



# Yuba Water Agency: Improving forest health and watershed resilience

Willie Whittlesey, General Manager, Yuba Water Agency  
Monday, January 9, 2023

# What are we discussing today?

- About Yuba Water Agency
- Need for forest management
- Our Watershed Resilience Program
- North Yuba Forest Partnership
- Forest Resilience Bond
- Additional forest health efforts



# Yuba Water Agency's mission areas



Flood Risk Reduction



Sustainable Water Supply



Hydropower Generation

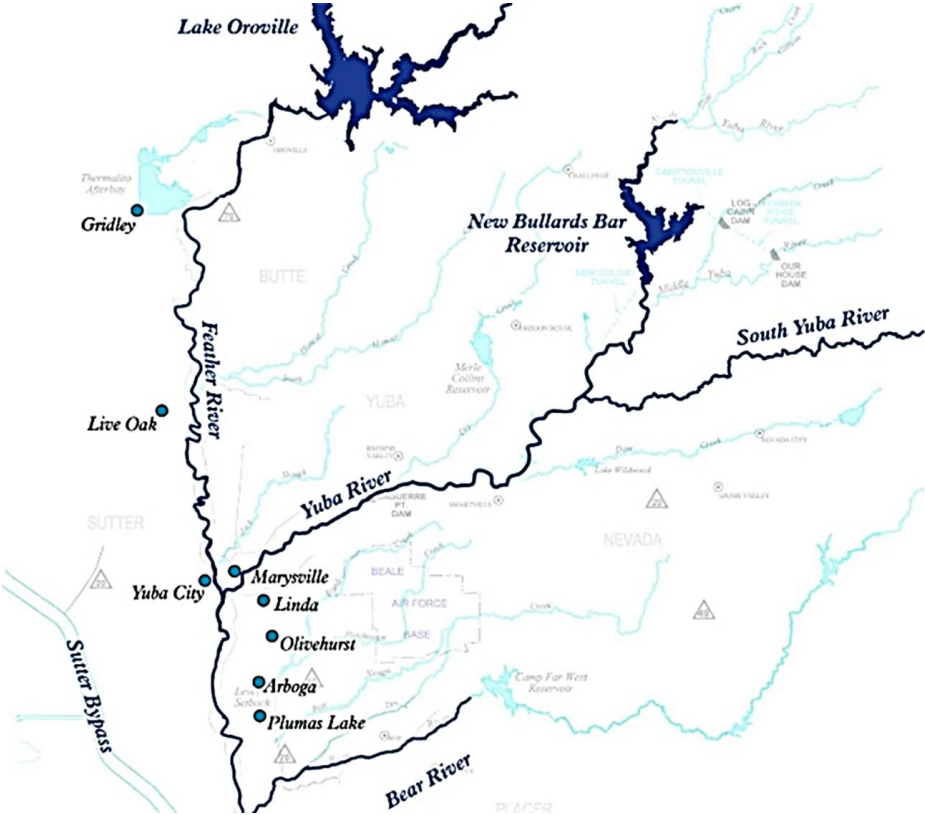


Fisheries Protection  
and Enhancement



Recreation at New  
Bullards Bar

# The Yuba River watershed



# Our facilities

## New Bullards Bar Dam:

- 5<sup>th</sup> tallest dam in the United States and the 2<sup>nd</sup> tallest in California
- Completed in 1970
- 645 feet tall
- Stores nearly **one million** acre-feet of water
- 170,000 acre-feet of dedicated flood storage space



▲ New Bullards Bar Dam



▲ Log Cabin Dam



⚡ New Colgate Powerhouse



⚡ Narrows II Powerhouse



▲ Our House Dam



⚡ Narrows I Powerhouse  
Acquired March, 2020



A photograph of a forest with many tall, thin trees and some dead trees, with the text "How did we get here?" overlaid in the center. The forest floor is covered in brown leaves and some tree stumps. The sky is visible through the canopy of green trees.

