

# Memorandum

Date: October 29, 2010

To: All DWR Employees

From: **Department of Water Resources**

Subject: Environmental Stewardship Policy

Earlier this year, I shared my vision for the Department of Water Resources with you, emphasizing DWR's role in leading California towards more sustainable, integrated water resources management to provide for a productive economy, healthy ecosystem, and desirable quality of life for all Californians. In following this vision for DWR, I have taken the next step from the establishment of our Sustainability Policy, and approved DWR's new Environmental Stewardship Policy.

This Environmental Stewardship Policy was developed to support a "Total Resource Management" approach to planning activities and projects Department-wide. Under an environmental stewardship paradigm, the concept is to "integrate" environmental requirements and not just "mitigate" environmental impacts, by including environmental benefits as an objective and outcome in the planning and development of operations or projects. In this approach, building in environmental benefits at a meaningful scale can address long-term sustainability from economic, social and environmental perspectives.

DWR has been engaged in developing and adopting environmental stewardship as a business strategy since 2006/2007, including the establishment of the new FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office; identifying environmental stewardship as a foundational action in the California Water Plan; and as an objective and outcome of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan development.

Through an environmental stewardship ethic, DWR builds on its credibility of proactive planning and facilitates meeting future water supply, flood risk reduction, and environmental protection needs of the population of California. With the adoption of this Environmental Stewardship Policy, we will continue to help lead the State into a more proactive and sustainable future that can and will adapt to the effects of climate change and increasing demands on natural resources.

/s/  
Mark W. Cowin  
Director

Attachment

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**DWR Mission:**

To manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.

Environmental stewardship is a concept and commitment of responsibility to manage and protect natural resources (water, air, land, plants and animals) and ecosystems in a sustainable manner that ensures they are available for future generations.

The value of the State's natural resources including plants, animals and ecosystems is reflected in State codes and law. DWR has a role and responsibility to protect and restore the environment, as reflected in its mission statement. Environmental stewardship is an ethic that DWR embraces as it makes and carries out decisions that deal with future demands on water resources and flood protection throughout California. DWR shall work towards the sustainability of public trust resources related to water resources projects and the environment.

The goal of an environmental stewardship ethic is to create human systems consistent with natural systems, where each is ultimately sustainable. Systems of water supply and flood protection are more successful when they accommodate and sustain ecosystem functions. Sustainable systems are also more economical over time.

DWR fosters the environmental stewardship ethic by embracing broad concepts of impact avoidance and protection of natural resources, minimization, mitigation and restoration and enhancement of natural functions and values. DWR will incorporate ecosystem restoration as an objective in water and flood management projects, including partnering with restoration efforts of others, to achieve net environmental benefit. Ecosystem restoration is the process of reestablishing, to the extent possible, the structure, function and composition of the natural environment.

DWR will use science to understand the functions of natural biological and physical systems, so as to help plan and design water supply storage and conveyance systems and flood control systems that also benefit native plants, and fish and wildlife resources.

DWR managers will embrace environmental stewardship as part of their responsibilities. As managers develop and deliver reliable water supplies and provide for flood protection for the State's residents, they can incorporate environmental stewardship in several ways:

- Integrate ecosystem protection and restoration into water storage and conveyance and flood control/management planning
- Include environmental stewardship and ecosystem protection and restoration as a criteria in project funding decisions for all DWR programs
- Plan for conservation, restoration and maintenance of the biological diversity and natural physical processes of aquatic and related terrestrial ecosystems

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- Plan and implement projects that contribute to the recovery of aquatic and riparian species listed under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and other laws, as well as other at-risk species.