



## Upper Feather River IRWM Program

### Local Government and the U.S. Forest Service

- In 2005, the Plumas National Forest joined the County of Plumas and other local agencies in adopting an Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) plan for the 2.3 million-acre Upper Feather River watershed (3,500 square miles).
- Nearly all of the 1.1 million acres of the Plumas National Forest – as well as parts of the Tahoe and Lassen National Forests – lies within the Feather River watershed, making the U.S. Forest Service an essential partner in managing the landscape for water supply, water quality, and flood control.
- Everyone with an interest in water and watershed management should be aware of the original charge of the Forest Service dating to the Organic Act of 1897:  
*“No national forest shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the boundaries, or **for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows**, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber...”* (16 U.S.C. 475)
- Like most National Forests and National Parks, the Plumas National Forest has the institutional capacity and expertise readily available to implement water quality and water supply improvement projects, but federal budget realities create a perpetual backlog of work.
- In adopting the Upper Feather IRWM plan, the Plumas National Forest and Plumas County agreed to jointly pursue funding opportunities to implement the IRWM plan and to consider the objectives of the plan and consult with other IRWM participants when carrying out independent activities.
- Recognizing the capabilities and the historic mission of the Forest Service, as part of the first round of Prop. 50 IRWM implementation grants the Department of Water Resources awarded \$7 million to the Upper Feather IRWM program, including nearly \$2 million for the Plumas National Forest for water quality and water supply projects.
- Recognizing their own interest in the Feather River watershed and the State Water Project's primary storage facility at Lake Oroville, the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Project contractors have worked with Plumas County through the Plumas Watershed Forum to provide funding for Plumas National Forest projects that improve watershed function and increase water supplies.

***The 30,000 square miles of National Forests in California account for 20 percent of the state's land mass and generate almost half of the state's runoff.***

***In the face of climate change impacts, an ever-increasing population, and all of the other challenges facing California's water supplies, the management of the National Forests to maximize water yield while balancing other resource values will be a critical element in meeting the state's water needs.***

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