

Strategic Plan Considerations



September 10, 2026

Based on member interviews and surveys, ICS will facilitate four conversations that will help bring clarity and prioritization to the Strategy Plan Update.

- 1. Vision and Role for RWA*
- 2. Delivering Water Bank & HRL*
- 3. Advocacy Capacity (State & Federal)*
- 4. Governance & Organizational Capacity*

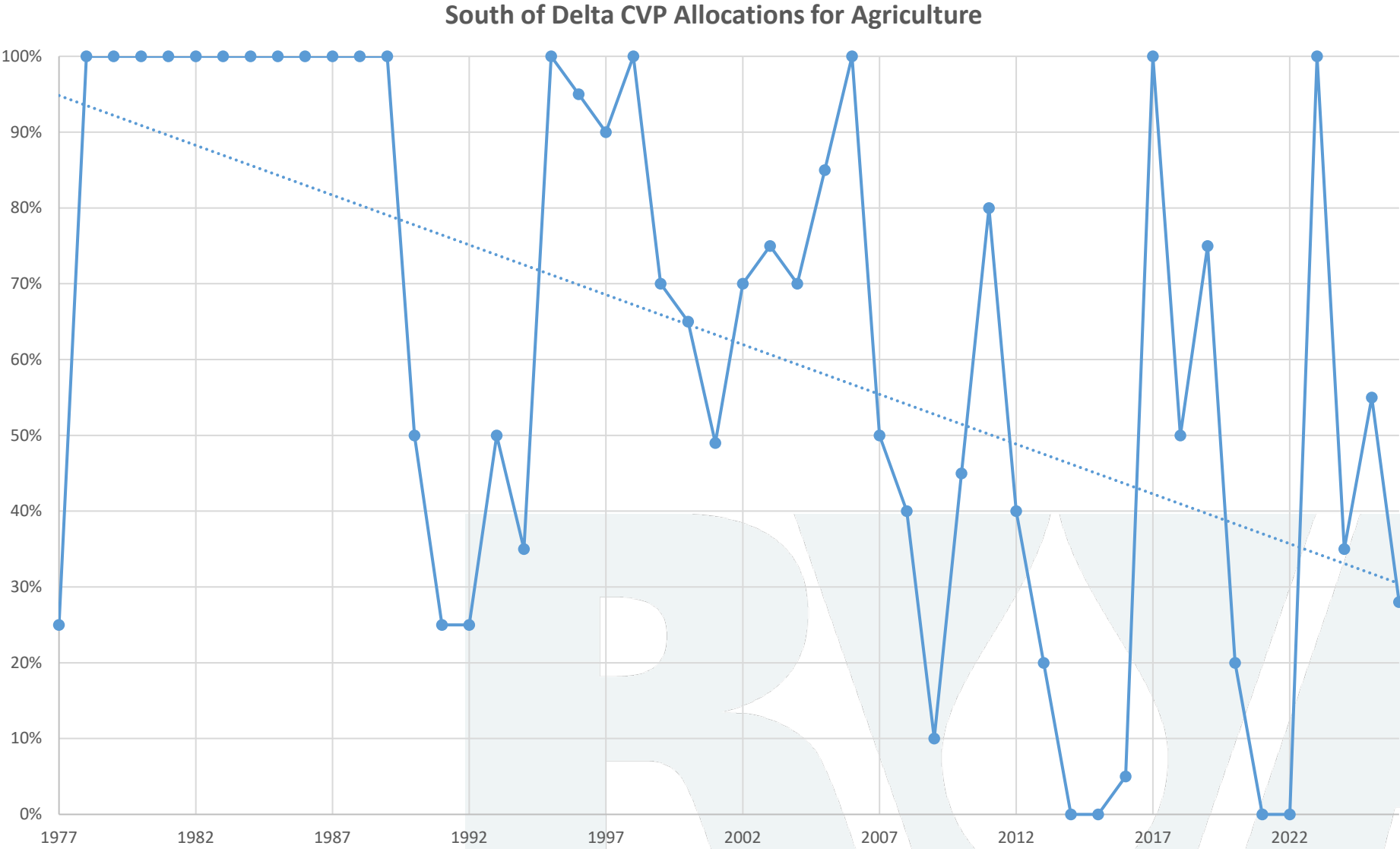


Discuss some of the foundational issues that will inform the ICS topics

