



Federal Legislative Platform 2024



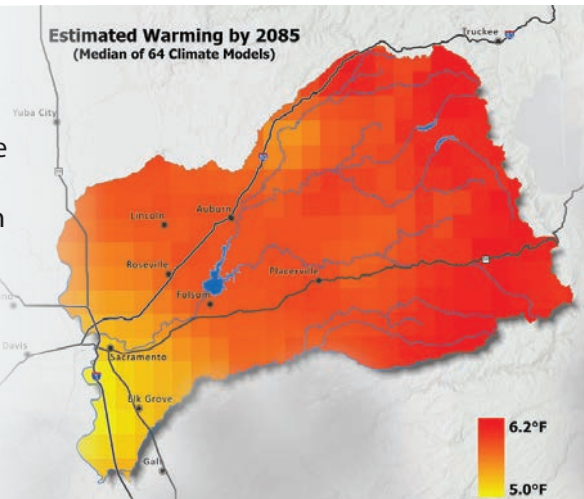
Who We Are

The Sacramento region is home to multiple watersheds, which include the American, Consumes, Yuba, Bear, Feather, and Sacramento rivers from which our water resources are captured. The Regional Water Authority, on behalf of its more than 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, More Variable Future

Weather whiplash has defined California for many years, but in recent years the extremes of wet periods and dry periods have taken on whole new levels. In 2022, The American River Basin Study, a joint effort with RWA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, indicated the upper American River watershed is likely to 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. These include 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.





The Sacramento Regional Water Bank

We are fortunate to have an estimated 1.8 million acre-feet of available storage capacity under our feet (about twice the volume of Folsom Reservoir). To take advantage of this natural storage capacity, RWA is spearheading an effort to increase utilization of the Water Bank in the near term with potential additional recharge of 60,000 acre-feet annually in wet years for future use in dry years. This could potentially expand to beyond 90,000 acre-feet in the near future if necessary infrastructure investments can be realized. This volume is almost equal to the water supply of cities the size of Sacramento. The Water Bank could also benefit Central Valley Project operations. As such, Reclamation has provided funding support for technical work and planning to expand the Water Bank. Future federal recognition of the Water Bank is critical to increasing its capabilities, as well as federal funding to help build new 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.

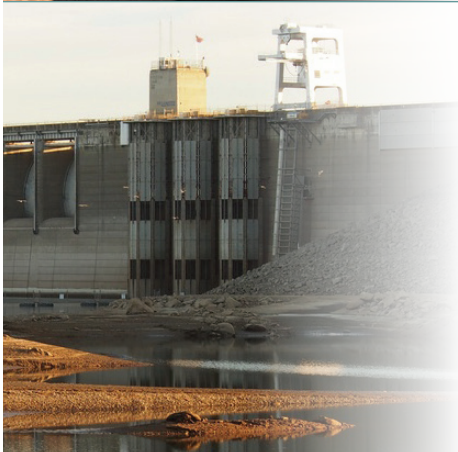


Groundwater Recharge

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 groundwater supplies available to meet local needs in dry years. But we can and seek to do more to enhance our conjunctive use capability.

The recent range of weather whiplash in California has made it clear that water managers must adapt with the changing climate. While 2022 was one of the driest years on record, it was followed by one of the wettest years on record. In the American River region, we've learned through years of practical application that we need to store groundwater in wet times to be able to use it for water supply in dry times. This is made possible by the development of modern water projects and programs, which include infrastructure such as groundwater wells, aquifer storage and recovery wells, interties, water treatment, and a host of other projects that improve the flexibility of water providers to use the appropriate water supplies at the appropriate times.