**How did we get here?**

# Historical comparison

## Yosemite Valley



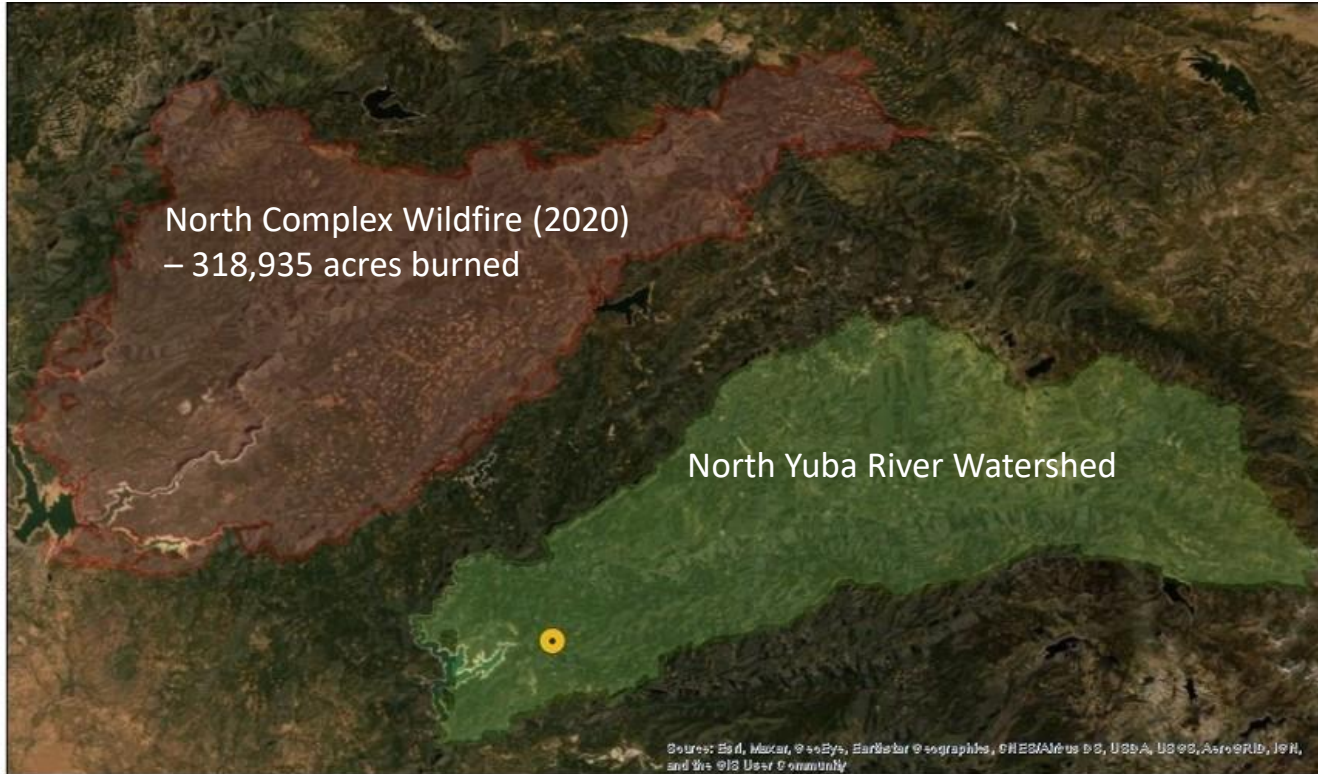
1899



1994

Gruell 2001

# Why do we need forest restoration?





# Benefits of forest restoration

- Reduces risk of destructive wildfire
- Protects our communities, water supply, local economies
- Improves forest health and resilience



# Yuba Water's Watershed Resilience Program

- Established by Yuba Water in 2018 to **reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire, protect local communities and safeguard water supply**
- Program builds collaborative projects within Yuba County and Yuba River watershed that support these goals



