BAY AREA WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 16, 2014

Reports and media coverage of interest between December 2, 2013 and January 10, 2014.

Informational Materials

At the January 16th BAWSCA Board meeting, Danielle Blacet, will present the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Statewide Water Action Plan (SWAP) to the BAWSCA Board on behalf of ACWA Executive Director, Tim Quinn. Ms. Blacet is the ACWA Project Manager for the SWAP. The attached documents are informational materials for the BAWSCA Board to keep apprised of Statewide planning efforts including the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) developments:

- ACWA *Statewide Water Action Plan* (SWAP)
  - Statewide Water Action Plan for California Fact Sheet
  - ACWA Policy Principles on Delta Conveyance
  - SWAP List of Supporters
  - SWAP Publication
  - Comparison of ACWA's SWAP to CWAP

- Draft *California Water Action Plan* (CWAP)
  - Oct. 31, 2013 CWAP Press Release
  - Complete CWAP can be found at http://resources.ca.gov/docs/Final_Water_Action_Plan.pdf

- Draft *Bay Delta Conservation Plan and Draft EIR/EIS* (BDCP)
  - Dec. 9, 2013 BDCP Press Release
  - BDCP Overview
  - BDCP Fast Facts
  - BDCP Highlights Document can be found at http://resources.ca.gov/docs/Highlights_of_the_BDCP_FINAL_12-14-10_2361.pdf

Media Coverage

Bay Delta Plan:

Date: December 10, 2013
Source: SF Gate
Article: Delta water plan released for public scrutiny

Water Supply:

Date: January 10, 2014
Source: Contra Costa Times
Article: Despite California drought, chances for water bond are evaporating

Date: January 9, 2014
Source: SF Gate
Article: After dry spell, get ready for water restrictions

Date: January 6, 2014
Source: Wall Street Journal
Article: Water Politics

Date: January 3, 2014
Source: LA Times
Article: Meager Sierra Snowpack is way below average

Raker Act:

Date: December 19, 2013
Source: San Francisco Examiner
Article: 100 years after Raker Act was signed, the fight over Hetch Hetchy dam continues

Date: December 19, 2013
Source: San Francisco Citizen
Article: Incredibly, Official San Francisco Celebrates the Destruction of Hetch Hetchy Valley – 100 years of Raker Act

Date: December 18, 2013
Source: Modesto Bee
Article: Raker Act changed Tuolumne River's course 100 years ago

Date: December 17, 2013
Source: Mercury News
Article Hetch Hetchy: Congress should undo the destructive Raker Act

Date: December 2, 2013
Source: LA Times
Article: Restore Yosemite? It can be done.

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October 2013

Statewide Water Action Plan for California

ACWA's Board of Directors unanimously approved a Statewide Water Action Plan for California on Sept. 27, 2013. Developed by a broad cross-section of member water interests convened by ACWA over several months, the plan outlines 15 actions to improve water supply reliability, protect water rights, protect the integrity of the state's water system and promote better stewardship. It also includes guiding principles for implementation of the plan to help ensure actions benefit the entire state, respect water rights and contract terms, and reflect a new regulatory approach that can better meet the needs of water users and ecosystems.

The Statewide Water Action Plan was submitted to Gov. Jerry Brown on Oct. 2, 2013, as the water community's recommendations for developing the Administration's water plan for the state.

Key Elements of ACWA's Statewide Water Action Plan

Actions to Improve Statewide Water Supply

- ✓ Expand water storage capacity (both surface and groundwater)
- ✓ Invest in water use efficiency / Integrated Regional Water Management Plans
- ✓ Facilitate water transfers
- ✓ Protect and improve water quality
- ✓ Pass a water bond

Actions to Protect Water Rights

- ✓ Respect area of origin commitments
- ✓ Ensure that reservoirs are not operated to "dead pool" as a result of state regulations or actions

Actions to Protect the Integrity of the System

- ✓ Complete a Bay Delta Conservation Plan, consistent with the Statewide Water Action Plan
- ✓ Invest in levee improvements / maintenance
- ✓ Prepare for emergencies to protect public safety
- ✓ Improve and expand groundwater management

Actions to Promote Better Stewardship

- ✓ Integrate headwaters management to sustain the environment and improve statewide water quality and supply
- ✓ Coordinate state and federal regulatory actions
- ✓ Implement flow regulations through a collaborative, science-based process to promote the co-equal goals

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ACWA Policy Principles on **Delta Conveyance**

In 2005, ACWA published "No Time to Waste: A Blueprint for California Water". The Blueprint laid out a common sense action plan for California to meet the water policy challenges of the future. Among ACWA's more than 450 public agency members, the Blueprint serves as an overarching policy guide for the activities of ACWA staff. Recent events indicate that some amplification of the Blueprint policies, particularly as regards Delta conveyance, is appropriate.

In 2006, the Governor and the legislature initiated the Delta Vision Process and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan. ACWA representatives and others have participated in these processes and learned more about Delta issues and possible solutions. Hurricane Katrina heightened awareness of the vulnerability of the Delta levee system to withstand the trauma of an earthquake, flood, or other natural disaster. Similarly, global warming and sea level rise raise serious questions about the long-term viability of a water supply system operating at sea level. Most important, recent decisions in federal court to significantly restrict water project operations to protect Delta smelt have significantly reduced available SWP and CVP supplies conveyed through the Delta, inhibited the transport of water in the voluntary water market, and adversely affected operations of groundwater and surface storage projects south-of-the-Delta.

To guide ACWA's efforts in the important policy discussions now under way, ACWA's Board of Directors adopted the following policy principles on conveyance in 2007:

I. Failure of Through-Delta

State and federal policy should reflect the widely acknowledged fact that the half-century through-Delta experiment has failed. The system we are operating today cannot provide environmental and economic balance. It is essential that we invest in a system that can promote restoration of fisheries while providing high quality, reliable water to the economy of California. This will require a comprehensive policy as advocated in the Blueprint.

www.acwa.com

March 2009

II. Delta Conveyance Principles

ACWA supports implementation of a Delta conveyance solution, taking into account the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force and Bay-Delta Conservation Plan, which meets the following criteria:

- Reduce impacts to endangered, threatened and other native fish;
- Provide conditions that allow for habitat improvements for fish and wildlife in the Delta;
- Improve water supply and water supply reliability;
- Reduce the quantity of bromide, total organic carbon, and chlorides for water users who rely on the Harvey O. Banks and C.W. Jones pumping plants and other municipal intakes in the Delta;
- Reduce vulnerability to disasters and other natural phenomena, including flood / Seismic events, and climate change; and
- Provide sufficient conveyance capacity for delivery of SWP and CVP contract water, the transfer of water from willing sellers in upstream areas to willing buyers downstream of the Delta, and wet period deliveries to south-of-Delta storage.

ACWA recognizes that, based on what we are learning through the Delta Vision and Bay-Delta Conservation Plan processes, the fulfillment of these criteria will likely require some form of isolated conveyance in the Delta.

III. Principles to Protect Statewide Interests

ACWA believes that implementing solutions to the challenges of the Delta is of the highest priority for California, but these solutions should protect and where possible advance the interests of all Californians. To assure that Delta solutions do, in fact, benefit ACWA's statewide membership, state policy should be consistent with the following principles, all of which are consistent with the Blueprint.

- **Implementation Assurances:** California must make a strong commitment now to a long-term Delta infrastructure solution. Consistent with that commitment, the state should immediately begin to undertake initial implementation steps on an urgency basis to restore water supplies and protect Delta fisheries.
- **Protection of Delta Interests:** Delta conveyance solutions should be implemented in a manner that improves flood protection for Delta residents and for water and other infrastructure in the Delta; keeps Delta agricultural interests whole through mitigation measures, compensation, or other means; and improves the local economy.
- **Water Rights Protection:** Conveyance solutions must respect existing water rights, including the area of origin rights of water users upstream of the Delta.
- **Upstream Water Supply Reliability:** Consistent with Blueprint Principle V, state policy must support the development of local surface and groundwater storage projects and other local programs to assure that all regions of California, including areas upstream of the Delta, have adequate water supply reliability.
- **Beneficiaries Pay:** The costs of Delta conveyance solutions should be borne by direct beneficiaries, including the SWP and CVP contractors. Costs should not be apportioned to water users who do not rely on the conveyance facility for their water supply. Public benefits, such as investments in major habitat restoration, should be paid by state or federal general tax revenues.
- **Local Resources:** State policy should provide funding for and vigorously pursue implementation of water use efficiency measures and the development of local water supply resources, consistent with ACWA's longstanding commitment to local control.

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ACWA's Statewide Water Action Plan Supporters

As of January 6, 2014, the following organizations have adopted support resolutions or sent letters of support for ACWA's Statewide Water Action Plan organized by ACWA region.

Region 1
- Hidden Valley Lake CSD

Region 2
- Browns Valley ID
- Clear Creek CSD
- Glenn-Colusa ID
- Rio Alto WD
- South Feather WPA
- ★ South Sutter WD
- Western Canal WD

Region 3
- Calaveras County WD
- City of Lincoln
- City of Roseville
- El Dorado County WA
- El Dorado ID
- Mammoth CWD
- Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
- Placer County WA

Region 4
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Carmichael WD
- Citrus Heights WD
- City of Sacramento
- Regional WA
- Sacramento Suburban WD
- San Juan WD
- Yolo County Flood Control and WCD

Region 5
- City of San Juan Bautista
- Contra Costa WD
- East Bay MUD
- Monterey Peninsula WMD
- San Benito County WD
- Scotts Valley WD
- Sunny Slope County WD

Region 6
- Alta ID
- Angiola WD
- Fresno Metropolitan FCD
- James ID
- Kings River CD
- Madera ID
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors WA

Region 7
- Friant WA
- Kern County WA
- Orosi Public UD
- Porterville ID
- Saucelito ID
- Terra Bella ID
- Tulare ID
- Semitropic WSD
- Southern San Joaquin MUD
- Wheeler Ridge Maricopa WSD

Region 8
- Calleguas MWD
- Casitas MWD
- La Puente Valley CWD
- Las Virgenes MWD
- Metropolitan WD So. Cal
- San Gabriel CWD
- Three Valleys MWD
- Walnut Valley WD

Region 9
- Chino Basin WCD
- City of Corona
- Coachella Valley WD
- Cucamonga Valley WD
- Desert WA
- Eastern MWD
- Elsinore Valley MWD
- Missions Springs WD
- Monte Vista WD
- Rancho California WD
- Riverside County FC & WCD
- San Bernardino Valley WCD
- San Gorgonio Pass WA
- Western MWD

Region 10
- City of San Diego
- Helix WD
- Irvine Ranch WD
- Mesa WD
- Padre Dam MWD
- Rincon del Diablo MWD
- Valley Center WD
- Vista ID

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Total Agencies: 78

★ *New agencies added 12/20/13 – 1/6/14*

Statewide Water Action Plan for California

Last updated: January 6, 2014

The following organizations have adopted support resolutions or sent letters of support for the ACWA'S Statewide Water Action Plan.

Supporters

- Alta Irrigation District
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Browns Valley Irrigation District
- Calaveras County Water District
- Calleguas Municipal Water District
- Carmichael Water District
- Casitas Municipal Water District
- Chino Basin Water Conservation District
- Citrus Heights Water District
- City of Corona
- City of Lincoln
- City of Roseville
- City of Sacramento
- City of San Diego
- Clear Creek Community Services District
- Coachella Valley Water District
- Contra Costa Water District
- Cucamonga Valley Water District
- Desert Water Agency
- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- Eastern Municipal Water District
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
- Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District
- Friant Wate Authority
- Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- Helix Water District
- Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District
- Irvine Ranch Water District
- James Irrigation District
- Kern County Water Agency
- Kings River Conservation District
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
- Madera Irrigation District
- Mammoth Community Water District
- Missions Springs Water District
- Mesa Water District
- Metropolitan Water District So. Cal
- Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
- Monte Vista Water District
- Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
- Orosi Public Utilities District
- Padre Dam Municipal Water District
- Placer County Water Agency
- Porterville Irrigation District
- Rio Alto Water District
- Regional Water Authority

- Sacramento Suburban Water District
- San Benito County Water District
- San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District
- San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contrators Water Authority
- San Juan Water District
- Saucelito Irrigation District
- Scotts Valley Water District
- Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District
- South Sutter Water District
- Sunnyslope County Water District
- Terra Bella Irrigation District
- Three Valleys Municipal Water District
- Tulare Irrigation District
- Valley Center Water District
- Vista Irrigation District
- Walnut Valley Water District
- Western Canal Water District
- Wheeler Ridge Maricopa Water Storage District
- Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Presentations Requesting Support:

- Bay Delta Conservation Forum for KVIE
- California Building Industry Association
- California Farm Bureau
- Clean Water & Jobs for California
- Orange County Water Leaders
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water Advisory Committee
- San Diego County Water Authority members
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
- Southern California Water Committee
- Vista Irrigation District
- Padre Dam Municipal Water District

SWAP also presented to ACWA members at ACWA Region programs

- November 15 – Regions 1 & 5
- November 4 – Regions 6 & 7
- November 5 – Regions 5 & 8
- October 17 – Region 10
- October 18 – Region 3
- October 24 – Regions 2 & 4

- October 30 – Region 9

Other Organizations Briefed on SWAP

- California Natural Resources Agency
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- State Water Resources Control Board
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Water Commission
- Delta Stewardship Council

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES

STATEWIDE WATER ACTION PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA

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October 2013

About the Statewide Water Action Plan

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) convened a broad cross-section of member water interests in spring 2013 to develop a statewide plan addressing the state's overall water supply reliability and ecosystem health. The goal was to craft a specific plan that could be broadly supported by water interests throughout the state and serve as a sustainable path forward for California.

