



Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
California and Nevada Region



NOAA Fisheries
West Coast Region



California Department
of Fish & Wildlife



California Department
of Water Resources

MP-18-090

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For Immediate Release: May 30, 2018

Framework guides San Joaquin River Restoration Program into next decade

SACRAMENTO, Calif – The San Joaquin River Restoration Program, a multi-agency effort to restore Chinook salmon to 150 miles of river, this month completed a critical guiding document that prioritizes program actions and funding through at least 2024.

The document – called the Funding Constrained Framework – outlines an ambitious, multiyear, staged plan to reconnect the San Joaquin River and provide volitional fish passage between Friant Dam and the confluence of the Merced River. The framework is a collaborative effort involving the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Friant Water Authority, South Valley Water Association, the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, and other third parties.

“The framework is an important step for the success of the program and sets the stage for the upcoming construction actions expected to begin in 2019,” said David Murillo, Regional Director for Reclamation’s Mid-Pacific Region. “This framework will allow the program to move forward in a fiscally viable manner while continuing to meet the terms of the Settlement and Settlement Act.”

The framework is a companion to the 2015 Revised Framework for Implementation and the forthcoming Fisheries Framework, all of which provide guidance for program actions and were derived from collaborative processes.

The framework prioritizes program actions and sets funding parameters for Stage 1 of the program, including developing volitional fish passage and habitat restoration. The linchpin of these actions is the Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Project – an effort to reshape a portion of the river near Firebaugh, California to allow fish passage around Mendota Pool while not impacting deliveries to water users.

“This is a critical step in supporting long-term reestablishment of Chinook salmon in the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam and development of infrastructure projects that help address the needs of farmers and communities in a balanced manner,” said Paul Souza, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Southwest Regional Director.

Other key restoration goals for Stage 1 include seepage protections and levee improvements to allow river flows of up to 2,500 cubic-feet-per-second from Friant Dam to the Merced River confluence; fish passage improvements at Sack Dam, Eastside Bypass and other key barriers; fish re-establishment; and fish screens at Arroyo Canal and Mendota Pool. Stage 1 also includes funding for water management actions

to assist water users with the construction of capacity correction projects for Friant-Kern and Madera canals and Friant-Kern Canal reverse flow facilities.

"The framework will help us make the most of the limited resources available," said Maria Rea, Assistant Regional Administrator in NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region. "We're confident that we can support and accelerate the recovery of California's native fish while also providing for the needs of agriculture and municipal water users."

In the decade since its inception in 2007, program implementation costs have increased substantially. The framework produces a more streamlined and cost-effective program while still creating a fully connected river with re-introduced Chinook salmon.

"This framework epitomizes our collective dedication to successful projects delivered in a collaborative, timely, and cost-effective manner," said Arthur Hinojosa, DWR Chief of Integrated Regional Water Management.

"Bringing back salmon to the San Joaquin River is a goal in the California Water Action Plan," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham. "The best way to do that is continuing to work through challenging implementation details with everyone involved."

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program is the result of the Stipulation of Settlement in Natural Resources Defense Council, et al., v. Rodgers, et al., signed in 2006, and the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act (Title X of Public Law 111-11) signed in 2009. The program is a comprehensive, long-term effort to restore flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River and restore self-sustaining Chinook salmon populations in the river while reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts from those flows.

The full Funding Constrained Framework may be viewed at <http://www.restoresjr.net/program-releases-framework-to-guide-program-into-next-decade/>.

For more information on the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, please visit www.restoresjr.net.

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The mission of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. Visit our website at <http://www.wildlife.ca.gov>.

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