Meeting Agenda

Date & Time: 11/3/2025 | 10:00 AM
Location: SLDMWA Boardroom

Notice of Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting / Joint Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting-Special Board Workshop

842 6th Street, Los Banos
(List of Member/Alternate Telephonic Locations Attached)

Public Participation Information

Join Zoom Webinar -
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82460239529?pwd=XtybmFza3grJSXAnINaj6pzleEB1EA.1

NOTE: Any member of the public may address the Water Resources Committee/Board concerning any item on the agenda before or during consideration of that item.

Because the notice provides for a regular meeting of the Water Resources Committee ("WRC") and a joint regular WRC Meeting/Special Board workshop, Board Directors/Alternates may discuss items listed on the agenda; however, only WRC Members/Alternates may correct or add to the agenda or vote on action items.

NOTE FURTHER: Meeting materials have been made available to the public on the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's website, https://www.sldmwa.org, and at the Los Banos Administrative Office, 842 6th Street, Los Banos, CA 93635.

Agenda Item	Topic	Lead
1.	Call to Order/Roll Call	
2.	Water Resources Committee to Consider Additions and Corrections to the Agenda for the Water Resources Committee Meeting only, as Authorized by Government Code Section 54950 *et seq*.	
3.	Opportunity for Public Comment – Any member of the public may address the Water Resources Committee/Board concerning any matter not on the agenda, but within the Committee or Board's jurisdiction. Public comment is limited to no more than three minutes per person. For good cause, the Chair of the Water Resources Committee may waive this limitation.	
	ACTION ITEMS	
4.	**Approval of October 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes**	
5.	**Recommendation to Board of Directors to Execute Memorandum of Understanding to Advance a Dredging and Channel Maintenance Strategy**	Petersen

REPORT ITEMS

6.	Update on O'Neill Pumping/Generating Plant Rehabilitation Project	Arroyave, McNeil
7.	Executive Director's Report (May include reports on activities within the Water Resources Committee's jurisdiction re: 1) CVP/SWP water operations; 2) California storage projects; 3) regulation of the CVP/SWP; 4) existing or possible new State and Federal policies; 5) Water Authority activities)	Barajas
8.	Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities (May include reports on federal, state, and local agency regulatory, legislative, and administrative water policy/resources activities)	Petersen
9.	Update on Water Operations and Forecasts	Arroyave
10.	Committee Member Reports	
11.	Closed Session	Akroyd

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Initiation of Litigation Pursuant to paragraph (4) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – 2 potential cases

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Paragraph (2) or (3) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – 2 potential cases

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION
Existing Litigation Pursuant to paragraph (1) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9

A. Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), et al. v. Nickels, et al., U.S. District Court, E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:11-cv-02980; 9th Cir. Case No. 23-15599 (GBP Citizen Suit)
B. City of Fresno, et al. v. United States, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Cir., Case No. 22-1994; U.S. Court of Federal Claims, Case No. 1:16-cv-01276 (2014 Friant Div. Operations)
C. PCFFA, et al. v. Lutnick, et al., U.S. District Court, E.D. Cal., Case No. 1:20-cv-00431 (2019 BiOps)
D. California Natural Resources Agency, et al. v. Lutnick, et al., U.S. District Court, E.D. Cal., Case No. 1:20-cv-00426 (2019 BiOps)
E. California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), et al. v. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), et al., Sac. Co. Superior Court, Case No. 34-2021-80003761 (2021 TUCP Order)
F. CSPA, et al. v. SWRCB, et al., Sac. Co. Superior Court, Case No. 34-2021-80003763 (2021 Temp. Mgmt. Plan)
G. Walsh v. Martin, et al., E.D. Cal., Case No. 1:23-CV-01774; 9th Cir. Case No. 25-6697 (employment action)
H. SWRCB, Administrative Hearings Office, Petitions for Change of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Water Right Permits, Delta Conveyance Project (DWR Change Petition)

I. Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, et al. v. DWR, et al., Sacramento Co. Superior Court, Case No. 24WM000183 (SWP 2024 EIR Challenge)

12. Return to Open Session

13. Report from Closed Session, if any, Required by Government Code Section 54957.1

14. Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)

15. ADJOURNMENT

Persons with a disability may request disability-related modification or accommodation by contacting Cheri Worthy or Sandi Ginda at the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Office, 842 6th Street, P.O. Box 2157, Los Banos, California, via telephone at (209) 826-9696, or via email at cheri.worthy@sldmwa.org. Requests should be made as far in advance as possible before the meeting date, preferably 3 days in advance of regular meetings or 1 day in advance of special meetings/workshops.

This agenda has been prepared as required by the applicable laws of the State of California, including but not limited to, Government Code Section 54950 et seq. and has not been prepared with a view to informing an investment decision in any of the Authority's bonds, notes or other obligations. Any projections, plans or other forward-looking statements included in the information in this agenda are subject to a variety of uncertainties that could cause any actual plans or results to differ materially from any such statement. The information herein is not intended to be used by investors or potential investors in considering the purchase or sale of the Authority's bonds, notes or other obligations and investors and potential investors should rely only on information filed by the Authority on the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access System for municipal securities disclosures, maintained on the World Wide Web at https://emma.msrb.org/.

SLDMWA WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING TELEPHONIC LOCATIONS

NOVEMBER 3, 2025

15671 W. Oakland Ave
Five Points, CA 93624

Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 10/6/2025 | 10:00 AM
Location: SLDMWA Boardroom
842 6th Street, Los

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting and Joint Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting – Special Board Workshop Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members Present

Ex-Officio: Cannon Michael
William Bourdeau
Division 1: Anthea Hansen, Member
Division 2: Lon Martin, Alternate
Division 3: Chris White, Member
Ric Ortega, Alternate
Division 4: Vince Gin, Member
Division 5: Manny Amorelli, Alternate

Board of Directors Present

Division 1: Anthea Hansen, Director
Division 2: Justin Diener, Director
William Bourdeau, Vice-Chair/Director
Lon Martin, Alternate
Division 3: Chris White, Alternate
Jarrett Martin, Director
Cannon Michael, Director
Ric Ortega, Member
Division 4: Brett Miller, Alternate
Division 5: Manny Amorelli, Director

Authority Representatives Present

Federico Barajas, Executive Director
Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer
Rebecca Akroyd, General Counsel
Rebecca Harms, Deputy General Counsel
Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director
Ray Tarka, Director of Finance
Eddie Reyes, Information Systems Technician
Stewart Davis, IT Officer

Others Present

Patrick McGowan, Panoche Water District
Chase Hurley, Pacheco Water District
Steve Stadler, San Luis Water District
Jacob McQuirk, DWR (ZOOM)
John Wiersma, Henry Miller Reclamation District

Agenda Item	Topic	Lead
1.	**Call to Order/Roll Call** – The meeting was called to order by Chair William Bourdeau at approximately 10:00 a.m. and roll was called.	
2	**Additions or Corrections to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq. -** No additions or corrections.	
3.	**Opportunity for Public Comment -** No public comment.	
4.	**Water Resources Committee to Consider Approval of the September 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes -** Chair William Bourdeau deemed the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes approved, with no objections.	

5. **Recommendation to Board of Directors to Authorize Execution of Professional Services Agreement for Public Affairs Services and Expenditures of up to $110,000 –** Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reviewed the memorandum included in the packet. Petersen reported that staff solicited input from a number of public affairs professionals within California, and identified three firms with a combination of capacity, talent, the potential for policy integration, and experience in the water sector. Petersen reported that after review of various proposals, staff recommends engaging Lucas Public Affairs for a 90-day task order specific to the development of a new Communications Plan and website redesign, and expenditure of up to $110,000 utilizing existing Fund 03 – Public Affairs Communication Funds. Committee Chair William Bourdeau suggested having Lucas Public Affairs provide a presentation at a later date. — Petersen

M/S - Motion by Member Vince Gin, seconded by Member Anthea Hansen, the Committee authorized execution of Professional Services Agreement for Public Affairs Services and expenditures of up to $110,000. Vote: Ayes - Michael, Bourdeau, Hansen, Lon Martin, White, Gin, Amorelli; Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0

6. **Recommendation to the Board of Directors to Adopt Staff Recommendation on Positions on Legislation** — Petersen

a. H.R. 3572 (Valadao), to make projects in certain counties eligible for funding under the rural surface transportation grant program, and for other purposes (Support & Amend)

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reviewed the staff recommendations for positions on legislation. Petersen answered questions from Committee members throughout the presentation.

M/S - Motion by Member Vince Gin, seconded by Alternate Lon Martin, the Committee adopted the staff recommendations for positions on H.R. 3572 (Valadao). Vote: Ayes - Michael, Bourdeau, Hansen, Lon Martin, White, Gin, Amorelli; Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0.

7. **Update on South and Central Delta Channel Maintenance/Siltation –** Water Policy Director Scott Petersen provided a brief overview of the item, and then introduced Jacob McQuirk from the Department of Water Resources. McQuirk reviewed a slide deck regarding “Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta Dredging Streamlined Permitting Development”. Petersen and McQuirk answered questions from Committee members throughout the presentation — Petersen, McQuirk

8. **Executive Director’s Report** — Barajas

a. **Government Shutdown** – Executive Director Federico Barajas provided a brief status update. Barajas reported that Reclamation is using zero-year appropriated funding to continue to operate through October 18, 2025. Barajas reported that Reclamation does have a contingency plan.
b. **Planning Committee Meeting** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that there is a scheduled Planning Committee (PC) meeting this afternoon. Barajas reported that the PC will be focusing on

specific cost allocation recommendations for the Phase I DMC Subsidence Correction Project.

c. **O'Neill Pumping/Generation Plant Outage** – Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that the O'Neill outages started today through October 25, 2025. Arroyave reported that the Authority is meeting direct demands with Jones Pumping Plant, and using DCI to balance demands. Arroyave reported that the Department of Water Resources/Reclamation requested JPOD from SWRCB. Arroyave also noted that on the final day of the outage, as part of the transformer recommissioning process, all six pumps at O'Neill Pumping Plant will be operating continuously for 24 hours.

d. **Golden Mussels –** Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) found Golden Mussels in the San Luis Reservoir, and have elevated their level of monitoring. Barajas reported that the Authority will be coordinating with DWR.

9. **Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities –** Water Policy Director Scott Petersen provided an update regarding State Water Resources Control Board Activity, including the Water Quality Control Plan Update, Water Rights reporting new format, the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, and the San Joaquin Valley Collaborative Action Program. Petersen answered questions throughout the presentation. — Petersen

10. **Update on Water Operations and Forecasts –** Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave introduced consultant Ron Milligan, who provided information regarding CVP supply, reservoir storage, allocations, snowpack, and operations. Milligan and Arroyave answered Committee member questions throughout the presentation. — Arroyave

11. **Committee Member Reports** – No reports.

12. **Agenda Items 12-14: Closed Session** – Chair William Bourdeau adjourned the open session to address the items listed on the Closed Session Agenda at approximately 11:19 a.m. Upon return to open session at approximately 11:34 a.m., Chair William Bourdeau reported that no reportable actions were taken in closed session. — Akroyd

13. **Agenda Item 15: Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)** – No reports.

14. **Agenda Item 16: Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m.

PO Box 2157
Los Baños, CA 93635
sldmwa.org

Official Memorandum

To: Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates / Board of Directors and Alternates

From: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

Date: November 3, 2025

RE: Recommendation to Board of Directors to Execute Memorandum of Understanding to Advance a Dredging and Channel Maintenance Strategy

Background

The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's (Water Authority) Strategic Plan, adopted in late 2023, has a number of key Goals and Objectives that involve the environmental conditions near Jones Pumping Plant and associated river channels leading to it, including the following:

- Goal 1: Sustainable Water Resources
  - Objective 1.1: South-of-Delta water supply reliability is maximized.
  - Objective 1.3: The Water Authority engages in regulatory, legislative, legal, and administrative venues to optimize water supply.
- Goal 3: Reliable and Cost-Effective Operations, Maintenance, and Replacement.
  - Objective 3.2: Preventive maintenance is undertaken with the longest reasonable planning horizon for long-term cost-effectiveness and reliability.

