

**Subject:** Habitat Restoration in Flood Control Bypasses

**Background:** One method of increasing the interaction of rivers with their floodplains is to fully utilize the existing flood bypass system in the Sacramento Valley, consistent with their role in flood management. For example, the Yolo Bypass provides habitat for a variety of aquatic, terrestrial, and plant species, yet has only seasonal connections to the mainstem Sacramento River and Delta. Flood bypasses can provide a myriad of ecological benefits, including nutrients to the upper Delta, important seasonal habitat for splittail, rearing and migration habitat for anadromous fish, and seasonal wetland habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.

However, the configuration and use of the existing bypasses limit their ecological contribution to the health of the Delta due to the need to maintain flood flow capacity and the ability to strand juvenile fish with flood flows recede.

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action is to fund a two-year needs and opportunity analysis of improving habitats within the existing bypasses and to provide a means to maintain year-round connectivity with the Sacramento River and North Delta. Elements to be evaluated would include planning activities to (a) improve existing habitats, (b) improve streamflows in the bypasses and their associated sloughs (c) improve wetland, riparian, slough, agricultural and shaded riverine aquatic habitats. (d) eliminate fish passage barriers, (e) reduce fish entrainment and stranding, and (f) develop wildlife- and fisheries-friendly levee maintenance programs. The proposed action should identify potential conflicts with existing or future flood control needs in the bypasses.

**Geographic Area:** Sacramento Mainstem

**Recommended Funding:** 1,200,000

**Coordination:** This work would require coordination between numerous state, federal and local agencies as well as environmental groups and local agricultural interests. It should also be integrated with the previous Category III project which is evaluating fisheries use in the Yolo Bypass.

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