



News for Immediate Release
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State Agencies Endorse Program to Help Yuba River Fish Populations

SACRAMENTO - The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and Department of Water Resources (DWR) today announced support for the proposed lower Yuba River Accord pilot program. The program will transfer water to the CALFED Environmental Water Account (EWA) and benefit Yuba River salmon and steelhead. The State Water Resources Control Board will review the pilot program at a hearing on Jan. 10, 2006.

“The pilot program is an important step in implementing the accord and will be good news for salmon, steelhead and other fish and wildlife species in the lower Yuba River,” said DFG Director Ryan Brodrick. “The program’s Fisheries Agreement was a cornerstone of the Yuba River Accord signed by a coalition of fishing, environmental, agriculture and water organizations earlier this year, and we look forward to seeing the benefits it brings to these important fisheries habitats.”

The Yuba River Accord announced in April 2005, is a collaborative proposal to settle longstanding litigation in California Superior Court over instream flow requirements in the lower Yuba River. Accord participants include DFG and DWR, seven local irrigation districts, four conservation and fisheries groups, three federal agencies and the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA).

Under the proposed settlement, YCWA will work with local irrigation districts to meet higher instream flow requirements in the 24-mile stretch of the lower Yuba River to assist salmon and steelhead populations. Fish and wildlife species in the Bay-Delta ecosystem will benefit from the Yuba River Accord’s provision to supply more water to the EWA. This would be the state’s first major long-term acquisition of water for the EWA and result in a one-year transfer of up to 125,000 acre-feet of water by YCWA. The environmental review process for the Yuba River Accord is expected to be completed in 2007.

“This is an innovative proposal that illustrates our commitment to responsibly manage and protect natural resources for local communities and the environment, which ultimately has

statewide benefits,” said DWR Director Lester Snow.

DFG and YCWA are also proceeding with plans to study the design of a new, state-of-the-art fish screen at a diversion upstream of Daguerre Point Dam. While the water diversion has used a fish screen in the past, an improved screen will more efficiently prevent juvenile salmon and steelhead from being sucked in with the irrigation water used by southern Yuba County farmers. This study is scheduled to be complete by May 2006.

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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