



1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155 (916) 657-2666
Sacramento, California 95814 FAX (916) 654-9780
<http://calfed.ca.gov>

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CONTACT: Margaret Gidding
(916) 654-7137

CALFED HIGHLIGHTS LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR WATER PROGRAM

Sacramento – California Secretary for Resources Mary Nichols joined state and federal officials, legislators, and local water policy leaders today to establish a partnership to study the feasibility of the Sites Reservoir west of Maxwell in Colusa County.

The partnership, formalized by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among local, state, and federal entities, is the latest in a series of CALFED achievements that includes the recent establishment of the Environmental Water Account, which provides water supply reliability while protecting the needs of the environment.

The signing of the Memorandum in Maxwell also marks another milestone that was set out in the Record of Decision that was released last August. “CALFED is fulfilling the promise of a bold new approach to solving California’s water problems,” said Mary Nichols. “The partnership we created here today is proof that the solutions CALFED promotes will benefit *all* Californians—farmers and families alike – while also addressing the needs of the environment.”

The Sites area was identified as a potential location for an ‘off-stream’ reservoir north of the Delta as part of a broader investigation of storage options under the CALFED program. Off-stream storage refers to reservoirs in which the primary water supply is pumped from a downstream source and stored for later use, e.g., San Luis Reservoir.

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CALFED Agencies

California

- The Resources Agency
- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Water Resources
- The Reclamation Board
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Department of Food and Agriculture
- Delta Protection Commission

Federal

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of the Interior
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Department of Commerce
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Western Area Power Administration

The CALFED Program's August 2000 Record of Decision (ROD) describes the Sites Reservoir project as having the potential to decrease water diversions on the Sacramento River during critical fish migrations, greatly increase the reliability of supplies for a significant portion of the Sacramento Valley, and provide storage and operational benefits for other CALFED programs including Delta water quality and the Environmental Water Account.

In accordance with the ROD, a joint planning program is under way through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between state and federal CALFED agencies and local water interests. The parties have agreed to an open planning process to objectively evaluate planning issues in order to determine if Sites Reservoir-- or other north-of-the-Delta off-stream reservoir alternatives-- can be implemented in an environmentally sound manner. Local water interests will participate directly in the planning work. One or more subsequent agreements will be required to specify the details of the environmental review. Future planning agreements will address operation of off-stream storage north of the Delta in combination with other water supplies, groundwater, water exchanges, water conservation, and other management tools.

The CALFED Program is the single-largest water management program in the nation, and will focus on strengthening partnerships with local and regional communities to build on collaborative efforts that address water issues at the local and regional levels.

A copy of the MOU is available at http://calfed.ca.gov/adobe_pdf/rod/PG_scans.pdf. For more information about the CALFED Program, visit the web site at <http://calfed.ca.gov>.

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