History

Starting in about 2017, the Delta Watermaster and South Delta Water Agency met periodically with California Department of Water Resources (DWR), California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), the State Water Contractors (SWC), the Water Authority, and Westlands Water District (WWD), (collectively "Workgroup"), to discuss obtaining permits to remove sediment from the Delta channels.

In June 2020, the Water Authority Board authorized staff to participate in the Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta Channel Restoration Program[1], as well as the expenditure of up to $50,000 to participate in a joint effort with the Workgroup supporting the development of a Planning Guide for Delta Channel Maintenance Activities. The Water Authority and other agencies in the Workgroup jointly released a RFP to solicit services to develop this Planning Guide and selected Anchor QEA.

In November 2021, Anchor QEA produced a "Planning Guide for the Channel Depth Restoration Program for the South Delta" (Planning Guide)[2] for the Workgroup. This Planning Guide presents a strategy for implementing a channel depth restoration program (Program) in the Delta channels, with initial emphasis on eight of the South

[1] See Attachments

[2] Anchor QEA (November 2021) South Delta Channels Planning Guide; request from Authority staff

Delta channels (Middle River, Old River (West/South/East/Side Channel), Fabian & Bell, Paradise Cut, and Tom Paine Slough).

The Planning Guide outlines the framework for developing and managing dredging projects to address sedimentation that has been impacting channel conveyance and water quality. The Planning Guide included discussions that covered dredging methodology, conceptual dredging design, real estate integration for potential dredging sites, environmental compliance and permitting, and conceptual costs. Opportunities were identified to support the use of the dredge material for ongoing maintenance and anticipated improvements of the Delta levee system, and there is a demand for its use to increase turbidity farther west in the Delta estuary within San Pablo Bay to help the native fish species hide from predators.

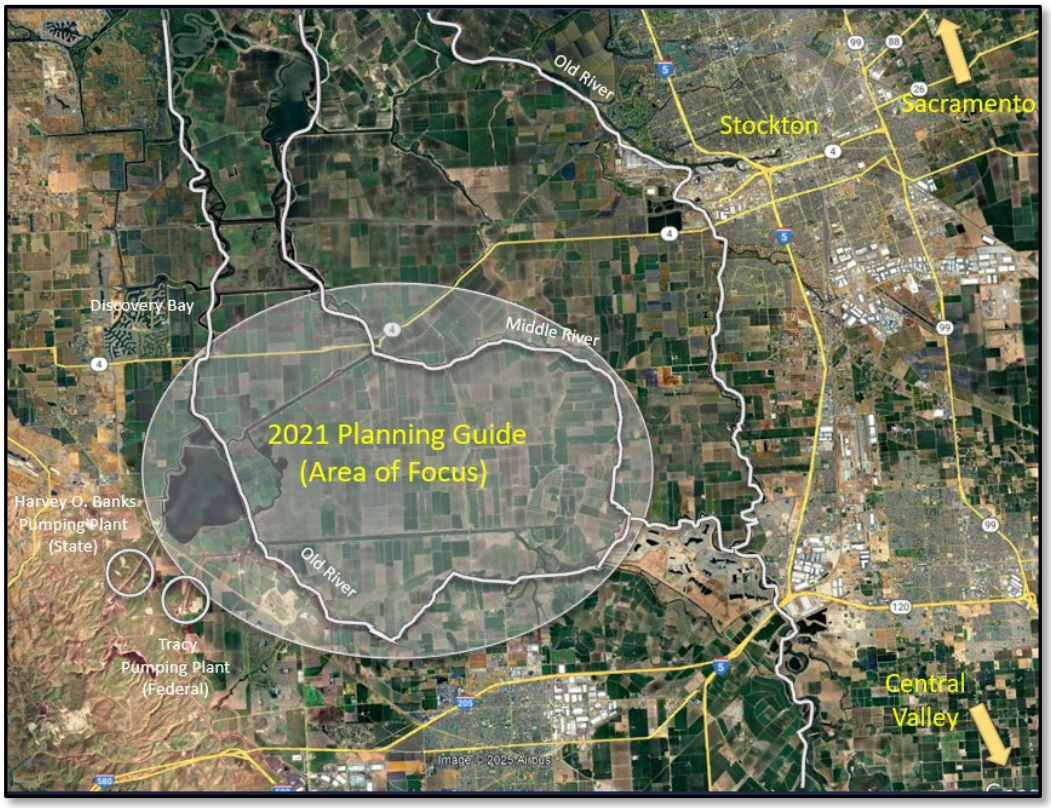

Figure 1 - 2021 Planning Guide (Sediment Removal Area of Focus per Anchor QEA)

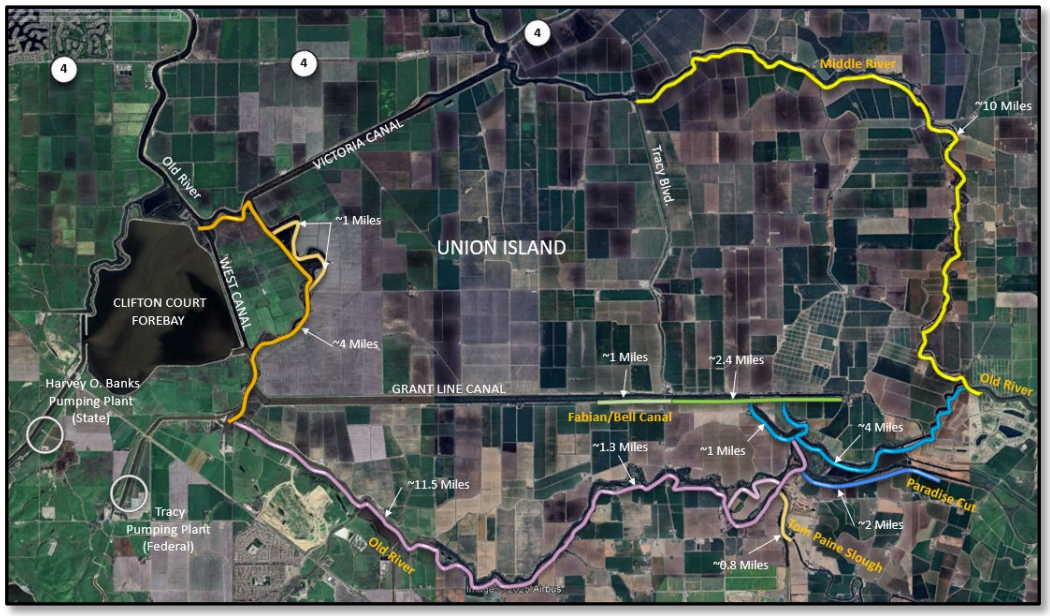

Figure 2. South Delta Channels Restoration Program (Middle River, Old River [West/South/East/Side Channel], Fabian & Bell, Paradise Cut, and Tom Paine Slough.

After completion of the Planning Guide, California experienced a drought and flood cycle that led to other priorities taking precedence over the implementation of the Program, and South Delta Water Agency shifted their approach to aligning needed dredging activities with other projects being advanced, like the Paradise Cut project. Water Authority staff's perspective is that an ongoing program to address necessary channel maintenance, paired with potential pilot projects in areas of greatest need, will be the most effective approach to resolving this issue in the near and long-term.

Implications

If a long-term channel maintenance program is not developed and implemented, channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and, in particular, those in the southern Delta will continue to suffer from diminished water depth due to siltation and siltation impacts including:

- Net flow in the channels (reduced)
- Water temperature (increased)
- Dissolved oxygen (reduced)
- Salinity ("hot spot" buildup)
- Concentration of constituents of concern (increased)
- Toxic algae blooms (increased)
- Navigation (impeded)
- Flood response and levee maintenance (compromised)
- Invasive species (expanded)

Issue for Decision

Whether to authorize staff to execute the attached Memorandum of Agreement to Advance a Dredging and Channel Maintenance Strategy[3], in substantially similar form.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Water Resources Committee and the Board authorize staff to execute the Memorandum of Agreement to Advance a Dredging and Channel Maintenance Strategy, in substantially similar form.

Analysis

The MOU is intended to demonstrate the support of signatory agencies to develop an "integrated dredging and channel maintenance strategy" to address channel maintenance and siltation removal efforts in the relevant areas of the Delta.

The Participants intend to develop an integrated strategy that would allow for streamlined permitting, planning, and implementation of channel-maintenance and -dredging projects through initiatives focused particularly on, but not limited to, the following areas of cooperation:

1. Build upon existing science and innovative permitting practices to expedite the pace and scaling of planning, permitting and funding to achieve the desired results.
2. Collaborate to identify the full set of potential channel-maintenance and -dredging projects within the focal area to be addressed with streamlined permitting, and to agree upon criteria to prioritize those potential projects, where joint implementation is sought.
3. Where reasonably feasible, develop funding formulas that reflect the benefits of potential project(s). The Participants understand and agree that nothing in this MOU requires or constitutes any commitment of federal, State, or local funds or appropriation. Nothing in this MOU obligates the Participants to future payments or cost shares.

The objective would be to: (1) engage permitting agencies early and secure all necessary permits; (2) identify an adequate and consistent source of funds; (3) reestablish adequate channel depths; and (4) provide for regular dredging that removes accumulating sediments to improve long term conditions for beneficial uses and the health of the Bay-Delta estuary. The Program, when implemented, should assist in resolving water level problems in the south Delta which will benefit CVP and SWP operations.

Budget

There are no budget implications anticipated through the remainder of FY26, with no planned expenditures for this program in the FY27 budget, beyond staff and consultant time to work on the advancement and development of this program, in coordination with other MOU partners.

[3] See Attachments.

ATTACHMENTS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
TO ADVANCE A DREDGING AND CHANNEL MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into by the below-signed persons and agencies, hereinafter referred to as the "**Participants**." This MOU is effective as to each Participant as of the date that the last Participant signs (the "**Effective Date**").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Participants have an interest in improving environmental conditions, reducing flood risk, and improving water-supply reliability and water quality in the southern Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

WHEREAS, the Participants agree that properly planned and implemented channel-restoration, -maintenance, and -dredging projects could improve long term conditions in the Delta by increasing net flow in the dredged channels, improve navigation and water quality, reduce invasive species' populations and occurrences of toxic algae blooms, and enhance flood safety (the "desired results").

WHEREAS, in recent years, complex permitting requirements and increasing construction costs have made it difficult for individual Participants to plan, permit, and implement such channel-maintenance and dredging projects.

WHEREAS, the Participants are interested in working together to improve the ability to plan, permit, and implement channel maintenance and dredging projects. The Participants understand and agree that no collective channel-maintenance or dredging project can be planned, permitted, or implemented absent necessary permissions and funding.

Therefore, the Participants have reached the following understanding:

SECTION I
Objective

The Participants' objective for entering into this MOU is to advance an integrated dredging and channel maintenance strategy that could greatly simplify the planning, permitting, and implementation of dredging and channel-maintenance projects, to make those activities more economical and accessible to those that need to maintain or dredge within the South Delta adjacent channels that have a need, when all necessary permissions and funding are secured.

SECTION II
Areas of Cooperation

The Participants intend to develop an integrated strategy that would allow for streamlined permitting, planning, and implementation of channel-maintenance and -dredging projects through initiatives focused particularly on, but not limited to, the following areas of cooperation:

a) Build upon existing science and innovative permitting practices to expedite the pace and scaling of planning, permitting and funding to achieve the desired results.

b) Collaborate to identify the full set of potential channel-maintenance and dredging projects within the focal area to be addressed with streamlined permitting, and to agree upon criteria to prioritize those potential projects, where joint implementation is sought.

c) Where reasonably feasible, develop funding formulas that reflect the benefits of potential project(s). The Participants understand and agree that nothing in this MOU requires or constitutes any commitment of federal, State, or local funds or appropriation. Nothing in this MOU obligates the Participants to future payments or cost shares.

