

## Water Chronology<sup>1</sup>

- 1769 First permanent Spanish settlements; water rights established.
- 1848 Gold discovered on the American River.  
Treaty of Guadalupe signed, California ceded from Mexico, California republic established.
- 1850 California granted statehood.
- 1860 Legislature authorizes the formation of levee and reclamation districts.
- 1880 First flood control plan for the Sacramento Valley developed by State Engineer William Hammond Hall.
- 1884 Federal circuit court decision in *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield* requires termination of hydraulic mining debris discharges into California rivers.
- 1886 California Supreme Court decision in *Lux v. Haggin* reaffirms legal preeminence of riparian rights, upheld again 40 years later.
- 1892 Conservationist John Muir founds Sierra Club.
- 1901 First California deliveries from the Colorado River made to farmland in the Imperial Valley.
- 1902 US Bureau of Reclamation established by the Reclamation Act of 1902.
- 1905 First bond issue for the city of Los Angeles' Owens Valley project; second bond issue in 1907 approved for actual construction.  
Colorado River flooding diverts the river into Imperial Valley, forming the Salton Sea.
- 1908 City of San Francisco's filings for Hetch Hetchy project approved.
- 1913 Los Angeles Aqueduct begins service.
- 1920 Col. Robert B. Marshall of the US Geological Survey proposes statewide plan for water conveyance and storage.
- 1922 Colorado River Compact appropriates 7.5 million acre-feet per year to each of the river's two basins.

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- 1923 Hetch Hetchy Valley flooded to produce water supply for San Francisco despite years of protest by John Muir and other conservationists.
- East Bay Municipal Utility District formed.
- 1928 Congress passes Boulder Canyon Act, authorizing construction of Boulder (Hoover) Dam and other Colorado River facilities.
- Federal government assumes most costs of the Sacramento Valley Flood Control System with passage of the Rivers and Harbors Act.
- California Constitution amended to require that all water use be “reasonable and beneficial.”
- St. Francis Dam collapses, flooding the Santa Clarita Valley, killing more than 450 people.
- Worst drought of the 20th century begins; ends in 1934, establishing benchmark for water project storage and transfer capacity of all major water projects.
- 1931 State Water Plan published, outlining utilization of water resources on a statewide basis.
- County of Origin Law passed, guaranteeing counties the right to reclaim water from an exporter if it is needed in the area of origin.
- 1933 Central Valley Project Act passed.
- 1934 Construction starts on All-American Canal in the Imperial Valley (first deliveries in 1941) and on Parker Dam on the Colorado River.
- 1937 Rivers and Harbors Act authorizes construction of initial Central Valley Project features by US Army Corps of Engineers.
- 1940 Metropolitan Water District of Southern California’s Colorado River Aqueduct completed; first deliveries in 1941.
- 1944 Mexican-US Treaty guarantees Mexico 1.5 million acre-feet per year from Colorado River.
- 1945 State Water Resources Control Board created.
- 1951 State authorizes the Feather River Project Act (later to become the State Water Project).
- First deliveries from Shasta Dam to the San Joaquin Valley.
- 1955 Flood in the Sacramento Valley kills 38 people.
- 1957 California Water Plan (Bulletin 3) published.
- 1959 Delta Protection Act resolves some issues of legal boundaries, salinity control and water export.