The resulting Statewide Water Action Plan was completed in September and unanimously approved by the ACWA Board of Directors on Sept. 27, 2013. ACWA submitted the Statewide Water Action Plan to California Governor Edmund G Brown Jr. on Oct. 2, 2013, as the water community's recommendations for developing the Administration's water plan for the state.

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ACWA's mission is to assist its members in promoting the development, management and reasonable beneficial use of good quality water at the lowest practical cost in an environmentally balanced manner.

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES

STATEWIDE WATER ACTION PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA

Introduction

California's complex water management system is facing unprecedented challenges. Local investments in water supply reliability and ecosystem health have built upon the legacy infrastructure projects that served us well in the past, but the backbone water supply system we rely on today no longer satisfies the state's needs. California's statewide water system cannot respond effectively to our growing population, changing ecosystem needs, increasing flood risks and consecutive years of drought. Climate change and its impacts on public safety and long-term water supply reliability also pose a significant challenge to this generation of water and flood managers.

These problems are extraordinary, and their solutions will require an extraordinary commitment from state, local and federal agencies. They also will require a more evolved regulatory approach that will allow the system to operate efficiently and predictably to meet 21st century water supply and ecosystem needs.

The state has recognized the need for action in venues and initiatives such as the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) California Water Plan, the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan, and the multi-agency Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Now California's public water agencies are stepping forward to recommend this set of principles and actions to enhance these individual efforts and integrate them in a comprehensive Statewide Water Action Plan. Our recommended plan, submitted to the Governor for his consideration, provides context for a Delta solution and other critical actions as components of a broader set of strategies to address overall water supply reliability and ecosystem health in California.

When implemented together, this suite of statewide actions will serve as a sustainable path forward for California. Governor Brown's leadership and commitment will be central to the success of this action plan and to moving water policy forward in California.

Guiding Principles for Implementation of the Statewide Water Action Plan

1. **Long-term water supply reliability and improved ecosystem health** are the core objectives of this statewide water action plan. In the course of achieving them, however, we must ensure that one region's increased reliability does not adversely affect another's near- or long-term water supplies.

2. **A new regulatory approach** is essential to reflect today's realities and better serve the needs of California water users and the ecosystem. This is critical if we are to reduce scientific uncertainty and incorporate new understanding of operational and ecosystem dynamics. Under the current approach, regulatory agencies tend to focus only on their specific goals, resulting in duplicative and contradictory requirements that fail to deliver benefits to our water supply, water quality or ecosystem. To combat this, state agencies should commit to using collaborative processes as extensively and transparently as possible to achieve regulatory goals in a way that satisfies water supply, water quality, and ecosystem needs. This new approach should embrace enhanced sharing of data, consistent use of peer-reviewed science (including climate change models), coordinated review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and improved integration and coordination of all related processes. This approach will help ensure continued ecosystem protections and increase the water community's confidence that regulatory investments will achieve benefits.

3. **The best available science** should be used to support every action, report or decision made as part of this Statewide Water Action Plan. The science should be inclusive, objective, transparent, and peer reviewed.

4. **Water rights and contract terms**, including area-of-origin protections, are foundational to our water system and should be respected and adhered to whenever projects and initiatives are implemented. State and federal facilities should be operated consistent with the conditions of water rights, contracts, and other entitlements.

5. **Bold actions guided by strong leadership** at the state, federal and local levels are essential for the successful implementation of this action plan. In particular, increased commitments by federal partners are needed to ensure the plan moves forward. The Department of Water Resources should provide leadership and support for these efforts from the department's highest level.

6. **Financing:** The state should fund investments that provide broad public benefits such as improved water supply reliability, water quality and ecosystem health. The state should also incentivize local projects that advance statewide water priorities and require public assistance to be cost effective.

Statewide Actions

To be most effective, the following suite of statewide actions should be implemented as a comprehensive package. Indeed, many elements — including a Delta conveyance solution — are much more likely to succeed if they are part of a broader action plan. Statewide support for the action plan is essential. Advancing all elements of the plan simultaneously will help secure and maintain that support and build a statewide coalition capable of achieving these ambitious goals.

1. Storage

California's water infrastructure has proven inadequate to meet the state's needs in a two-year drought, let alone a multi-year drought. This deficiency, coupled with the already measurable effects of climate change, makes construction of new storage facilities and expansion of existing storage imperative. A wide range of options should be on the table, including new surface water projects; re-operation and expansion/enlargement of existing storage projects; groundwater and conjunctive use; and development of other local and regional storage facilities. Additional storage will add flexibility to the water management system and help ensure a more reliable water supply to serve California's diverse needs, including drought resilience and ecosystem protection (e.g., improved temperatures and flows for fish).

Actions

- **Studies**. In coordination with DWR, the responsible state, federal or local water agency proponents of projects should complete storage studies by June 2014 and formally determine whether a particular project is environmentally and economically sound and will provide benefits for water supply and the ecosystem.

- **Permitting**. Within six months of a local determination based on these studies, DWR and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDF&W) should begin coordinating with local agencies to expedite permitting and CEQA compliance for new storage facilities. For storage projects found to have statewide benefit, DWR and CDF&W should take the lead in expediting the permitting process. The state also should coordinate with federal agencies as needed on permitting, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), water rights issues and potentially construction.

- **Financing**. Under comprehensive water legislation enacted in 2009, the California Water Commission is tasked with defining and quantifying the public benefits of water storage projects eligible for funding with state dollars. By June 2014, local water agencies that would receive identifiable water supply benefits from water storage projects should provide a plan outlining their commitment and steps they will take to pay for those benefits. This Statewide Water Action Plan recommends that any water bond that moves forward in 2014 provide for continuous appropriation of funding for the public benefits of storage as outlined in the bond measure currently slated for the November 2014 ballot.

- **Construction.** By January 2018, construction should commence for new groundwater and surface water storage projects with an initial target of 1.5 million acre-feet of new storage capacity, as documented in the 2000 CALFED Record of Decision.

- **Local Construction**. As soon as practicable, construction of local facilities with a target of 1 million acre-feet should be completed.

- **Reoperation**. DWR should complete its study of reservoir reoperation by June 2014, including reoperation of existing reservoirs and integration of new storage into system operations.

2. Water Use Efficiency

Water conservation and water use efficiency are central elements of the state's strategy to enhance water supply reliability, restore ecosystems and respond to climate change and a growing population. It should continue to be the state's policy to encourage investments in water conservation and water use efficiency by ensuring that the right to conserved water remains with the conserving entity. Local and regional water agencies have made significant multi-decade investments in water conservation and water use-efficiency activities and continue to do so under new state requirements

enacted in law. The state should acknowledge that local agencies are in the best position to determine compliance with these requirements and should respect local determinations as sufficient.

Actions

- The state should provide funding for water use efficiency activities in disadvantaged communities and support programs that are not locally cost effective but contribute broad benefits to California.
- DWR and local water agencies should coordinate with groundwater management agencies where applicable to enhance conjunctive use opportunities and minimize potential impacts on groundwater recharge that may result from water use efficiency and conservation efforts.

3. Water Supply Assurances

California law establishes a goal of improving water supply reliability throughout the state. Water supply reliability in regions that rely on water conveyed across the Delta is of obvious importance to the California economy. A BDCP is being developed in part to improve and protect water supply reliability for the agencies that will benefit from its completion. However, it is important that these improvements be accomplished in a manner consistent with this principle.

When the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) were built, assurances were incorporated in their authorizing statutes that water needed to meet present and future beneficial uses in the areas of origin (i.e., the Sacramento Valley, the east side of the San Joaquin Valley and the Delta) would be available to those areas when needed. All of California has benefited from these fundamental assurances. The state should commit to implementing an action plan that augments storage and modifies regulatory approaches to ensure that positive storage balances can be maintained at all times to provide for improved water supply reliability and ecosystem health and protection of the state's economy.

Actions

- As the state implements this plan, all relevant agencies should adhere to water rights protections in state law and comply with existing water rights and contractual requirements.
- The Administration should continue to affirm through its policies and actions that the implementation of a BDCP will not adversely affect existing water rights of those in the watershed of the Delta, nor will it impose any obligations on area-of-origin water users, including in the Delta, to supplement flows in and through the Delta.
- Those seeking to secure permits for a BDCP will be responsible for meeting all applicable conditions in their BDCP permits, including any obligations in those permits for Delta flow, which as required by law must avoid redirected impacts to area-of-origin water users, including in the Delta, unless provided for in voluntary agreements or settlements.

4. Operational Assurances

Recent modeling indicates that, in the driest 10% of years, some major reservoirs will hit "dead pool," the condition in which water levels fall below a dam's lowest outlets and no operable storage exists to deliver water for supply, environmental, and power generation purposes. The ramifications of hitting dead pool at that frequency could be catastrophic for water users who rely on these facilities for a portion of their supply, for the environment, and particularly for affected water agencies that do not have another viable source of water supply for their customers.

Allowing reservoirs to reach dead pool is not sound policy and is at odds with overall efforts by the state and federal governments to address California's water supply reliability and ecosystem health. Adaptive strategies that address this issue are critical to ensure that the operational rules for California's water delivery system will provide the water supply assurances needed by water users throughout the state. It should be the policy of the state to adopt regulations, develop operating rules, or take other actions that will ensure that reservoirs are not drawn to dead pool conditions, even in multiple dry years.

Actions

- The Administration should develop a strategy in coordination with state agency leadership and federal agency partners by January 1, 2015, to ensure reservoirs are not driven to dead pool levels. This strategy should identify needed regulatory changes, infrastructure improvements including increased storage capacity, and changes in reservoir operations, as well as support for additional local resources development.

- Initial actions identified through this process that can be implemented prior to January 1, 2015, should be included as part of the report outlined in the Governmental Coordination section of this Statewide Water Action Plan.

- As part of this strategy, the Governor should direct state agencies to implement new and existing water management and water quality programs in a manner that will help ensure California's reservoirs do not reach dead pool conditions.

5. Improved Regional Self-Reliance

In addition to water use efficiency and water conservation, California's water agencies utilize a variety of methods to increase local water supplies and reliability for water users and the environment. The state should continue to support development of local and regional water resources that improve each region's water supply reliability and, where applicable, augment imported water supplies. This includes surface water diversions for in-basin uses, conjunctive use, stormwater capture, recycled water, desalination, and groundwater cleanup. Projects and programs that achieve multiple benefits should be a priority.

Actions

- Local agencies should improve self-reliance by planning and implementing projects consistent with decisions made by local and regional water agencies.

- DWR should consult with local and regional agencies to develop a statewide strategy to improve regional supplies, in accordance with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act.

- The state should continue to support Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) efforts that successfully provide for regional and local needs.

- DWR should work with existing IRWMP programs and stakeholders to evaluate the state's Integrated Regional Water Management program and identify areas for improvement, including streamlining the application process, developing specific criteria to determine successful plan implementation, and reducing transaction costs. This effort should include ways to enhance the program's effectiveness in serving disadvantaged communities in IRWMP-eligible areas.

6. Headwaters

Because nearly all of the state's water supplies originate in California's headwaters, more effectively managing these areas is integral to optimizing the water supplies that nature provides. Adapting to climate change and improving watershed resiliency to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires and increase water yield and quality will require substantial investments by the state.

Actions

- State land and resource management agencies with jurisdiction in headwaters areas should draft a joint report to the Governor and the Legislature analyzing the impacts of climate change on headwaters. The report should identify the benefits that headwaters currently provide, identify models to assess the impacts of climate change on these resources and outline strategies to adapt to those impacts. The appropriate state agencies should invite their federal agency partners to participate in the development of the report.

- The Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Sierra Nevada Research Institute (UC Merced) and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, should provide a report to the Governor outlining and prioritizing investments that can be made on public lands to improve the condition and functions of California's headwaters to benefit water supply reliability for the state.

- Working with local agencies, the state should assess and support solutions for legacy issues affecting water quality and supply to improve the condition of affected watersheds.

- The state should seek to partner with the U.S. Forest Service in meadow restoration projects that can control excessive soil erosion and sediment delivery in California's watersheds to help maintain reservoir storage capacity, reduce flood risks and increase conjunctive use capability.

7. Water Quality

Protecting water quality is a critical aspect of water management in California. The state should continue to pursue actions to protect, maintain and enhance surface water and groundwater quality for all applicable beneficial uses, consistent with meeting all applicable standards, agreements and regulatory requirements.

Actions

- The Department of Public Health should fund the development and use of new analytical methods and cost-effective treatment technologies to better detect and remove chemical and microbial contaminants from drinking water supplies.
- The state should provide funding support for local water agencies to develop and implement salt and nutrient management plans that will reduce salinity in surface and groundwater supplies and provide enhanced conjunctive use opportunities.
- The State Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Boards should review and better match water quality standards to the locally appropriate and demonstrated use of the water. Water quality program expenditures should be focused where they will provide the greatest water quality benefits. Source water quality for municipal uses should continue to be protected.
- The state should continue to develop solutions for assisting disadvantaged communities that do not have safe drinking water.

8. Bay Delta Conservation Plan

A Delta solution, including a BDCP, is a critical component of a broader set of actions that will address water supply reliability and ecosystem health in California.