SECTION III
Coordination

The Participants will identify their roles, including the primary championing entity.

SECTION VI
No Legal Obligations, Rights, or Remedies

This MOU is a voluntary initiative. It does not create any legally binding rights or obligations and creates no legally cognizable or enforceable rights or remedies, legal or equitable, in any forum whatsoever. In addition, the pledges in this MOU are not conditioned upon reciprocal actions by other Participants; each Participant retains full discretion over implementation of its pledges in light of the Participant's individual circumstances, laws, and policies; and each Participant is free to withdraw from the MOU.

SECTION VII
Availability of Personnel and Resources

This MOU does not involve the exchange of funds, nor does it represent any obligation of funds by any Participant. All costs that may arise from activities covered by, mentioned in, or undertaken pursuant to this MOU will be assumed by the Participant that incurs them, unless otherwise expressly agreed in a future written arrangement in accordance with applicable laws. All activities covered by, mentioned in, or undertaken pursuant to this MOU are subject to the availability of funds, personnel and other resources of each Participant.

SECTION VIII
Compliance with Applicable Laws

This MOU shall be construed consistent with all applicable laws, and activities covered by, mentioned in, or undertaken in connection with this MOU shall be subject to, and shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with, all otherwise-applicable laws.

SECTION IX
Interpretation and Application

Any difference that may arise in relation to the interpretation or application of this MOU will be resolved through consultations between the Participants, which will endeavor in good faith to resolve such differences.

SECTION X
Final Provisions

This MOU is effective for a four-year period from the Effective Date, unless terminated earlier, renewed, or extended by the Participants.

This MOU may be renewed, extended, or modified by mutual consent of the Participants. Any modification shall be made in writing and specify the date on which such modification is to become effective.

Any of the Participants may, at any time, withdraw from this MOU by providing a written notice to the other Participant(s). A Participant that intends to withdraw from this MOU shall endeavor to provide notice in writing of such withdrawal to other Participants thirty (30) days in advance.

Nothing in this MOU is intended to be a pre-decisional commitment of resources. Any commitment to implement the activities described in this MOU is dependent on all necessary environmental review and regulatory approvals.

This MOU may be executed in separate counterparts, each of which when so executed and delivered will be an original. All such counterparts will together constitute but one and the same instrument.

FOR THE [AGENCY NAME] OF [PARTNER NAME]	FOR THE [GOVERNMENT or AGENCY] OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA or OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
[Name] **[Title]** **[Date]**	**[Name]** **[Title]** **[Date]**

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SACRAMENTO SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA
CHANNEL RESTORATION PROGRAM

Representatives of the above-identified federal agencies, state agencies, local agencies and non-governmental entities are interested in exploring a ***Delta Channel Maintenance Program****.*

Problem Statement

Channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and, in particular, those in the southern Delta, suffer from diminished water depth due to siltation. The siltation impacts:

- Net flow in the channels (reduced)
- Water temperature (increased)
- Dissolved oxygen (reduced)
- Salinity ("hot spot" buildup)
- Concentration of constituents of concern (increased)
- Toxic algae blooms (increased)
- Navigation (impeded)
- Flood response and levee maintenance (compromised)
- Invasive species (expanded)

Proposed Action

Through a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative process, develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term program to remove excess silt buildup from Delta channels, at least initially targeting those in the southern Delta. The program would identify the scope of the problem, criteria for silt removal operations (dredging), and mitigation measures. The objectives would be to: (1) engage permit agencies early and secure all necessary permits, (2) establish an adequate and consistent source of funding, (3) reestablish adequate channel depths, and 4) provide for regular dredging that removes accumulating sediment to improve conditions for beneficial uses and the health of the Bay-Delta estuary.

Background Information

Impacts Generally: Siltation in the Delta channels has occurred and, left unaddressed, is reasonably expected to continue to result in more severe consequences. The buildup of silt fundamentally alters the hydrodynamics to the detriment of all beneficial uses. As sediment accumulates, the amount of flow which can travel in and through the channels decreases. With decreased channel capacity, incoming flows (whether from river or tidal action) encounter greater resistance and thus reduced flows pass into and through the channels. When flows are reduced, the beneficial uses are impaired, and the health of the Bay-Delta estuary suffers.

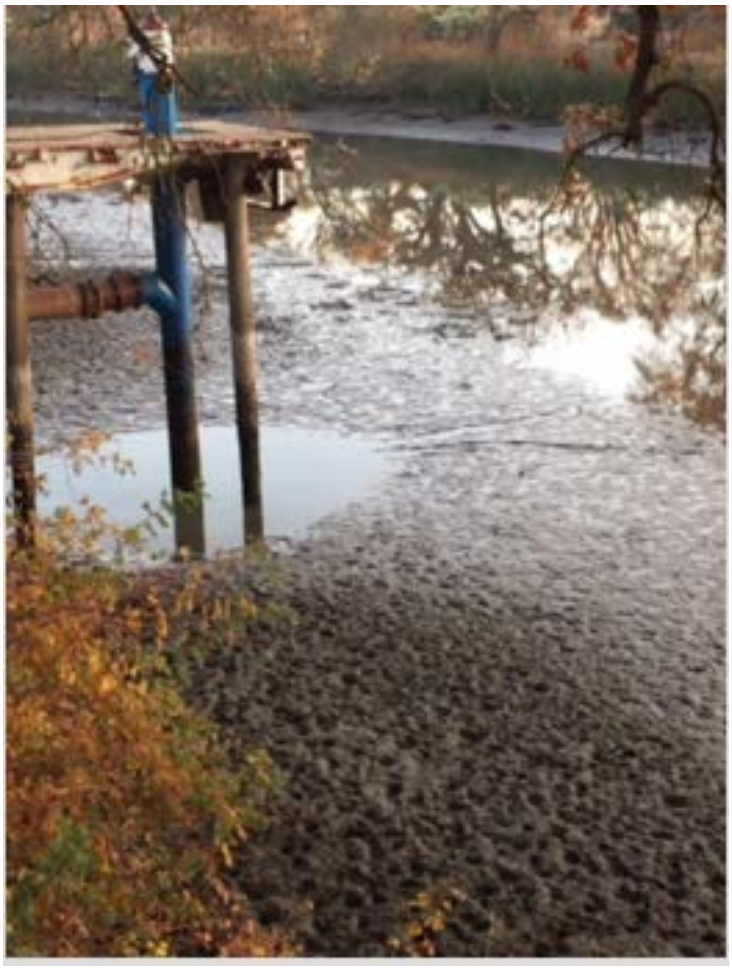
Ecosystem Impacts: Shallower channels constrict flow for habitat, increase temperatures and decrease dissolved oxygen in the water, all of which adversely affect fish and other water-dependent species. Reduced channel capacities also decrease capacity to dilute pollutants, such as salts and metals, and encourage the growth of invasive plant species and harmful algae blooms. These invasives further degrade aquatic as well as terrestrial habitat in areas that have been designated critical habitat for protected fish species.

Navigation Impacts: Reduced depth impacts the accessibility of south Delta channels for commerce, recreation, emergency response, and marine construction including water-based levee repairs.

Water Supply Impacts: For in-Delta water users, shallow channels impede diversions due to pumps' and siphons' inability to divert water without adequate depth. The silt deposition is also not uniform and can create mounds or channel features that block water from reaching areas that otherwise would have sufficient water elevation for diversion. Also, because of the effect on hydrodynamics, water levels, and quality, the excess silt buildup generates avoidable and unnecessary friction among regulators, recreational interests, in-Delta water users, and the operators of the CVP and SWP, both of which depend on Delta channels to convey water for use in areas south of the Delta.

High Flow Events: Very high flows entering the Delta might have formerly been expected to flush accumulated sediment out of the area and improve channel capacity. This is no longer the case; recent high flows, like those that occurred in 2017, actually increased sediment buildup in many South Delta channels. The fast-moving flows on the San Joaquin River bring heavy sediment loads which then settle out in the meandering and slow-moving Delta channels. Thus, it is now reasonable to expect that the adverse effects of the diminished channel capacity are increasing, and high flow events are unlikely to solve the problem.

Potential Uses of Dredge Material: Although dredge material is expected to improve levees by depositing the material on the land side of levees to form stability berms, other uses, such as supporting Delta restoration projects would be explored.



Old River at 17500 S. Tracy Blvd. No date.

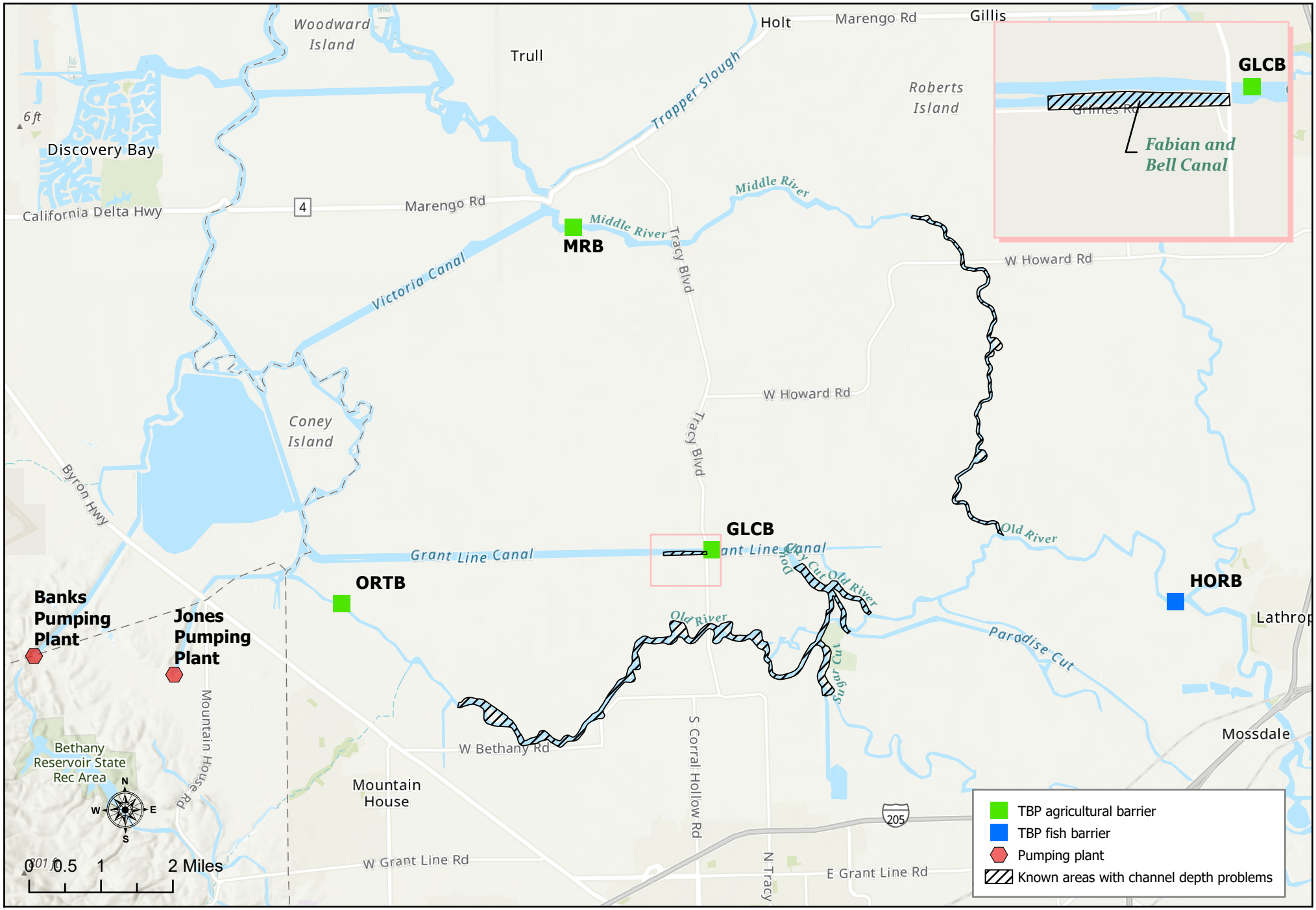
Middle River 6001-6025 W. Undine Rd. No date.

