

# Collaboration Can Better Protect Our Rivers and Strengthen Water Resiliency

July 2019

The people who supply water, regulate its use and advocate for its vital role in our lives are working together to find common ground in the California Bay-Delta watershed. A coalition of federal, state and local agencies, farmers, nonprofits and conservation groups is focused on new policy approaches to protect fish and wildlife in the Bay-Delta and in key tributary watersheds. In addition to protecting environmental resources, these plans, referred to as Voluntary Agreements, will ensure water reliability and security for California's urban and agricultural communities.

When implemented, the Voluntary Agreements will provide historic benefits to California's people, wildlife and our environment. These agreements represent a more dynamic, creative and expansive approach to addressing California's water challenges than past approaches. Several similar agreements have been successfully implemented for many rivers in the Bay-Delta watershed.

For example, coordinated flow and habitat restoration projects – such as those implemented on Butte Creek – have resulted in dramatic improvements in salmon populations. Meanwhile, the Lower Yuba River Accord and the American River Water Forum Agreement prove that collaboration among all stakeholders, from public water agencies to farmers, environmental groups and regulatory agencies, is not only possible, but works and delivers real results. All of these agreements and actions reconciled conflicts while improving the environment and water supply reliability.

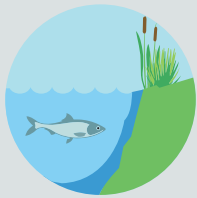
Building upon these past successes and incorporating the latest science, Voluntary Agreements will implement a comprehensive suite of integrated actions to address the specific needs of chinook salmon and other species, improving the environment while ensuring water supply reliability for California's urban and agricultural communities.

# FOUR KEY BENEFITS OF THE VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS

## COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH



River Flows



Habitat Enhancements



Scientific Research

Voluntary Agreements call for a comprehensive suite of integrated and necessary watershed-level actions including river flows, habitat enhancements and funding for scientific research. This integrated approach complements Gov. Gavin Newsom's Executive Order calling for a Water Resilience Portfolio that embraces innovation and encourages regional approaches while integrating investments, policies and programs across state government.

## COLLABORATIVE PROCESS



Federal & State Government



Conservation Groups



Public Water Agencies

The development of Voluntary Agreements relied on engagement from multiple parties involved in water supply, regulation and environmental protection. Implementation of these agreements will establish a 15-year partnership among federal, state and local government, conservation groups and other stakeholders.

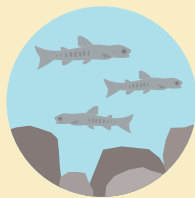
## ENHANCEMENTS FOR FISH & WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITAT



Floodplain



Improvement of Fish Spawning



Rearing Areas

Several endangered and threatened fish species live in or migrate through the Bay-Delta and the tributaries to the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Voluntary Agreements recognize the critical need to improve water supply reliability and do so in a way that protects, restores and enhances the health of our ecosystems. This is why they include plans for habitat-enhancing projects such as floodplain inundation and physical improvement of fish spawning and rearing areas.

## READY FOR IMPLEMENTATION



\$425 Million Water Revolving Fund



\$262-\$314 Million Science & Structural Habitat Fund

Public water agencies, state and local government agencies and the conservation community are ready to act. Funding for fish and wildlife water supplies, habitat restoration projects and science programs will come from a variety of sources. This will include funds from public water agencies and their water users. Total estimated water user contributions to a Water Revolving Fund are projected to be \$425 million. Total estimated water user contributions to the Science and Structural Habitat Fund will range from \$262 to \$314 million. In support of this initiative, Gov. Newsom and the legislature recently set aside \$70 million in the 2019-'20 fiscal year state budget for habitat restoration actions and other measures for the Voluntary Agreements.