Actions

- Within the scope of existing regulatory statutes, all state agencies involved in developing a BDCP should exercise their discretion and authority to ensure the final project is consistent with the principles of this Statewide Water Action Plan.
- A Delta solution is expected to provide substantial public benefits, which will be funded from public sources including a revised 2014 water bond. The state should work with its federal partners to secure long-term, non-reimbursable federal funding to pay for the federal share of these public benefits.
- Any large construction project, including a BDCP, may have adverse impacts related to the project's "footprint." Where feasible, a BDCP should be designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts in the first place. When adverse impacts cannot be avoided, the permittees of a BDCP should mitigate project-related environmental impacts, including water supply impacts, in accordance with existing law.
- The permittees of a BDCP, including the Central Valley Project and State Water Project contractors, should work collaboratively with other water users in good faith on all statewide water issues to find mutually acceptable solutions on the broader statewide water issues.

9. Levee Improvement and Maintenance

Levees in the Delta and throughout California are key features of the state's water system and are subject to many risks, including those associated with earthquakes and floods. To protect against and prepare for future levee failures, the state should continue to support and prioritize the maintenance of levees in accordance with state law, including critical near-term actions and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan.

Actions

- The Delta Stewardship Council should complete its prioritization plan by July 1, 2014.
- The state should continue to support DWR's Delta Levee Maintenance and Special Projects programs and provide support for local flood protection measures throughout the Central Valley by partnering with local agencies in projects that can incorporate public benefits.

10. Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety

Recent events in California and other states have demonstrated that water-related emergencies can have significant impacts and put public safety at risk. A robust emergency response plan is essential for minimizing disruption due to floods, earthquakes, wildfires, power outages or contamination of drinking water supplies. The state, working with federal partners, should continue efforts to improve response strategies to enhance public safety during these unforeseen events.

Actions

- DWR should implement pertinent recommendations of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force Report of 2012.

- To reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) should review and, if necessary, revise relevant state regulations to better accommodate and effectuate the use of forest management tools such as forest thinning, biomass removal and controlled burns that reduce fuel loading.

- DWR should coordinate with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure public safety in the Delta and upstream will not be compromised by actions that might otherwise degrade the performance of flood management facilities; create or redirect hydraulic impacts; or, interfere with or impede flood facility improvements, operations or maintenance.

- DWR should implement the pathway strategy adopted in its draft Delta Flood Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and supported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This effort includes all measures to facilitate restoration of an emergency freshwater pathway to water export facilities in approximately six months.

11. Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan

Multiple regulatory agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), CDF&W, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), DWR, Army Corps of Engineers, and the Delta Stewardship Council are tasked with making decisions affecting California's water supplies. Continued coordination among these agencies is essential to avoid duplicative and possibly conflicting policies and regulations, and to make the most efficient use of the state's resources. Negotiated programs and planning efforts have been and likely will be the most effective tools to protect beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta. The State Water Board has the opportunity to lead this coordination through its review and update of the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan (Bay-Delta Plan). In its review of the Bay-Delta Plan, the State Water Board should:

Actions

- Encourage and facilitate negotiated programs, planning efforts and settlements that will implement flow and non-flow actions consistent with the need to protect beneficial uses and public trust balancing.

- Require a tri-annual review of water quality objectives and implementation accountability through annual reports by local agencies, state offices, departments and boards with responsibility to implement the Bay-Delta Plan.

12. Water Bond

Significant investments in California's water infrastructure, water management improvements and ecosystem health are critically needed and long overdue.

Actions

- The water bond currently set for the November 2014 ballot should be modified, consistent with the ACWA Board of Directors' Water Bond Policy Principles, in early 2014 to ensure its placement on the November ballot. An appropriately crafted general obligation bond can fund broad public benefits associated with investments identified in this Statewide Water Action Plan. Priorities for funding should include new surface and groundwater storage; local and regional projects that support greater regional self-sufficiency; investments in Delta ecosystem restoration; safe drinking water projects and water quality improvements; water conservation and water use efficiency; and watershed management.

13. Groundwater Resources

Many regions of the state rely on groundwater for a significant portion of their water supply. In recent years, climate change, regulatory restrictions on surface water supplies, and increased demands have forced greater reliance on groundwater as a principal or supplemental supply for urban, agricultural and environmental uses. More sustainable management of groundwater is needed, but in order to succeed the state must invest in improvements to its water storage and Delta conveyance infrastructure to optimize both surface and groundwater supplies. Consistent with ACWA's strategic policy document, *Sustainability from the Ground Up: A Framework for Groundwater Management in California*, the state should support and incentivize effective local and regional groundwater management, resolve conflicting state regulatory requirements and streamline its policies to optimize and increase surface and groundwater storage opportunities.

Actions

- DWR should convene a multi-agency workgroup with participation by local groundwater agencies to coordinate, review and facilitate implementation of local and regional groundwater management performance objectives.

- Groundwater recharge, banking and conjunctive use projects are critical to the future sustainability of California's groundwater resources. DWR and State Water Board (and Regional Boards) should support and facilitate these activities when programs are implemented as part of an IRWMP or legally recognized groundwater management plan.

- DWR, in consultation with other agencies that gather data, should develop a single data portal on a publicly accessible website for groundwater quality information. DWR also should continue to expand the CASGEM database for groundwater quantity.

- The state, through the Regional Boards, should support and incentivize local agencies' efforts to develop long-term, sustainable solutions for cleanup of existing groundwater contamination and prevention of future contamination.

14. Water Transfers

Water transfers can provide much-needed flexibility in meeting water supply and environmental needs and have proven invaluable in dry years and droughts. A well-defined set of policies and procedures that provide certainty to transferring parties is essential to facilitate future transfers and promote local and statewide economic, social and environmental sustainability.

While federal and state laws promote transfers, DWR's current approval processes should be streamlined. These issues should be resolved as expeditiously as possible so water transfers can be implemented quickly — when they are needed — without adversely affecting third parties.

Actions

- DWR should convene stakeholder meetings, including with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, to identify and resolve, at a minimum, the following issues by December 1, 2013:
    - Identify a process to expedite transfers within a region;
    - Assess the role of CEQA in water transfers,
    - Review DWR and Reclamation processes and criteria that are used to determine what water is transferable; and
    - Investigate and review contracting practices within Reclamation and DWR for approving agreements to use conveyance and storage facilities of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project.
- DWR also should review the 2002 SWRCB report, *Water Transfers Issues in California*, for background and relevant recommendations to further facilitate water transfers.

15. Governmental Coordination

For this plan to be successful, improved coordination among state agencies and between the state and federal government will be critical.

Actions

- The Governor and state agency leadership should follow up with their federal counterparts, including the President, to assess actions, policy direction and commitments in response to the memo from the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to his cabinet directing that a BDCP be a priority for the Obama Administration. The state should further coordinate with federal agencies to advance other actions identified in the CEQ memo, including conservation and water use efficiency, enhancing water supplies and storage, and facilitating water transfers during times of shortage.

- The secretaries of the Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency and the Health and Human Services Agency, in coordination with their respective boards, departments, offices, councils, commissions and conservancies that have a role in implementation of this plan, should produce within 90 days of the Governor's approval of this plan a joint report that details how the agencies and entities they oversee will exercise their authorities to implement this plan in an expeditious and integrated manner.

Statewide Water Action Plan Participation

Sacramento Valley

- Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- Northern California Water Association

Delta and Sacramento Region

- City of Sacramento
- San Juan Water District
- Regional Water Authority
- Reclamation District 2068

Mountain Counties

- Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- Placer County Water Agency

San Joaquin & Kings Rivers

- San Joaquin Tributaries Authority
- Merced Irrigation District
- Friant Water Authority
- Turlock Irrigation District
- Kings River Conservation District

Bay Area

- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- Contra Costa Water District
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Santa Clara Valley Water District

West & Southern San Joaquin Valley / Southern California

- MWD of Southern California
- Westlands Water District
- Kern County Water Agency
- San Luis / Delta-Mendota Water Authority
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors
- San Diego County Water Authority

** Participation in plan development does not necessarily imply formal endorsement of final document.*

Association of California Water Agencies

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Comparison of ACWA's Statewide Water Action Plan for California and the Brown Administration's Draft California Water Action Plan

ACWA's Board of Directors unanimously approved a Statewide Water Action Plan for California on Sept. 27, 2013. Developed by a broad cross-section of member water interests convened by ACWA over several months, the plan outlines 15 actions to improve water supply reliability, protect water rights, protect the integrity of the state's water system and promote better stewardship. It also includes guiding principles for implementation of the plan to help ensure actions benefit the entire state, respect water rights and contract terms, and reflect a new regulatory approach that can better meet the needs of water users and ecosystems.

ACWA submitted the Statewide Water Action Plan to Governor Brown on Oct. 2, 2013 as the water community's recommendations for developing the Administration's water action plan for the state. On October 31, the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture released the draft California Water Action Plan. Below is a comparison of the two plans.

Key Elements of ACWA's Statewide Water Action Plan compared to the Brown Administration's draft California Water Action Plan

Actions to Improve Statewide Water Supply

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes

✓ Expand water storage capacity (both surface and groundwater) (pg. 3)	✓ Expand both surface and ground water storage (pg. 11)
	✓ Support funding partnerships for storage projects (pg. 11)
		• The storage section in the Administration's Plan indicates that:
		  • financing is often the limiting factor for storage projects, particularly for the larger surface storage projects. (pg. 11)
		  • BDCP will increase feasibility of additional water storage. (pg. 11)
		• The Administration's Plan emphasizes

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
		groundwater storage and management opportunities (pg. 12), but is not inconsistent with additional surface storage provisions in ACWA's SWAP. See the groundwater section of this document for the groundwater-related actions.
✓ Invest in water use efficiency and water conservation activities (pp. 3-4)	✓ Facilitate expansion of existing agricultural and urban water conservation and water use efficiency programs to exceed SBX7 7 targets (pg. 4) ✓ Increase coordinated water-energy efficiency (pg. 5)	• The Administration's Plan indicates the State will work with the Legislature to expand funding for water use efficiency programs. Priority will be given to Integrated Regional Water Management Plans with existing/proposed measures including numeric targets. (pg. 5)
✓ Advance regional self-reliance/ Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (pg. 5)	✓ Streamline permitting for projects to increase local water supplies (pg. 6) ✓ Increase the use of recycled water (pg. 6) ✓ Support and enhance IRWMP program, targeting funding to those projects that result in multi-benefit solutions (pg. 5) ✓ Work more closely to promote land use decisions with sustainable water management (pg. 5)	• The Administration's Plan also indicates the state will adopt criteria for indirect and direct potable water reuse of recycled water, which is required by SB 918 (Ch. 700 Stat. 2010). ACWA also recommended this action in its Groundwater Framework. (pg. 6) • ACWA included a recommendation in its Groundwater Framework regarding bridging the gap between land use decisions and sustainable water management. (pg. 31)
✓ Facilitate water transfers (pg. 8)	✓ Streamline water transfers in both extreme situations and normal system conditions (pg. 10)	

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Protect and improve water quality (pp. 5-6)	✓ Complete consolidation of drinking water and surface and groundwater quality programs; provide funding for disadvantaged communities (pg. 13)	• This action in the Administration's Plan moves the CDPH Drinking Water Program to the State Water Resources Control Board. Originally opposed to this move, ACWA is now working with the Administration to accomplish the in a workable manner.
✓ Pass a water bond (pg. 7)	✓ Develop water financing strategy to identify all potential sources of revenue. Mentions general obligation (G.O.) bond as one financing opportunity, along with federal grants and loans, revenue bonds, fees, taxes, private investments etc. (pg. 16) ✓ Review changes needed to Prop. 218 that would allow water agencies to assess funds for sustainable water management (pg. 17) ✓ Analyze user and polluter fees (pg. 17)	• The Administration's Plan lays the foundation for possible agreement on the 2014 water bond, but clearly contemplates going beyond G.O. Bond financing of public benefits in the future.

Actions to Protect Water Rights

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Respect area of origin commitments (pg. 4)	✓ Includes a statement in the operational and regulatory efficiency section that states "efficiently operating the State Water Project and Central Valley Project, while complying with the requirements of state and federal endangered species acts and operating consistent with the conditions of water rights, contracts and other entitlements, is a delicate balance." (pg. 14)	• Stronger commitments may be required for the Administration's Plan to satisfy the water supply assurances commitments of the SWAP.

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Ensure that reservoirs are not operated to "dead pool" as a result of state regulations or actions (pp. 4-5)	✓ There are not specific actions included in the Administration's Plan that address the operational concerns related to this issue, although the Administration's Plan does state in the *Manage and Prepare for Dry Periods* section that state and federal agencies will implement a series of administrative solutions to make water delivery decisions and propose options in extreme conditions (pg. 10)	• The Administration has acknowledged the issue, and ACWA and its affected members will continue working on efforts to address it with State agencies.

