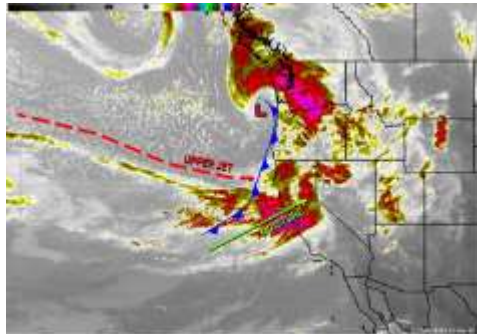




NCWA Week in Review

March 14, 2016

Reservoir Nearing Capacity, Bypasses Flowing, Feinstein Calls for More Pumping



Weekend plans often include some outdoor activity, but not this past weekend as a series of powerful storms assaulted the west coast dropping anywhere from 3-8 inches of rain and up to 5 feet of new snow in their wake. The Sacramento River is



so high it has flooded Discovery Park, which sits at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, for the first time since 2011. Water began spilling over the Fremont Weir, near Woodland, into the Yolo Bypass on Sunday for the first time since 2012. As the [NCWA weekly blog points out](#) the Sacramento Valley has shifted from drought management to flood control.

Shasta and Oroville reservoir hit a milestone as the [Mercury News story on the Sacramento Valley Water Facebook page](#) reported, reaching 101 percent of the historic average for mid-March -- the first time it has reached that "normal" milestone in three years. As of March 13, Oroville was at 97% of historic average and Folsom Reservoir, which opened its flood gates last week, is at almost 70% of its capacity, prompting Jay Lund, director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis to say, "This March is wetter than I expected. After February, I was worried. This is really going to help a lot."

With so much water in the system, U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein last Friday called on operators of the federal and state water projects to pump more water south through the Delta to drought-stricken farms and cities in Central and Southern California, as the [Fresno Bee reported](#).

Feinstein said the pumping restrictions have allowed millions of gallons of water to escape into the Pacific, water that could have supplied 360,000 homes for a year. Advocates for increased pumping say Delta water could be filling groundwater banks and reservoirs that supply cities and farms throughout the south state. The latest [information on the California Department of Water Resources website](#) is that Sites Reservoir would have captured over half-million acre feet were it built and operational.

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Water Commission Water Storage Investment Regulations Raise Concern

In a joint letter to the California Water Commission, NCWA, the California Rice Commission and Family Water Alliance, expressed concern that the [draft regulations](#) for the quantification and management of the public benefits of water storage projects (WSIP), “Do not fulfill the intent of Proposition 1,” and “will unnecessarily delay funding for several years.” The letter went on to state the regulations “are so tightly wound that the types of storage projects the Legislature intended to fund will not meet the current criteria.”

The joint letter pointed out that projects such as Sites Reservoir may not receive Proposition 1 funding for 5 years because the current regulations did not incorporate §79755(c) in Proposition 1, which allows the Commission discretion to fund completion of an EIR/S that is integral to the project and requires “all permits are secured” before funds become available to the applicant.

Underscoring the widespread and strong support for the Sites Project Authority, Assemblymen James Gallagher (R-Yuba City), Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber), Assemblywoman Kristin Olsen (R-Modesto), Assemblymen Devon Mathis (R-Visalia) and Frank Bigelow (R-Jackson), sent a joint letter to the Commission conveying their strong concern with the regulations stating, “California needs improved water storage for the benefit of our citizens and the environment and the four-year drought has shown an imperative to move forward thoughtfully but expeditiously.”

Additionally, NCWA joined with the Association of California Water Agencies, the State Water Contractors, Mountain County Water Association and others in a letter stating “The Commission and water agencies around the state have a shared interest in ensuring that the WSIP is able to move forward in an effective and efficient manner. As the Commission advances toward timely adoption of all required WSIP regulations, it should focus on twin objectives of ensuring compliance with the requirements of Chapter 8 and providing a workable framework for project proponents to utilize when presenting the public benefits of their projects for potential WSIP funding. At present, a number of provisions in the draft Regulations are overly prescriptive and unnecessarily restrictive. The WSIP regulations should be revised to provide a clear and more direct path forward for the state to start investing in the public benefits of water storage in California. To help ensure that the draft Regulations provide a clear framework for potential project proponents, we encourage the Commission to carefully consider the specific comments presented by various water agencies, Authorities, and their representatives throughout the state.”

