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## The Proposed Lower Yuba River Accord - Description

Working with a broad coalition of 17 agricultural, environmental, and fisheries interests, including state and federal agencies, the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA) has developed an innovative set of agreements that together form a framework - the proposed Lower Yuba River Accord (Yuba Accord) - that will resolve nearly 15 years of controversy and litigation over instream flow requirements for the lower Yuba River. The Yuba Accord will be based on three separate but related proposed agreements: a Fisheries Agreement, a Water Purchase Agreement, and Conjunctive Use Agreements.

Once implemented, they will collectively provide significant environmental and economic benefits, including the following:

- Higher instream flow requirements to protect lower Yuba River Chinook salmon, steelhead, and other fish species, ranging from 260,000 acre-feet in a dry year to more than 574,000 acre-feet in a wet year - an increase of 25,000 acre-feet in a dry year to more than 170,000 acre-feet in a wet year.
- Improved water supply reliability for the Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, including a commitment of 60,000 acre-feet per year for the Environmental Water Account and up to an additional 140,000 acre-feet of water in dry years for the State Water Project and Central Valley Project.
- A \$6 million long-term lower Yuba River fisheries monitoring, studies, and enhancement program.
- Improved water supply reliability for Yuba County's farmers, along with a responsible conjunctive use program to improve water use efficiency for local farmers.
- A secure funding source for YCWA and local irrigation districts to finance conjunctive use and water use efficiency activities, levee strengthening, and other water management actions in Yuba County.

### Extensive Public Involvement and Next Steps

Local, state, and federal agencies, the public, and other interested parties will have ample opportunities to comment on the Yuba Accord throughout the environmental compliance process. Public meetings, workshops, and scoping sessions are being scheduled as part of the preparation of a joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and additional reviews required by the state and federal Endangered Species Acts.

The goal of the participants is to implement the Yuba Accord by late 2006. The first step in this process was completion of a Statement of Support (for the Fisheries Agreement), a Memorandum of Understanding (for the Water Purchase Agreement), and Principles of Agreement (for the Conjunctive Use Agreements with YCWA's local irrigation districts). Parties to the Yuba Accord that also are parties to the litigation will soon request that the California Superior Court stay its proceedings so the parties and other participants in the Yuba Accord may initiate a 2006 pilot program and the environmental compliance process.

The State Water Resources Control Board will be asked to take actions to implement both the 2006 pilot program (including instream flow and water transfer provisions consistent with the Yuba Accord) and the Yuba Accord. Throughout the process, local, state, and federal agencies and the public will be involved in extensive input, review, and comment activities. Such involvement will be welcomed and encouraged.

### Further Documentation:

- The Proposed Lower Yuba River Accord: A Collaborative Settlement Initiative
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Fisheries Agreement Technical Brief
- Water Purchase Agreement Technical Brief
- Conjunctive Use Agreements Technical Brief
- Signed Statement of Support (for the Fisheries Agreement)
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding (for the Water Purchase Agreement)
- Signed Principles of Agreement (for the Conjunctive Use Agreements)

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- Signed YCWA/CDFG Letter Agreement regarding South Yuba River Diversion and Fish Screen
  - California Department of Fish and Game, 04/21/05 Press Release