Actions to Protect the Integrity of the System

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Complete a Bay Delta Conservation Plan, consistent with the Statewide Water Action Plan (pg. 6)	✓ Complete the current Bay Delta Conservation Plan. Once the BDCP is permitted, it will become part of the Delta Plan (pg. 7) ✓ Identify improvement and restoration projects based in part on priority areas listed in the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan (pp. 7-8)	• The Administration's Plan indicates many of the actions build on the priorities in the DSC's Delta Plan and directs all relevant agencies to fully participate in the Delta Plan Implementation Committee. (pg. 7)
✓ Continue to support DWR's Delta Levee Maintenance and Special Projects programs (pg. 6)	✓ Continue implementation of the Delta Levee Subventions, Delta Special Projects and Floodway Corridor Programs (pg. 8) ✓ Develop prioritization plan by January 1, 2015 (pg. 14)	• ACWA's SWAP says that DSC should complete its levee prioritization plan by July 1, 2014. (pg. 6)

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Prepare for emergencies to protect public safety (pg. 6-7)	✓ Develop funding, streamline permitting and coordinate response protocols to reduce flood risk and impacts (pg. 13) ✓ Review Prop. 218 for changes needed to exempt flood management activities as public safety concerns (pg. 13)	• The Administration's Plan and SWAP appear to be in conformance on this issue.
✓ Improve and expand groundwater management (pp. 7-8)	✓ Update Bulletin 118 (pg. 12) ✓ Outline strategy for sustainable groundwater management (pg. 12) ✓ Advance groundwater quality improvements (pg. 12)	• The recommendations on page 12 were in the storage section. • Many of the groundwater recommendations are similar to ACWA's Groundwater Framework.

Actions to Promote Better Stewardship

ACWA's SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ Invest in headwaters management to sustain the environment and improve statewide water quality and supply. Areas include climate change, legacy issues and meadow restoration. (pg. 5)	✓ Restore mountain meadow habitat in Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges (pg. 8)	• There are very limited actions in the Administration's Plan addressing California's headwaters; more work needed here in implementation.
✓ Coordinate state and federal regulatory actions (pg. 8) ✓ New regulatory approach needed (pg. 2)	✓ Improve and clarify coordination of State Bay Delta actions (pg. 15) ✓ Integration across and between all voluntary and regulatory efforts may be necessary to truly achieve basic ecological outcomes (pg. 16)	• The Administration's Plan appears to open the door to a more collaborative approach to regulation, but there will be a lot of "devil in the details."
✓ Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan: Implement flow regulations through a collaborative, science-based process that protects beneficial uses and public trust balancing (pg. 7)	✓ Complete the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan establishing requirements, recommended actions and balancing competing uses of water (pg. 8)	

Additional Actions

ACWA SWAP	Draft California Water Action Plan	Notes
✓ The ACWA SWAP did not specify in its document restoration projects for individual areas or watersheds.	✓ Implement actions for San Joaquin River, Salton Sea, Klamath Basin and Coastal watershed restoration (pp. 8-9) ✓ Develop and implement managed wetlands program (pg. 9) ✓ Address fish passage at California's rim dams (pg. 10) ✓ Enhance flows statewide in at least five stream systems that support critical habitat for anadromous fish (pg. 10)	• Allocation of effort and funds among California headwaters and watersheds will require the active involvement of ACWA members during implementation.

**For additional information, please contact Danielle Blacet, ACWA Special Projects Manager, at 916-441-4545 or danielleb@acwa.com.

For Immediate Release:
Oct. 31, 2013

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California Agencies Release Draft Action Plan for Water, Ask for Input and Dialogue

California Water Action Plan Provides Roadmap for State Efforts

SACRAMENTO – The California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture today released a detailed draft action plan to help guide state efforts and resources on one of California's most important resources, water. The California Water Action Plan will focus on the reliability of our water supply, the needed ecosystem restoration to bring our water system back into balance, and the resilience of our infrastructure.

In May, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. directed the agencies to identify key actions for the next one to five years that address urgent needs and provide the foundation for sustainable management of California's water resources.

Each entity will work with affiliated and interested parties and individuals in the next month to gain additional input and provide guidance on future actions. It is anticipated that a final form of the plan will be released in early December.

"Over a century ago, California leaders began the development of one of the most complex water systems in the world," said Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. "Now, with 38 million people and the threat of climate change, we more fully understand the need to strike a balance with the environment. This comprehensive water blueprint for the future will help us find that balance and address long standing water issues in California."

The challenges facing California are many: uncertain water supplies; water scarcity/drought; declining groundwater basins; poor water quality; declining native fish species and loss of wildlife habitat; flood risks; and, supply disruptions.

"California has not kept pace with some of the significant water challenges that face us, including providing safe drinking water for all our communities. And these challenges will only become more serious with a growing population and a changing climate," said Cal/EPA Secretary Matt Rodriquez. "This draft plan offers a practical set of actions that will begin to address these urgent challenges and set us on a course of sustainable water management in the coming decades."

California's nearly $45 billion agricultural industry remains one of the state's largest and most important economic sectors. A reliable supply of water is a key element of this thriving industry.

“There is no issue more important than water for food production and agriculture,” said Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross. “This plan is a critical pathway that will lead to a long-term, sustainable future for water management in the 21st century.”

This report identifies actions that, in the next five years, will move California toward more sustainable water management by providing reliable water supply for our farms and communities, restoring important wildlife habitat and species, and helping the state’s water systems and environment become more resilient.

Some of the actions are new proposals, such as a greater focus on water recycling for potable reuse. Water recycling is a key part of a broader strategy to make regions more self-reliant by developing new or underused water resources. Locally-developed water will relieve pressure on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other imported sources and make communities more resilient against drought and climate change.

Other actions reflect work that state agencies are already planning or engaged in, such as enhanced conservation measures for urban and agricultural water users, accelerated habitat restoration efforts, and adding water storage capacity.

Together, these actions address the most pressing water issues that California faces while laying the groundwork for a sustainable and resilient future. All of these actions require cooperation and collaboration among many partners.

The plan focuses on ten key actions:

- Make Conservation a California Way of Life
- Increase Local and Regional Self-Reliance
- Achieve Co-Equal Goals for the Delta
- Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems
- Manage and Prepare for Dry Periods
- Expand Water Storage Capacity
- Provide Safe Drinking Water for All Communities
- Improve Flood Protection
- Increase Operational and Regulatory Efficiency
- Identify Sustainable and Integrated Financing Opportunities

From this effort, we also hope to drive participation in the many venues the state of California has for policy development and regulation for water.

Read the water action plan here.
To submit comments and questions about the plan please email wateraction@water.ca.gov

# # #

For Immediate Release:
Dec. 9, 2013

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State Releases Updated Comprehensive Water Reliability and Ecosystem Restoration Plan

Public Invited to Comment on Bay Delta Conservation Plan to Safeguard Supplies for 25 Million Californians

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The state of California and its federal partners have announced the release of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan for formal public review. This is a significant milestone in the effort to restore ecosystem health and secure reliable water supplies for California. The release is a key step toward completion of a final plan and corresponding environmental documents.

The plan seeks to protect delivery of the mountain snowmelt that supplies water to two-thirds of the state's population from San Jose to San Diego and thousands of Central Valley farms. It focuses on the estuary where the snowmelt flows, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and aims to both reverse the ecological decline of the region and modernize a water system that now depends on hundreds of miles of earthen levees vulnerable to earthquake, flood, and rising sea levels.

Release of the public review draft of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and its corresponding Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) triggers a 120-day period for the gathering of public comments, from Dec. 13, 2013 through April 14, 2014. Citizens, organizations, and government agencies are urged to review and comment on the documents. From mid-January through mid-February, experts will be available at a dozen separate public meetings to facilitate review of the plan, and to hear public comments on the plan and accompanying environmental documents.

All substantive comments received during the public review period will be considered and discussed in a final EIR/EIS. Completion of the final documents would allow project proponents to begin seeking the many permits necessary to implement the comprehensive plan.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan aims to both stabilize water deliveries from the Delta and contribute to the recovery of 56 species of plants, fish and wildlife over the 50-year life of the plan. The Legislature delineated those co-equal goals in the 2009 Delta Reform Act.

The 9,000-page Bay Delta Conservation Plan and its corresponding 25,000-page EIR/EIS reflect significant revisions since the informal release of administrative review drafts last spring and summer. The public review draft documents reflect changes such as:

- Changes to the alignment of the proposed water conveyance tunnels that would significantly reduce disruption to north Delta communities and reduce by half the project’s permanent footprint.

- More detail about the plan's critical adaptive management process, which would use research, monitoring, and adjustment of actions to ensure that environmental measures truly contribute to the recovery of covered species.
- Refinement and revision of how the plan would be governed.
- A description of the tools and sources of funding potentially available to support the adaptive management process if additional Delta flows and water supply are needed.
- Additional design criteria and operational constraints for the proposed north Delta intakes, including fish studies that would influence facility design.
- Addition of further measures to protect the greater sandhill crane, giant garter snake, and saltmarsh harvest mouse.

"This is a rational, balanced plan to help meet the needs of all Californians for generations to come," said California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird. "By meeting the state's dual goals for BDCP of ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability, we will stabilize and secure against catastrophe the water deliveries that sustain our homes, jobs, and farms, and do so in a way that not only protects but enhances the environment."

The plan proposes to change the way the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) divert water from the Delta. It proposes the construction of new intakes in the north Delta along the Sacramento River about 35 miles north of the existing pumping plants. Twin tunnels would carry the water underground to the existing pumping plants, which feed canals that stretch hundreds of miles to the south and west.

A northern diversion on the Sacramento River would minimize environmentally harmful reverse flows in the south Delta that are caused when the existing pumping plants draw water from nearby channels.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan has been developed through seven years of analysis and hundreds of public meetings. It is a habitat conservation plan under the federal Endangered Species Act and a natural community conservation plan under California law. It describes 22 separate conservation measures that would be undertaken by the California Department of Water Resources, operator of the SWP, in coordination with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, operator of the CVP. The plan would provide a stable regulatory environment for operation of the SWP, while working toward the recovery of imperiled fish species.

Water users served by the SWP and CVP – primarily in Southern California, the Santa Clara Valley, and the San Joaquin Valley – would pay most costs under the plan, including the entire $16 billion cost associated with new intakes and tunnels.

To read the public review draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan, get guidance on how to comment on the plan, and see the schedule of public meetings, please visit http://baydeltaconservationplan.com.

For BDCP updates online, follow us on Twitter @BDCP_CA and on Facebook.
For assistance on locating specific information within the BDCP documents, use Twitter hashtag #WhereinBDCP.

# # #

BDCP

BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN

California's Future Depends on Delta Water Supply

March 2013

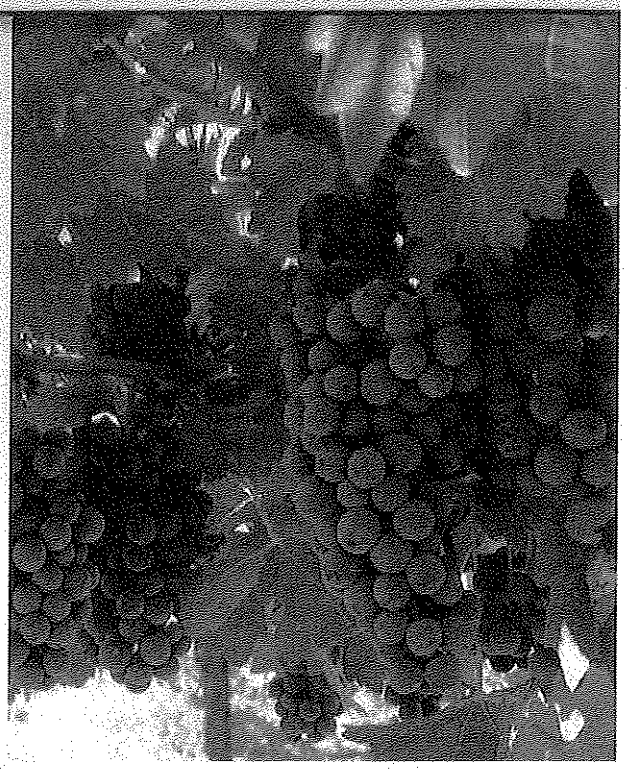
The importance of the Delta to statewide water supplies cannot be overstated.

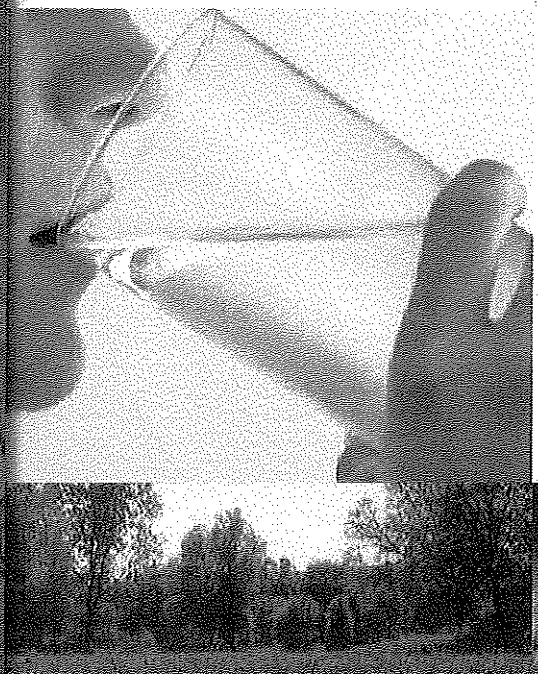
Two out of three Californians and 3 million acres of farmland receive some water from the Delta.

Fresh water that reaches the Delta from the Sierra Nevada mountains serves businesses and homes from Silicon Valley to San Diego County.

