and financial impacts) to the Sacramento River Basin. This work is important to avoid impacts to the region's mosaic of farms, cities and rural communities, fish, birds, and recreation. We believe there are ways the Central Valley Project and State Water Project can be operated to support modern Delta conveyance, the co-equal goals, and protecting the Delta as a place--while continuing to serve multiple beneficial uses in the Sacramento River Basin and promote regional water sustainability for all of these beneficial purposes. Success in this effort will be a large step forward to break down the old binaries of north versus south.

C. Partnerships and Collaboration

The leaders in the Sacramento River Basin—as part of the "fix it" culture—work with diverse partners in every component of water management and we welcome additional partners who are willing to roll up their sleeves to help advance solutions. The NCWA Board of Directors has both a Conservation and an Agricultural Task Force to advance these partnerships. Some of the partnerships include:

- Voluntary Agreement Partners.
- Floodplain Forward Coalition.
- Pacific Flyway partnerships, including the California Rice Commission, Ducks Unlimited, California Audubon, California Waterfowl, Nature Conservancy, Point Blue, and refuge managers.
- Salmon partnerships, including American Rivers, California Trout, Ducks Unlimited, EDF, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited.
- MOU with CalTrout, Ducks Unlimited and California Rice Commission to promote functioning ecosytems and sustainable water supplies in California's Sacramento Valley.
- Headwaters and Forest Management Partners.
- Water suppliers, including project exporters (including the State Water Contractors and federal Central Valley Project contractors), the San Joaquin Tributary Association, EBMUD and the North Delta Water Agency.
- The North State Water Alliance, including other water, business and local government partners in Northern California.
- Statewide influencers, including the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), the California Water Foundation and the Water Education Foundation.

We also embrace a new culture of partnerships building on the model for success that has emerged over the past decade, with state and federal agencies encouraging, facilitating and supporting regional and local agencies with the capability, expertise and local knowledge to design and implement the essential elements of a water portfolio. Every policy priority described here would benefit from an approach where state and federal agencies actively support local agencies or joint powers authorities.

D. Advance Collaborative Science

A major part of our partnerships in the Sacramento River Basin involves developing collaborative science with agencies and our partners to inform joint learning on species recovery and water management. This includes the following programs:

- Our MOU with CalTrout, Ducks Unlimited, and the California Rice Commission around promoting functioning ecosystems and sustainable water supplies
- Sacramento Water Forum
- Sacramento River Science Program
- Yuba River Science
- The Delta Science Program

E. Secure Funding to Advance the Portfolio

We believe the water portfolio approach provides a solid foundation for the state and federal agencies to support these priorities, including funding through general fund opportunities, federal appropriations, and the next generation of state general obligation climate/water bond that will unify parties and provide a catalyst for local, regional and state agencies to implement the actions necessary to support the portfolio approach. We particularly support state and federal funding and investment in landscape-scale initiatives, such as expanding the use of natural infrastructure through reactivated floodplains, forest health initiatives, and groundwater recharge. Helping local agencies navigate and secure funding under Propositions 218 and 26 to advance these measures would also be helpful.

In sum, we appreciate the efforts of both the state and federal governments to advance water management approaches that create resilience and will help us meet the needs of California's communities, economy, and environment through the 21st century. We look forward to working with the Administrations, the Legislature and Congress, and our various partners to advance these efforts.

Copies of this plan are available at www.norcalwater.org. We would welcome any additional ideas or thoughts by calling us or by email at info@norcalwater.org.

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