Middle River, 6001-60025 W. Undine Road, 12-26-2017.

Old River, 17500 S. Tracy Blvd. 12-26-2017.

Old River 17500 S. Tracy Blvd, 12-27-2017.

Old River, 17500 S. Tracy Blvd., 12-27-2017.



Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta Channel Restoration Program

SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY

Official Memorandum

PO Box 2157
Los Banos, CA 93635
sldmwa.org

To: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates

From: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

Date: November 3, 2025

RE: Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities

Background

This memorandum is provided to briefly summarize the current status of various agency processes regarding water policy activities, including but not limited to the (1) Implementation of Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, including environmental compliance; (2) State Water Resources Control Board action; (3) Central Valley Regional Water Board Action, (4) San Joaquin River Restoration Program; (5) Delta conveyance; (6) Reclamation action; (7) Delta Stewardship Council action; (8) San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint, and (9) San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Plan.

Policy Items

Implementation of Executive Order 14181

On January 2024, President Trump issued Executive Order 14181[1], directing analysis of potential changes to the operations in the 2024 Record of Decision (ROD) for consideration by the Administration. There is currently work underway to develop an implementation plan for the Executive Order, including a current WIIN Act review period for a revised operations plan compared to the 2024 ROD.

Implementation of 2024 Record of Decision on Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project

On December 20, Reclamation executed the Record of Decision and both the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries issued their Final Biological Opinions, beginning operations under the new operations regime.

On January 2024, President Trump issued Executive Order 14181, detailing analysis of potential changes to the operations in the 2024 ROD for consideration by the Administration. There is currently work underway to develop an implementation plan for the Executive Order and future action on project operations.

Note: There are also Endangered Species Act consultations on the Trinity River and Klamath River that may have overlap/interactions with the operations of the CVP/SWP.

[1] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-31/pdf/2025-02174.pdf

Adaptive Management Program

As part of implementation of the 2024 Record of Decision, state and federal agencies initiated and completed a structured decision-making process to assess alternatives to implement the Summer-Fall Habitat Action, including an analysis of summer and fall X2, for elevation to the agency directors to make a decision regarding summer-fall operations.

After completion of the analysis, the Directors elected to offramp Fall X2 operations for the last water year and instead extended the operations of the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates by 30 days.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Activity

Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update

Background

The State Water Board is currently considering updates to its 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary ("Bay Delta Plan") in two phases (Plan amendments). The first Plan amendment is focused on San Joaquin River flows and southern Delta salinity ("Phase I" or "San Joaquin River Flows and Southern Delta Salinity Plan Amendment"). The second Plan amendment is focused on the Sacramento River and its tributaries, Delta eastside tributaries (including the Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne rivers), Delta outflows, and interior Delta flows ("Phase II" or "Sacramento/Delta Plan Amendment").

During the December 12, 2018 Water Board Meeting, the Department of Water Resources ("DWR") and Department of Fish and Wildlife presented proposed "Voluntary Settlement Agreements" ("VSAs") on behalf of Reclamation, DWR, and the public water agencies they serve to resolve conflicts over proposed amendments to the Bay-Delta Plan update.[2] The State Water Board did not adopt the proposed VSAs in lieu of the proposed Phase 1 amendments, but as explained below, directed staff to consider the proposals as part of a future Delta-wide proposal.

Phase 1 Status – San Joaquin River and its Tributaries

The State Water Board adopted a resolution[3] to adopt amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary and adopt the Final Substitute Environmental Document during its December 12, 2018 public meeting.

On July 18, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP)[4] and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Scoping Meeting for the Proposed Regulation to Implement Lower San Joaquin River Flows (LSJR) and Southern Delta Salinity Objectives in the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta Plan).

[2] Available at https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Blogs/Voluntary-Settlement-Agreement-Meeting-Materials-Dec-12-2018-DWR-CDFW-CNRA.pdf.

[3] Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2018/rs2018_0059.pdf.

[4] Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/public_notices/notices/20220715-implementation-nop-and-scoping-dwr-baydelta.pdf

In response to the release of the NOP, the Water Authority and member agencies provided scoping comments[5] and the State Water Board is working through a long-term process to address Phase 1 elements of the Water Quality Control Plan Update.

A long delay in Phase 1 action occurred as legal activity was undertaken.

Recently, on September 19, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) has released a Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Workshop on the Draft Scientific Basis Report Supplement for the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement Proposal (Draft TVA Scientific Basis Report). A public workshop has been scheduled for November 5, 2025, where the Board will receive public oral comments. The public written comment submittal deadline is no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Friday, November 7, 2025. Please see the Notice for additional information on how to submit written comments and participate in the public workshop.

Next Steps

- Final draft Staff Report for Tuolumne River VA
- Board workshop and consideration of Tuolumne River VA
- Final draft EIR and regulation implementing Lower SJR flows and South Delta Salinity
- Board consideration of regulation implementing Lower SJR flows and South Delta Salinity

Phase 2 Status – Sacramento River and its Tributaries and Bay-Delta

In the State Water Board's resolution adopting the Phase 1 amendments, the Water Board directed staff to assist the Natural Resources Agency in completing a Delta watershed-wide agreement, including potential flow and non-flow measures for the Tuolumne River, and associated analyses no later than March 1, 2019. Staff were directed to incorporate the Delta watershed-wide agreement as an alternative for a future, comprehensive Bay-Delta Plan update that addresses the reasonable protection of beneficial uses across the Delta watershed.

Revised Draft Sacramento/Delta Updates to the Water Quality Control Plan

Background

The July 2025 revised draft Bay Delta Plan (2025 revised draft) includes proposed changes to the draft Bay Delta Plan released in October 2024 (2024 draft) based on public input and comments received throughout the planning process, including comments on several options for possible changes to the plan identified in the 2024 draft. Specifically, the 2024 draft identified the possible inclusion of flow, cold water habitat and related provisions that were based on the proposed Plan amendments and alternatives identified in the 2023 draft Staff Report in support of updates to the Bay Delta Plan, as well as options for these provisions. The 2024 draft also identified the possible inclusion of Voluntary Agreements (VAs) to provide flows and non-flow habitat proposed by state and federal agencies and water users referred to as the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal, as well as options associated with inclusions of VAs. The regulatory provisions would apply to all water right holders if the Board did not move forward with VAs, or in the event the Board moved forward with VAs would apply to water rights not participating in approved VAs. The 2025 revised draft proposes to move forward with the inclusion of VAs in the Bay Delta Plan for water rights included in approved VAs (VA pathway) and the regulatory provisions for water rights not included as part of approved VAs (regulatory pathway). The 2025 revised draft also includes proposals for addressing other

[5] Request from Authority staff

options identified in the 2024 draft. The 2025 revised draft also proposes the designation of Tribal Tradition and Culture (CUL) beneficial use as part of the current Bay Delta Plan update.

The State Water Board is seeking public input on the 2025 revised draft updates to the Bay Delta Plan. Comments on this revised draft will inform development of a final draft of the Plan for Board consideration in the future.

Current Activity

On September 16, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) rescinded the August 22, 2025 Second Revised Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Hearing on Revised Draft Sacramento/Delta Updates to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed (Bay-Delta Plan or Plan). The Rescinded Notice is available on the Board's website. Accordingly, the hearing previously scheduled for September 24-25, 2025, and the associated public comment period are cancelled and will be rescheduled to a future date.

Updating the Sacramento/Delta components of the Bay-Delta Plan is one of the State Water Board's top priorities, and the Board is working expeditiously to complete this update. Board staff anticipate a limited recirculation of the draft Staff Report/Substitute Environmental Document in support of the Sacramento/Delta updates to the Bay-Delta Plan together with the updated draft Plan in December 2025. New dates for a public hearing and comment period will be announced upon release.

The August 22, 2025 supplemental model results remain available for public review, but the Board is not soliciting comments on the supplemental model results at this time.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact SacDeltaComments@waterboards.ca.gov.

Additionally, the State Water Board has received term sheets for additional voluntary agreements from Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and South Sutter Water District (SSWD) specific to the Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine that are available to the public.

Water Rights

Water Accounting, Tracking, and Reporting System (CalWATRS) Launch

The State Water Resources Control Board has launched the California Water Accounting, Tracking, and Reporting System (CalWATRS). A link to the new system and additional information is posted on the CalWATRS webpage.

If you have questions or would like the CalWATRS team to attend an event in your area, please email CalWATRS-help@waterboards.ca.gov.

Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation

On September 26, 2025, the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) approved and filed with the Secretary of State chapter 2 and 2.7 revisions, which are now in effect. Please note that the State Water Resources Control Board will release a notice with additional proposed revisions to the chapter 2.8 (water measurement) regulation text for public comment in the coming weeks; these changes will provide additional clarity and consistency in the proposed regulation text. Because of these additional revisions, the updated water measurement regulation in chapter 2.8 will become effective at a later date.

The virtual measurement workshop that was scheduled for October 15, 2025, will be postponed until an updated chapter 2.8 is approved.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding the rulemaking process for this regulation, visit the Water Measurement and Reporting Regulation Rulemaking webpage. Subscribe to the Water Measurement list on the State Water Resources Control Board's Email Lists webpage for further updates about the water measurement regulations. For information regarding the existing regulation, and resources on how to measure, visit the general Water Measurement webpage.

Delta Conveyance Project

Petition for Change of Point of Diversion and Rediversion for the Delta Conveyance Project

The State Water Resources Control Board Administrative Hearings Office is holding a Public Hearing on the pending Petitions for Change of Water Right Permits 16478, 16479, 16481, and 16482 (Applications 5630, 14443, 14445A, and 17512, respectively) of the **Department of Water Resources.**

The evidentiary portion of the Public Hearing **will continue on May 1** (starting at 1:00 p.m.)**, 2, 5, 14, 15, 21-23, 27 & 28 and June 10 & 11, 2025,** and additional dates as necessary.

Policy statements will be **heard in person and by Zoom Webinar on May 19, 2025, starting at 9:00 a.m.**, at Joe Serna Jr. CalEPA Building, Byron Sher Hearing Room, 1001 I Street, Second Floor, Sacramento, California.

The portion of the hearing for presentation of Protestants' cases-in-chief will begin on **August 12 and will continue on August 13, 14, 18 & 25, and September 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 15, 29 & 30, and October 1, 6, 9 & 10, 2025**.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation Manual

Documents out for Comment

Draft Policy

- There are currently no draft Policies out for review.

Draft Directives and Standards

- There are currently no draft Directives and Standards out for review.

Draft Facilities Instructions, Standards, and Techniques (FIST)

- There are currently no draft Facilities Instructions, Standards, and Techniques out for review.

Draft Reclamation Safety and Health Standards (RSHS)

- There are currently no Safety and Health Standards out for review.

Draft Reclamation Design Standards

- There are currently no Design Standards out for review.

San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley (Blueprint) is a non-profit group of stakeholders, working to better understand our shared goals for water solutions that support environmental stewardship with the needs of communities and industries throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Blueprint's strategic priorities for 2022-2025: Advocacy, Groundwater Quality and Disadvantaged Communities, Land Use Changes & Environmental Planning, Outreach & Communications, SGMA Implementation, Water Supply Goals, Governance, Operations & Finance.

Mission Statement: *"Unifying the San Joaquin Valley's voice to advance an accessible, reliable solution for a balanced water future for all.*

Water Blueprint Board Meeting

The September meeting covered the latest on the unified water plan, which quantifies these challenges and catalogs potential solutions - establishing the baseline understanding that will guide federal and state funding decisions for our region. The monthly board meeting is open to the public, and interested parties can register through the website.