The [Sites Project Authority comments on the proposed regulations can be found here.](#)

Governor Makes Appointments to Water Commission

On March 11, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Carol Baker, of Sacramento, to the California Water Commission. Baker was chair of the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission in 2011 and an independent water policy consultant at Kaufman Campaign Consultants in 2009. She was chief policy consultant for natural resources and environmental protection policy and deputy budget director in the California State Assembly Speaker’s Office from 2000 to 2008. Baker was principal budget analyst at the California Department of Finance from 1994 to 2000 and from 1985 to 1992, where she was a staff budget analyst from 1982 to 1985. She was a deputy director for administration and management at the California Department of Housing and Community Development from 1992 to 1994.

The Governor also reappointed Andrew Ball, of Piedmont, to the California Water Commission, where he has served since 2010. Ball has been western region president at Suffolk Construction since 2012. He was chief executive officer at Webcor Builders from 1994 to 2012 and president at AJ Ball Construction from 1992 to 1994. Ball was executive vice president at Koll Construction from 1986 to 1992, a partner at Davis Development from 1984 to 1986 and senior project manager at CL Peck Contractor from 1978 to 1984.

Water Education Executive Briefing Explores “New Normal?”



The theme for this year's Water Education Executive Briefing “Defining the New Normal.”, seems timely given the dry February we have been experiencing. The [Executive Briefing, the WEF's flagship event](#), its 33rd, will be held March 17, 2016 in Sacramento. The Briefing will feature Brad Udall, Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist/Scholar, Colorado Water Institute, Colorado State University, as panels on

Sustainable Groundwater Management – One Year Later, the State of the Delta – Tunnels, Habitat and More, and a lunchtime keynote by California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird. The 2016 event will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento. Click [here](#) to securely register online.

Still Water Challenges on the Sacramento River –Please Attend the SWRCB Workshop

Even with the recent precipitation, there is still an effort by certain fishery and State Water Board staff to limit diversions for the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors this year, particularly during May, to help maintain cold water for salmon. This issue will be in full view at the [State Water Board workshop](#) on March 18th starting at 9:00 AM. There will be a Sacramento Valley panel presenting in the morning. We encourage people to attend the State Water Board workshop to show support for the Sacramento River water suppliers and to see first-hand the challenges facing the water suppliers on the Sacramento River.

Silver Anniversary of California Water Policy Conference

Registration has opened for the 25th Annual California Water Policy Conference appropriately titled, *Silver Anniversary No Silver Bullet*. This year's event will be held for the first time at the UC Davis Conference Center on April 20 & 21, 2016.



What began as a vision by environmentalist Dorothy Green to bring different perspectives to the same table is now her lasting legacy as an established forum drawing participants from around the state. Dorothy, who passed away in 2008, is said to have conceived the idea for the California Water Policy Conference at a meeting in her living room with others concerned about the state's water supply. Today, Green's legacy remains alive through the collaborative spirit that engulfs our conference, as well as through our format that continues to bring agricultural, urban and environmental interests together to discuss better water management

For more information about speakers and to register visit the [California Water Policy Conference website](#).

Water: More or Less

Former Water Education Foundation executive director, Rita Schmidt Sudman, has co-authored a new book entitled “Water: More or Less.” The book captures historic water conflicts, moments of change and offers solutions for the future. Written with co-author, artist and essayist Stephanie Taylor, the authors visually and verbally cover water in three dimensions – art, history, and stories of real people. Twenty diverse top water policy leaders add their voices and stories to the book. For those who were not able to purchase the book at the annual meeting, please be sure to order the book through the Water Education Foundation at: <http://www.watereducation.org/publication/water-more-or-less>.

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