



March 2024

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CSPA Challenges Water Rights Application for Proposed Sites Reservoir in Upcoming Regulatory Hearings

Populations of native fish species continue to decline in the Bay-Delta and its tributaries due to the impoundment and overallocation of water from the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries. The proposed Sites Reservoir will continue this trend.

The Sites Reservoir Project aims to build a reservoir on two small creeks in Colusa County. It would be an off-stream reservoir, meaning that only a tiny percentage of the projected 1.5 million acre-feet of water to fill the reservoir will come from those creeks.

The water to fill the reservoir will be diverted from the Sacramento River into large canals, then pumped from the canals to the reservoir.

CSPA has opposed the Sites Reservoir Project since its inception.

On December 19, 2023, CSPA and its allies sued the Sites Project Authority challenging its certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report for Sites Reservoir Project and required findings under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Now, the State Water Resources Control Board is beginning hearings April 10, 2024 to determine if it should issue a water rights permit for the Sites Reservoir Project.

These hearings will last over the summer.

CSPA will be involved in this regulatory process every step of the way, working to protect California's fisheries from massive new diversions of the Sacramento River to this destructive reservoir.

Sites Reservoir must be stopped.

Help CSPA show up day after day and win this battle by becoming a member of CSPA today!

JOIN US

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San Joaquin River at Vernalis, USGS, public domain

Superior Court Upholds State Board's Plan to Increase Flows on San Joaquin River but Denies Claims Flows are Inadequate to Protect Fish

In December 2018 the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) adopted updates to the Bay-Delta Plan (Plan) in accordance with its obligations under the Porter-Cologne Act. The updated Plan included flow objectives intended to restore and protect Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead in the lower San Joaquin River and its tributaries.

Twelve lawsuits and 116 claims were filed challenging the State Board's updated Plan. On March 15, 2024, Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Stephen Acquisto rejected all lawsuits and claims.

Several water districts including Westlands Water District and Merced Irrigation District filed lawsuits against the State Board arguing that the flow objectives in the 2018 update to the Plan are arbitrary and as such violate the Porter-Cologne Act.

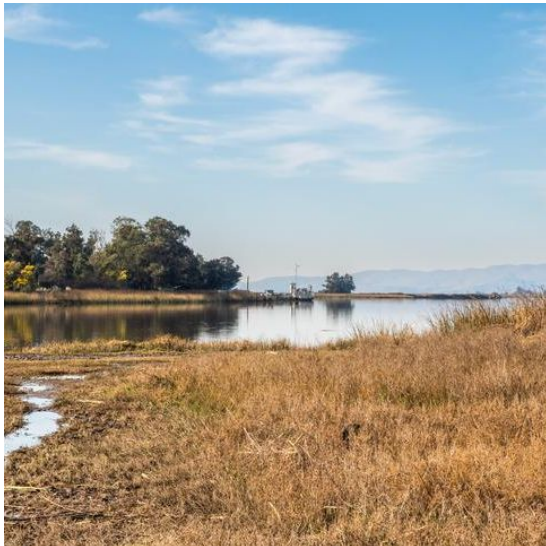
To some degree Judge Acquisto's decision is thus a win for California's fisheries. The decision upholds the authority of the State Board to limit diversions from the San Joaquin River and its tributaries to protect native fish species. It affirms the use of a percent of unimpaired flow as a reasonable basis for flow objectives (requirements).

However, environmental groups including San Francisco Baykeeper and the Bay Institute also challenged the State Board's updated Plan in court. In their view, the prescribed flow objectives for the San Joaquin, Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers do not go far enough to protect fisheries.

The decision affirmed the State Board's discretion to keep flow requirements lower than the flows needed to recover fish and aquatic ecosystems. This part of the decision is extremely concerning, as the State Board now faces proposed "voluntary agreements" that would allow even lower flows throughout the Central Valley.

