Temperance Flat Reservoir Project

September 2007 | Department of Water Resources

New surface storage in California will improve water supply and greatly needed flexibility resulting in broad public, environmental and operational benefits. With the additional capacity and integrated operation of California's water delivery system, water diversion and deliveries can be timed in ways that improve water quality, restore wildlife habitat, support fishery needs, facilitate conjunctive management and increase flood protection.

BROAD PUBLIC BENEFITS:

- Maintain a maximum cold water pool in Millerton Lake which could be diverted for instream flows to benefit fish in the San Joaquin River.
- Facilitate water exchanges that improve the quality of water deliveries to urban communities.
- Increase flood protection for Central Valley communities and agriculture by capturing additional runoff during wet years to augment Millerton Lake's limited storage capacity.
- Contribute to San Joaquin River restoration activities by providing water supplies for fish protection during critically dry periods that are not covered in the San Joaquiun River Settlement Agreement.
- Promote new recreation sources or enhance existing recreation opportunities at Millerton Lake.

The Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation is a joint feasibility study by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources. The primary objectives are to contribute to San Joaquin River restoration, improve San Joaquin River water quality and facilitate additional conjunctive water management in the eastern san Joaquin Valley to reduce groundwater overdraft.

Proposed Temperance Flat Reservoir. Temperance Flat is one of the alternatives in the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation

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KEY POINTS:

- A new reservoir near Millerton Lake could hold up to 1.3 million acre feet in additional water storage.
- The project could supply up to 208,000 acre feet of water per year to farms and communities.
- Water supply reliability problems in the southeastern San Joaquin Valley are evident through a long-term downward trend in groundwater levels. Temperance will improve conjunctive management with groundwater in the region and help reverse this downward trend.
- The ability to release water from Friant Dam at suitable temperatures for anadromous fish and increase the flow during critically dry years is important to meet goals of restoration of San Joaquin River as stipulated in 2006 settlement agreement. (Which did not stipulate flows during critically dry years).

PROJECT STATUS:

Two potential locations are still being investigated for the Temperance Flat Reservoir, located in the Millerton Lake region. In addition, Fine Gold Reservoir, an offstream alternative adjacent to Millerton Lake is being investigated. Project construction could begin by about 2012 and be completed in five to seven years. Final engineering design, preparation of construction documents, acquisition of lands and rights, and construction permitting would precede construction. Project operation could begin by 2017 to 2019. The NEPA/CEQA process is underway to identify potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures with draft and final EIS/EIR due in July 2008 and July 2009 respectively. All significant adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where feasible.