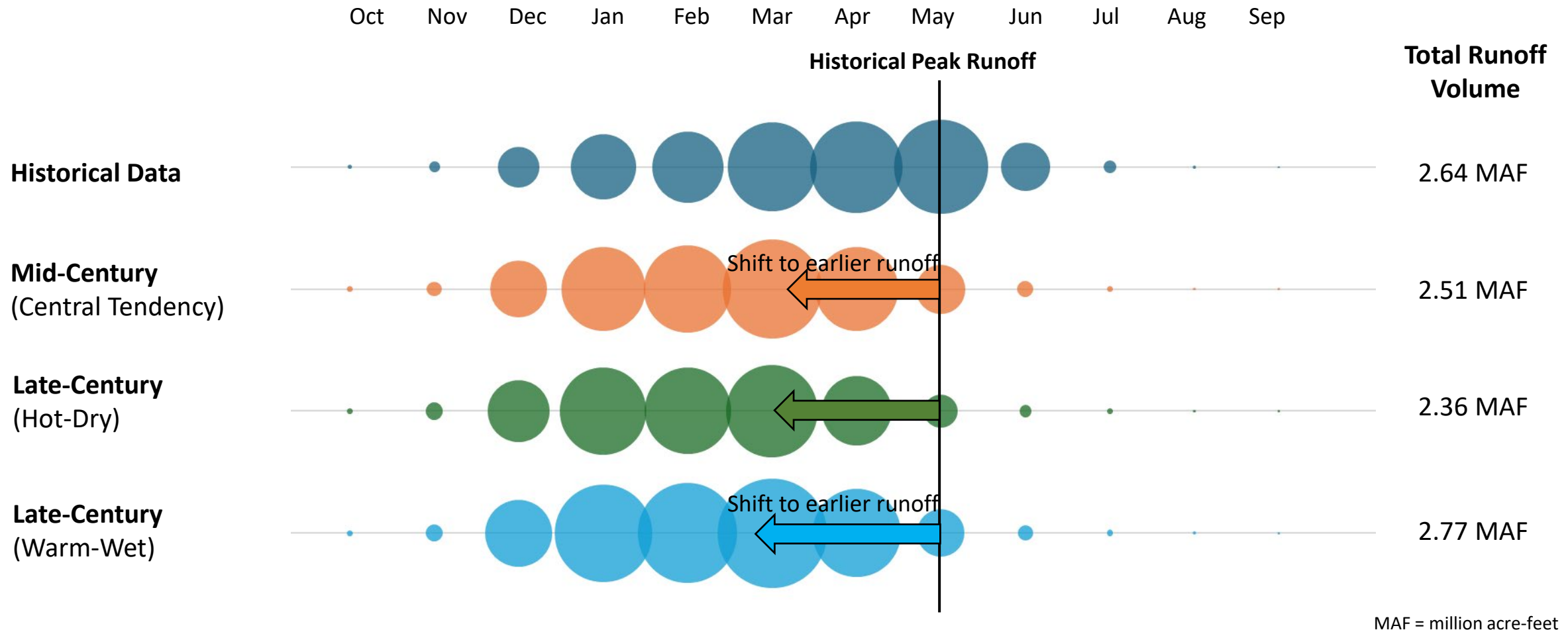
- ARCAP / Federal Recognition
- RWA / SGA Staffing Model
- State Advocacy Priorities
- RWA Communications



Water Supply Allocations for South of Delta Agriculture CVP Contractors



Changes in Timing of Peak Inflow to Folsom



Peak inflow to Folsom could occur up to **2 months earlier**

Folsom Reservoir

Interest: Having enough water in Folsom Reservoir at the end of the year in case a following year is dry.

