



Federal Legislative Platform 2021

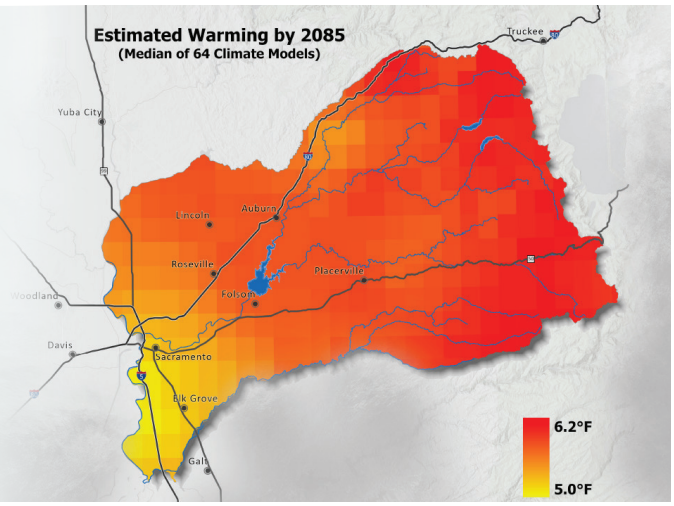
Who We Are

The Sacramento region is home to multiple watersheds, which include the American, Consumes, Yuba, Bear, and Sacramento rivers, from which our water resources are captured. The Regional Water Authority, on behalf of its 20 water purveyor members, helps to sustainably manage the water resources for nearly 2 million people. Collectively, RWA members are guided by the coequal goals of water supply reliability and stewardship of the region's natural and recreational assets.

The following are issues related to federal action that impact the pursuit of the coequal goals by RWA and its members.

A Warmer Future

The American River Basin Study, a joint effort with RWA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, recently indicated the upper American River watershed may experience a 6 F° temperature increase by 2080. This presents ongoing serious challenges to regional water management as we are forecast to lose 50-75% of our snowpack and peak runoff will occur an estimated 45 days earlier than it does today with highly-variable flows. This temperature increase, and other related changes, will continue to exacerbate floods, fires, and droughts, which are already impacting our way of life.



Adapting to a Changing Climate

A key to adapting to our changing climate and optimizing water resources for both water supply and the environment is enhanced management and storage through development of a more diversified and resilient water supply portfolio. Our region is fortunate to have access to both surface water and groundwater, but we are limited in our ability to store it and convey it for human use and in our ability to regulate its temperature for environmental benefits. Informed by regional plans and studies, there are several efforts underway to address these limitations to better achieve the coequal goals, including investing in both natural and constructed infrastructure, as well as instituting operational changes to help improve water temperature management. Part of this work will include implementation of a Modified Flow Management Standard and Folsom Reservoir planning minimum with our federal partners.

Building Groundwater Resiliency

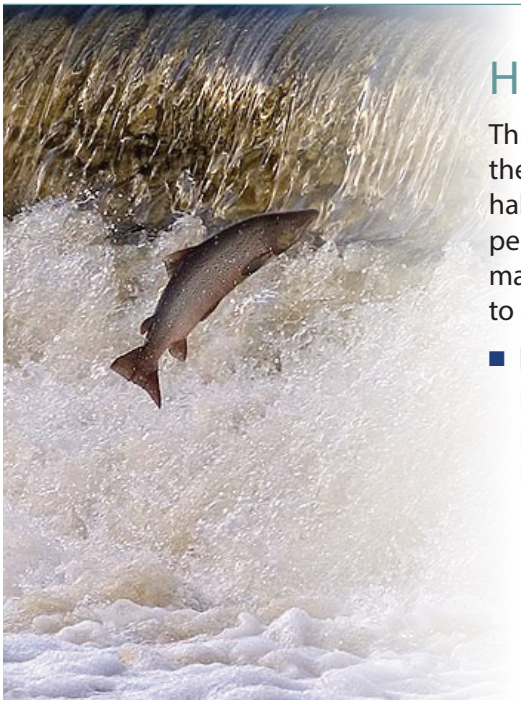
Over the last 20 years, in accordance with the Water Forum collaborative, the Sacramento region has successfully recovered and maintained healthy local groundwater levels. Water agencies voluntarily shift to more surface water use in wet years, which results in increased aquifer storage, and those groundwater supplies being available to meet local needs in dry years. But we can, and seek to, do more to enhance that conjunctive use capability.