Top 3 Key Takeaways:

- **Unified Water Plan Making Significant Progress with Tight Timeline:** The Water Blueprint's unified water plan is moving forward rapidly with chapters 1 and 2 already distributed for review. The plan quantifies the San Joaquin Valley's massive water supply gap at 2.5-3 million acre-feet by 2040, incorporating SGMA compliance needs, climate change impacts, and environmental flow requirements. Comments on the initial chapters are due by October 6th, with the full administrative draft expected by year-end.
- **Major Supply-Demand Gap Identified Requiring Immediate Action:** Technical analysis reveals the valley faces a future water shortage of 2.5-3 million acre-feet by 2040, driven by SGMA compliance requirements (1.4-2 million acre-feet), environmental restoration needs, climate change impacts, and groundwater replenishment requirements. This massive gap demonstrates the critical need for comprehensive water infrastructure investments and management changes.
- **Recharge Projects Dominate Solutions:** The latest research points out that nearly 50% of all GSP projects are groundwater recharge projects, including on-farm recharge, injection wells, in-lieu recharge, and constructed basins, with injection wells being the most cost-effective option.

Additional Takeaways:

- GSA Project Lists Need Updating: Analysis of Groundwater Sustainability Plans revealed that less than half of the 800+ identified projects have both cost and yield information, necessitating outreach to GSA points of contact for more accurate data.
- Multiple Funding Sources Needed: Projects will require diverse funding streams including flood control, environmental restoration, and water supply funding to address the multi-benefit nature of proposed solutions.
- Water District Partnership Expanding: Blueprint is deepening its relationship with water districts outside the Central Valley. These growing partnerships can create significant opportunities for Valley water interests to tackle water banking and supply management.
- Speakers Bureau Approved: The board approved the creation of a speakers bureau to provide unified messaging about blueprint activities to community meetings, boards of supervisors, and other venues across the valley.
- Large Group Valley Meeting Planned: A major stakeholder meeting is being organized with Bureau of Reclamation's Acting Regional Director Adam Nickels as the headline speaker to discuss partnership opportunities and funding.

Unified Water Plan for the San Joaquin Valley

The purpose of the Unified Valley Plan for the San Joaquin Valley is to identify and present possible solutions for long-term water needs in the San Joaquin Valley by bringing together existing water plans, strategies, and knowledge from across the San Joaquin Valley into one coordinated, valley-wide planning framework.

Bureau of Reclamation Report to Congress:

- Chapter 1. Introduction
- Chapter 2. Overview of the water resource needs and opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Chapter 3. Overview of flood risks and management in the San Joaquin Valley and opportunities for improving flood management.
- Chapter 4. Illustration of an environmental vision for the San Joaquin Valley and estimates of the water supplies needed to implement that vision.
- Chapter 5. Evaluation of a range of potential solutions.
- Chapter 6. Recommendations for a path forward and a roadmap for implementation. Includes policy recommendations.

Authority staff continues to recommend that Authority member agencies increase their engagement with the Blueprint Technical Committee to ensure accuracy and support of the work product being developed for the westside of the San Joaquin Valley.

Chapter 3 of the Plan is now out for review and comment and is attached herein.

San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (SJV CAP)

Background

The CAP Plenary Group adopted work groups to implement the CAP Term Sheet[6], adopted on November 22, 2022. During Phase II, Work Groups are continuing to meet and discuss priorities and drafting various documents for their respective areas: Safe Drinking Water; Sustainable Water Supplies; Ecosystem Health; Land Use, Demand Reduction and Land Repurposing; Implementation.

The Bureau of Reclamation is currently funding the CAP. This funding supports its management and facilitation of the overall CAP process and the development of a prioritization tool. The tool is envisioned to be used by CAP participants, federal and state agencies, other stakeholders, and the public to evaluate policy recommendations, programmatic changes, and projects to achieve sustainable water management in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Steering Committee created a subgroup and will review several prioritization tools developed by other organizations and use those examples to craft a work plan and initial set of criteria for consideration.

On a parallel track, the subgroup recommends that each caucus develop up to three top-priority actions that will advance the outcomes of the Term Sheet.

[6] Request from Authority staff

ATTACHMENTS

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

<update>

cfs	cubic feet per second
CVFPP	Central Valley Flood Protection Plan
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
FDRE	Flood Diversion and Recharge Enhancement
FIRO	Flood Informed Reservoir Operations
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Reclamation	U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
SPFC	State Plan of Flood Control
State	State of California
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers

Chapter 3 Flood Management

This chapter describes flood management facilities and challenges in the San Joaquin Valley. It begins with a summary of the regional setting and historical development of flood facilities; describes Federal, State, and local agencies involved in flood management; and summarizes existing and projected future flood risk. This is followed by a summary of flood management challenges and priorities identified for planning regions associated with the San Joaquin River through development of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). The CVFPP has a strong focus on flood risks, opportunities to improve the flood system performance, and regional planning of flood management in the Sacramento and the San Joaquin River hydrologic regions, but does not address the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region. This chapter concludes with a description of flood management actions identified through the CVFPP and other efforts that have the potential to also provide water supply and ecosystem benefits in the San Joaquin Valley. Many of the opportunities identified for potential application in the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region may also be applicable in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region.

Setting and Historical Context

The setting of the San Joaquin Valley makes it naturally prone to flooding. As described in Chapter 2, it is bound by the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Tehachapi Mountains, and Coastal Range, and receives significant runoff primarily through rivers and streams originating in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region, the San Joaquin River historically lacked sufficient channel capacity to convey high flows as it drains towards the Delta. This resulted in frequent fooding and the formation of vast floodplains with swales, oxbows, and other features that created low-lying areas prone to inundation (USACE 1999). The Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region has been prone to frequent flooding because it is a closed basin where the major rivers and streams flow towards Tulare Lake (which was once the largest natural lake west of the Mississippi River), Buena Vista Lake, and Kern Lake. A portion of flood flows on the Kings River in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region are conveyed to the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region.

Flooding in the San Joaquin Valley is driven by rainfall that typically occurs during winter months and snowmelt that typically occurs in spring and early summer months. The variability of intensity and timing of flooding in the San Joaquin Valley posed a significant challenge to development of farms and communities beginning in the mid-19th century. The first significant flood event post-European settlement was the Great Flood of 1861 and 1862. During this event, nearly the entire San Joaquin Valley floor was inundated which caused significant loss of life and economic hardship (Dowd 2022). During this same time, hydraulic mining also contributed to frequent flooding because it resulted in millions of cubic yards of earth being washed downstream and deposited into channels, further reducing conveyance capacity (USACE 1999). Other significant floods occurred every few years (USGS 1953; USACE 1999). The occurrence of these major flood events influenced

continuous development and reassessments of flood infrastructure and policy in the San Joaquin Valley, as well as in the Sacramento Valley and elsewhere in California.

Initial flood control efforts in San Joaquin Valley in the 19th century included construction of earthen levees to protect low-lying lands. Through a series of local, state and federal investments and policies, a network of weirs, bypasses, and flood control channels were constructed in the 20th century to direct flood flows away from farms and communities (USACE 1999). A summary of events and actions that drove the development of flood control infrastructure and management policies include:

- 1941 – the federal Flood Control Act of 1941 laid the groundwork for flood control projects across the United States, including significant efforts in California. It authorized civil engineering projects such as dams, levees, dikes, and other flood control measures to manage water flow and reduce flood risks.

- 1944 – the federal Flood Control Act of 1944 was the most significant federal authorization for construction of flood facilities in the San Joaquin Valley. It authorized the Lower San Joaquin River and Tributaries Project, which included constructing levees on the San Joaquin River below the Merced River, Stanislaus River, Old River, Paradise Cut, and Camp Slough. It also authorized construction of New Hogan Dam on the Calaveras River, New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River, and federal costs for flood control toward the construction of Don Pedro Dam on the Tuolumne River. New Melones Dam was later reauthorized for construction under the Flood Control Act of 1962 (USACE 1999). The Flood Control Act of 1944 also authorized construction of Isabella, Success, Terminus, and Pine Flat Dams on rivers in the Tulare Lake Basin.

- 1955 – Following major flooding in 1955, the construction of levees and bypasses on the San Joaquin River upstream of the Merced River was authorized. The Chowchilla and Eastside Bypasses were also constructed during this time period by the State of California.

- 1962-63 – Congress authorized construction of Buchanan Dam on the Chowchilla River and Hidden Dam on the Fresno River, and Federal participation in the cost of New Exchequer Dam on the Merced River.

- 1968 – the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 established the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which provided federally backed flood insurance to property owners and introduced floodplain management standards. This program significantly influenced flood management practices in California by encouraging local governments to adopt zoning and land use policies that reduce flood risk.

- 1980s and 1990s – major flood events in 1983, 1986, 1995, and 1997 caused extensive damage in both the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River basins. These events raised concerns about the adequacy of the flood management systems and land use practices in flood-prone areas (USBR 2015).

- 2006 and 2007 – in the wake of continued flood risk, California voters approved two key measures: (1) Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006, and (2) the Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008. These acts formally defined the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Federal-State flood control projects as the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC). They also required DWR to develop, and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) to adopt, a CVFPP, which is a comprehensive strategy updated every five years. Unlike the SPFC, the CVFPP addresses flood risk across the entire watersheds of the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys and includes land use planning requirements for local jurisdictions (USBR 2015; DWR 2022a; DWR 2022b).

- 2009 – the Delta Reform Act of 2009 was enacted to address water management challenges in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. This legislation includes provisions to reduce flood risks by improving levee systems and integrating ecosystem restoration with flood management strategies.

Today, flow in almost all the major rivers in the San Joaquin Valley is regulated by dams and other flood control facilities. As described in Chapter 2, most dams and reservoirs on rivers in the San Joaquin Valley provide water supply and flood control benefits. Flood management facilities are operated in coordination between multiple local, state, and federal agencies.

In recent years, most investments in flood management have focused on repair and rehabilitation of facilities that were constructed in the 20th century (USACE 1999). The CVFPP, which is updated every five years and most recently in 2022, presents a coordinated strategy to improve flood management throughout the Central Valley (DWR 2022a).

Existing Conditions and Future Flood Risk

The history of flooding in the San Joaquin Valley has driven significant investment in the construction and maintenance of flood control infrastructure and the implementation of flood management policies. Areas of flood risk, referred to as "flood zones", are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA defines several types of flood zones and two primary categories are Special Flood Hazard Areas and Moderate Flood Hazard Areas. Special Flood Hazard Areas are defined by areas inundated by a flood event with a 1-percent chance of occurring in any given year. These areas are often described as 100-year floodplains, however it should be noted that the frequency of occurrence of a flood with a 1-percent chance of occurring can be greater than once in 100 years. Moderate Flood Hazard Areas (often referred to as the 500-year floodplains) are defined by areas inundated by a flood event with a 0.2-percent chance of occurring in any given year (FEMA 2020). Figure 3-1 shows the delineated 0.2-percent and 1-percent flood zones in the San Joaquin Valley, which include approximately 1 million people and $112 billion worth of structures (PPIC 2024).

Recent studies indicate that climate change could intensify flood events in the future (DWR 2024). This could put additional areas at risk of flooding and/or increase the flood risk of areas in the floodplains. This could stress flood control facilities as larger floods occur more frequently, which

further intensifies the need to address existing challenges with aging levees, subsidence induced capacity loss in channels, sedimentation in channels, and limited reservoir flood storage capacity (DWR 2017).

Flood Control Facilities

Managed flood control storage capacity has been designated for reservoirs on most major rivers in both the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region and the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region, and numerous leveed channels and bypasses have been developed. These facilities work in tandem to reduce peak flows (e.g., dams/reservoirs), convey high flows as they move downstream (e.g., levees), and/or route water away from the main channel (e.g. bypasses). A summary of authorized dedicated flood control storage capacity for the major reservoirs in the San Joaquin Valley is included in Table 2.1 in Chapter 2. Dedicated flood control storage capacity in reservoirs typically becomes effective in late fall months and remains in effect through winter months to manage rainfall inflows. As runoff transitions from rainfall to snowmelt during spring months, dedicated flood control capacity in reservoirs is reduced and the space is used for water storage.

