



SITES RESERVOIR

Water for the Environment

California is facing multiple challenges in how it manages its water infrastructure and supply, including concerns regarding rising temperatures, declining snowpack, longer dry seasons, and more volatile precipitation. This presents challenges to the state's ability to meet its goal of creating a win-win scenario, including a more reliable water supply and protecting and enhancing the environment. To be successful, California's policy makers must advance a portfolio of actions that includes new water storage.

Sites Reservoir Project is a water storage enhancement to the California water system that will provide multiple environmental benefits to improve aquatic habitat conditions and withstand dry year conditions. This reservoir will be operated to accommodate climate change and improve environmental and water supply system resilience.

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Up to 40 percent of the project's water would be dedicated for and managed by state and federal agencies to address environmental needs.
- Nearly 40,000 acre feet of water would be available for managed refuges and wetlands north and south of the Delta, providing a more sustainable water supply to benefit migratory birds and other species.
- With the anticipated reduction in snow-melt, cold water stored in the existing reservoirs will be reduced, making it more difficult to manage the temperature of water released for salmon and other species downstream. The operation of Sites Reservoir will allow Shasta, Oroville and Folsom to hold more cold water later into the summer months for the benefit of fisheries.
- Project operations will also improve water quality and reliability in the Delta by releasing nutrient-rich water to improve conditions for Delta smelt, among other species.

Sites Reservoir will be operated to provide significantly more water during drier periods, complementing other drought-management tools in addressing California's water management challenges into the 21st century and beyond.

As Sites Reservoir moves through the final permitting process, the Sites Project Authority is working with the NGO community, state, and federal agencies to ensure that the environmental water from Sites is managed appropriately. For more information, please visit www.sitesproject.org.



About Sites Reservoir

Located 10 miles west of the town of Maxwell in rural Colusa and Glenn Counties, Sites Reservoir would create additional off-stream storage for drier periods.



How It Works

The reservoir will capture and store storm-related runoff and flood flows in the Sacramento River after all other water rights and regulatory requirements are met.



An upgrade to California's water storage infrastructure is long overdue to restore flexibility and adapt to future uncertainties and changing priorities. The reality of a changing climate – flashier rain storms, less snowpack, and longer, more intense stretches of drought, make it harder for the existing system to capture water for use in drier years. Simply put, the state's existing water infrastructure is challenged to meet our human and environmental needs. A portfolio of solutions must be developed to improve water supply resiliency, including new surface water storage. Sites Reservoir, which is strategically located to support existing infrastructure, will provide significantly more water during drier periods. The reservoir will complement other drought-management tools in addressing California's water management challenges into the 21st century and beyond.

A FLEXIBLE STORAGE SOLUTION

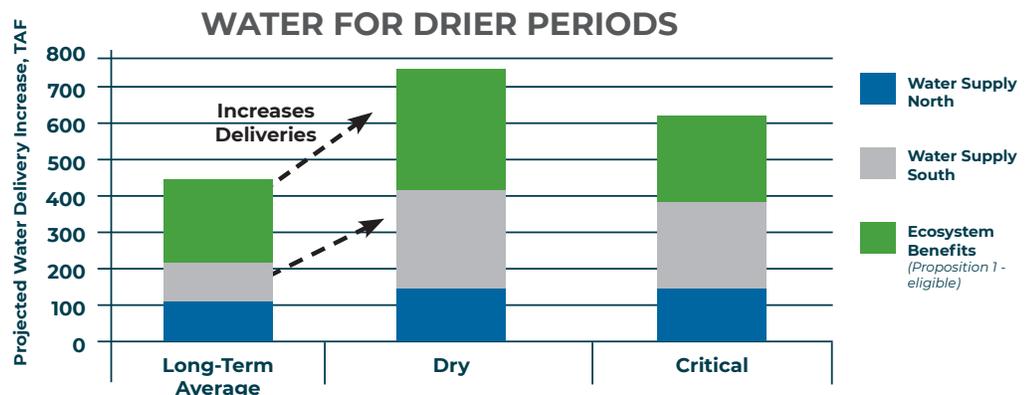
Sites Reservoir does not rely on snow-melt but captures winter runoff from uncontrolled streams below the existing reservoirs in the Sacramento Valley. Because of this, it will inherently adapt to future climate conditions and will be operated to improve water supply resilience to the predicted changes in weather. Much of the rainfall from extreme events – especially those that occur back-to-back when the ground is saturated – runs off before it can be captured for maximum environmental, urban and agricultural benefit. Sites Reservoir will increase the resiliency of water supplies because it will not rely on spring snowmelt for filling, but instead will capture storm-related runoff and a portion of storm-related flood water.

By operating in conjunction with other California reservoirs, Sites Reservoir substantially increases water supply flexibility, reliability and resiliency in drier years. Deliveries from Shasta, Oroville and Folsom – the northern backbone for State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) – are vulnerable to cutbacks during dry years. **Sites Reservoir is the only proposed storage facility in the State of California that will help with statewide operational effectiveness of the SWP and CVP.**

Sites Reservoir would increase Northern California's water storage capacity by up to 15 percent by helping to meet increased needs for water when it is needed most during drier periods.

FACT:

Sites Reservoir was first proposed decades ago by DWR as a necessary addition to the SWP to maximize operational capacity.



LOCALLY MANAGED

The Sites Project Authority – a joint powers authority comprised of 11 Sacramento Valley entities – will govern, manage and operate the project. The Authority is currently advancing the project's environmental review and permitting, along with preliminary design and operations planning.

For more information, please visit www.sitesproject.org.

According to a recent report by the California Public Policy Institute, "The best option for increasing supply is capturing and storing additional water from big storms."

