



Water Storage Investment Program: Sites Project Ecosystem Benefit Overview

Agenda Item at a Glance

- The [Water Storage Investment Program](#), called “WSIP,” funds the public benefits of water storage projects. The public benefits are funded by Proposition 1, passed by voters in 2014, and Proposition 4, passed by voters in 2024. “Public benefits” are the ways in which water storage projects provide benefits to Californians broadly, such as cleaner water, new recreational opportunities, and improvements to the land and water fish and wildlife need to survive (called “ecosystem benefits”). For WSIP, public benefits are defined by Proposition 1. All projects must have an ecosystem benefit.
- The Sites Project is a water storage project in the WSIP that will provide water to wildlife refuges. Refuges need water for the birds that live on them to survive.
- This is an informational agenda item, important to anyone interested in the ecosystem benefits that the Sites Project will provide.
- At this meeting, staff from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, called “CDFW,” will present information on the Sites Project’s ecosystem benefits. Commissioners will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the information presented. Tribes and the public will have an opportunity to make a comment to the Commission before the Commission discusses this agenda item.

Introduction

The California Water Commission (Commission) administers the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) to fund the public benefits associated with water storage projects using funds from Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), codified at Water Code section 79750 *et seq*, and supplemented by funds from Proposition 4, the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clear Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4). The amount of Proposition 1 funding available to a given project is based on the value of the public benefits that the project will provide. All projects must provide an ecosystem benefit.

One of the WSIP projects, the Sites Project, will create a 1.5 million acre-foot (MAF) off-stream water storage facility in Glenn and Colusa Counties. This storage facility will capture and store excess stormwater flows from the Sacramento River system for later use by storage partners, including federal, State, and local agencies from across the state. The project will provide

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ecosystem improvements by providing water to wildlife refuges north and south of the Delta. The project will also provide recreation and flood control benefits.

As part of its technical review of the Sites Project, CDFW made findings on two ecosystem benefits for the Sites Reservoir Project: Yolo Bypass flows to benefit Delta smelt and additional refuge water supply. CDFW will present new scientific information regarding the potential benefit to Delta smelt from additional summer flows through the Yolo Bypass. Additionally, CDFW will present information about the process to provide additional water supply to Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) refuges.

Background

Through the WSIP, the Commission will invest \$2.6 billion in the public benefits of water storage projects, consistent with the requirements of Proposition 1, Chapter 8. In July 2018, the Commission made Maximum Conditional Eligibility Determinations, which set the amount of Proposition 1 funding potentially available to each project. One project received a final award at the June 2023 Commission meeting. The five remaining WSIP applicants successfully met Proposition 1 interim requirements by the deadline of January 1, 2022, and are working to complete the remaining statutory requirements. These include obtaining permits and completing environmental documents, executing contracts for the administration of public benefits, and completing contracts for non-public benefit cost share. When the applicant completes these requirements, the applicant will return to the Commission for a final award hearing at which the Commission will decide whether to award final funding.

This agenda item relates to Goal One of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#), which calls on the Commission to implement the WSIP to achieve public benefits.

Meeting Overview

At the May meeting, Kristal Davis-Fadtke, Environmental Program Manager from CDFW, will provide an overview of the Sites Project's ecosystem benefits.

This is an informational item.

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