



The Yuba River Basin Project

A bold initiative reducing flood risk for the people of Yuba County

What is the Yuba River Basin Project?

The Yuba River Basin Project is a federal project designed to reduce flood risk throughout Yuba County. Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Water Resources, Central Valley Flood Protection Board and others, Yuba Water Agency raised the need for this \$500 million effort following catastrophic flooding in Yuba County in 1986. The project was redesigned after a 1997 flood and twice authorized by Congress.

As part of its core mission to reduce flood risk, Yuba Water requested Congress and the Corps initiate the project in 1990 to bring a 200-year level of flood protection to urban Yuba County. Coordinated by Yuba Water and executed through multiple programs and partnerships, the project focuses on rebuilding existing levees and constructing new levees, including the Bear and Feather River Setback Levees.

To date, agencies involved in the project, including Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority (TRLIA), have built or improved 29 miles of levees along the Yuba, Feather and Bear rivers and replaced key parts of the Western Pacific Interceptor Canal, which conveys excess irrigation and stormwater from southern Yuba County into the Bear River. The final phase of the project includes the Corps' planned completion of the 7.5-mile-long Marysville Ring Levee and a new 2.5-mile levee by TRLIA near an area of the Yuba River known as the Goldfields. The Goldfields work is nearly complete. Repairs to the Marysville Ring Levee continue, with the major levee phases slated for completion by 2026. In addition to this major federal flood risk reduction project, Yuba Water is designing a secondary spillway at New Bullards Bar Dam. When implemented with Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations - a flexible, forecast-based water management strategy - the secondary spillway will further reduce flood risk and improve regional climate resilience.

Yuba County's Flood Risk

Flood risk in Yuba County is due to its proximity to the Yuba, Feather and Bear rivers. Hydraulic mining debris, a result of the region's Gold Rush legacy, has also contributed to the region's flood risk by raising riverbeds and altering flows. Poorly constructed levees built by early settlers have also compounded flood risk. The lasting and significant social, economic and environmental consequences of catastrophic floods that hit the region in 1955, 1986 and 1997 are still felt today and reinforced the need for bold investments in long-term flood risk reduction projects.

Understanding Levels of Protection

A 200-year level of protection means there is less than a 1-in-200 (half of a percent) chance in any year that a storm more powerful than the system is designed to handle will come along. Levels of protection are used to determine flood insurance premiums, land uses and whether building permits can be issued in certain areas. With the Yuba River Basin Project, Yuba County's urban flood-prone areas will be among the best protected in California.

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What are the benefits of the Yuba River Basin Project?

The Yuba River Basin Project has been a game-changer for Yuba County. It has significantly reduced flood risk and provides economic value to businesses and residents by lowering flood insurance premium costs and ensuring local developments can move forward without additional building or permitting costs required in higher-risk flood zones. It also buffers the region against rain-heavy atmospheric river storms, which are expected to increase in frequency and intensity in the future due to climate change.

How is the Yuba River Basin Project funded?

Recognizing the urgency for advancing flood risk reduction projects after the 1986 and 1997 floods, Yuba Water pursued multi-benefit infrastructure projects that included environmental and water supply benefits that helped TRLIA secure funding through various state bond programs and regional developers. This made it possible to accomplish all but the Marysville Ring Levee improvements. Yuba Water's unique proactive approach covered significant portions of early project costs and has been instrumental in securing millions of dollars in state and federal funds and credits for later work.

Of the Yuba River Basin Project's \$500 million in improvements, the state has funded nearly \$350 million, while locals have funded the remaining \$150 million. Yuba Water continues to pay approximately \$5.5 million annually in bond debt to cover both the agency and Yuba County's local cost-share for much of the completed levee work, including the Feather River setback levee, and will continue to do so through 2038. Yuba Water also contributed a \$2.5 million line of credit for Marysville Ring Levee repairs and a \$2 million cashflow loan to TRLIA for work at the Goldfields.

Through investments by Yuba Water, TRLIA and the state to the Yuba River Basin Project, the Corps has made approximately \$42 million of credit available to cover the local costs of the repairs to the Marysville Ring Levee. These repairs, estimated at more than \$100 million, are the last scheduled construction segment of the Yuba River Basin Project and the only segment being constructed by the Corps. Without this credit, Marysville residents would have been responsible for 30 percent, or \$12.6 million of the non-federal cost share for these repairs, with the remaining 70 percent being covered by the state. Non-federal interests are also responsible for approximately \$21 million of planned utility relocation costs related to the Marysville Ring Levee. Credit applied to this repair also saved Marysville residents \$6.5 million in costs for the relocations. Learn more about this important work at yubawater.org.



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

**Marysville Levee
Commission**



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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FLOOD PROTECTION BOARD**

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Yuba River Basin Project partners

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