Hundreds of miles of levees protect farms and communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Levees confine flood flows to the channel and have been used in the San Joaquin Valley since the 19th century. The State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) is the State of California's state-federal flood management system. Federal authorizations of SPFC projects in the San Joaquin Valley began in 1944 and state authorizations began in 1955. Infrastructure under the SPFC is subject to stricter regulations and regular rehabilitation efforts (DWR 2022b). Not all floodways that are defined by levees are a part of the SPFC and thus the levee systems of the San Joaquin Valley work in conjunction with each other.

Flood bypass systems are used to route water away from the main channel, through control structures. Three major flood bypass channels have been constructed to convey flood waters in the San Joaquin Valley:

- The James Bypass diverts flood water from the north fork of the Kings River to Fresno Slough and Mendota Pool on the San Joaquin River. It has a design capacity of 4,750 cfs and is operated by the James Irrigation District.

- The Chowchilla Bypass diverts flood water from the San Joaquin River downstream from Friant Dam to the Fresno River and Eastside Bypass. It has a design capacity of 5,500 cfs and is managed by the Lower San Joaquin River Levee District.

- The Eastside Bypass diverts water from the Chowchilla River, Bear Creek and other tributaries to the San Joaquin River upstream of its confluence with the Merced River. It has a design capacity varying by reach from 17,500 cfs down to 14,400 cfs and it is also managed by the Lower San Joaquin River Levee District.

Flood Control Operations

Reservoir operations are governed by comprehensive documentation to meet authorized water supply and flood risk reduction purposes, and to manage operations during flood events. To ensure

that the flood management operation of each of the flood management projects will be as effective as possible, it is essential that the operating agency be continually advised of possible flood hazards, weather conditions, inflows to the project and upstream reservoirs, and flows in the system downstream from the project (USACE 1999).

The United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) flood management decisions are based on the approved Water Control Plan from the Water Control Manual for each project. The Water Control Plan describes the specific operational rules for managing storage and releases day-to-day in order to fulfil its authorized purpose. The Water Control Manual includes the Water Control Plan and all supporting technical documentation (USACE 2018). The USACE also prepares and applies Water Control Manuals to direct operations of dedicated flood control space in non-USACE reservoirs with federally authorized flood control purposes. Non-USACE reservoirs that are not federally authorized for flood control manage for their authorized purposes and, to the extent possible, contribute to regional flood management objectives.

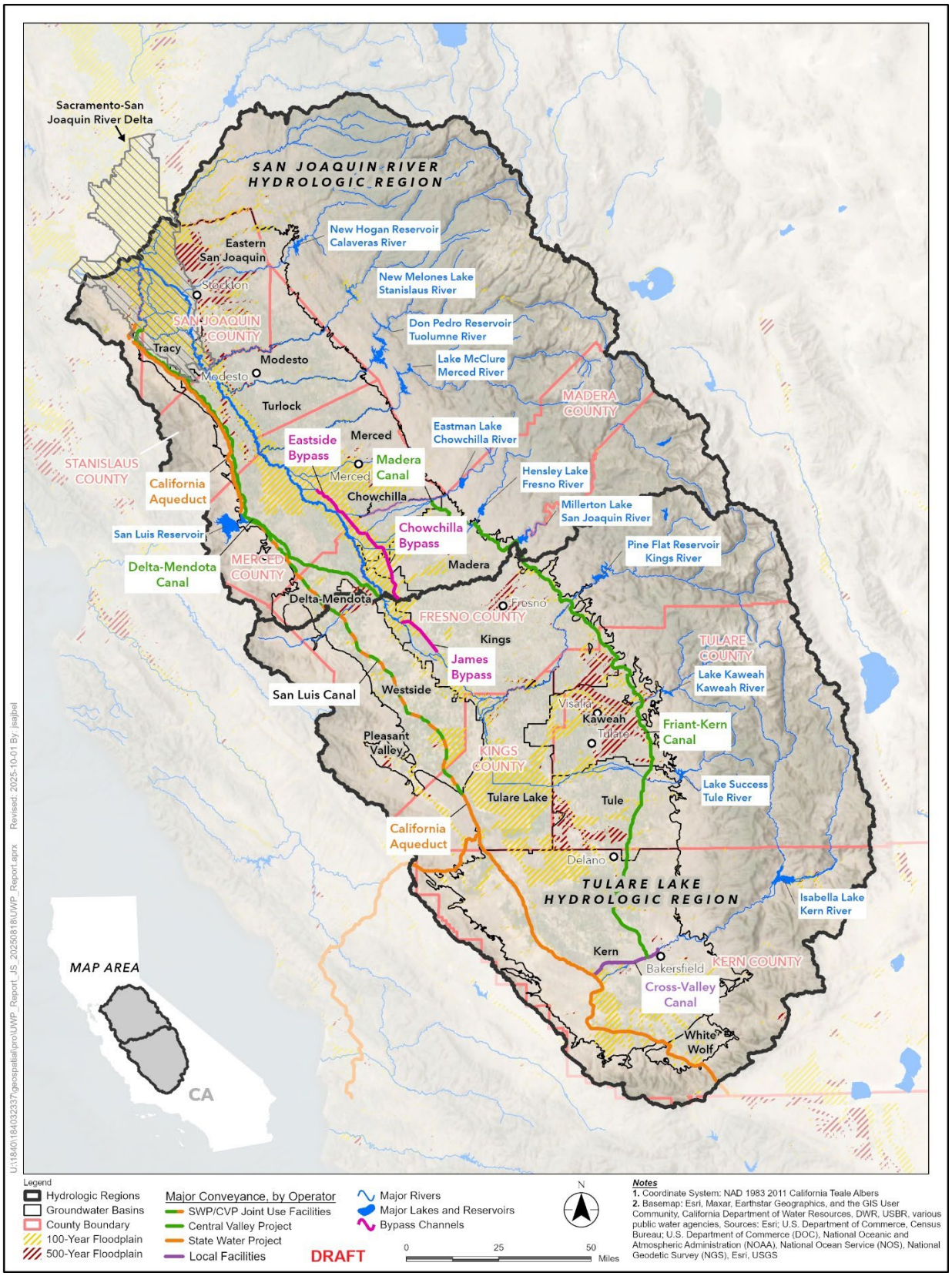


Figure 3-1: Flood Zones and Facilities in the San Joaquin Valley

Flood Management Agencies

Flood management in the San Joaquin Valley involves a collaborative effort among various agencies and organizations to mitigate flood risks and protect communities and farmland. The federal, state, and local agencies primarily responsible for flood management in the San Joaquin Valley are:

- Federal Agencies:
    - The USACE constructs and maintains flood control infrastructure such as levees, dams, and reservoirs. The USACE has emergency authority to fight floods to protect life and property and to rehabilitate federal flood management facilities that are maintained by State and local entities (Reclamation 2015).
    - FEMA provides funding and support for flood risk reduction projects and emergency response during flood events.
- State Agencies:
    - The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is responsible for statewide flood management planning and coordination. DWR's Division of Flood Management was established in 1977. DWR works to prepare for and manage floods including planning, risk management, emergency response, flood system operation and maintenance, and flood risk reduction (DWR 2022a).
    - The Central Valley Flood Protection Board was established to control flooding along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries, in cooperation with the USACE. The Central Valley Flood Protection Board establishes, maintains, and enforces standards for the construction, maintenance, and operation of the flood control system to protect life, property, and habitat in California's Central Valley (DWR 2022a). The Board coordinates State entities, local flood risk control agencies and the federal government to minimize damages from floods in California's Central Valley and is the non-federal sponsor for federal flood control projects in the State Plan of Flood Control. The Board serves as a public forum for flood risk reduction policy in the Central Valley and is responsible for adopting updates to the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan every five years.
- Local Agencies
    - Local agencies, such as county flood control districts and water agencies, are responsible for implementing flood management projects at the local level. These agencies work to maintain and improve flood control infrastructure, conduct floodplain mapping, and develop emergency response plans. As an example, the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency provides flood protection for the City of Stockon and surrounding areas.

- The Lower San Joaquin Levee District (LSJLD) was created in 1955 by a special act of the State Legislature to operate, maintain, and repair levees, bypasses, and other facilities built in connection with the Lower San Joaquin River Flood Control Project (Reclamation 2015). The district encompasses approximately 108 river miles, 190 miles of levees, across 468 square miles (300,000 acres) in Fresno, Madera, and Merced counties. LSJLD is responsible for operation, maintenance and emergency management of State flood control facilities within the district boundaries. The LSJLD is not responsible for operation and maintenance of privately owned levees. Operations and maintenance activities include vegetation management activities, sediment management and removal activities, cleaning of screens and trash racks on facilities, opening and closing gates and flap gates in the bypass systems, and flood watch. Important facilities maintained by the district include the Chowchilla Bypass, the Eastside Bypass, and the Mariposa Bypass which connects the Eastside Bypass to the San Joaquin River.

- In addition to the local agencies, community members contribute to flood planning and management by participating in public meetings, providing input on flood management plans, and taking proactive measures to protect their properties from flooding.

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan for the San Joaquin Valley

The CVFPP is jointly developed by DWR and the CVFPB to prepare for and reduce flood impacts using methods that are strategic and achieve wide community support. These plans are updated every five years and identified projects are implemented as funding becomes available. The most recent update was completed in 2022 (DWR 2022a).

In developing the CVFPP and recent updates, DWR focuses on three different planning areas in the San Joaquin Valley: the Upper San Joaquin River Region, the Mid San Joaquin River Region, and the Lower San Joaquin River Region (Figure 3-2). The Central Valley Flood Reduction Act of 2008 requires urban areas in the Central Valley to provide a higher standard of protection than the federal standards (PPIC 2024).

