



Statement from Nicole Sandkulla, Chief Executive Officer: The State Water Resources Control Board Has Announced an Aggressive Schedule for Consideration of a Voluntary Agreement for the Tuolumne River that will provide greater water flows and increased habitat to Protect Fish and a Reliable Water Supply for 1.8 million Residents, 40,000 Businesses, and Hundreds of Communities in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties and for San Francisco's water users.

February 21, 2023

Last November, San Francisco, along with the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts, signed onto a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for development of a larger voluntary agreement for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that meets the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board) objectives for the Bay-Delta.

The MOU includes a commitment by the Tuolumne River parties for new additional flows in the Tuolumne River to protect native fish species on top of the current requirements. The MOU also commits spending \$64 million in habitat improvement projects over the eight-year term of the MOU to provide improved and increased habitat for native fish species. BAWSCA urges the Tuolumne River parties, including the SFPUC, to move forward now with early implementation of the MOU commitments for new additional flows in the Tuolumne River and implementation of identified habitat improvements.

At a workshop on January 19th, the State Board presented its schedule for a State Board workshop and consideration of a Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement in Winter/Spring 2024. The State Board also identified the release of a final draft environmental document and regulation for implementing the adopted Bay-Delta Plan in that same Winter/Spring 2024 period.

Now the parties to the MOU, including San Francisco, must finalize additional legal and implementation details of a voluntary agreement so that it can be submitted to the State Board for a successful evaluation as an alternative to part of the adopted Bay Delta Plan. The State Board has set an aggressive timeline that will require significant effort and engagement by all parties to achieve it, and those efforts are worthwhile given the downside risks of not securing a voluntary agreement for our water users and the water supply they rely on.

A voluntary agreement for the Tuolumne River will be a big step forward in providing necessary improvements for fish in the Tuolumne River and ensuring a continuing reliable supply of high-quality water at a fair price for the health, safety, and economic well-being of BAWSCA's water users in the three counties and for construction of thousands of new affordable housing units.

Fortunately, the State Board has invited voluntary agreements to resolve major California water-supply issues, such as this one, and BAWSCA looks forward to a voluntary agreement for the Tuolumne River being carefully analyzed, as an update to the Bay-Delta Plan, and implemented.

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