CSPA was involved with this lawsuit for some time, but was forced to cease involvement due to procedural matters. CSPA continues to participate in other legal and regulatory proceedings to secure flows to protect fisheries in the San Joaquin River and its tributaries.

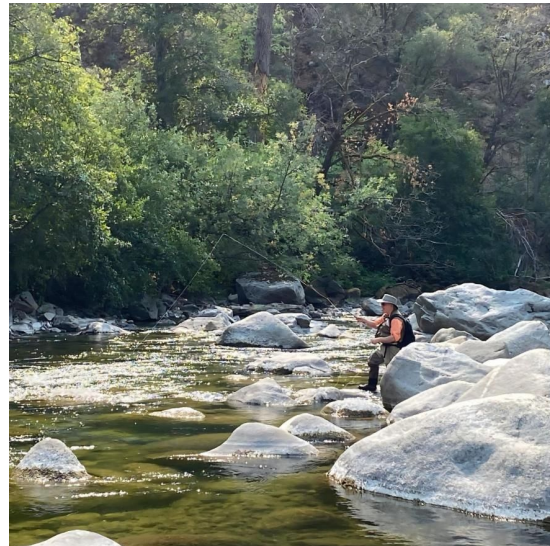
[Read More](#)



Department of Water Resources Gets a Free Pass:

CSPA Asks State Water Resources Control Board to Follow its Own Rules

On March 15, 2024, CSPA and allies submitted a letter to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) requesting that it resolve the protests of CSPA and others of a petition for extension of time submitted by the



2024 Membership Drive

CSPA needs you!

With the Newsom Administration working hard to push through the Delta tunnel and Sites Reservoir, 2024 is a big year for destructive water developments.

At the same time, CSPA is working to enforce clean water laws, leverage and

Department of Water Resources (DWR) in 2009.

CSPA submitted this letter because the State Board issued notice of DWR's recent change in point of diversion petition for the Delta Conveyance Project (proposed Delta tunnel) without resolving protests made by CSPA and allies in 2010 regarding the same water rights.

CSPA and allies conclude in their March 15 letter that the State Board's "proposed ordering of proceedings is inconsistent with the water rights statutory scheme, implementing regulations, case law, and SWRCB [State Board] Orders in other water rights proceedings."

DWR's petition for change in point of diversion for the proposed Delta tunnel should not proceed until the 2010 protests submitted by CSPA and allies are resolved.

reform water rights, complete the Bay-Delta Plan, protect rivers from hydropower dams, and improve fisheries management.

CSPA needs a robust membership base to continue its work to conserve, restore, and enhance California's water quality, fisheries, aquatic ecosystems, and riparian habitats. When you become a member you help create the foundation upon which we work by improving our "standing" to advocate for protections in the watersheds where you live, work, and play.

If you have been a member or donated in the past, we thank you for your contribution!

Members will now receive reminders to renew their membership prior to the expiry date. Memberships are good for one year.

If you have not joined us yet we encourage you to do so!

[Read More](#)

[Renew or Join](#)

Photo: Grizzly Slough, a canal in the Suisun Marsh, iStock, artist: AlessandraRC

Photo: Chris Shutes fishing on the Tuolumne River, taken by Treasurer Cindy Charles

Register for Bill Jennings' Memorial

Join Us - Sunday April 7, at 10am

[Register](#)

Apr 07

Memorial for Bill Jennings

Apr 07, 2024 10:00am



Wimpy's Marina Restaurant, Bar & RV Park
14001 W Walnut Grove Rd, Walnut Grove, CA 95690

[View on map](#)

Join CSPA in celebrating the life and achievements of Bill Jennings, our longtime leader who passed away on December 27, 2022.

Bill was chairman of CSPA's board of directors since 1988 and its executive director since 2005. Bill's unique legacy of protecting California fisheries, habitat, and water quality will endure for many years to come.

A BBQ lunch will be provided at the memorial. When you register please indicate if you will be joining us for lunch.

Register online by clicking the 'register' button or email Sarah Vardaro at sarah@calsport.org.

Free

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