

2023 California Capital Region Water Project Landscape Analysis

Conducted through the Capital Region
Climate Readiness Collaborative (CRCRC)



**CAPITAL REGION
CLIMATE READINESS
COLLABORATIVE**

Overview

The Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative (CRCRC) is a multidisciplinary network of 47 members from diverse sectors including local and regional agencies, organizations, businesses and associations that work together to advance climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in their own communities and throughout California's Capital Region.



CRCRC's membership network encompasses the 6-county Sacramento Area. CRCRC is a member of the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation.

This landscape analysis is meant to take stock of the ongoing water management and groundwater-related efforts and projects currently being planned and implemented throughout the Capital Region. This includes an overview of the priorities, ongoing projects, and recent challenges to practitioners in the field throughout 2022 going into 2023.

This analysis was put together through a series of interviews conducted with representatives of various organizations working on water policy throughout the Capital Region. The organizations included in this landscape analysis are not exhaustive of the work that's happening in the Capital Region and the state as a whole. For readers not involved with water policy, this landscape analysis can serve as a window into the policy field. For those who work in water this report can, hopefully, provide an insight into what your peers have been hard at work on while potentially facilitating additional regional coordination around this work. The rivers and aquifers we rely on stretch across county and state lines, and through cross-sector collaboration we can preserve reliable, safe water for our communities.

If you have content or information that you believe should be included in this report or the accompanying tracker please complete this [Update Submission Form](#). This form provides the opportunity suggest both edits to existing content of the landscape analysis as well as suggestions for entries from organizations currently unrepresented.

This landscape analysis was conducted primarily through the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 but is an ongoing project and is designed to be updated on an iterative basis. This landscape analysis is accompanied by a [tracker](#) which presents an overview of the information in this report.

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California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

DWR manages water resources, systems, and infrastructure (including the State Water Project) in a responsible and sustainable way across the State. DWR is committed to building resiliency in water management by preventing, preparing for, and adapting to climate change. DWR has several ongoing multi-sector adaptation projects that will affect the Capital Region. Some of DWR's ongoing efforts from the past year include the following. [The California Water Plan Update](#) is the State's strategic plan for sustainably and equitably managing and developing water resources for current and future generations. The Plan focuses on future scenarios for climate change and includes adaptation strategies utilizing risk-based vulnerability assessments. [The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan](#) is California's strategic blueprint to improve flood risk management in the Central Valley. The plan draws on the latest climate science and understanding to assess the effects of sea level rise and hydrological impacts to support a systemwide plan for the Central Valley. Current planning investigations in resiliency include the Delta Conveyance Project, which would help protect Delta water supplies from sea level rise and increase operational flexibility to protect fisheries. Also, new facilities being investigated at Oroville reservoir would allow SWP to resume energy storage and pump back operations while protecting downstream river temperatures for fish. Additionally, SWP has already contributed to the restoration of 1,500 acres of mountain meadow habitat in the Feather River watershed that provide water supply, flood, and ecosystem benefits in support of system resilience.

Upcoming Priorities:

DWR has multiple [grant opportunities](#) for public agencies, public utilities, universities, non-profit organizations, and federally recognized Native American Tribes involved in drought relief and mitigation.

Delta Stewardship Council

Due to the importance of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for water supply, biodiversity, and agriculture, the Delta Stewardship Council advances the State's coequal goals of reliable water supply for the state and to protect, restore and enhance the Delta ecosystem, while protecting the unique characteristics of the Delta as an evolving place. The Council accomplishes this through implementation of the Delta Plan, a comprehensive, long-term, legally enforceable plan to guide how multiple federal, state, and local agencies manage the Delta's water and environmental resources. Overseen by the Delta Stewardship Council, the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee facilitates Delta Plan implementation through collaboration with state, local, and federal agencies. Working groups focused on scientific enterprise and environmental restoration continue to guide and direct these efforts.



**Delta
Stewardship
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

Upcoming Priorities:

Delta Adapts Is the first comprehensive climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategy conducted for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh. The complete vulnerability assessment for the Delta was published in 2021, and identifies the potential impacts of rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and sea level rise will have on the Delta and its communities. Throughout 2022, the Council has hosted cross sectoral working groups to gather input on a variety of adaptation approaches to consider for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and evaluate the impacts of these approaches. A draft for the adaptation strategy will be published in late 2023.

South American **SUBBASIN**

South American Groundwater Subbasin

The Capital Region has been at the forefront of establishing sustainable groundwater management. The South American Subbasin (SASb), bounded by the American River in the north the Consumes River to the south, and the Sacramento River to the west, first received attention for management back in 2002.

12 years before the passage of SGMA, the **Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum** met to discuss collaborative management. This created the **Central Sacramento County Groundwater Management Plan**, which established the sustainable yield metric for the region. Following the passage of **SGMA** and the basin prioritization in 2015, a total of six Groundwater Sustainability Agencies were created within the SASb; the County of Sacramento, Northern Delta, Reclamation District #551, Omochumne-Hartnell Water District, Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority, and the Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District GSAs. Recognizing the need for collaboration for successful management in the SASb, all the GSAs signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2020 to create a **Groundwater Sustainability Plan Working Group**. Building off of earlier work, the SASb GSP working group has created a sustainability plan that was published in 2022.

Upcoming Priorities

Near term projects for the SASB include the **Harvest Water Project**, sponsored by the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, will provide 50,000 AfY for irrigating farmland by treating wastewater.