# Watershed Resilience Program by the numbers:



Invested \$10M to date and leveraged more than \$78M in external funds



Collaborating with 19 partners



Working on 8 projects, in Yuba County and the upper watershed



More than 7,000 acres treated so far

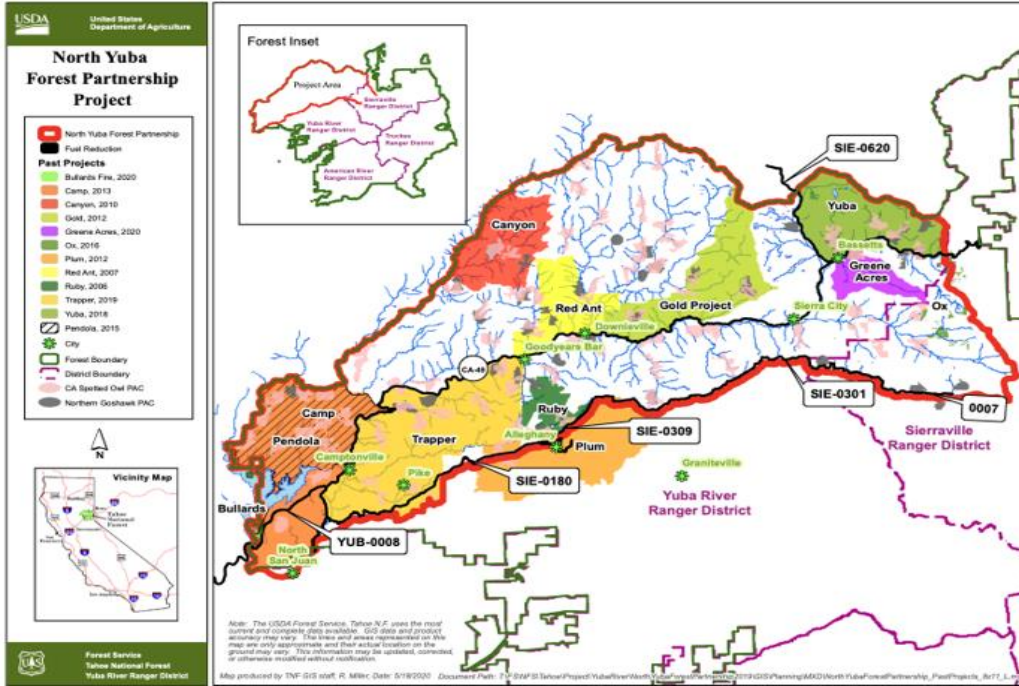


More than 280,000 acres of planned restoration underway



# North Yuba Forest Partnership

Working together to expedite forest health work across the North Yuba River watershed



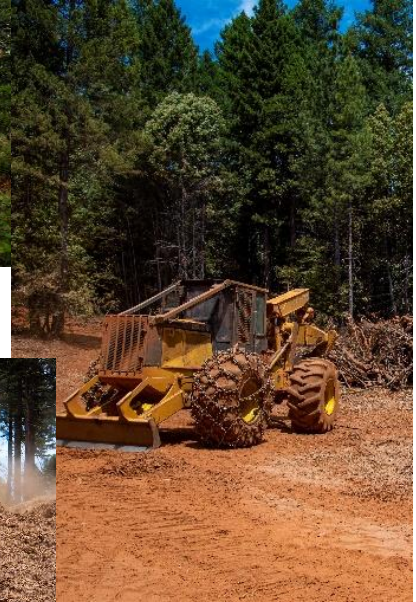
# Blue Forest Conservation and Forest Resilience Bonds



- First-ever Forest Resilience Bond piloted by Yuba Water and Blue Forest in 2018 with 15,000-acre Yuba Project
- Now, 26,000-acre Yuba 2 Project funded via second Forest Resilience Bond, began work this year
- Increasing pace and scale of our efforts

# Additional watershed resilience efforts

- Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Project
- \$4.5 million grant from Cal Fire
- Forest thinning, fuel reduction and other treatments on 5,400 acres
- Reducing wildfire risk in Yuba County foothills
- Partners: local landowners, timber companies and Plumas National Forest





# Questions?

Looking for more information?  
Visit [yubawater.org](https://yubawater.org)



Follow us on social @yubawater  
Visit our website at [yubawater.org](https://yubawater.org)