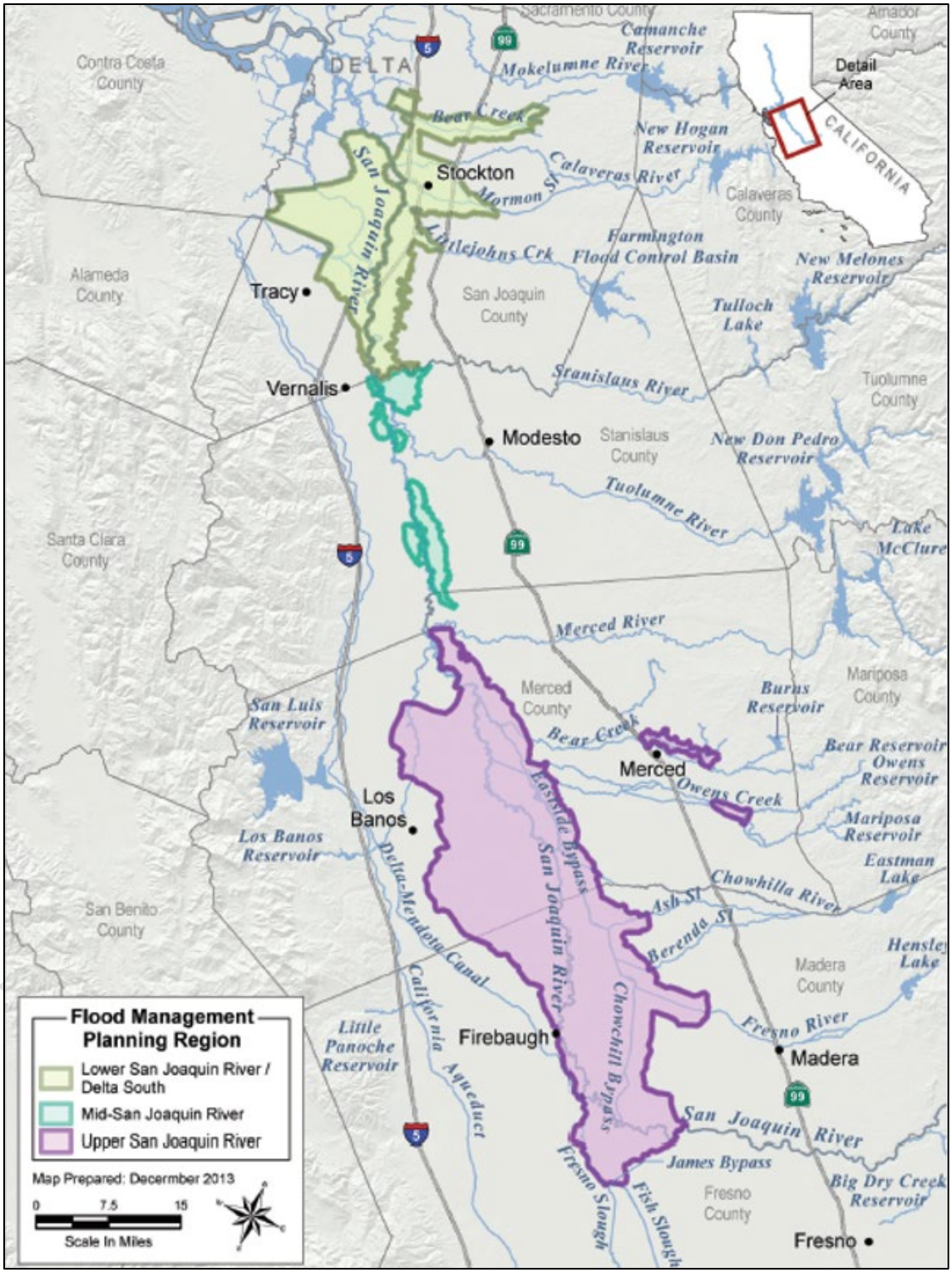
Regional Flood Management Plans

Following the adoption of the 2012 CVFPP, DWR funded three regional flood management plans (RFMPs) in the San Joaquin Valley. The RFMPs identify and describe region-specific priorities and challenges, identify projects and management actions that inform CVFPP updates, and offer valuable insight from the perspective of local and regional flood management groups, landowners, stakeholders, and community groups. RFMPs help support DWR in planning efforts across the Central Valley, align with CVFPP goals, inform CVFPP's investment strategy, and provide an important foundation for regional and local engagement.

The extent of the Upper San Joaquin, Mid San Joaquin, and Lower San Joaquin regions are shown on Figure 3-2. The CVFPP describes several challenges associated in regional flood management

planning, including complex regulatory compliance and permitting requirements for projects and operation and maintenance, limited funding, and the presence of numerous rural and disadvantaged communities within floodplain areas. In consideration of these challenges, the CVFPP identified the following priorities that are common to all regional flood management plans in the San Joaquin Valley:

- Restore flood system to original design capacity or increasing capacity, where feasible, through levee and other infrastructure improvements
- Improve infrastructure that provides flood protection to small communities.
- Implement multi-benefit actions to increase climate resilience and address subsidence
- Apply Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO)
- Implement groundwater recharge projects, including Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR).
- Implement ecosystem restoration projects.
- Improve operations and maintenance.
- Expedite permitting and construction of flood protection infrastructure improvements
- Improving climate change analyses and planning at an integrated systemwide scale
- Improve emergency response
- Preserve the unique and historical character of agricultural communities.



Source: DWR (2017), Figure 1-1

Figure 3-2: San Joaquin River Basin Flood Management Planning Regions

Upper San Joaquin River Flood Planning Region

The Upper San Joaquin River region covers approximately 660 square miles of floodplain associated with the San Joaquin River, from Gravelly Ford to the confluence of the Merced River. Major tributaries within include the Fresno River; Ash and Berenda sloughs; and Black Rascal, Owens, and Bear creeks. One third of the region is native vegetation and riparian habitat with contiguous wetland complexes.

Land use in the region is predominantly productive agricultural land. Urban areas include the City of Merced, with a population of 83,000 and several smaller communities, including Mendota, Firebaugh, Franklin-Beachwood, and Dos Palos among others. More than 10 communities in the area are classified as disadvantaged communities.

Flood management planning in the Upper San Joaquin River region is coordinated by the San Joaquin River Flood Control Project Agency, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed to represent local interests. It is composed of: Lower San Joaquin Levee District, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, and Merced County, which provides auditor/controller services.

Challenges and Priorities

Flood infrastructure in the Upper San Joaquin River region suffers from damage and diminishing capacity, lack of funding for maintenance and repairs, and increasing maintenance and repair costs. About 192 miles of SPFC levees and critical flood facilities in the region have been deauthorized and are now ineligible for assistance. In consideration of these challenges, the following priorities for flood management were identified in the CVFPP:

- Restore federal authorization for the San Joaquin River Flood Control Project making the Lower San Joaquin Levee District eligible for PL 84-99 federal disaster and rehabilitation funding.
- Increase or restore flood system conveyance capacity.
- Provide 200-year flood protection for City of Merced.
- Provide 100-year flood protection for small communities of Franklin-Beachwood, Firebaugh, and Dos Palos.
- Modify or remove levees from the SPFC.

Mid San Joaquin River Flood Planning Region

The Mid San Joaquin River region comprises six non-continuous floodplain areas along the San Joaquin River between the Merced and Stanislaus Rivers within Stanislaus and Merced counties . Major tributaries include the Merced and Tuolumne rivers. The region is a network of connected floodplains and waterways managed by SPFC and non-SPFC facilities.

More than 500,000 people reside within the region, which is primarily rural and agricultural; Modesto is the region's largest city. The region does not have a regional flood management agency.

Challenges and Priorities

Levee systems in the Mid San Joaquin River Region are unable to safely convey design flows. Improvements to non-continuous SPFC and non-SPFC facilities require close coordination. Multiple Reclamation Districts lack the ability to comply with state inspection standards due, in part, to insufficient funding to maintain flood system facilities. Some Reclamation Districts have expressed a desire to remove levees from the SPFC. In consideration of these challenges, the following priorities for the Mid San Joaquin River Region were identified in the CVFPP:

- Improve engagement with, and flood protection for, disadvantaged communities
- Develop a pilot project for levee reclassification to remove levees from the SPFC
- Developing a State-federal partnership to acquire land or flowage easements in the San Joaquin River floodplain.
- Identify and implement groundwater recharge opportunities.

Lower San Joaquin River Flood Planning Region

The Lower San Joaquin River region covers approximately 260 square miles of floodplain of the San Joaquin River the Calaveras rivers immediately upstream from the legal Delta. The region extends along the mainstem of the San Joaquin River from the Stanislaus River to Bear Creek and includes the tributaries French Camp Slough and the Calaveras River.

Land use in the region includes rapidly developing urban areas and rural-agricultural areas. The region's urban population is approximately 400,000, accounting for approximately 25% of the land area. The largest urban area is the City of Stockton, and large portion of this region is designated as disadvantaged communities or severely disadvantaged communities.

Flood planning for the region is coordinated by the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA) for the entire region. SJAFCA serves to reduce and manage flood risk and will support other agencies that deliver flood risk management services. Local flood management facilities are managed and maintained by 29 reclamation districts and by the San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Challenges and Priorities

Flood management challenges in the Lower San Joaquin River Region include operations and maintenance challenges of current levee systems, capacity to raise local revenue for project construction and maintenance; evolving and increasingly strict standards for levee maintenance, a need for planning resilient projects; and refining the USACE Lower San Joaquin River Project to reduce costs and minimize impacts. In consideration of these broad challenges, the following priorities for the Lower San Joaquin River Region were identified in the CVFPP:

- Provide 200-year flood protection for Mossdale Tract.
- Secure local financing to fund capital improvement projects and support O&M activities.

- Implement the USACE Lower San Joaquin River Project.
- Implement Mormon Slough bank repair and channel restoration projects.
- Initiate and advance recommendations from identified feasibility-level studies.
- Improve flood emergency preparedness and response.

Flood Management Opportunities

A wide range of actions that can reduce flood risk and improve flood management have been identified through the CVFPP and other planning efforts. This section briefly describes flood management actions that have the potential to also provide water supply and/or ecosystem enhancement benefits. Actions include land use management practices in upper watersheds, diversion of flood water from stream channels, modifications to reservoir flood management rules, increased capacity of designated floodways, and development of additional surface water storage capacity. These flood control strategies, and their ability to contribute to water supply and ecosystem enhancement benefits, are described below.

Land Use Modification in Upper Watersheds

Forest management practices in upper watersheds can help enhance water retention, stabilize soils, slow runoff, and minimize debris runoff. Avoiding or minimizing disturbances in forested headwaters of river basins help maintain the capacity of forests to attenuate flood flows during high flow events by slowing the rate of runoff. Forest management practices that prevent or minimize wildfires by reducing fuel loads and improve forest health and create resilient landscapes (USFWS 2025). Minimizing burned areas can reduce fire debris inflow into streams and reservoirs during flood events. Reestablishing meadows within river basins creates natural retention of flood flows. Meadows that are shallow, meandering, and contain impervious features such as logs or rocks naturally slow water, allowing water to infiltrate and slow its movement through the watershed (USFWS 2020). Reducing inflow to reservoirs improves management of inflow and can help reduce the frequency and magnitude of flood releases, thereby improving the management of water supply, while improving ecosystem condition in upper watershed areas.

Diversion of Water from Rivers and Streams During High Flow Conditions

Diversion of flood flows from rivers and streams during high flow conditions can reduce flood stage at downstream locations and provide flood risk reduction benefits. In the San Joaquin Valley, water diverted from rivers and streams can be used to replenish groundwater using a variety of techniques (on-farm application, recharge basins, percolation through stream channels, injection wells, etc.,). Diversion of flood water from the Kings River can contribute to reduced flows from the Kings River to the San Joaquin River and also contribute to reducing flood risk in San Joaquin Valley Flood Planning regions. Diverted flood waters can also be routed to regional and statewide conveyance facilities, such as the Friant-Kern Canal, Delta-Mendota Canal, San Luis Canal, the Kern River Intertie, and the California Aqueduct. The use of these regional conveyance facilities to

intercept and convey flood flows increases the management of water supplies for delivery to areas both within and outside of the San Joaquin Valley.

California Water Code Section 1242.1 was codified to allow for temporary diversion of flood flows for the benefit of groundwater recharge if certain conditions are met. DWR's Flood Diversion and Recharge Enhancement (FDRE) Initiative is working to create incentives and streamline the process for temporary diversions of flood flows on river systems in the San Joaquin Valley, and beyond, with the aim of increasing diversion for the benefit of recharge.

Modification of Reservoir Flood Storage Operations

Modification of reservoir flood storage rules can improve real time decision making on the management of water during wet hydrologic periods. All major reservoirs in the San Joaquin Valley have rules that specify required flood storage capacity to be preserved during the winter and spring to accommodate flood flows and operational requirements to release water from flood storage. Climate change studies project increased precipitation as rainfall, rather than snow, and come earlier in the year. Resulting changes in the magnitude of inflow for specified return-frequency flood events may reduce the effectiveness of existing flood management rules to provide expected levels of flood protection.

Improvements in weather forecasting and the application of more dynamic decision making can allow adaptive management of reservoir operations to improve the flood management and provide water supply benefits. Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) is a management strategy that uses data from watershed monitoring and modern weather and water forecasting to help water managers selectively retain or release water from reservoirs in a manner that reflects current and forecasted conditions. This allows water managers to better balance flood control, water supply, and environmental needs by retaining water when a storm is small and releasing it strategically ahead of a larger storm to reduce flood risk and also using available storage to capture more water in reservoirs.