- 1960 Burns-Porter Act ratified by voters; \$1.75 million bond issue to assist statewide water development.
- 1963 *Arizona v. California* lawsuit decided by US Supreme Court, allocating 2.8 million acre-feet of Colorado River water per year to Arizona.
- 1964 Partially completed Oroville Dam helps save Sacramento Valley from flooding.
- 1966 Construction begins on New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River after 20 years of controversy over the reservoir's size and environmental impacts; completed in 1978.
- 1968 Congress authorizes Central Arizona Project to deliver 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water a year to Arizona.
- Congress passes Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- 1970 Passage of the National Environmental Quality Act, California Environmental Quality Act and California Endangered Species Act.
- 1972 California Legislature passes Wild and Scenic Rivers Act preserving the North Coast's remaining free-flowing rivers from development.
- Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) passed.
- 1973 First State Water Project deliveries to Southern California.
- 1974 Congress passes Safe Drinking Water Act.
- 1978 State Water Board issues Water Rights Decision 1485 setting Delta water quality standards.
- 1980 State-designated wild and scenic rivers placed under federal Act's protection.
- 1982 Proposition 9, the Peripheral Canal package, overwhelmingly defeated in statewide vote.
- Reclamation Reform Act raises from 160 acres to 960 acres the amount of land a farmer can own and still receive low-cost federal water.
- 1983 California Supreme Court in *National Audubon Society v. Superior Court* rules that the public trust doctrine applies to Los Angeles' diversion from tributary streams of Mono Lake.
- Dead and deformed waterfowl discovered at Kesterson Reservoir, pointing to problems of selenium-tainted agricultural drainage water.
- 1986 Ruling by State Court of Appeals (*Racanelli* Decision) directs the State Water Board to consider all beneficial uses, including instream needs, of Delta water when setting water quality standards.
- Passage of Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act (Proposition 65) prohibiting discharge of toxic chemicals into state waters.

- Coordinated Operation Agreement for Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations in the Delta signed.
- 1987 State Water Board's Bay-Delta Proceedings begin to revise D-1485 water quality standards.
- 1989 In a separate challenge to Los Angeles' Mono Basin water rights, an appellate court holds that fish are a public trust resource in *California Trout v. State Water Resources Control Board*.
- Metropolitan Water District and Imperial Irrigation District agree that Metropolitan Water District will pay for agricultural water conservation projects and receive the water conserved.
- 1991 MOU signed to implement urban water conservation programs.
- Inyo County and Los Angeles agree to jointly manage Owens Valley water, ending 19 years of litigation.
- West Coast's first municipal sea water desalination plant opens on Catalina Island.
- 1992 Congress approves landmark Central Valley Project Improvement Act.
- 1993 Federal court rules in *Natural Resource Defense Council v. Patterson* that the Central Valley Project must conform with State law requiring release of flows for fishery preservation below dams.
- Central Arizona Project declared complete by the federal government.
- 1994 State Water Board amends Los Angeles' water rights licenses to Mono Lake.
- Bay-Delta Accord sets interim Delta water quality.
- CALFED Bay-Delta Program planning initiated.
- 1995 State Water Board adopts new water quality plan for the Delta and begins hearings on water rights.
- 1997 New Year's storms cause state's second most devastating flood of the century.
- State Water Project's Santa Barbara Aqueduct completed.
- 1999 Sacramento splittail minnow and spring-run Chinook salmon added to federal endangered species list.
- 2000 CALFED Record of Decision signed by state and federal agencies.
- 2002 Voters approve Proposition 50, a \$3.44 billion bond issue to fund improvements in water quality and reliability.

- 2003 Interior Secretary orders California's Colorado River allocation limited to 4.4 million acre-feet; water users sign Quantification Settlement Agreement.

State Water Project contractors, DWR and environmental groups settle lawsuit over the Monterey Amendment. State Water Project, Central Valley Project and respective contractors reach tentative agreement on "Napa Proposal" water-sharing plan.

DWR issues draft EIR on increasing pumping level out of Delta to 8,500 cubic feet per second.

US Fish and Wildlife Service removes Sacramento splittail from federal Endangered Species Act list of threatened species.

- 2004 State Water Board initiates review of 1995 Water Quality Control Plan.

Congress approves long-awaited legislation to re-authorize CALFED.

- 2005 Scientific surveys of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and Suisun Marsh reveal ongoing, sweeping population crash of native pelagic fish.

Legislation directs DWR to evaluate the future of the Delta.

- 2006 Coalition of fishing groups sue DWR, alleging the agency never obtained proper legal authority to take endangered fish while exporting water.

- 2007 State Water Project pumping operations shut down to protect endangered delta smelt (Wanger Decision).

DWR estimates that Delta levees are vulnerable to massive failure if major earthquake occurs.

Seven Colorado River states agree to new drought rules and shortage criteria.

Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force releases plan; strategic plan due end of 2008. Other Delta planning processes continue.

- 2008 DWR initiates Bay-Delta Conservation Plan EIS/EIR.

Governor declares statewide drought after second dry/critical year.