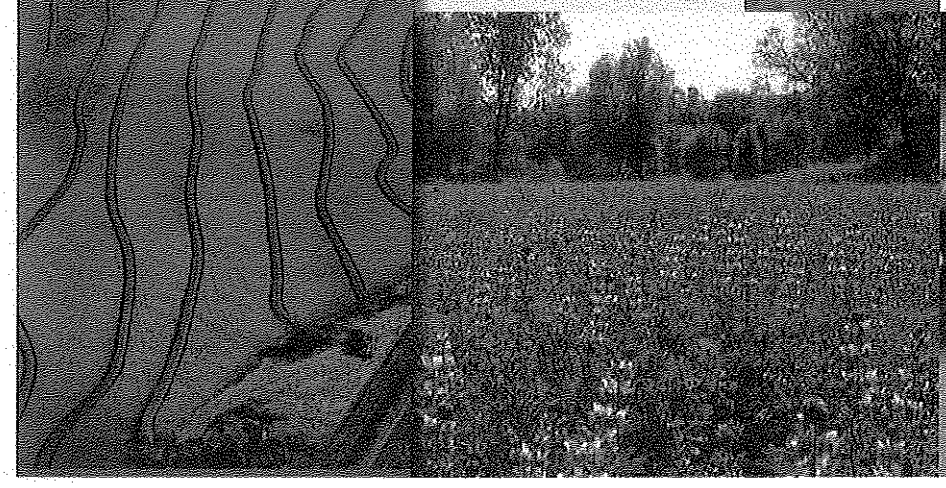
The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta), located east of San Francisco Bay, is a vast and vitally important ecosystem to California. The Delta is home to hundreds of aquatic and terrestrial species—some unique to the area—as well as more than 500,000 people, a thriving agricultural economy, and a distinctive recreational resource.

Equally important, the Delta provides water for 25 million Californians and supplies an agricultural industry that, in turn, feeds millions. Water from the Delta irrigates farms where much of the nation's domestic produce is grown. Delta water powers the California economy. We cannot thrive without it.





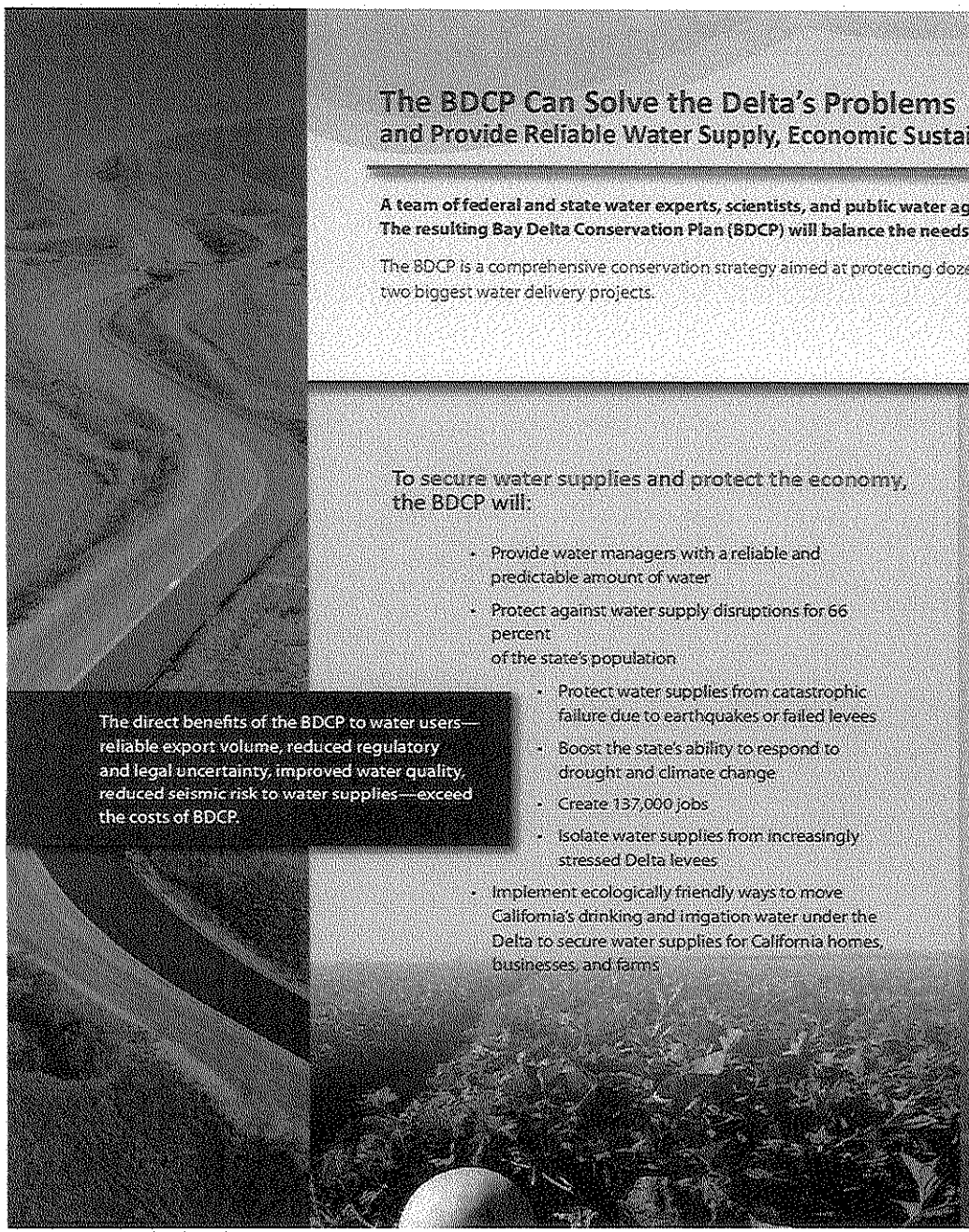
Here's the problem that all Californians face: **The Delta has been stretched to a breaking point**. The ecosystem is in steep decline and has put the water that millions of Californians depend on at risk. Environmental restrictions on water deliveries are meant to protect Delta fish species, but have also greatly reduced the flexibility to meet statewide water supply needs.



The BDCP Can Solve the Delta's Problems
and Provide Reliable Water Supply, Economic Sustainability, and Jobs

A team of federal and state water experts, scientists, and public water agencies have worked together for years on a way to address the Delta's problems. The resulting Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) will balance the needs of fish and wildlife with California's human and economic needs.

The BDCP is a comprehensive conservation strategy aimed at protecting dozens of species of fish and wildlife, while permitting the reliable operation of California's two biggest water delivery projects.



To secure water supplies and protect the economy, the BDCP will:

- Provide water managers with a reliable and predictable amount of water
- Protect against water supply disruptions for 66 percent of the state's population
- Protect water supplies from catastrophic failure due to earthquakes or failed levees
- Boost the state's ability to respond to drought and climate change
- Create 137,000 jobs
- Isolate water supplies from increasingly stressed Delta levees
- Implement ecologically friendly ways to move California's drinking and irrigation water under the Delta to secure water supplies for California homes, businesses, and farms

The direct benefits of the BDCP to water users—reliable export volume, reduced regulatory and legal uncertainty, improved water quality, reduced seismic risk to water supplies—exceed the costs of BDCP.

To restore a healthy Delta ecosystem, the BDCP will:

- Improve the overall ecological health of the Delta
- Reverse the trend of habitat loss and help recover declining populations of native species
- Address habitat needs for 11 fish species and 46 wildlife and plant species
- Improve natural flow conditions for fish and wildlife
- Implement an accelerated habitat restoration program by creating 30,000 acres of aquatic habitat in the next 15 years
- Reconnect floodplains and rivers
- Return degraded riverbanks to a more natural state
- Improve water quality
- Control invasive species

As the Delta ecosystem improves in response to BDCP implementation, water operations will become more reliable and secure.

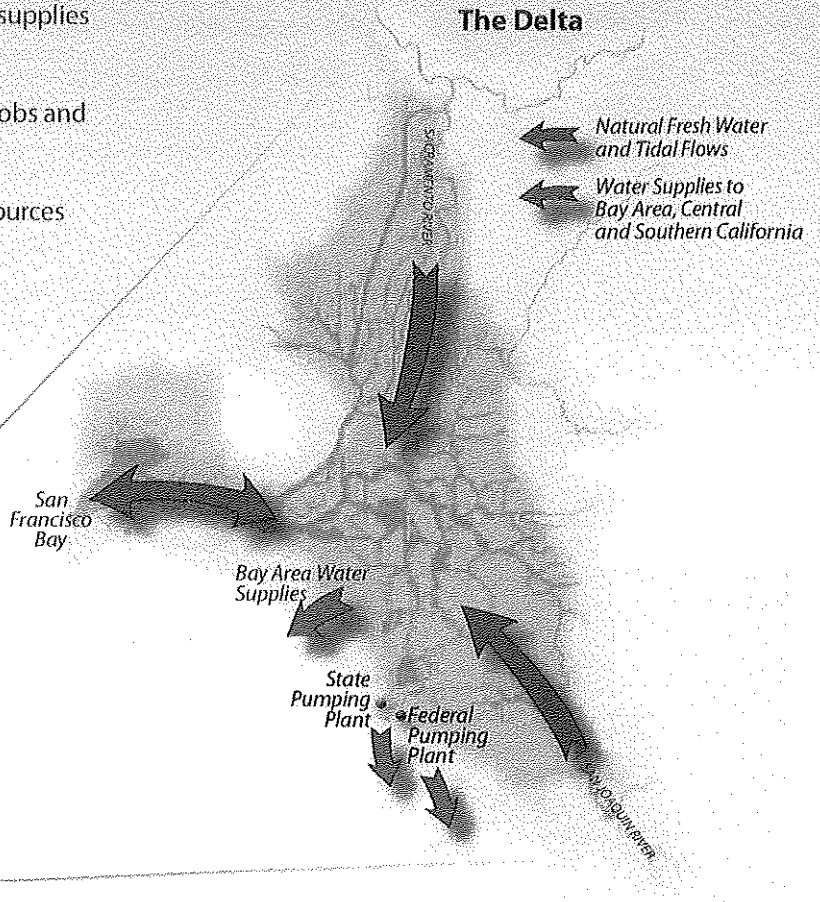
BDCP
BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN

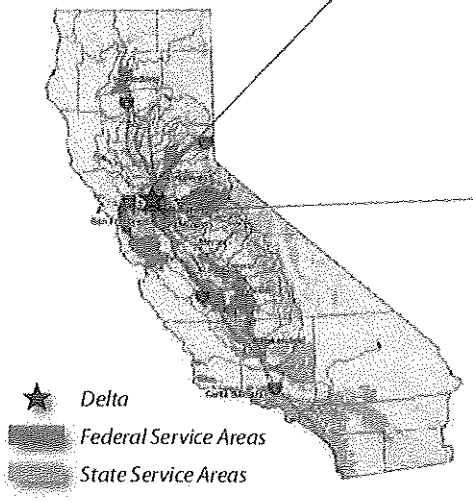
What's at stake?

The heart of California's water system rests in the Delta, and its current configuration is at risk of failure. Without changes to the way water currently flows through the Delta, Californians risk:

- A loss of secure and reliable drinking water supplies for millions of people
- Damage to the statewide economy, loss of jobs and loss of business
- Further degradation of precious natural resources and extinction of native species

BDCP would environmentally retrofit, modernize, and restore greater flexibility to the state's water system.





The state's two most important water delivery systems are located in the Delta: the federal Central Valley Project, operated by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, and the California State Water Project, operated by the California Department of Water Resources.

The future of reliable, high-quality water supplies for Californians depends upon a healthy Delta ecosystem and critical upgrades to the Delta's water delivery infrastructure.

The BDCP's intent to ensure the coequal goals of ecosystem recovery and water supply reliability serves the entire California community, not just part of it. The BDCP is based on science, environmental research, and economic realities. The agencies preparing the BDCP welcome public input.

For more information, visit:
www.baydeltaconservationplan.com

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BDCP
BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN

October 2013

Fast Facts

The BDCP is...

...a long-term strategy to secure California's water supplies and improve the ecosystem of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

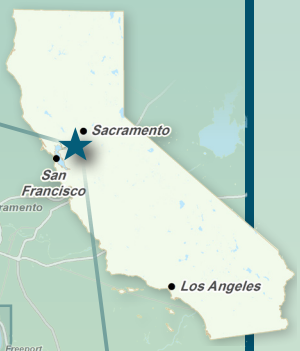
The BDCP Co-Equal Goals

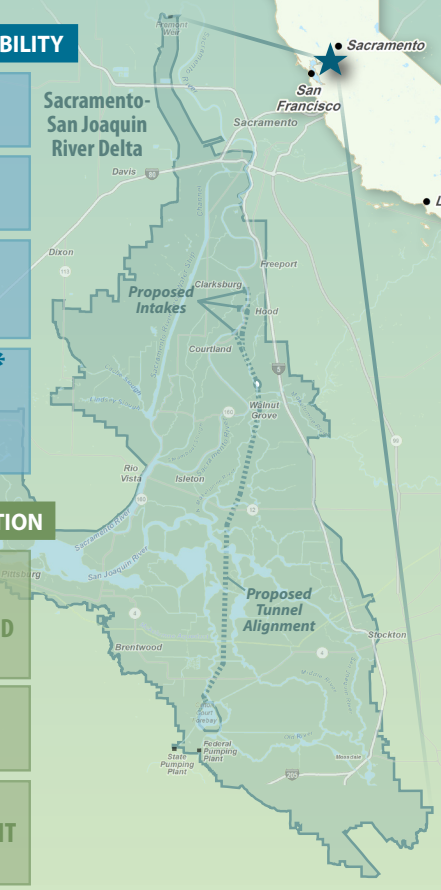
WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY

- **3 INTAKES**
- **2 GRAVITY FLOW TUNNELS**
- **30 MILES IN LENGTH**
- **9,000 CFS* CAPACITY**
  *Cubic Feet per Second

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

- **150,000 ACRES OF RESTORED AND PROTECTED HABITAT**
- **56 PROTECTED SPECIES**
- **IMPROVED FLOW CONDITIONS TO BENEFIT FISH IN THE DELTA**





The BDCP Would Benefit Millions of Californians

The BDCP is one part of California's overall water portfolio. It aims to protect our unique Delta ecosystem and secure water supplies for a vast part of the California economy.

