

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CALFED Seeks Public Comment
on Largest Cold Water Restoration Effort in North America**

*Battle Creek restoration would open more than 40 miles
of historic salmon and steelhead habitat*

SACRAMENTO – A public comment period is now open for restoration of Battle Creek, the largest single investment to date for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project would include the removal of five hydropower diversion dams, installation of fish screens and ladders on three hydropower diversion dams, and several flow management actions to increase cold water benefits to the Creek for a combined state and federal commitment of more than \$90 million.

"This unique opportunity to improve salmon and steelhead populations on Battle Creek is exciting and welcome. It reflects the spirit of agencies and private partners working together and the dedication of many researchers and scientists -- a great example of what can be achieved through the CALFED process," said Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman.

Ultimately, the project would restore approximately 42 miles of habitat on Battle Creek and an additional six miles of habitat in its tributaries in Shasta and Tehama Counties below

Mount Lassen. Battle Creek flows into the Sacramento River. This habitat restoration would allow for population improvements to the winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon, and steelhead – all three species are listed as endangered or threatened by the state and federal governments.

The current public comment period ends July 20. It is the next step for funding in a review process that began in 2002 with a proposal from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Over the last three years, while state and federal agencies have been preparing environmental documentation (CEQA/NEPA), the proposal has gone through independent review aimed at ensuring that this significant investment will result in a comparable level of improvement for salmon and steelhead.

A CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program selection panel has developed recommendations to be considered by the California Bay-Delta Authority at its Aug. 11 meeting.

Restoration efforts on Battle Creek have been ongoing for several years with Pacific Gas and Electric Company, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the Department of Fish and Game signing a Memorandum of Understanding in 1999 to work together as lead agencies on creek improvements.

At that time, \$28 million in federal funds were set aside for the project. In addition, PG&E will contribute approximately \$50 million and The Packard Foundation will contribute \$3 million to an adaptive management fund. The revised proposal now under consideration still needs approximately \$65 million in additional funding.

If approved, construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2006 and continue through the summer of 2009.

Information about Battle Creek restoration efforts is available at:

<http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/EcosystemRestoration/EcosystemBattleCreek.shtml>.

Grant information, including a revised proposal, pertaining to Battle Creek restoration is available at:

<http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/EcosystemRestoration/EcosystemRestorationGrants.shtml>.

Public comments can be mailed to the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program, attn: Rebecca Fris, 650 Capitol Mall, 5th floor, Sacramento, CA, 95814, and must be received by 3:00 p.m. on July 20, 2005.

More information about the CALFED Program is available at <http://calwater.ca.gov/>.

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The California Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort of more than 20 state and federal agencies working with local communities to improve the quality and reliability of California's water supplies and revive the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem. The Bay-Delta plan is the largest, most comprehensive water management effort in the nation.