FIRO relies on more accurate and longer-range weather forecasts, including those for atmospheric rivers, to predict precipitation and water inflows. Instead of following rigid, historically based rules, It creates a linkage between research, applications, technology, reservoir operations and water control manuals to enable continuous improvement based on state-of-the-science to enable operators to adapt their actions based on real-time and future forecast data. FIRO allows water to be retained in the reservoir when forecasts indicate low projected precipitation, which can be released in a controlled manner to make space for more significant incoming storms. This helps capture more water for supply during dry periods.

FIRO has the potential to optimize reservoir management to achieve multiple goals. Flood control can be improved by making proactive water releases prior to forecasted flood events, which enables reservoirs to capture more inflow and release less flood flow to downstream areas. Water supplies can be increased through the delivery of pre-evacuated reservoir storage for ground recharge and subsequent capture and storage of water during flood events For example, DWR and Merced Irrigation District recently completed the Merced River Watershed Flood-MAR Reconnaissance Study which identified FIRO as a key strategy for improving water management and highlighted the benefits of increased groundwater storage in the watershed (DWR 2024). River ecosystem

conditions can be enhanced through improved management in the timing and volume of releases for ecosystem needs. Conversely, during periods when less precipitation is forecasted, water could be held in storage within designated flood space while minimizing the risk of potential flood spills.

Increasing Conveyance Capacity of Designated Floodways

Increasing conveyance capacity of designated floodways includes the restoration and expansion of the existing built flood system of bypasses as well as the expansion of floodplains. Historically the conventional strategy for managing flood has been to build levees along rivers to narrowly contain and convey flood flows. But rivers in their natural state continually evolve - depositing sediment, cutting into banks, and changing course as they meander downstream, connecting to floodplains. Actions to increase conveyance capacity of floodways should also consider integrating with associated floodplains to realize the ecosystem benefits associated with highly productive shallow water habitat for fish and nutrients for riverine ecosystems.

Achieving a balance between future water supplies and demands, as discussed in Chapter 2, may involve retiring agricultural lands, creating an opportunity to repurpose land in historic flood plains. Increasing floodplain areas in the San Joaquin Valley would provide ecosystem benefits by improving habitat and water quality, while providing flood management benefits and potentially increase groundwater replenishments.

Like many of the conveyance facilities throughout the San Joaquin Valley, many flood bypass facilities are aging and investments to maintain and update the system have not kept pace with the needs. In addition, some floodways and bypasses have been affected by differently land subsidence, thereby reducing their water conveyance effectiveness. Restoring the design conveyance capacity of these systems would maintain their ability to manage flood flows and reduce risks to communities on or near these rivers and streams.

Development of Additional Surface Water Storage

The development of additional surface water storage can be achieved by expanding transitory storage in the Valley as well as expansion or development of water storage on existing river systems. Transitory storage refers to temporary surface storage of water, generally within historical floodplain locations, until it can be used at a later time meet water demands, delivered to groundwater storage, or released to river systems after flood flows have dissipated. While not suitable for long term storge in the San Joaquin Valley due to high evaporation loses, transitory storage can provide strategic opportunities for regulating surface water, reducing flood damages, and providing ecosystem benefits.

Several transitory storage projects have been proposed in Groundwater Sustainability Plans, particularly in areas not well-suited to groundwater recharge through percolation. The expanded use of transitional storage in key areas of the San Joaquin Valley, such as in and around Tulare Lake, offer unique opportunities to achieve multiple benefits. Increasing the capacity of storage along the rivers and streams throughout the San Joaquin Valley can improve the ability to manage inflows during wet hydrologic periods.

Reservoir modifications, such as the recently completed Tule River Spillway Enlargement Project, increased the capacity of Lake Success on the Tule River by 28,000 acre-feet. This project enhanced flood risk management, increased water storage for irrigation use, and increased recreational opportunities.

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CAP In-Person Plenary Meeting Summary

October 7, 2025

Agenda

1. Meeting Objectives
2. Watershed Studies Update from Joel Metzger, DWR
3. Overview of Prioritization Tool
4. Caucus Discussions on Small Tool
5. Next Steps for Prioritization Tool
6. Prop 4 Next Steps

The purpose of this in-person meeting was to build trust and deepen relationships among CAP members and to solicit feedback on the current draft of the CAP Prioritization Tool. This feedback will help continue the process of developing a portfolio of projects that the CAP supports. New CAP members Jeff Payne (Westlands Water District, Water Agency Caucus), Nick Reed-Krase (Tule Basin Land and Water Trust, Environmental Caucus), and Jarrett Martin (Central California Irrigated District, Water Agency Caucus) were introduced.

Watershed Studies Update

Joel Metzger, Deputy Director, Statewide Water Resources Planning and Enterprise Project Management, with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) provided an update on the DWS's Watershed Studies for the San Joaquin Basin. A separate summary of this presentation will be circulated for review by the broader CAP membership.

Overview of the Prioritization Tool

CAP Funding Situation

The development of this tool is driven by a requirement associated with the Bureau's funding provided to the CAP. The remaining funds would support the final development of this tool and provide the deliverable to the Bureau, near the end of January 2026. There is one identified funding source that may support an additional two months of work into the new year. Outside of that, the CAP does not have adequate funds available to support work moving forward. The prioritization tool and the ability to support projects have long been a desire of many CAP members and would enhance the value of the Coalition. An additional challenge with previous funding is that lobbying was not allowed. Potential new funding sources could be pursued, allowing the CAP to directly lobby for funding or administrative support for projects and programs. If funding sources are not identified, CAP members may be asked to provide funding contributions for ongoing work, or the CAP will be asked to decide how to "land" the work and move forward.

Tool Review

A draft of the current prioritization tool and criteria was provided to members. A small group, consisting of Scott Petersen, Kyle Jones, Mike Myatt, and Randy Fiorini, was appointed by the Steering Committee to guide the development of the tool. Jim Kramer provided an overview

presentation of the tool and the rationale behind the criteria. As part of the review, Jim noted that the Water Agency Caucus provided alternative criteria for the Environmental Caucus to consider regarding species and habitat benefits. In the current iteration of the tool and criteria, there are no numeric point values, and the evaluation is done on a "high", "medium", or "low" scoring system.

As a reminder, any proposal submitted for review will be evaluated against all of the criteria listed in the tool. The process begins with the "Pass/Fail" criteria, which largely focus on the project's ability to support, and not negatively impact, the desired outcomes listed on the Term Sheet and project feasibility. Those proposals that Pass will continue to the water supply and project benefit criteria, which evaluate the drinking water, ecosystem/habitat, and agricultural uses of water. Following those reviews, there is a set of "Portfolio Criteria" that will ensure that there is a diversity of projects included in the overall scoring portfolio.

One criterion that has elicited a response is the use of the term "reasonable period of time" in relation to a proposal being completed. The CAP intends to evaluate projects with discretion based on the proposal type and scope. The evaluation of the proposal will be based on the recent history of similar project types.

Scott Petersen provided an overview of the proposed alternative environmental criteria for species benefits. These criteria are intended to provide metrics to which species benefits can be tied. The Water Agency Caucus proposal would incorporate the specific benefits of the species based on the relevant life cycle models. Where there are no available tools to develop specific metrics, the CAP could recognize and advocate for the development of those tools. The proposed revisions would develop species-specific criteria for anadromous species of concern. The proposal also includes criteria for Delta smelt and sturgeon, but it was suggested during the meeting that salmonids and steelhead be the focus. There was a discussion about areas lacking tools to develop species-specific criteria. It was suggested to apply a "medium" score, which would also include monitoring and support for the development of a tool.

Hypothetical Project Review

Sam Cunningham provided an overview of three hypothetical projects that were reviewed against the existing criteria. The first project was a multibenefit recharge project in the Kings Subbasin that would use previously unappropriated flood water from the Kings River system, when available. The second project is a community drinking water system consolidation project that lacked community support but was projected to keep water rates within 10% of MHI. The third project was a floodplain restoration levee setback project along a priority habitat stretch of the San Joaquin River. Using the "high", "medium", and "low" scoring criteria system, the recharge project scored "medium", the drinking water system consolidation scored "medium-low", and the levee setback project scored "medium."

The following concerns and questions were raised by the members in attendance:

- The criteria seem to be tailored towards large-scale projects based on the yield and cost criteria in the water supply section.
    - The portfolio criteria are intended to ensure that important projects (e.g. drinking water system improvements, local recharge projects, etc.) are pulled up into the overall portfolio.

- The criteria should consider the whole watershed and not limit to a specific habitat or species.
- Would there be the potential to review a "class" of projects rather than individual projects? Like evaluating the whole of the multi-benefit recharge basins that won't impact down stream users included in the GSPs?
- Community support could be considered in more than just the environmental area
- Requiring monitoring may create a high barrier to entry for certain project proponents and project types.
- How are demand reduction projects evaluated in the water supply criteria?
    - They will have a water supply benefit (conserved water) and a cost that can be annualized. They will be evaluated against the same criteria.

Following this those in attendance broke out into groups by caucus to discuss their specific comments or concerns on the tool and draft criteria.

Caucus Discussions on Tool

Safe Drinking Water Caucus

- Climate change is not referenced or considered in the tool
- How do we make sure that we are measuring the full potential range of benefits from multibenefit projects, if some won't be realized until later in the project life?
- There needs to be more work done on defining levels of opposition, including for community support and consolidation partner support.
- Recharge projects did not score well, and there appear to be challenges with the cost and geographic benefit, appearing to be limited challenges.
    - The broader group noted that the geographic scale could be tied to many things like population served, square mileage, acreage, etc., and the group would need to determine the appropriate method for setting the scale.
- Based on the watershed studies presentation and the I-FIRM concept, how do flood flows score in the source of supply criterion?
    - New water determinations would be based on whether the project supply is based on a new water right, the full use of a water right that has not been fully utilized, or the use of an existing water right. This determination will largely be dependent on the selected baseline.
- Consider adding a criterion to the agricultural sustainability that gives points to a project that would reduce the regulatory requirements, such as CV-SALTS.
- There is currently no criterion to capture ancillary benefits of projects like flood risk reduction or stormwater management.

Environmental Caucus

- The Environmental Caucus is viewing the proposed alternative as a "yes, and…" approach
- There are many species that we would want to consider that are broader than the ecosystem
    - Consider removing smelt and sturgeon as the anadromous species are keystone enough

    - Consider Pacific Flyway considerations and links to pond turtles and giant garter snake.
- The caucus is willing to work with the proposed alternative criteria, but there are aspects about the existing criteria (such as fish passage) that they don't want to lose.

Water Agency and Ag Caucus

- Need to reach a collective agreement on the scale of regional benefit.
- Need to agree on the baseline we use to set metrics.
- Is there utility in adding criteria for preventing damage to critical infrastructure, such as through subsidence and flood damage, and would those criteria live in an existing section or be a new set of criteria?

Next Steps for Prioritization Tool

The small group will review the feedback received at this meeting and work with Sam and Jim to revise the tool. The major questions that need to be addressed are as follows:

1. Do the criteria work for programs?
2. How far along do projects need to be developed to be considered?
3. How does the CAP solicit and receive an adequate amount of information?

The goal is to finalize the tool and get the green light to start soliciting projects by early November. The small group proposes to develop a set of Portfolio Criteria for the caucuses to review and make edits. The CAP members are also asked to submit potential projects or proposals to the CAP staff to develop a list for running through the tool.

Prop 4 Next Steps

Kyle Jones analyzed the funding allocations from Prop 4 in the most recent budget bill. The Prop 4 workgroup intends to revamp the previously sent letter to re-up the CAP's request for funding in the San Joaquin Valley. The Kaweah Subbasin leaders had good discussions with Ashley Swearingen and presented a set of projects that would benefit from immediate funding. The letter will likely reference these projects as examples of things that could be funded through bond allocations, but will not indicate that the CAP supports these projects (as the tool and support process have not been finalized).

Next Steps

Jim will send out a Doodle Poll to try to schedule an in-person meeting at the beginning of the new year.