SECURING WATER SUPPLIES

4.7-5.6
MILLION ACRE-FEET ON AVERAGE ANNUALLY
(An acre-foot is roughly as much water as two California households use, indoors and outdoors, in a year)

CREATING & PROTECTING JOBS

1.1 MILLION
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT JOBS CREATED AND SAVED FOR CALIFORNIA
(Based on a year by year estimate)

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY

$84 BILLION
INCREASE IN STATE ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY

The BDCP is Important for California

WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY

25 MILLION PEOPLE

from the Bay Area to San Diego rely on water from the Delta

MORE THAN 3 MILLION ACRES OF FARMLAND
rely on water from the Delta

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

DELTA FISH AND WILDLIFE
depend upon a healthy Delta ecosystem

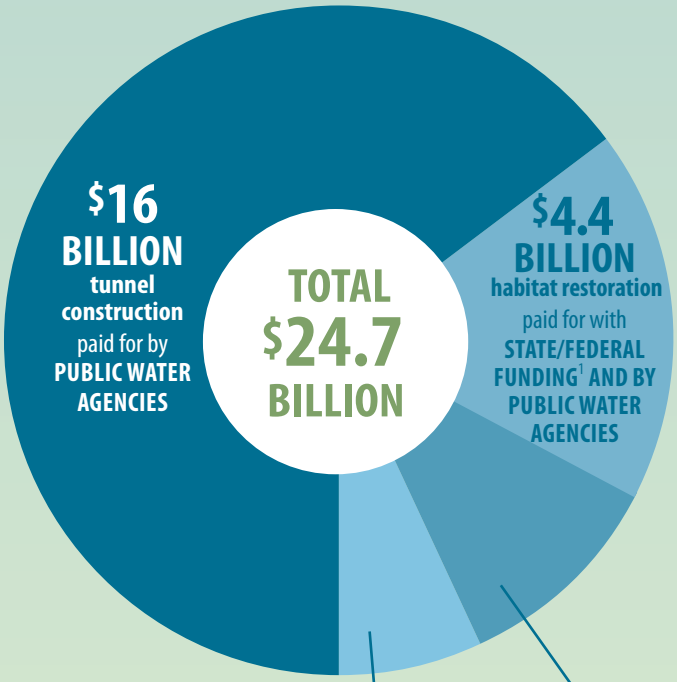
CLIMATE RISK ADAPTATION

LEVEE FAILURES | **RISING SEA LEVELS** | **EARTHQUAKES**

NATURAL RISKS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
threaten the reliability of the existing system

BDCP Cost and Funding...

...implemented over a 50-year period.



$1.7 BILLION
for program oversight[2]
paid for by
PUBLIC WATER AGENCIES AND STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING

$2.6 BILLION
to address other stressors
paid for by
PUBLIC WATER AGENCIES AND STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING

[1]The availability of federal funds will be contingent on future federal appropriations.

[2]Program oversight includes monitoring and research, management/administration, changed circumstances, and property tax revenue replacement.

The BDCP is Guided by the Best Available Science

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
to implement and monitor BDCP biological goals and objectives

WATER OPERATIONS
by the Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

OVERSIGHT
by state and federal fish and wildlife agencies

The BDCP Would Benefit the Delta Ecosystem

DELTA RESTORATION

BDCP would contribute to the conservation of 56 species of fish, plants and wildlife in the Delta.

45
SPECIES OF PLANTS & WILDLIFE CONSERVED
through protection and enhancements in the quantity and quality of habitat in the Delta.

52%
INCREASE IN PROTECTED LAND
in the Delta

11
FISH SPECIES BENEFIT,
from an increase in the amount and quality of habitat, food sources, and ecological function of Delta flows. Species include Chinook salmon and delta smelt.

10
OTHER STRESSOR REDUCTION MEASURES
would reduce adverse effects, such as invasive species, predation, and contaminants, to improve the ecological function of the Delta.

For more information, or to submit comments, visit ***www.BayDeltaConservationPlan.com****,*
call ***1-866-924-9955,*** *or email info@BayDeltaConservationPlan.com.*

Delta water plan released for public scrutiny
Melody Gutierrez, SF Gate
Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Sacramento -- After seven years in the making, the $25 billion plan to build two massive tunnels diverting water out of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is up for public review. And one thing is clear: You better grab your reading glasses.

The 9,000-page Bay Delta Conservation Plan and 25,000-page environmental impact report pack a hefty punch, particularly considering the public has 120 days to comment on the documents, which state officials said contain significant revisions since first drafts were released this year.

Accompanying executive summaries and brochures on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan's website say the proposal, which has the backing of Gov. Jerry Brown, is an important step in the effort to restore the delta ecosystem and stabilize the water supply for 25 million Californians and 3 million acres of farmland from San Jose to San Diego.

"This is a rational, balanced plan to help meet the needs of all Californians for generations to come," said California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird in a statement.

The public-comment period begins Friday and ends April 14. Once it ends, the state can revise its plan before submitting it to state and federal wildlife agencies, which will decide whether to issue the necessary permits to move forward.

"The delta matters to the entire state," said Nancy Vogel, spokeswoman for the Department of Water Resources. "For a generation, Californians have been debating in courts and courts of public opinion on how we can have a rich estuary in the delta and also divert the water 25 million people and 3 million acres of farmland depend on. We are trying to modernize our water system in a way that protects the environment."

However, the delta diversion plan continues to draw fire from environmental groups and some lawmakers. Critics have characterized the tunnels as nothing more than a water grab they liken to the peripheral canal plan that California voters rejected in 1982.

"I continue to be concerned that the state has chosen to follow a path that will not solve either the state's water supply or the delta's ecosystem challenges," said state Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, whose district includes much of the delta.

Jeffrey Michael, an economist at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, said the $25 billion project estimate isn't a complete picture because it doesn't include financing costs. The delta tunnels will need $1.2 billion for planning costs prior to construction and the state water department said those costs are included in the $25 billion price tag. To date, the water districts that buy water pumped from the Delta have committed $240 million to the project.

State and federal water contractors - which provide water to millions of Californians and to farms - would contribute about 68 percent of the total funding, while state and federal funds account for the rest. The state, which anticipates sharing $4.1 billion of the cost, is banking on the 2014 water bond on the statewide ballot for its initial share and subsequent bonds for future habitat

restoration funds. Wolk, who opposes the tunnels, is carrying one of two water bond proposals in the Legislature.

"This will all be paid for on the backs of California rate payers," said Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, executive director of Restore the Delta. "In terms of the San Francisco Bay, this will have a negative impact on the bay that no one has analyzed. The bay is dependent on fresh-water feed, and if that water is diverted, it will have an environmental impact."

This story has been updated since it appeared in print editions.

Delta tunnels

To see the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and the accompanying environmental impact report on the plan to build two tunnels under the delta, go to: http://bit.ly/IMKGli.

Melody Gutierrez is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: mgutierrez@sfchronicle.com Twitter: @MelodyGutierrez

Despite California drought, chances for water bond are evaporating

By Paul Rogers and Jessica Calefati Staff writers
POSTED: 01/10/2014 05:39:34 AM PST |

SACRAMENTO -- Despite record dry weather, it's looking increasingly unlikely that a multibillion-dollar water bond to pay for dams, conservation and parts of Gov. Jerry Brown's $25 billion plan to build two huge tunnels through the Delta will be placed on the November ballot.

Water agencies around the state have assumed that some kind of measure would go to voters to provide a new river of cash for water projects. But Sacramento political leaders and insiders say Brown, widely expected to seek re-election this year, hasn't committed and has worries it could hurt him politically, particularly as polls have shown shaky support for it.

Asked Thursday if he wants a water bond this year, Brown said, "The world is changing with these serious drought conditions, but I think I'll withhold judgment on that."

In 2009, lawmakers approved placing an $11.1 billion water bond on the ballot but then pulled it in 2010 and 2012 after polls showed voters would reject it because of its high cost and criticism that it was full of pork-barrel projects. Two smaller measures, both about $6.5 billion, are pending in the Legislature but require a two-thirds vote. A September poll by the Public Policy Institute of California found a bare majority, 50 percent, of likely voters supporting a bond that size.

"There's not going to be a water bond this year. No way," said one legislative staff member working on the issue who requested anonymity. "Brown's presenting himself to voters as the guy who just paid down California's debt. Putting more debt on the ballot when he's up for re-election would be a mixed message."

Some environmental groups say they will oppose any bond that includes funds for the Delta tunnels project, which would make it easier to move water south.

"I've heard rumblings that the governor doesn't want to deal with a water bond this year and he's been communicating that to Democratic leaders," said Senate Republican Leader Bob Huff, R-Brea. "However, I think that would be a big mistake."

The head of a top state water group said he hopes dry weather might change poll numbers -- and Brown's mind.

"Let's keep this issue open and figure out where we are in late spring," said Tim Quinn, executive director of the Association of California Water Agencies. "The drought looms large."

Paul Rogers covers resources and environmental issues. Contact him at 408-920-5045. Follow him at Twitter.com/PaulRogersSJMN.

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After dry spell, get ready for water restrictions
Kurtis Alexander
Updated 10:12 am, Friday, January 10, 2014

In what may be a first for this time of year, residents in many parts of California are being asked - and sometimes ordered - to scale back their water use.

A record-breaking dry spell has left the state's rivers parched and the snowpack trifling - and there's almost no rain in the forecast. While water agencies are used to watching supplies regenerate during the wet winter months, they're now looking at ways to deal with shortfalls.

In Santa Cruz, the city has barred restaurants from serving drinking water unless diners request it. In Marin County, residents are asked not to clean their cars or to do so only at eco-friendly car washes. And in towns in Sonoma and Mendocino counties, homeowners are facing restrictions on when they can water lawns.

The measures so far are modest. But they may be a taste of days ahead, as the dozen or so communities that have passed the ordinances, and others as well, say stricter water-rationing plans are in the works. Households that exceed a set allowance of water could pay a hiked rate - in some places as much as 10 times the regular rate.

"It's a little unusual to see the agencies proposing and bringing in cutbacks this time of year," said Jay Lund, director for the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis. "But I think everybody has heard by now that 2013 was the driest year on record, and so far this year has been very, very dry."

20% cut in Folsom

Already in the Sacramento Valley, the city of Folsom has ordered residents and businesses to reduce their water consumption by 20 percent, while the city of Sacramento is poised to do the same next week. On Tuesday, Mendocino County became the first to ask the state for help beefing up its water supplies by declaring a drought emergency.

Water officials in San Francisco say they're not quite to that point - but may not be far behind.

Supplies for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which imports water from the High Sierra for 2.6 million Bay Area customers, were at 72 percent capacity this week. That's the same level they were at six years ago when the district was asking residents to voluntarily reduce water use by 10 percent.

"As each day passes, there's a little more worry about having enough water and whether we're going to have to call for voluntary or even mandatory water restrictions," said agency spokesman Tyrone Jue.

The last time the agency ordered mandatory reductions was 1989 through 1992, when California was suffering from multiple years of drought. Water restrictions were rampant across the Golden State at that time.

Today, the extent of water problems in California varies from community to community, depending on their climates and water sources. While each has a different reason why supplies may be short - shallow reservoirs, creeks with low flow, little mountain snowmelt - the backdrop for the problem remains the same: dry weather.

Most parts of California set records for lack of rainfall in 2013, with almost all Bay Area communities receiving less than half of what they normally get, according to the National Weather Service. San Francisco got 5.6 inches of rain, compared with an average of 23.7 inches. The two previous years were also dryer than normal.

Forecast: dry

Now, state climate models have projected a dry next couple of months, and rain forecast in the short term is not likely to be significant.

"We might see a little bit of sprinkles or light rain this weekend, but nothing of any consequence," said Bob Benjamin, forecaster for the National Weather Service in Monterey. "I just don't see anything ahead that's going to help us out."

California residents, who have learned to live with water shortages over the past few decades, seem to have resigned themselves to dealing with conservation measures on the way.

Erik Ansell, assistant manager at the popular Walnut Avenue Cafe in downtown Santa Cruz, said diners don't seem to mind not getting water without asking.

Usually when someone asks for a glass, though, the whole table wants one," he said.

Ansell said he's noticed a significant drop in the restaurant's water use since the city sanctions took effect. The water filters at the cafe, he explained, don't need changing as often.

In San Francisco, Svet Pavlov, owner of the mobile car-washing company Waterless Touch, said the dry weather has brought an uptick in business. Many of his customers are from Marin, he said, where washing a car in the driveway is one of the water district's suggested conservation measures.

'People are trying'

Pavlov's business promotes itself as being able to clean a vehicle with only one cup of water.
"We all know what the situation is with water right now," he said. "I think people are trying to do their part."
While California's rainy season still has at least two more months to make an impact, water managers aren't optimistic that there's time to make up for the dry start.
"We are not seeing any improvement in water conditions," said Toby Goddard, a manager for the Santa Cruz City Water Department, which is considering adding water-rationing to its current lineup of ordinances. "Every day that goes by without rain, the chances of making up for the past get lower and lower."

