



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## Bay-Delta Resources

- **Water Quality Control Plan Update**

### Summary

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The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is currently in the process of updating the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Bay-Delta Plan). The Bay-Delta Plan affects water supply management statewide by designating beneficial uses of water, setting water quality objectives for the reasonable protection of those uses, and establishing a program of implementation for meeting those objectives. The most recent July 2025 draft update to the Bay-Delta Plan included the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program (HRL) as a path for implementation and as an alternative to a State Water Board mandated regulatory pathway based largely on unimpaired flow requirements. The HRL program is a statewide collaborative effort that will provide both flow and non-flow measures, such as habitat improvements, to meet State Water Board objectives. In May 2022, Metropolitan's Board of Directors voted to support the HRL program (previously known as voluntary agreements).

[July 2025 Draft Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan](#)

### Purpose

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Informational

### Attachments

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Attachment 1. July 2025 Draft Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Excerpts and Metropolitan Staff Summary

Attachment 2. Metropolitan Water District Press Release Bay-Delta WQCP

Attachment 3. Multiple Public Water Agency Press Release Bay-Delta WQCP

## July 2025 Draft Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Excerpts and Metropolitan Staff Summary Attachment 1

### **Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Implementation Path**

The July 2025 Draft Update to the Bay-Delta Plan is an improvement over the prior draft and previously approved water quality control plans because it includes the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) implementation path. The HRL is a completely new approach to Bay-Delta Plan implementation as it is a collaborative approach where the largest public agency water users in the watershed are working with the Water Board to achieve the objectives of the Bay-Delta Plan. In prior processes, Bay-Delta Plan implementation involved years of administrative hearings followed by years of complex multiple party litigation. The HRL is designed to avoid the significant implementation delays and costs that were associated with prior approaches. The HRL is also an innovative approach because it addresses the ecosystem in a comprehensive manner, improving both physical habitat and flows, particularly in above and below normal water years. It incorporates science-based decision-making, improved metrics and monitoring, and includes dedicated funding to improve habitats, enhance water quality and increase flow at optimal times. A summary of the HRL assets is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Assets**

LOCATION	ADDITIVE DELTA INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS (TAF) ABOVE BASE CONDITIONS BY WATER YEAR TYPE					RESTORATION (ACRES)		
	C	D	BN	AN	W	SPAWNING	INSTREAM REARING	FLOODPLAIN
Sacramento		100	100	100		113.5	137.5	40,000 <sup>2</sup>
American <sup>1</sup>	30	40	10	10		25	75	
Yuba <sup>1</sup>		50	50	50			50	100
Feather		60	60	60		15	5.25	1,655
Bear River and Auburn Ravine (Nevada Irrigation District (NID)) <sup>1</sup>		5.6	5.6	5.6				
Bear River (South Sutter Water District (SSWD)) <sup>1</sup>		4.4	4.4	4.4				
Putah <sup>1</sup>	7	6	6	6		1.4		
Mokelumne <sup>1</sup>		5	5	7			1	25

LOCATION	ADDITIVE DELTA INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS (TAF) ABOVE BASE CONDITIONS BY WATER YEAR TYPE					RESTORATION (ACRES)		
	C	D	BN	AN	W	SPAWNING	INSTREAM REARING	FLOODPLAIN
Delta forgone exports		125	125	175				5,227.5 <sup>3</sup>
Friant (by San Joaquin River Restoration Program Water Year Type) <sup>1</sup>		50	50	50				
PWA Water Purchases	3	113.5	144.5	182.5	27			
Permanent State Water Purchases	65	108	9	52	123			

### **Flow Implementation Path Based on Percent of the Unimpaired Hydrograph**

The July 2025 Draft Update to the Bay-Delta Plan is also an improvement because the alternative to the HRL implementation path, which is a flow implementation based on percents of the unimpaired hydrograph (herein UIF approach), has also been further refined. An unimpaired hydrograph is a calculation of the flow entering the watershed at the head waters. The percent of the UIF represents the quantity of flow that would have to stay in the watershed and that could not be diverted. The Phase II default UIF is 55%. As shown in the Water Board's 2023 Substitute Environmental Document, the water supply impact of a 55% UIF to Metropolitan would be significant. Due to concerns regarding the impact that a 55% UIF would have on reservoir operations designed to protect cold water fish habitat and agricultural and urban beneficial uses, the July Draft Bay-Delta Plan provides for at least two Water Supply Adjustments (WSA). The watershed wide and tributary WSAs are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2 - Watershed-Wide WSA.**