Why: If the region enters a dry year and the reservoir does not have enough water in it at the beginning (of the calendar year), the risk to water supply increases.

Water agencies may not be able to draw water from Folsom Reservoir or the American River.

Could that happen?

What would that look like?

RWA

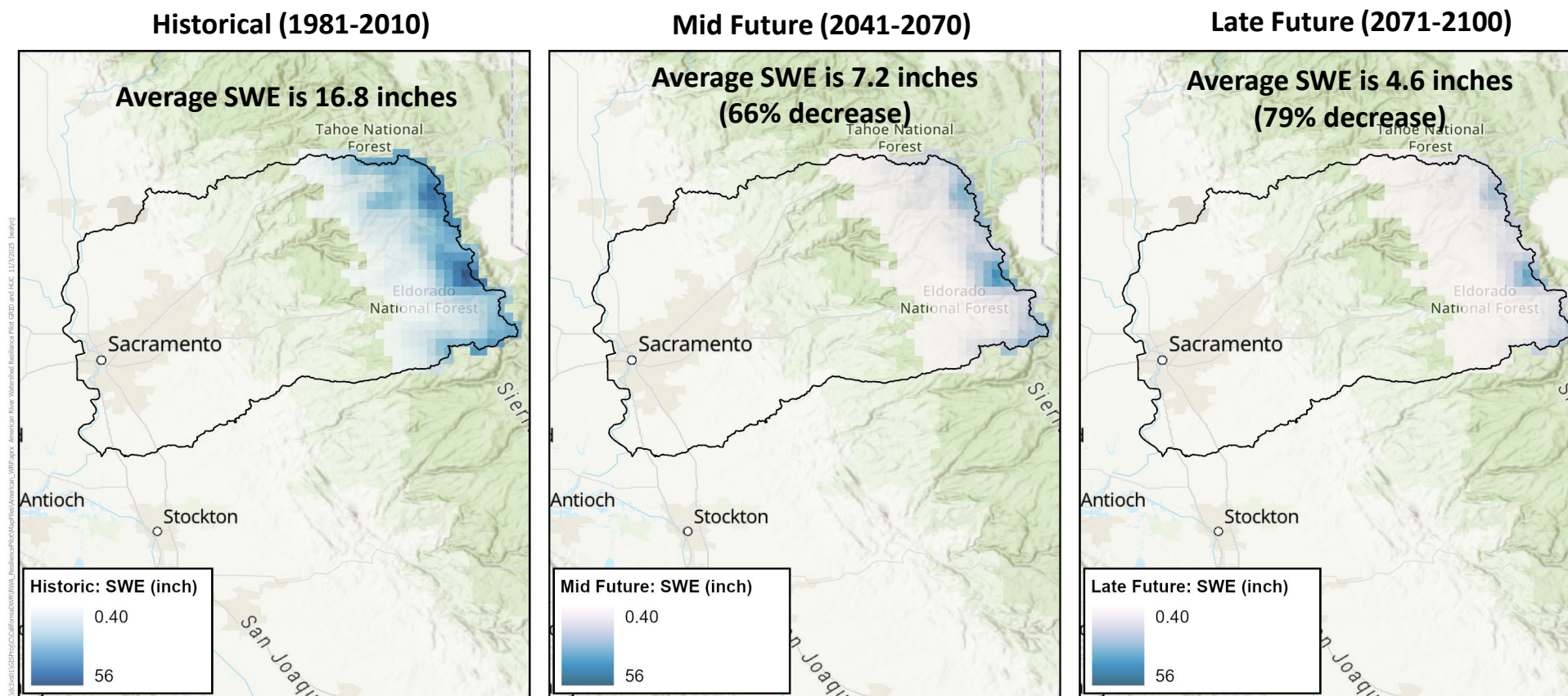


A short history of Folsom Storage Levels

- 2000: Water Forum Agreement: Improved Pattern of Instream Fishery Flow
- 2008: Flow Management Standard (FMS)
- 2013: E. Maisch: This region needs operational protections (from the BDCP), and that means having water in the reservoir at the end of the year.
- 2014: Modified FMS (added an *End of December* storage element and *May* storage element)
- 2015: Folsom Reservoir reaches its lowest point ever: 140,410 AF (14% of Capacity)