Tips for conserving water

The state's Save Our Water program, which seeks to cut everyday water use, offers the following suggestions:

Indoors

-- Do only full loads of dishes and laundry and get water-efficient appliances, including toilets.
-- Install an aerator on the kitchen faucet to reduce the flow.
-- Install low-flow shower heads, reduce shower time to five minutes, and fill bathtubs halfway, at most.
-- Don't use the toilet to flush away trash, and turn off the faucet while shaving or brushing teeth.

Outdoors

-- Use efficient irrigation systems, and water early in the morning or late in the evening.
-- Water deeply but less frequently, select drought-resistant plants, and use mulch around them.
-- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean driveways and patios.
-- Wash vehicles with a bucket and a sponge, plus a hose with a self-closing nozzle.

Kurtis Alexander is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: kalexander@sfchronicle.com Twitter: @kurtisalexander

Water Politics

Wall Street Journal, Allysa Finley
Jan. 6, 2014 11:45 a.m. ET

Californians are enjoying particularly balmy weather this winter, but the sunshine and warmth isn't free. Residents are being warned that water could soon be rationed due to drought conditions exacerbated by environmental regulations.

The California Department of Water Resources reported Friday that the state snowpack measures only about 20% of average for this time of year. The agency also noted that Sacramento has received less than a third of it typical precipitation, while downtown Los Angeles ended the year with a historical low of 3.4 inches of rainfall. As a result, the state estimates that water districts will only receive about 5% of their contractual allocations.

Some cities have warned that they may have to raise prices for heavy water users and ration supply. The Sacramento suburb of Folsom last month ordered residents to cut their consumption by 20% and restricted homeowners to watering their lawns to two days a week between the hours of 10 p.m. and 10 a.m. Residents are also prohibited from washing their driveways.

Making matters worse are state and federal rules intended to protect fish like the steelhead trout and delta smelt. The regulations restrict pumping at the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and choke off water to residents in Central and Southern California. These wildlife protections are popular in the Bay Area and other liberal hamlets in the north but are a source of outrage south of the delta. Grape growers in Napa Valley aren't affected, but vegetable and fruit growers that form the lifeblood of the Central Valley's economy have left hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land fallow (some of which have been converted into solar farms).

The ensuing jobs drought has helped cost Democrats a state Senate and Congressional seat over the past two years. Particularly vulnerable this year are Rep. Jim Costa of Fresno where, the unemployment rate stands at 12.0%, and Rep. Jerry McNerney, whose district spans the counties of Sacramento and San Joaquin around the delta and who has supported species protections.

Freshman state Assemblymen Adam Gray and Rudy Salas, Democrats who represent districts in the Central Valley, are also top GOP targets. Last month they joined six Republican legislators in urging Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown to work with federal regulators to ensure adequate water flows to residents south of the delta. "Without immediate action," the legislators wrote in a letter, "we worry about the thousands of acres of farmland that will be taken out of production due to a lack of water, increased cost of food and livestock feed, depletion of scarce groundwater, devastating increases in water rates, and the obliteration of jobs dependent on agriculture in the Central Valley and throughout California that rely on water."

We suspect these politicians also realize that their jobs in part depend on water flows. Ditto Mr. Brown, who is quarterbacking a $24 billion infrastructure project to circumvent pumping restrictions at the delta that would help protect endangered Democratic politicians in the Central Valley.

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Meager Sierra Snowpack is way below average

LA Times, By Bettina Boxall

January 3, 2014, 4:51 p.m.

The signs aren't good when the chief of California's snow survey has to walk over bare ground to take a snowpack measurement in the Sierra Nevada, as Frank Gehrke did Friday near Echo Summit.

Manual and electronic readings up and down the range placed the statewide snowpack at 20% of normal for this date, adding to worries that 2014 could be a bad drought year.

The meager snowpack was not a surprise. Last year was California's driest in 119 years of records, according to the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno.

Los Angeles and other cities around the state recorded their lowest precipitation amounts for a calendar year. The levels of key reservoirs have been dropping when they should be rising with winter rains.

Gov. Jerry Brown has yet to declare a drought emergency. But last month the state Department of Water Resources formed a drought management team.

"While we hope conditions improve, we are fully mobilized to streamline water transfers and take every action possible to ease the effects of dry weather on farms, homes and businesses as we face a possible third consecutive dry year," department director Mark Cowin said in a statement. "Every Californian can help by making water conservation a daily habit."

Storage in Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville, the two largest reservoirs in the state, is 57% of average for the date. Several other major reservoirs are in better shape, largely due to supplies left over from December 2012, when storms drenched many parts of California.

Thanks to that month, statewide precipitation in the 2013 water year, which ended Sept. 30, was 73% of average -- the 29th driest on record, according to the regional climate center.

If this winter stays dry, the hardest-hit will likely be farmers in some parts of the San Joaquin Valley and rural communities that depend on wells.

In Southern California, regional water managers say they have enough supplies in reserve to maintain deliveries for the next two years and do not expect to ration sales.

Storage in Pyramid and Castaic lakes, the two state reservoirs that the Southland draws directly from, is slightly above average for the date.

Diamond Valley Lake in Riverside County, where the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California stores imported supplies, is nearly three-quarters full.

The snowpack, which is a measurement of the snow's water content, not its depth, was the lowest in the northern mountains, at 11% of average for the date. It was the highest in the southern Sierra, at 30% of the norm.

The statewide snowpack figure of 20% tied with 2012 as the driest early January reading in 25 years of records.

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http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-sierra-snowpack-20140103,0,939473.story#ixzz2q1O6aao1

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100 years after Raker Act was signed, the fight over Hetch Hetchy dam continues

by Jonah Owen Lamb @jonahowenlamb
SFExaminer, 19, 2013

SUNDAY, DEC. 7, 1913, EDITION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER
The City won a big vote in the U.S. Senate, to much controversy.

It is perhaps the mother of all California water wars, and it's been raging for more than a century.

The most decisive defeat in the fight over damming the Tuolumne River in Hetch Hetchy Valley occurred 100 years ago today when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Raker Act. That gave San Francisco the right to build the O'Shaughnessy Dam in a place described by environmentalist John Muir as "one of God's best gifts [that] ought to be faithfully guarded."

The struggle, pitting defenders of natural beauty against thirsty urbanites, has set the mold for environmental conflicts to this day. And while everyone who threw their weight into the first debate is long dead, the struggle continues.

Modern-day opponents of the dam say they plan to take their efforts to the courts and Congress.

The 1906 earthquake, and earlier fires, made it clear to many that San Francisco needed a more secure and plentiful supply of water than the monopoly held at the time by a private water company. The City looked to the Sierra Nevada. What it found was a high-walled valley perfect for damming the Tuolumne River. The only problem: The valley sat smack in the middle of the newly created Yosemite National Park.

Even before the earthquake, debates flourished as they do now. But they reached a fever pitch in the weeks before the Raker Act's passage.

The San Francisco Bulletin printed a Dec. 1, 1913, story calling the bill's opponents "a crowd of nature lovers and fakers, who are waging a sentimental campaign to preserve the Hetch Hetchy Valley as a public playground, a purpose for which it has never been used."

The San Francisco Examiner printed a 16-page special edition in Washington, D.C., that week to pressure lawmakers to pass the bill.

"The most insidious lobby ever assembled in Washington," was how a senator described the law's supporters.

The day after its passage, fruitless attempts were made to repeal the Raker Act.

"The Raker Act was deeply controversial, and was condemned in more than 200 newspaper editorials nationwide. That outcry is often cited as the birth of today's conservation movement. Three short years after the Act was signed, Congress atoned by passing the National Park Service Act, largely to protect our national parks from any further disfigurement," according to Restore Hetch Hetchy, a nonprofit trying to bring down the dam.

The dam, which wasn't completed until 1923, started delivering water to San Francisco taps in 1934.

The fight bubbled to the surface in 1955 when the Sierra Club released the film "Two Yosemites." Narrated by environmentalist David Brower, it contrasted the "ugliness of the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir" with Yosemite Valley.

Fifteen years later, the group recommended taking down the dam. The Reagan administration in the 1980s picked a losing fight with California liberals in Congress by backing a plan to drain the reservoir.

Then-Mayor Dianne Feinstein, now a U.S. senator, said in 1987 of the plan, "All this for an expanded campground? Dumb. It's dumb, dumb, dumb."

Aside from small skirmishes in the past couple of decades, the most recent effort to bring down the dam was 2012's failed Proposition F in San Francisco.

Now Restore Hetch Hetchy is planning a new campaign in the courts and in Washington. In the courts, it will argue that San Francisco's current water system violates state and federal law. The group hopes to get Congress to amend the Raker Act, which would take down the dam and restore the valley but allow San Francisco to still take water from the Tuolumne River and use its conveyance systems currently in place.

The Bay Area Council, which led the charge in opposition to Restore Hetch Hetchy's Prop. F effort, will continue to oppose such measures, said spokesman Adrian Covert.

"We are dedicated to maintaining the Hetch Hetchy water and power system and bringing a reliable, clean, fresh water supply to the Bay Area," Covert said. "And if that involves defending the Hetch Hetchy system in Congress or the ballot box, we'll be there."

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

The water supply for San Francisco is housed in the Yosemite Valley, and also provides electricity locally.

1.7B Kilowatt hours of electrical generation from hydroelectric plant per year

167 miles of aqueduct from Hetch Hetchy to San Francisco

2.4M customers using Hetch Hetchy water in the Bay Area

300M gallons of water provided daily by water system

1913 Raker Act passed

1923 O'Shaughnessy Dam was completed

1934 water was first delivered to San Francisco

This article was corrected Thursday, Dec. 19. The name of Bay Area Council spokesman Adrian Covert was misspelled.

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Incredibly, Official San Francisco Celebrates the Destruction of Hetch Hetchy Valley – 100 Years of Raker Act

"The Pen That Changed the Bay Area Forever

Bay Area Leaders Celebrate the Centennial of the Raker Act with a New City Hall Exhibit

San Francisco Citizen
December 19, 2013

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Today, Bay Area leaders joined the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to celebrate the centennial of the signing of the Raker Act into law at a ceremony at San Francisco City Hall. The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of a new City Hall exhibit featuring the pen that President Woodrow Wilson used to sign the legislation 100 years ago today.

"The Raker Act enabled the construction of the Hetch Hetchy Regional Water System and Hetch Hetchy Power System," said SFPUC General Manager Harlan Kelly. "Once President Wilson signed the act into law, the San Francisco Bay Area began to construct a public water system that now serves 2.6 million people across four Bay Area counties. It also allowed for construction of a public power system that provides clean hydroelectric energy for San Francisco city services like public buses, schools, firehouses, and more."

The Raker Act provided the rights of way to construct water and power facilities over federal land in Yosemite National Park and Stanislaus National Forest. Named after its chief sponsor John E. Raker, Congressman from Manteca, the bill granted the rights to build O'Shaughnessy Dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley, and construct water-collection and power-generating facilities stretching from the Sierras to the San Francisco Bay Area.

"The communities and businesses in the Bay Area were able to develop and thrive because of access to high quality water," said Nicole Sandkulla, Chief Executive Officer of the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA). "A true engineering marvel, this system supports the health and economic vitality of nearly 7% of California's population."

Despite, countless earthquakes, fires and other natural disasters, each day, 2.6 million people in the Bay Area turn on the tap and quench their thirst with Hetch Hetchy Water – some of the most pristine, cleanest water found anywhere in the world. While this water is delivered to its customers, the system also generates on average 1.7 billion kilowatts hours of clean, greenhouse gas-free electricity for San Francisco and its electricity customers. With no carbon footprint from its electricity supply, the SFPUC is considered one of the cleanest electric utilities anywhere.

The City Hall exhibit features a redwood plaque with a silver facsimile of the letter President Wilson wrote which explained his reasoning for signing the Raker Act. Mounted on the plaque is the actual pen the President used to sign the bill into law.

The plaque was originally presented to former San Francisco Mayor James Rolph, Jr. at the dedication of O'Shaughnessy Dam in 1923. Governor Rolph passed this heirloom on to his son, James Rolph III. Rolph was close friends with SFPUC Commissioner Oliver M. Rousseau, and because of this friendship he gave the plaque to Commissioner Rousseau. In 1970 Commissioner

Rousseau officially presented the plaque to our commission as the logical and permanent home for such an historic piece. Until a few years ago, the location of the pen was lost to all. Curators have now refurbished the piece in time for its public debut in City Hall.

Passage of the Raker Act met with a great deal of opposition at the time, having more to do with protecting states and local water rights. Its most well-known opponent was John Muir, environmentalist and founder of the Sierra Club. The merits of the Act are still debated by some today.

“Love or hate the Raker Act, it is undeniable that its passage was truly historic for the San Francisco Bay Area,” concluded General Manager Kelly. “The Hetch Hetchy Regional Water and Power Systems have reliably served the region well for nearly 100 years.”

###

Raker Act changed Tuolumne River's course 100 years ago

By John Holland, Modesto Bee
jholland@modbee.comDecember 18, 2013

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco has a place of honor for a pen wielded by President Woodrow Wilson a century ago today.

He used it to sign the Raker Act, which allowed the city to divert some of the Tuolumne River upstream of the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts.

The signing on Dec. 19, 1913, came over the objection of district residents worried that San Francisco would take water they needed for farming – an issue that has resurfaced in recent years. And it capped a battle with John Muir and other people aghast at the city's plan for a dam inside Yosemite National Park.

