



**FRIENDS
OF THE
RIVER**

23 New Or Enlarged Dams & Canals Proposed To "Restore" Bay-Delta Ecosystem

A Peripheral Canal around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and numerous new and enlarged dams and canals throughout the Central Valley are the centerpieces of a new joint federal and state plan intended to restore the delta ecosystem.

Federal and state officials are inviting public comments in response to their massive and complex plan intended to reverse the ecological decline of the West's largest bay-delta estuary caused by years of water diversions and upstream dam operations. The so-called "CALFED" plan examines 12 alternatives which address the impacts of delta water diversions and the operation of upstream federal, state, and local water projects.

More than 40 percent of the state's run-off flows through the delta, and much of it is diverted into canals for agricultural and urban uses to the south. These massive diversions have reversed flows in the delta, decimated resident fish species and migratory salmon, and degraded water quality. Consequently, experts consider the delta to be an ecosystem on the brink of ecological collapse.

Some interests consider the CALFED plan -- which proposes the largest ecosystem restoration program in state history -- to be the solution to the delta's problems. If successful, the plan would halt and reverse the decline of endangered fish and other aquatic species in the delta and throughout much of the Central Valley, as well as significantly increase water supplies and improve water quality. But others believe that the ecosystem restoration component of the plan is little more than a palliative for a new massive public works project to build additional dams and canals to meet current and future water demands. Many question whether the delta's ecological problems -- caused by dams and water diversions -- can be resolved by building yet more dams and diversions.

Major components of the CALFED plan include:

- * Ecosystem restoration programs to improve water quality, increase water use efficiency, improve watershed management, facilitate water transfers, and improve delta levee system integrity.
- * New water storage and conveyance facilities in the Central Valley and in the delta, as well as increased use of groundwater storage.
- * New conveyance facilities (canals) in and around the delta.

The twelve alternatives considered in the CALFED plan are divided into three categories based on how water will be conveyed through or around the delta. The first category assumes using existing delta channels, the second category would modify and expand delta channels, and the third category depends on the construction of an "isolated delta conveyance" -- a facility better known as the Peripheral Canal. Seven of the 12 alternatives assume construction of new or enlarged dams to store up to three million acre feet of water in the Sacramento Valley and up to two million acre feet of water in the San Joaquin Valley.

CALFED spin controllers are working over-time on making the Peripheral Canal component of the plan more palatable to the public. In 1982, Californians voted overwhelmingly against funding construction of the canal and polls indicate a continued high level of opposition in every region of California. But conservationists are also concerned about CALFED's proposals for 23 new dams, diversions, and canals. While much of the 2,100 page document concentrates on the ecosystem restoration and delta conveyance components of CALFED plan, very little information is provided on proposed new water storage and conveyance systems.

A sampling of the 23 projects includes enlargement of Shasta dam on the upper Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit rivers; enlargement of Monticello dam on Putah Creek; up to five new dams on Cottonwood Creek; up to six new "offstream" storage reservoirs in the Central Valley dependent on massive new water diversions from the Sacramento River and the delta; as well as several new canals to deliver the water, including two different versions of the Peripheral Canal around the delta. Many of these projects could push the Central Valley's endangered salmon runs over the brink to extinction.

Most of the projects have been studied before and generally eliminated because of prohibitive costs. For example, the proposed enlargement of Shasta dam and reservoir was shelved by both state and federal agencies in the past because of its \$5.5 billion price tag. Now federal authorities estimate that Shasta enlargement would cost \$3.8 billion -- still the most expensive dam project in U.S. history. Shasta dam and reservoir enlargement would also be costly to the environment. Raising the crest of Shasta dam by 200 feet would require the relocation of Interstate 5, the Union Pacific railroad, several lakeside resorts, and a handful of upstream communities. The reservoir would seldom fill, but several miles of the upper Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit rivers would be drowned in the process, leaving a seasonal barren bathtub ring hundreds of feet high. Massive changes in flows downstream of an enlarged Shasta dam and new diversions proposed by CALFED could further decimate the Sacramento River's endangered salmon runs.

CALFED's current planning and restoration costs add up to about a billion dollars so far, without a drop of cement having been poured to fulfill the plan's ambitious construction agenda. Currently, Governor Wilson is negotiating with legislative leaders to place a \$1.3 billion water bond on the November ballot which could pay the state's share of CALFED's feasibility studies for new and enlarged dams and canals. Actual construction will cost the state and federal taxpayers billions more.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: The CALFED joint federal and state environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (EIS/EIR) is available for public review and comment. Write a letter today to: **Lester Snow, CALFED Bay-Delta Program, 1416 Ninth Street - Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814.** **The comment deadline is June 1, 1998.** In your letter:

- * Oppose all CALFED alternatives that require construction of new or enlarged dams and canals, including the Peripheral Canal and an enlarged Shasta dam. Feel free to mention any other specific dam and canal projects summarized in this alert.
- * Urge CALFED to expand water efficiency, conservation, and reclamation programs to stretch our existing water supplies, instead of building new dams and canals.
- * Support CALFED's proposed restoration objectives for Central Valley stream flows, water temperature, stream meander, flood plain management, and riparian/riverine habitat, as well as all sensitive, threatened, and endangered species. These restoration objectives are needed to mitigate the impacts of current water facilities.
- * Oppose CALFED's proposed restoration objectives for upper watershed forest management and delta hydraulics. We cannot reduce the wildfire threat in the upper watersheds by increasing logging and we cannot resolve the delta's flow problems by building more dams and diversions.

Attend a CALFED hearing in your region and speak out for our rivers and estuaries!

April 28: Burbank - Fire Training Center, 1845 N. Ontario. 7 p.m.
April 29: Bakersfield - Kern Agricultural Pavilion, 501 S. Mount Vernon. 7 p.m.
April 30: Santa Cruz - Pacific Cultural Center, 1307 Seabright. 7 p.m.
May 5: Irvine - University High School, 4771 Campus Drive. 7 p.m.
May 6: Walnut Grove - Jean Harvie Center, 14273 River Road. 7 p.m.
May 7: Chico - Chico Community Center, 545 Vallombrosa Avenue. 7 p.m.
May 12: San Diego - Encinitas City Council Chambers, 505 S. Vulcan Drive. 7 p.m.
May 13: Pittsburg - Pittsburg Senior High School - Creative Arts Bldg, 250 School Street. 7 p.m.
May 14: Redding - Doubletree Hotel, 1830 Hilltop Drive. 7 p.m.
May 18: San Jose - Santa Clara Supervisors' Office, 70 W Hedding Street. 7 p.m.
May 19: Vacaville - The Opera House, 560 Main Street. 7 p.m.
May 20: Yuba City - Veterans Community Bldg, 1425 Circle Drive. 7 p.m.
May 27: Stockton - UC Cooperative Extension, 420 South Wilson Way. 7 p.m.
May 28: Santa Rosa - Board of Supervisors, 575 Admin Dr, Rm 102A. 7 p.m.

For more information about the hearings or to order copies of the plan, call CALFED at (800) 700-5752 or visit their web site at <http://calfed.ca.gov>. For more information about CALFED's impact on California's rivers, contact Steve Evans at Friends of the River, (916) 442-3155 ext. 221, email: sevans@friendsoftheriver.org.