



*To advance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Northern California
by enhancing and preserving the water rights, supplies and water quality.*

Statement on Voluntary Agreements – Sacramento River Basin A Comprehensive Restoration Strategy for the Bay-Delta Watershed

The Sacramento River Basin water suppliers on the American, Feather, Sacramento and Yuba Rivers have constructively developed, with the California Natural Resources Agency, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and state and federal water contractors, a comprehensive framework proposal for a series of voluntary agreements to implement water quality objectives in the State Water Board’s Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP) for the Bay-Delta. These agreements include a portfolio of instream flows, reactivating the floodplain and habitat restoration measures that will benefit multiple fish and wildlife values for each river and provide a more-collaborative, effective and successful alternative to the traditional adversarial State Water Board hearing process. These voluntary measures will be implemented very quickly.

Substantial Contributions to Fish and Wildlife

Sacramento River Basin water suppliers have a proven legacy of successfully working with diverse parties to implement innovative conservation actions for fish, birds and wildlife across the region. (see [since 2000.](#)) Building on this legacy, the Sacramento River Basin parties have proposed additional instream flows as part of an ecosystem water budget, which, when integrated with the proposed habitat enhancements and other measures below, will substantially contribute to restoring Sacramento River Basin salmon runs and other avian and terrestrial species to viable populations over the next several decades. These flow and habitat measures will be integrated as a modern, [functional flow approach](#)-- where every drop of water serves [multiple benefits](#), maximizing benefits for both consumptive and environmental water while working to avoid impacts in the region. These actions recognize the time-value of water and are specifically designed to meet California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s biological objectives for the Sacramento River Basin.

Portfolio of Actions

Additional Flows: The Sacramento River Basin parties will continue to implement the numerous [instream flow arrangements](#) and various projects taken on these rivers since State Water Board D-1641 took effect in 2000. These actions have already improved habitat conditions and contributed toward implementation of D-1641 objectives. Additionally, the agreements will bolster Delta outflow in the spring and summer during above normal, below normal, dry, and critical dry years in certain rivers, while assuring cold water pools in reservoirs are preserved for salmon spawning.

Habitat Enhancements: Sacramento River Basin water suppliers and the fish and wildlife agencies have developed a comprehensive program for habitat enhancement on each of the four rivers. The water suppliers will immediately begin implementing these projects in partnership with state and federal agencies and conservation organizations. A program for expedited permitting for aquatic restoration will be deployed to ensure habitat delivery is completed in a timely manner and not delayed. The water suppliers are also collaborating with landowners on reactivating the floodplain to restore ecological functions in the bypasses, ricelands and other managed wetlands.

Endowed Funding: Funding for the agreements will be generated by water suppliers to implement the additional flows, habitat enhancements and additional science efforts, combined with state bond funding and federal assistance for multi-benefit water quality, water supply and watershed protection and restoration.

Collaboration and Regional Governance: The water suppliers on the four river systems will work with the Natural Resources Agency, federal and state agencies, and conservation organizations to further regional management structures that will facilitate collaboration and effective decision-making to advance these actions.

Robust and Structured Science Program: The agreements are based upon collaborative and structured science that will use a careful review of data and testable hypotheses to determine specific flow and structural habitat actions, direct science needs, and incorporate outcomes of the testable hypotheses to continue to inform decision-making to advance and improve fish and wildlife restoration. This will also be funded by the water suppliers through the voluntary agreements.

Integration of Rivers. The agreements provide a new opportunity to integrate and coordinate the operations of the rivers in the Bay-Delta watershed to provide maximum benefit to fish and wildlife, while providing water to cities, rural communities and farms.

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For more information on these agreements and the Sacramento River Basin, please contact:

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Feather River: Ted Trimble (Western Canal Water District) 530.520.2507 or Sean Earley (Richvale Irrigation District) 530.701.8181.

Sacramento River: Thad Bettner (Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District) 530.588.3450 or Lewis Bair (Reclamation District 108) 530.979.1536.

Yuba River: Willie Whittlesey, 530.701.6018 or DeDe Cordell, 530.329.9563 (Yuba Water Agency).

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