Regional Water Authority (RWA)

The Regional Water Authority is a joint powers authority bringing together 24 surface and groundwater providers in the Sacramento area to better provide water supply reliability, availability, quality and affordability. Unique to the Central Valley, the Sacramento region's groundwater levels have gone up over the past 20 years. This has been accomplished through **conjunctive use**, where water suppliers draw on surface water when it's raining, and pump from the ground during droughts. RWA and its members believes that through better collaboration, conjunctive use will become even more efficient, preserving even more water. The RWA is an active **legislative advocate**, and supported several bills that passed in 2022, including AB-1817, which bans PFAS, a toxic chemical that seeps into groundwater. RWA has works throughout the region, and through numerous avenues to build a **climate resilient water supply**.



Upcoming Priorities

In late 2022 the Regional Water Authority initiated a public engagement process for the Sacramento Regional Water Bank. This project would allow the region to sustainably increase use of groundwater as a local water source during dry periods, allowing reduced surface water diversions to help meet local environmental needs. Additional information on the Water Bank is available [here](#).



The Sacramento Water Forum

The Water Forum is a collective body of private businesses, public organizations and environmental nonprofits who came together and signed the original Water Forum Agreement in the year 2000. Recognizing the importance of the lower American River for economic growth and urban development while preserving the fisheries, wildlife, and recreation dependent on the river, over 40 signatories have agreed to uphold both goals through collaboration and cutting-edge science until 2030. Every year between August and October, the Water Forum conducts a **Salmon Habitat Reconstruction Project**. In 2022, the Water Forum 'tuned-up' two old sites, Lower Sailor Bar and Nimbus Basin. Laying down roughly 41,000 cubic yards of clean gravel into the flowing river and carving side channels into existing gravel bars, this provides sites for salmon to reproduce and gives juvenile fish an environment to grow up before migrating to sea. The Water Forum, since 2006, has published a **Flow Management Standard** for the Lower American River. Updated in 2015, the standard protects anadromous salmonids, preserves recreational and aesthetic values, avoids catastrophic water shortages in the basin and contributes to the Delta's ecological health downstream

Upcoming Priorities

The Sacramento Water Forum Agreement, originally signed in 2000, expires in 2030. Given the success of the Water Forum, work has started on creating the **Water Forum 2.0**, the successor to the Water Forum and the next step in protecting and enhancing the Lower American River while ensuring a sufficient and reliable water supply.

Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

The Sacramento- San Joaquin Delta Conservancy is a state agency tasked with the environmental and economic protection of the Delta Community. A member of the **Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee**, the Conservancy works to lead efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment for the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of California. The **Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program** was established by Prop 1 in 2014, and provides funding for multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects. The **Delta Carbon Program** and the associated **California Wetland Protocol** established a system for landowners to successfully convert working lands to tule wetlands, winning the American Carbon Registry's Innovation Award in April 2017.



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY
A California State Agency

Upcoming Priorities

The Budget Acts of 2021 and 2022 provided the Delta Conservancy with one-time general fund allocation for the **Climate, Access, and Resource Grants**, which provides funding for projects that provide public access to open space, promote climate resiliency, protects water resources and preserves natural resources. **The 2023 Delta Drought Response Pilot Program** will reduce drought stress in the Delta watershed by incentivizing agricultural water users to incorporate practices into their operations that conserve water and promote ecological health. **The Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration** grant program supports restoration, conservation, and climate resilience for wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta via projects that re-wet the peat soils.



San Juan Water District (SJWD)

Directly serving Granite Bay and eastern Sacramento County, SJWD also provides wholesale water supplies to the Citrus Heights and Fair Oaks Water Districts, Orange Vale Water Company, and the Ashland portion of the City of Folsom, and periodically the Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD).

SJWD currently provides an average of 40,000 acre feet of water a year to approximately 150,000 residents in its wholesale area and up to 12,000 acre-feet per year to SSWD. A signatory of the Water Forum, SJWD diverts water from the American River at Folsom Dam, which is purified at the Peterson Water Treatment Plant. In the summer of 2022, SJWD conducted a **water transfer**, temporarily transferring 3,505 acre-feet of water from the American River to other water agencies south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. SJWD and its wholesale customers were able to substitute groundwater supplies to allow the surface water supplies to be transferred.

Upcoming Priorities

SJWD is conducting major capital investment projects, from renovating their 62 million gallon wholesale treated water storage reservoir, replacing aging water meters, and investing in a new ZEV fleet. SJWD is developing and promoting an environmentally superior alternative to the proposed unimpaired flows approach in the **Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan**. To offset the costs of certain projects, SJWD is securing financing from the California State Water Resources Control Board's **revolving loan fund**.

The Yuba County Water Agency

Yuba Water Agency (Yuba Water) was founded in 1959 to reduce flood risk and enhance water supply reliability for Yuba County. As stewards of a source watershed, Yuba Water also recognizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing ecosystem health. The Lower Yuba River Accord, first implemented in 2008 between Yuba Water, environmental groups, and state and federal agencies, was a landmark agreement to enhance instream flows for salmon and steelhead populations on the Yuba River.



Upcoming Priorities

Working with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the US Army Corps of Engineers to implement **Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations** strategies that will enhance the flexibility of reservoir operations and reduce flood risk through improved weather and runoff forecasts. The **Atmospheric River Control Spillway** at New Bullards Bar Dam will significantly reduce flood risk by providing an additional outlet for earlier release of flows during extreme precipitation events. **The North Yuba Forest Partnership** is a collaborative consisting of Federal agencies, local governments, environmental nonprofits and tribal governments working to collaboratively plan, analyze, finance and implement forest restoration across 275,000 acres of the watershed.

Thank you to those who contributed to this effort. This report is intended to be a live resource and will be updated as new updates and additions are submitted. As stated in the introduction to this report, if you have any additions, updates, or amendments that you would like to see made to this document please submit them through [this form](#).

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS FOR YOUR ONGOING LEADERSHIP