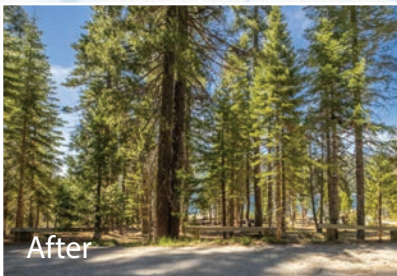
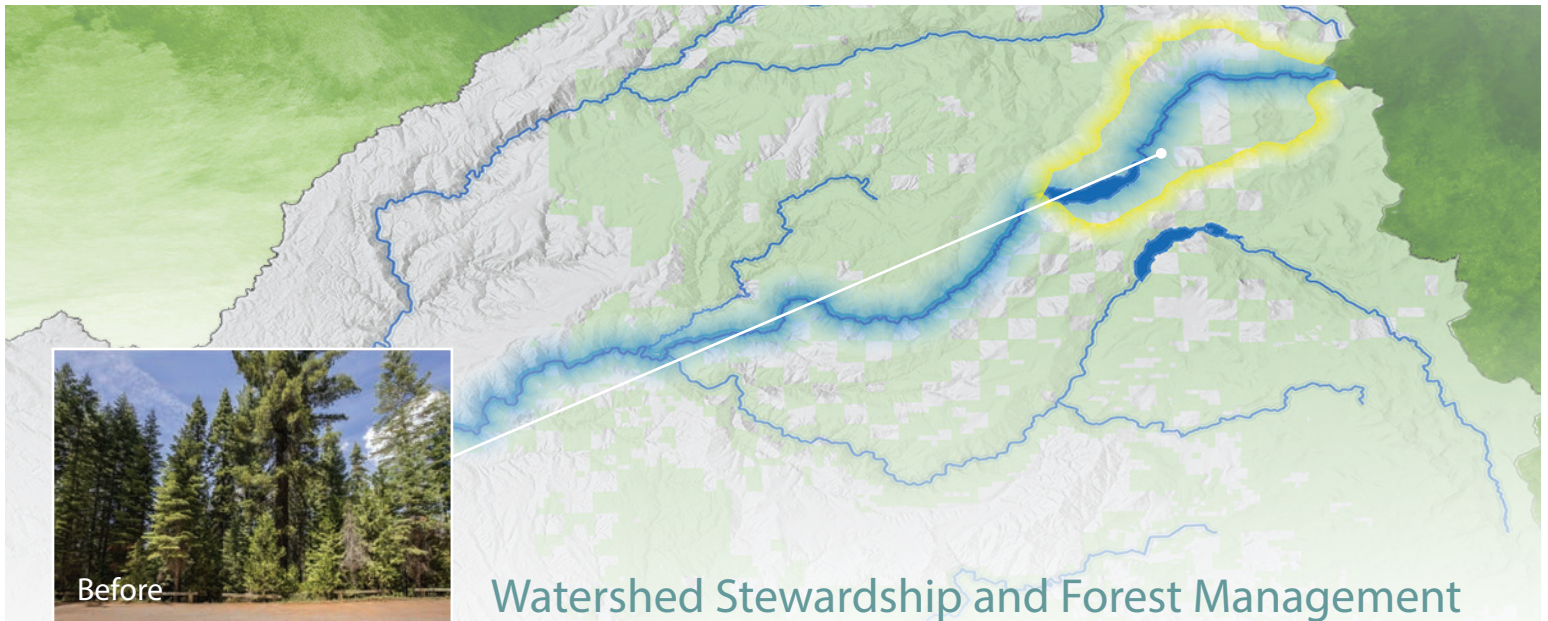
- **RWA Supports:** Support for groundwater recharge policies and projects from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.



Folsom Cold Water Pool Management

During the drought periods of 2013-2016 and 2020-2022, elevated water temperatures on the American River were devastating to fisheries. We anticipate that 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 authorized and appropriated funds to construct a new Temperature Control Device (TCD).

- **RWA Supports:** Keeping the TCD project on schedule and on budget.



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 degrade water resources with topsoil, contaminants and ash, as well as send eroded soils into downstream lakes and 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.



Water Use Efficiency

The Sacramento region has increased its efforts in Water Use Efficiency in recent decades. Over the last 22 years, the region's water use has been steady even though the population grew nearly 43 percent from 1.5 million to almost 2.2 million people. Increasing water use efficiency will be important to align this region with the State's policy of "Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life." Financial assistance will be necessary to continue to increase efficiency.

- **RWA Supports:** Increased funding assistance in the form of grants in existing programs such as Reclamation's Water Smart program and similar Federal Assistance programs.

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 to benefit fisheries. RiverArc can also increase the Water Bank's potential 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.

