

California Department of Water Resources



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DWR AND CALFED SUPPORT YUBA/FEATHER FLOOD CONTROL STUDY

In a collaborative process, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and CALFED have approved \$3.2 million in grants aimed at improving flood protection and wildlife habitat in the Yuba and Feather River Watersheds.

The DWR grant of \$3 million goes to the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA) from the California Water Bond (Proposition 13), Yuba Feather Flood Protection subaccount. YCWA will use the money for a feasibility study of alternative flood protection improvement methods in the Marysville and Yuba City vicinity.

CALFED's grant of approximately \$200,000 to The Yuba Feather Workgroup provides a collaborative effort opportunity for concerned stakeholders to work directly with YCWA in the feasibility study process.

Janet Cohen, Executive Director, South Yuba River Citizens League: "We're delighted to be helping achieve flood control without new dams. This sort of collaborative effort benefits everyone and is yet another example of how different groups working together can effect positive change in our community."

Curt Aikens, General Manager, Yuba County Water Agency: "This is a good step forward in achieving greatly needed increased flood protection along the Yuba and Feather Rivers. We appreciate Governor Davis' leadership in supporting additional flood protection and we look forward to working with the environmental groups in pursuing mutually agreed upon flood control actions."

The area has a long history of catastrophic flooding events since the mid-1800s involving both the Yuba and Feather Rivers. Since 1950, five major floods have taken 41 lives, caused significant property damage, and hampered economic development.

Partial protection has come from levees and upstream storage but the existing system does not provide adequate flood protection. Since the devastating floods of 1997, YCWA has been investigating alternative means of providing urgently needed supplemental flood control for Yuba County's Yuba and Feather River floodplains.

With the Proposition 13 grant, YCWA will be able to implement, as soon as possible, a practicable level of flood protection within Yuba County that prevents loss of human life, reduces property damage, and ensures economic stability.

The study will include preparation of a final environmental document in accordance with the requirements of both the California Environmental Quality Act and the California Endangered Species Act. The CALFED grant will allow environmental concerns and regulatory agencies to work directly with YCWA in a coordinated effort to streamline this process.

FACT SHEET

The \$3 million grant from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) comes from the Yuba Feather Flood Protection Program of the California Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act (also known as the Costa-Machado Water Act of 2000 or Proposition 13). This grant will allow Yuba County Water Agency to conduct a Feasibility Study to identify alternatives related to the feasibility of flood protection projects in the Yuba and Feather River Watersheds. It would also support future requests to DWR for appropriations by the California Legislature for permitting, design and construction of the feasible alternatives.

The Costa-Machado Act of 2000 authorized a total of \$1.97 billion of State general obligation bonds that were approved by the electorate on March 7, 2000. Included in this Act, among other things, was authorization of \$90 million for a Yuba-Feather River Flood Protection Program. The \$90 million authorization includes \$70 million for flood protection projects and \$20 million for mitigation of any impacts on fish, wildlife, or riparian habitat resulting from implementing the projects.

The Yuba Feather Work Group has established a stakeholder-based collaborative process to collect data from the Proposition 13 Study and environmental process and other sources, analyze the data and provide input back into the environmental clearance process.

A steering committee of representatives from existing watershed coalition groups, state and federal regulatory agencies, local governments and environmental groups has been established as part of the Yuba Feather Work Group.

The work group has been working with a project coordinator and a technical team to evaluate various flood control measures, their flood control and ecosystem benefits, and any potential impacts on river processes, habitat or

species. The CALFED grant will allow them to continue that process.

While the Prop 13 Yuba Feather program is focused on flood protection and mitigation, the CALFED Yuba Feather Work Group proposal would also allow for exploring opportunities to expand that by linking to other programs for restoration in the watershed.

With increased stakeholder involvement, this collaborative investigation will also provide educational opportunities to increase the understanding of floodplain management and restoration actions by the public and stakeholders.

In addition, the Yuba Feather Work Group augments the habitat restoration and water quality improvement work being undertaken by watershed coalition groups established through existing CALFED and Proposition 204-funded projects in the upper and lower Yuba watershed.

The two groups working together under these two grants will allow for a non-confrontational approach to solving flooding problems while at the same time exploring opportunities to improve the ecosystem of the area.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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