- 2017 - 2018: Water Fix water right petition proceedings
- 2019 – 2021: MOU between Reclamation and the Water Forum
- 2021 – 2022: Drought
- 2024: Reclamation tells the RWA staff what they expect from our region
- 2025: Water Forum American River Climate Adaption Program

Change in April 1 Snow (measured as snow water equivalent, or SWE)

- Significant reduction in snow under both future periods as early snow melt and more precipitation will fall as rain instead of snow.
- Accelerated snowmelt cause early runoff, lower spring runoff, increases flood risks, impacts reservoir operations.



Impacted Sectors

Surface Water Supply

Flood Management

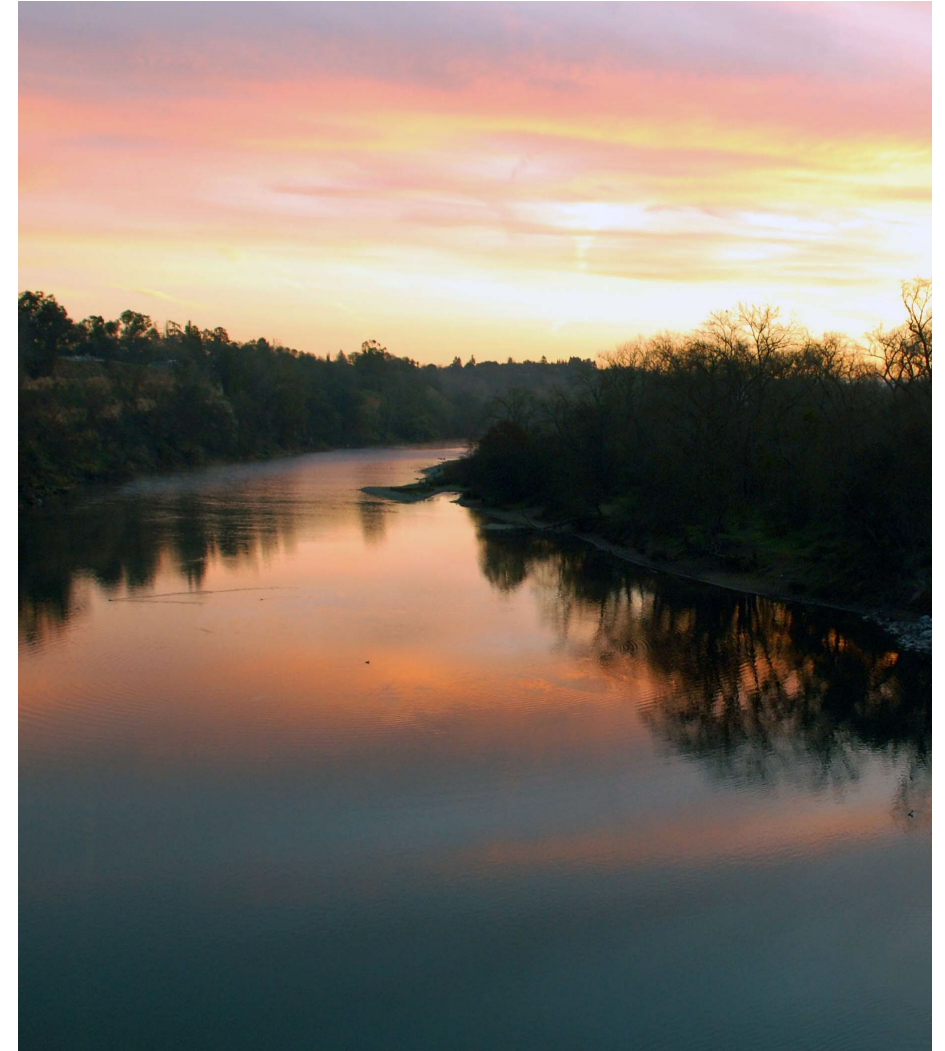
Hydropower

Recreation

Ecosystem

ARCAP allows us to:

- Work with Reclamation to maintain higher storage levels in Folsom Reservoir by providing something they might want
- Helps with Federal Recognition of the Water Bank
- Attract funding to our members
- Get to yes with the Environmental NGOs/Environmental Caucus



Apparent Issue: There is some concern by some on the Board of Directors that the RWA staff may be spending too much time on SGA matters, or that there is too much focus from a fraction of the RWA Board members on SGA matters.

Benefits of the joint staffing model:

- Increased organization competence and abilities
- Lower cost to both organizations – economies of scale
- There would be no Water Bank without the SGA being staffed by RWA

State advocacy engagement on issues not “mission critical” to RWA membership

- 2009: Our region was not relevant.
- Do we want to be relevant to members of the Legislature?
- Its not just what is important to us, but what is important to the members.
- Legislators are asking RWA staff our opinion on “controversial” legislation.



Apparent Issue:

Some agencies like having the RWA being the outward facing representative on issues of common concern to outside audiences (Regulators, the Legislature, Media and Press, others such as Statewide NGOs)

Some agencies disagree with the RWA being the voice of the region while being an independent organization. They see the RWA as an implementor and the member agencies should be the ones communicating externally.



The goals of the RWA are to...

Provide a unified voice to advocate and respond to legislative, regulatory and policy matters of importance to the region's water supply.

“Do good work and tell people about it”

Senator Joe Simitian

*The Tower of Babel
by Pieter Bruegel the Elder*



Provides Communications Capacity

- **Strategy:** Communications counsel, audience analysis, and message development
- **Preparation:** Fact sheets, presentations, talking points, and spokesperson support
- **Visibility:** Media strategy, journalist relationships, opinion articles, and rapid response
- **Engagement:** Events, tours, websites, videos, and stakeholder communications

One regional investment supports priorities across the organization



Created Recognition and Credibility

- **Established the voice:** Created foundational messages, materials and communications channels supporting RWA's Programs.
- **Defined the regional story:** Connected water reliability, groundwater, environmental stewardship, and climate adaptation within a consistent narrative.
- **Demonstrated regional leadership:** Elevated RWA priorities through news coverage, opinion articles, Coffee & Conversation, tours and stakeholder events.

The result: RWA communicates with greater clarity, consistency, and visibility



The Water Bank: Communications in Action

A complex idea became a visible regional strategy

- **Built the foundation:** Research-based messages, fact sheets, presentations, and a dedicated website
- **Created transparency:** Stakeholder Forums, Q&A Connect, videos, Spanish-language resources, and environmental review outreach
- **Built third-party visibility:** Sustained news coverage and opinion placements connecting the Water Bank to timely topics such as climate change and groundwater recharge

A defining communications result: The Sacramento Bee Editorial Board endorsed the Water Bank following a direct briefing arranged as part of the outreach program



Extending Reach and Credibility

Sustained media outreach made the Water Bank a recurring news story:

- **The Sacramento Bee Editorial Board:** “If the Sierra snowpack vanishes as feared, California will need ideas like this for water”
- **KCRA 3:** “Sacramento region banked 11.5 billion gallons of groundwater last year”
- **ABC10:** “How ‘in-lieu banking’ built up an extra 12 billion gallons of water beneath our feet”
- **Fox40 News:** “The innovative ways California is improving its underground water storage”
- **CBS13:** “Groundwater supply could get a boost across the Sacramento area thanks to a new project”

Value to RWA members: A clear regional story • Trusted media relationships • Credible third-party visibility • Recognition of regional leadership

Thank you!