Watershed-Wide WSA	
Four River Flow 12-month Index	Percent of Unimpaired Flow
Above 20,200,000 AF	55%
Below 20,200,000 AF	45%
Below 13,200,000 AF	35%

**Table 3 - Tributary Specific WSA.**

Tributary	Reservoir	Fraction of Total Regulated Storage Capacity	Required Percent of Unimpaired Flow
Mokelumne River	Camanche Reservoir	<0.71	35%
		<0.38	0%
Putah Creek	Lake Berryessa	<0.9	35%
		<0.57	0%
Calaveras River	New Hogan Reservoir	<0.75	35%
		<0.25	0%

The goal of the watershed-wide WSA is 55% UIF for the wettest 1/3 of years, 45% UIF for the middle 1/3 of years, and 35% UIF for the driest 1/3 of years. The tributary specific WSA is only for the tributaries identified in Table 3, being rain and urban dominated tributaries. In addition to the WSAs, the default of 55% UIF could be modified through adaptive management or through cooperative plans with water users. The July Draft Bay-Delta Plan states that the UIF path would be implemented through a water curtailment process, but the details of that process have yet to be determined.

The UIF implementation path also includes further actions to protect cold water fish habitat, that include end of September reservoir carry-over storage targets and new instream temperature requirements. The July Draft Bay-Delta Plan includes proposed carryover storage targets for all of the main reservoirs, including Oroville Reservoir, even though this requirement would not be applied to the State Water Project since it will be implementing HRL. See Table 4.

**Table 4 - End of September Carry Over Storage Targets**

Reservoir	Drought Years <sup>2</sup>	Non-Drought Years
Shasta Reservoir	1,500 – 2,000	>2,000 – 3,000
Whiskeytown Reservoir <sup>3</sup>	200 – 210	>210 – 240
Oroville Reservoir	1,000 – 1,200	>1,200 – 1,600
New Bullards Bar Reservoir	400 – 600	400 – 600
Camp Far West Reservoir	10 – 20	>20 – 50
Folsom Reservoir	300 – 400	>400 – 500
Camanche Reservoir <sup>4</sup>	150 – 200	>200 – 250
Pardee Reservoir <sup>4</sup>	100 – 160	>160 – 180
New Hogan Reservoir	50	>50 – 100
Lake Berryessa	500 – 700	>700 – 1,000

**History of the Bay-Delta Plan Update**

The current update to the Bay-Delta Plan started after the prior update to the plan in 2008. A partial summary of past planning and public process opportunities are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5 – Bay-Delta Plan Update History**

Year	Bay-Delta Plan Implementation Action
2010	Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem (Flow Policy Report)
2012	Public workshops on the topics of Ecosystem Change, Salmon and Pelagic Species, and Analytical Tools
2014	Convened expert panels and received the following reports: Delta Outflows and related Stressors Panel Report and Interior Delta Flows and Related Stressors Panel Report
2017	Final Scientific Basis Report
2018	Framework for Sacramento/Delta WQCP Update
2020	Memorandum of Understanding and term sheet for Voluntary Agreements (Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program) signed by state and public water agencies. (MWD signatory)
2023	Draft Scientific Basis Report Supplement in Support of Proposed Voluntary Agreements (Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program), peer review February 2024
2023 (Sept.)	Draft Staff Report and Substitute Environmental Document
2024 (April)	Water Board Public Workshops regarding Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program
2024 (Oct.)	Draft Update to Bay Delta Plan
2024 (Nov.-Dec.)	Water Board public workshops on the update to the Bay-Delta Plan
2025 (Jan-March)	Water Board staff held 11 public meetings to discuss various aspects of the draft Bay-Delta Plan
2025 (July)	Draft Update to the Bay-Delta Plan



News for Immediate Release\_\_

# Metropolitan issues statement on inclusion of Healthy Rivers and Landscapes in Water Quality plan

July 24, 2025

Metropolitan Water District Assistant General Manager John Bednarski issues the following statement regarding the State Water Board’s [release today](#) of a new draft update of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan that includes the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program:

“The State Water Board has taken an important step today toward building a more sustainable Bay Delta by including the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program in the revised Water Quality Control Plan. We’re grateful to our state, federal and local agency partners who have worked together to develop these solutions to support healthy ecosystems and reliable water supplies.