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL
WATER BANK
A Sustainable Storage & Recovery Program

The Sacramento Regional Water Bank

We are fortunate to have a 1.8 million acre foot capacity natural reservoir under our feet that can sustainably and resiliently store water. To take advantage of this opportunity, RWA is spearheading a project known as the Sacramento Regional Water Bank expansion, which increases the Region's ability to use more groundwater in dry years and free up surface water for other purposes. This project is currently operating on a limited basis. However, it has the capacity to allow water providers to store 60,000 acre feet annually of additional water in the basin in wet years for future use in dry years and could potentially expand beyond 90,000 acre feet in the near future. It can provide water resource reliability and resiliency to local agencies as well as the Central Valley Project. Reclamation has provided financial assistance to support our technical work related to the Water Bank's development, demonstrating Reclamation's support for our efforts to develop the Water Bank. Federal recognition of this project is critical as well as federal funding to help build out its infrastructure.

- **RWA Supports:** Federal investment in the Sacramento Regional Water Bank to support technical, governance and operational framework development, as well as related infrastructure for future expansion.



Habitat

Through the Water Forum collaborative, the region has and continues to improve the ecosystem of the Lower American River by increasing spawning and rearing habitat acreage for native fisheries. More habitat investments are needed, but the permitting process for these projects is in desperate need of modernization to make it more predictable, and reduce the time and resources currently required to develop and implement these environmental enhancements.

- **RWA Supports:** The Army Corps of Engineers should initiate a process to develop and adopt more predictable and timely permitting processes as well as allocate funding to ensure regulatory staff can meet necessary permit processing timelines.

Folsom Cold Water Pool Management

During the five-year drought period that ended in 2016, elevated water temperatures on the American River were devastating to fisheries. We anticipate with a warmer climate and earlier runoff, cold water will become more critically important. To improve cold water pool management at Folsom Reservoir, the Army Corps of Engineers has already been authorized to construct a new Temperature Control Device (TCD).

- **RWA Supports:** The inclusion of the TCD as an Army Corps priority, as well as securing a sufficient appropriation to fund its construction at Folsom Dam.

Watershed Stewardship and Forest Management

Managing our water resources from their origin at the headwaters and in the upper watershed is critical. Unmanaged and unhealthy forests extend and intensify fire seasons. Runoff from heavy rain events after wildfires contaminate water resources with topsoil, contaminants and ash, as well as sending eroded soils into downstream reservoirs.

- **RWA Supports:** Increased and predictable funding for greater investments in ecological forest management and fire suppression practices on U.S. forest lands consistent with the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding with the State of California.

Legacy Groundwater Issues

As a critical part of our water portfolio, groundwater comes with its own challenges. One is contamination, including the family of PFAS chemicals. Without remediation, the ability to optimize conjunctive use and expansion of the Water Bank cannot be fully realized.

- **RWA Supports:** The federal government should accept responsibility and partner with communities to fund clean-up of legacy contamination from the operation of military bases and other federal facilities, while also securing financial support from polluters.

Infrastructure Investment and Financing

The pandemic has highlighted the critical value of reliable water service, so much so that water service shut-offs for lack of payment has been widely prohibited. There is a long-standing, multi-billion-dollar deficit in necessary investment in new water infrastructure, as well as rehabilitation of existing facilities.

- **RWA Supports:** Significant federal funding of programs that provide job recovery, financial support and grants to leverage local investments (e.g. WaterSMART, WIFIA, State Revolving Funds, etc.), as well as increased direct capital investment funding for Reclamation, EPA, and the Corps of Engineers.

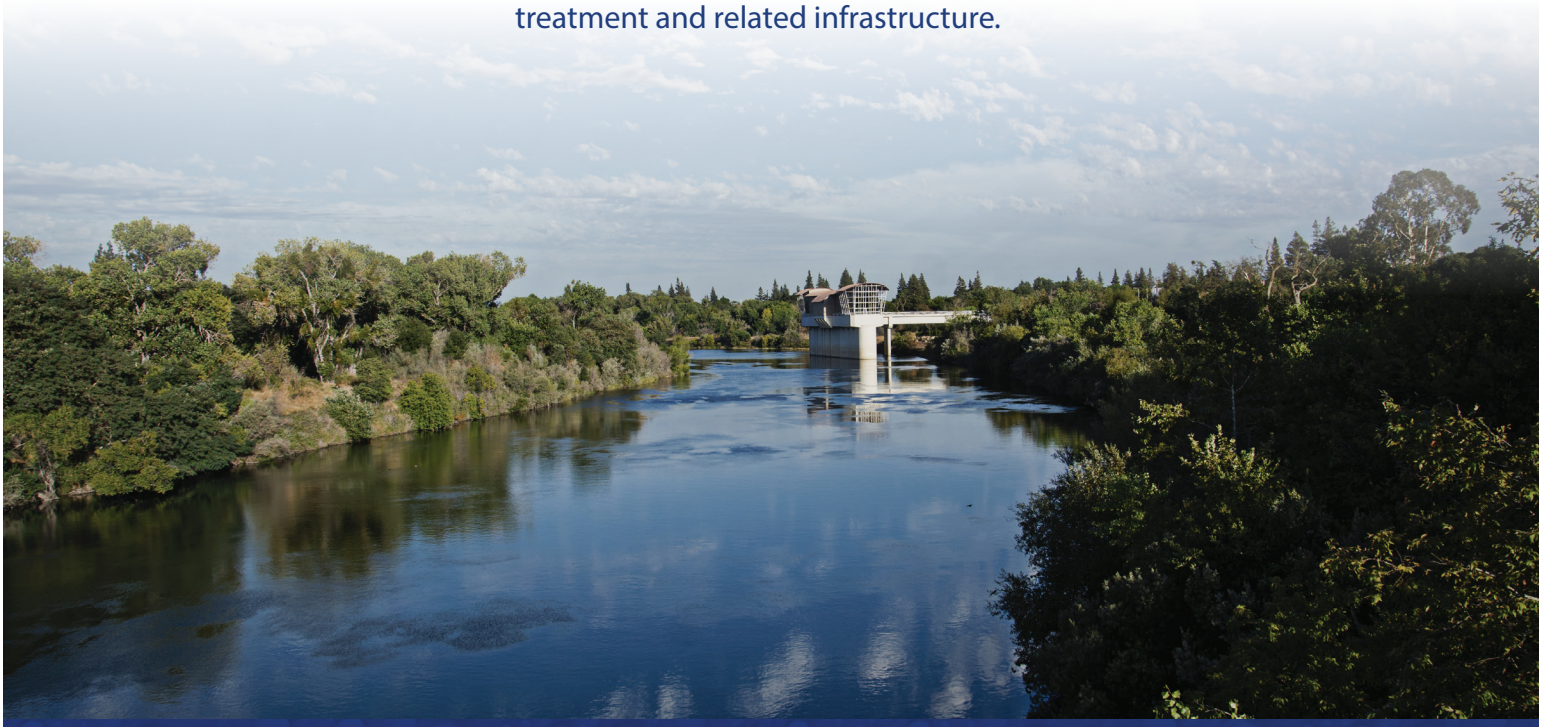
RiverArc Project

Balancing Water Reliability

RiverArc

The RiverArc project would enable large parts of both Sacramento and Placer counties to divert water supplies from the Sacramento River instead of the American River. This would allow more cold water to be preserved at Folsom Reservoir and improve environmental management of American River flows, both to benefit fisheries. RiverArc can also increase the upper potential of the Water Bank by increasing regional conjunctive use capabilities, as well as enhancing Central Valley Project operational flexibility with respect to managing demands on Folsom Reservoir. Reclamation has supported the project by helping to fund initial technical studies.

- **RWA Supports:** Continued federal financial support of the RiverArc project for technical, governance and operational framework development, as well as funding for the project's conveyance, treatment and related infrastructure.



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BUILDING ALLIANCES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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