San Francisco is marking the 100th anniversary with a yearlong display of the pen at its City Hall. To supporters, it's a fitting tribute, for from that pen flowed a water supply that has helped make the Bay Area one of the wealthiest places on Earth.

"From Silicon Valley to San Francisco, our rich regional history and economy was made possible through the efficient, clean and reliable delivery of water and hydropower," said Harlan Kelly, general manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, in an emailed statement this week.

MID and TID did not dry up when the city built its Hetch Hetchy Water and Power System, diverting about an eighth of the Tuolumne's flow for use in four Bay Area counties. The districts remain the largest users of the river, and they cooperate with San Francisco in managing river and reservoir levels.

The concerns about a water grab were addressed in Section 9(b) of the act. It says the city "shall recognize the prior rights" of MID and TID, which date to just after the 1887 founding of the two districts.

But in the dozen years leading up to the signing, starting with San Francisco's 1901 filing for Tuolumne water rights, district residents feared the worst. A 1904 editorial in the Stanislaus County News warned that the city "would lay hold of and carry off large quantities of this vivifying fluid, upon which the very life of our valley here depends, and leave us the aridity and desolation which is our doom if needed moisture be denied us."

That quote is in "The Greening of Paradise Valley," a history of MID written by Dwight Barnes for the district's centennial in 1987.

Muir, who helped create the national park in 1890, railed against the reservoir planned for Hetch Hetchy Valley, which he thought to be as magnificent as Yosemite Valley to the south. "These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar," he wrote in a 1912 book on the park. "Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man."

Raker Act's roots

San Francisco had looked at several other Northern California rivers before deciding on the Tuolumne. The 1906 earthquake and fire helped make the city's case for a supply much larger than what it received from Bay Area watersheds.

The planners liked the reservoir site in Yosemite because the watershed above it is mostly wilderness and less prone to contamination than lower elevations. A location that high also boosted the amount of hydropower from the system.

To get past National Park Service limits on development, San Francisco relied on a bill introduced in early 1913 by Rep. John Raker of Manteca, whose district included Yosemite. Officials from MID and TID negotiated for provisions that recognized their prior rights. Meanwhile, Muir and his allies stirred up opposition in newspapers and magazines around the nation – one of the first great causes of the environmental movement.

The House of Representatives passed the Raker Act on Sept. 13, 1913, followed by the Senate on Dec. 6. Thirteen days later, Wilson signed it. It would take until 1923 for San Francisco to complete the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and until 1934 for the water to start flowing in a set of big pipes to the Bay Area. Other water storage and hydropower plants were added later.

Meanwhile, MID and TID built the original Don Pedro Reservoir in the 1920s to hold water that the city, as required by the Raker Act, passed along from the upper watershed. The current, much bigger Don Pedro followed in 1971, funded with San Francisco's help because it streamlined these transfers.

The districts and city still square off at times, such as in 2005, when San Francisco looked at boosting the capacity of the Bay Area-bound pipelines. But they have largely worked together to ensure that the Tuolumne provides farm and city water and hydropower when they are needed, and that the reservoirs have enough room to control floods.

San Francisco has not completely shaken the label of water-grabber. Two years ago, MID proposed selling about 1 percent of its supply to help the city through dry years. Despite the very high price and guarantees that the water was available, many residents opposed the move and the district dropped it. San Francisco has since been talking with the Oakdale Irrigation District about a dry-year supplement from the Stanislaus River, with little controversy.

Restore Hetch Hetchy?

The Raker Act centennial has renewed calls to drain a reservoir that sits about 300 feet above the floor of Hetch Hetchy Valley when full. Advocates say San Francisco can modify its remaining waterworks on the Tuolumne to make up for the loss and meet some of the demand with water conservation and recycling.

They lost one battle last year, when San Francisco voters rejected a ballot measure ordering city officials to do detailed studies on the idea, but they carry on. "San Francisco may have a 'green' reputation, but if we wait for the city to reconsider its water system, we may be waiting another century," wrote Spreck Rosekrans, executive director of Restore Hetch Hetchy, on The Sacramento Bee opinion pages in October.

The Raker Act is vilified by many, but it actually reflected some of the ideals of the Progressive Movement that swept the nation a century ago, according to TID historian Alan Paterson. These included ownership of water and power systems by the public, rather than wealthy private interests, and honest government. Paterson noted that a San Francisco mayor went to prison a few years earlier for trying to secretly profit from a water project on another river.

Paterson has a whole chapter on the Raker Act in “Land, Water and Power: A History of the Turlock Irrigation District,” published for TID’s 1987 centennial.

Both he and MID historian Barnes said the act stemmed from a belief at the time in conservation over preservation – that water, timber and other resources should be used wisely, not locked away. Gifford Pinchot, father of the national forest system, said as much in testimony on the Raker Act: “I believe that if we had nothing else to consider than the delight of the few men and women who would yearly go into the Hetch Hetchy Valley, then it should be left in its natural condition, … (but) I have never been able to see that there was any reasonable argument against the use of this water supply by San Francisco.”

TIMELINE

1887: The Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts form and set about securing rights to the Tuolumne River.

1901: San Francisco applies for rights to the same river.

1913: The Raker Act grants the city permission to divert the Tuolumne inside Yosemite National Park while recognizing the districts’ rights.

1934: The first water flows to San Francisco, after long delays in building the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and other parts of the system.

1955: San Francisco completes Cherry Lake on a major Tuolumne tributary.

1971: A larger Don Pedro Reservoir is completed by MID and TID. San Francisco helps pay for the project because it helps store water the city must pass through to the districts under the Raker Act.

HETCH HETCHY SYSTEM

Water customers: About 2.6 million people in San Francisco and parts of San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda counties. Some are served by water agencies with additional sources.

Water storage: 360,000 acre-feet in Hetch Hetchy Reservoir on the Tuolumne River; 273,000 acre-feet in Cherry Lake on a Tuolumne tributary; and smaller amounts at sites in Tuolumne County and the Bay Area

Power generation: 405 megawatts of capacity at three plants in Tuolumne County

Power uses: Mainly municipal services in San Francisco, including public transit, streetlights, the airport, health clinics, fire stations and schools.

MORE INFORMATION

Hetch Hetchy Water and Power System: www.sfwater.org

Restore Hetch Hetchy: www.hetchhetchy.org

Modesto Irrigation District: Its website, www.mid.org, has details on the Raker Act debate in a district history, "The Greening of Paradise Valley." The book can be found at the Stanislaus County Library.

Turlock Irrigation District: Its history, "Land, Water and Power," also is at the county library.

Read more here: http://www.modbee.com/2013/12/18/3096220/raker-act-changed-tuolumne-rivers.html#storylink=cpy

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Hetch Hetchy: Congress should undo the destructive Raker Act

By Robert Binnewies, B.J. Griffin and David Mihalic

Special to the Mercury News

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Thursday marks the centennial of a decision that allowed the destruction of one of America's wilderness treasures: Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park.

On Dec. 19, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson signed the ill-conceived Raker Act, which turned the spectacular, glacier-carved valley into a mere "water tank," in the words of naturalist John Muir.

As former superintendents of Yosemite, we call on Congress to amend this legislation to better reflect the best interests of the American people, drain Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and heal the greatest blemish in all our national parks.

A century ago, 200 newspaper editors nationwide saw the Raker Act as a raid on the very purpose of national parks to protect wild and wonderful natural scenery for every American. But San Francisco, the intended beneficiary, was recovering from a terrible earthquake, and officials eager to restore the city saw Yosemite as an ideal place to collect an abundant, free supply of water.

Sympathy in Congress was on their side, and the result was a 430-foot-high concrete dam that drowned Hetch Hetchy Valley under 300 feet of water.

The public outcry prompted Congress to establish the National Park Service, to ensure that our national parks would be managed as a national system, not for local benefit.

Subsequent proposals to build dams in Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon were defeated. In the 100 years since passage of the Raker Act, no other significant development has been allowed in any of our national parks.

Writer and historian Wallace Stegner called national parks "the best idea we ever had," and we heartily agree. They preserve our most glorious natural heritage for the benefit of all. The centennial of the Raker Act prompts us to ask whether we can do a better job of upholding those principles.

Yosemite National Park was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 for its exceptional natural beauty, unique landform features and distinctive reflections of geologic history. Hetch Hetchy Valley once possessed all of these characteristics, but today it attracts few visitors to the reservoir's shore.

Meanwhile its twin, Yosemite Valley, 15 miles to the south, is so congested that the National Park Service is working on a plan to reduce tourist activity there.

What better time for Americans to ask their elected representatives to reconsider the Raker Act?

Careful studies including reports by UC Davis, the Environmental Defense Fund and the California Department of Water Resources have confirmed that San Francisco's water and power needs could be met without the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir.

San Francisco could expand its surface and groundwater storage outside Yosemite and filter, recycle and conserve water. Other California cities have successfully taken such steps, and in far greater magnitude.

It's time for Congress to take bipartisan action on behalf of all American people by returning Hetch Hetchy Valley to Yosemite National Park. The Raker Act amendment should ensure that the city retains its hydroelectric facilities, pipelines and other reservoirs in the Tuolumne River watershed, and of course should provide adequate time to plan and implement changes to its water system.

A century ago, our nation sought to tame the wilderness with large-scale engineering projects, occasionally with destructive results. Today we should commit to undoing one of the worst examples of that destruction. And tomorrow, we can watch a magnificent valley emerge from the depths.

Let's make Yosemite National Park whole once again.

Robert Binnewies, B.J. Griffin and David Mihalic are former superintendents of Yosemite National Park. They wrote this for this newspaper.

LATimes.com
Op-Ed

Restore Yosemite? It can be done.

Before the Hetch Hetchy dam, the park had two spectacular valleys.

By Dan Lungren and John Van de Kamp
December 2, 2013

One hundred years ago this month, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Raker Act, which allowed San Francisco to build a dam in Yosemite National Park and convert the spectacular Hetch Hetchy Valley into a municipal reservoir.

As native Californians who have often visited Yosemite, we can think of no greater crime committed against the national parks. But it's not too late to undo the damage. We should take the opportunity of this centennial to reform San Francisco's water system and return Hetch Hetchy Valley to the American people.

Hetch Hetchy Valley was once home to a richly diverse ecosystem, surrounded by towering cliffs and waterfalls similar to those in neighboring Yosemite Valley. The Tuolumne River, the source of much of the Bay Area's water, flowed through it unobstructed. Today, most of Yosemite National Park's visitors crowd into Yosemite Valley, unaware of its submerged twin 15 miles to the north. Were the reservoir to be drained and Hetch Hetchy Valley restored, the world would rediscover one of America's great natural treasures and tourist pressure on Yosemite Valley would be relieved.

The proposal to build a dam in Yosemite National Park was controversial. Naturalists, led by John Muir, and more than 200 newspaper editorials nationwide, opposed it. But San Francisco lobbyists were able to push it through Congress with the help of Interior Secretary Franklin Lane, San Francisco's former city attorney.

Three years later, Congress responded to public disapproval over the flooding of Hetch Hetchy by passing the National Park Service Act to ensure that, going forward, national parks would be managed as a national system, not for local benefit. Subsequent proposals to build dams in Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon were defeated, and municipalities have not been allowed to appropriate land and other resources from national parks since then.

Extensive water supply development in California over the last century has been essential to support the state's 38 million people and its world-class agricultural economy. However, such development has come at a sometimes unanticipated but nonetheless significant cost to vital natural resources.

Today we're repairing environmental damage by removing dams and reducing diversions from our natural waterways. Los Angeles has reduced its diversion of the waters that feed Mono Lake, a vital bird sanctuary. And water agencies throughout the state, including virtually all of urban Southern California, have reduced diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to protect and restore native fish populations.

California's water agencies have also made significant investments to ensure reliable water supplies for their customers. They built Diamond Valley reservoir. They've cleaned up and learned to manage groundwater basins. They've built water-recycling facilities. They've developed relationships with agricultural agencies and committed to exchange and bank water. As a result of these programs and remarkable success in water conservation, our water supply is now more reliable and sustainable.

Last year, San Francisco voters were asked to approve the creation of a plan for similar water conservation reforms and for the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Though the plan would have been nonbinding, opponents suggested it would start the city on a path to less reliable and far more expensive water.

We believe the plan would have confirmed that reform is both possible and significantly cheaper than they claimed.

A well-financed negative campaign ensured the proposition's defeat, in spite of numerous studies by government agencies, universities and independent groups that have concluded it would be possible for San Francisco to continue to obtain water from the Tuolumne River without storing it in Yosemite. Related reforms in the city's water system, such as the development of additional infrastructure and supply, are also feasible.

It's time for a bipartisan effort in Congress to consider amendments to the Raker Act that would stop the use of Hetch Hetchy Valley as a municipal reservoir. A first step would be to commission an independent analysis of practical alternatives and the actual cost of restoration and how that cost might be allocated. We also need to have a robust national dialogue about the value of restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley to the American people — as well as the economic benefits to California. Hetch Hetchy Valley should not be used as a water tank.

An amended Raker Act would not deprive San Francisco of its access to the Tuolumne River or of its other reservoirs and facilities in the river's watershed. But it would require that Hetch Hetchy Valley be returned to the American people, making Yosemite National Park whole once again.

Former congressman Dan Lungren, a Republican, served as California attorney general from 1991 to 1999. John Van de Kamp, a Democrat, served as California attorney general from 1983 to 1991.