“This transformational approach allows water managers to respond to challenges in the Bay Delta watershed more comprehensively, using a variety of tools. It incorporates science-based decision-making, improved metrics and monitoring, and dedicated funding sources to improve habitats, enhance water quality and increase flows at optimal times.

“We appreciate the hard work and collaboration of State Water Board staff in refining the WQCP. We look forward to reviewing the plan in detail.”



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 24, 2025

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## Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program Advances Before the State Water Board

*Public water agencies reinforce support for an innovative approach to managing California's water supplies and our landscape.*

**Sacramento, CA** — Public water agencies across California are joining Governor Gavin Newsom and statewide leaders to applaud the forward progress by the State Water Board for advancing an innovative approach to create *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes* throughout the Central Valley.

Today, the State Water Board released another draft update to its Bay-Delta Water Quality Plan that includes two regulatory pathways: 1) a comprehensive *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program*; and 2) a flow-only approach for parties not participating in the *HRL Program*.

Advancing the *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* will immediately connect new flows in our rivers and through the Delta with important habitat across our landscape to improve conditions for fish and wildlife, while also working in harmony with our economic needs for water for thirty-two million people and sustaining some of the most vibrant farms and ranches in the world.

The *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* will meet state regulatory requirements while improving conditions for the environment, farms, homes, and businesses. A comprehensive science program will utilize the best available science to inform real-time decision-making and includes plans for monitoring and reporting, all under the umbrella of a collaborative governance program. A science-based Bay-Delta Plan means water for families, farms, fish, and fowl; while supporting our collective vision of a prosperous future, as described in a [whiteboard video](#).

“A large coalition of public water agencies and businesses are coming together from Redding to the Mexican border to work with state and federal agencies to advance the *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* as a new and transformational approach to managing California's water,” **said Jennifer Pierre, General Manager of the State Water Contractors**. “The collaboration demonstrates broad commitment by these agencies to manage the delta watershed in a way that is inclusive, science-based, and responsive to our weather whiplash.”

“The *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* offers a new way forward for California to manage our water resources in concert with our landscape. With our mutual commitment to more strategic flows, accelerated habitat restoration on our landscapes, and accountability, we can work together to meet the needs of our environment and local communities throughout California,” **said David Guy, President of the Northern California Water Association.**

“We look forward to continued collaboration with the State Water Board, the public, natural resources experts, and other stakeholders in implementing the *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program*. This program can improve resilience for fish in the Delta and its tributaries while balancing water supply needs for communities,” **said Alice Towey, Director of Water and Natural Resources for the East Bay Municipal Utility District.**

“The Water Authority has long advocated that the most impactful approach to balancing fisheries needs and water supply reliability is to address all stressors impacting the species. The *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* has the potential to do just that,” **said Federico Barajas, Executive Director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority.** “Maintaining the status quo is not a viable option for our farms, communities, or fisheries, so we’ve been working closely with state, federal and local leaders to develop a program that will improve environmental conditions more quickly and holistically than traditional regulatory approaches that simply redirect water from human use to river flow without pairing that flow with the habitat needed to support species recovery. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with our partners and the public to advance this important work.”

The *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* offers an innovative approach to improve ecological outcomes for the Bay-Delta by leveraging increased flows, new habitat, science, and collaborative decision-making, while still providing more certainty to communities, farms, and businesses throughout California. There is strong and broad support for this approach throughout California from public water agencies in California, local governments and elected officials, the business community, agriculture, and energy producers.

The following water agencies are MOU signatories and actively participating in the *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program*:



