

Water Unavailability Methodology for the Delta Watershed

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1 Introduction

California and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) watershed have experienced extremely dry conditions over the last three years. Statewide, water years 2020, 2021, and 2022 were the driest three-year period on record, resulting in very low runoff. These low runoff conditions resulted in very low inflows to reservoirs and associated limited storage supplies for various purposes. Currently, reservoir storage levels in the Delta watershed are significantly below average for most reservoirs and are expected to continue to decline. To help address these conditions, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) developed a methodology to assess water unavailability in the Delta watershed. This report describes that methodology identifying when available data indicates that natural and abandoned water supplies are unavailable for diversion by water right holders and claimants in the Delta watershed under their priority of right (Delta Water Unavailability Methodology or Water Unavailability Methodology for short).

This report has been updated regularly since the initial draft was released for public review on May 12, 2021. The July 23, 2021 version of this report was incorporated by reference into the emergency regulations that became effective August 20, 2021 (see section 1.3 below). Since that time four revised versions of the report have been released. Most of the revisions to the report did not reflect changes to the methodology that was described in the July 23, 2021 report, but some relatively minor refinements to the methodology have been made. These minor refinements include:

- Exclusion of the Goose Lake subwatershed due to disconnection from the lower watersheds such that curtailing diversions would not make water available to serve senior downstream water rights or claims.
- Adjustment of subwatershed boundary delineation for certain subwatersheds previously representing headwater and valley floor portions of the larger watershed.
- Allocation of abandoned instream flows to non-riparian water right holders and claimants only.
- Application of return flow factors to direct diversion demand only.
- Use of appropriate timesteps in between monthly and weekly to determine curtailments in response to precipitation and runoff events.
- Curtailment of non-riparian rights only when no water is available at the diverter's priority of right.

The spatial refinements of the methodology served to improve the accuracy of the methodology in certain portions of the watershed, while the temporal refinement has

enabled the temporary suspension of curtailments for a greater number of diverters during sub-monthly precipitation and runoff events.

Updates to the report introduced in this April version are summarized in section 1.6 below. Previous updates to this report are summarized within the introductory sections of those versions of the report, which are available on the [Delta Drought webpage](#).

1.1 Background

The mission of the State Water Board is: “To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California’s water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.” The Board’s critical goals of providing safe drinking water to all Californians and maintaining the quality of our waterways, in keeping with both state and federal requirements, rely on the Board’s successful administration of the water rights system. California’s water rights system is one of the most complex in the nation, incorporating both riparian¹ and appropriative water rights, including appropriative rights issued under the Board’s authority and those in existence prior to the inception of its predecessor-in-interest.²

The water right priority system, based on the “priority date” of each water right, forms the basis for determining which users may divert, and how much, when there is insufficient water in the stream for all users. Older, more senior appropriative water rights have priority over more junior appropriative water rights. Senior water right holders are more likely to receive water at times of shortage than more junior water right holders. However, once water is stored or imported, the entity that stored or imported the water has the only right to it, though others may acquire contingent junior rights to any return flows.

When the amount of water available in a surface water source is not sufficient to support the needs of existing water right holders and in-stream uses, junior

¹ Generally, a riparian water right is a right to use the natural flow of water on land contiguous to a natural water course and does not include a right to divert water that is foreign in time or source. Riparian water rights are unquantified, allowing the diverter to take water from the natural flow of the water course for any immediate reasonable and beneficial use on the subject land. In times of shortage, all riparian rights share the shortage on a correlative basis; that is, each riparian is required to reduce its use proportionally so that the reduced supply is divided among all riparian rights.

² Use of water on non-riparian land or seasonal storage of water for later beneficial use requires an appropriative water right. Appropriative water right holders can divert available supplies that are foreign in time or source. An appropriative water right that was initiated before the Water Commission Act went into effect on December 19, 1914, is called a pre-1914 appropriative water right, even if subsequently perfected. Appropriative rights initiated and acquired after this date are called post-1914 appropriative water rights, and they are administered and regulated by the State Water Board.

appropriators must cease diversion in favor of higher-priority rights. However, it is not always clear to a junior diverter whether there is sufficient natural flow in the system to support their diversion and senior water uses and instream needs downstream. As part of administering water rights, the State Water Board may issue notices of curtailment to water rights holders based on California's water rights priority system.

1.2 Current Conditions

After three years of low precipitation, the U.S. Drought Monitor reports that the entirety of California is experiencing moderate to extreme drought, of which 94 percent is experiencing severe to extreme drought (USDM 2022). The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, released by the Climate Prediction Center on March 31, 2022 and valid through June 30, 2022, shows drought is likely to persist at least until fall throughout California (NOAA 2022). Within the Delta watershed, conditions have been extraordinarily dry, with Water Years (WY) 2020, 2021, and 2022 ranking as the driest three-year period on record based on precipitation (DWR 2022a; DWR 2022b; DWR 2022c; DWR 2022d). These dry conditions have resulted in reservoir storage levels in the Delta watershed that are significantly below average (DWR 2022e). As of April 10, 2022, storage volumes in major reservoirs, including Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville are lower than 50 percent of capacity and below 70 percent of average storage conditions; recent precipitation has improved conditions in some reservoirs, such as Folsom Lake, which currently holds 63 percent of capacity and 95 percent of its historical average (DWR 2022f).

1.3 Emergency Proclamation and Regulations

As a result of the dry conditions last spring, on May 10, 2021 Governor Newsom issued a drought emergency proclamation covering 41 of California's 58 counties (Exec 2021a). On July 8, 2021, the Governor expanded the emergency declaration to 9 additional counties (Exec 2021b) and called on Californians to reduce their water use by 15 percent compared to 2020 levels (Exec 2021c). On October 19, 2021, the Governor further expanded the emergency declaration to cover the entire state and urged Californians to increase their water conservation efforts as urban water conservation to date had fallen significantly short of the 15 percent goal (Exec 2021d).

The May 10 proclamation orders the State Water Board and other agencies to consider a number of actions to protect water needed for health, safety, and the environment in the Delta watershed (Exec 2021a). The proclamation specifically indicates that the State Water Board shall consider emergency regulations to curtail water diversions when water is not available at water right holders' priority of right or to protect previously stored releases of water (*Ibid*). On August 3, 2021, the Board adopted emergency regulations that authorize the use of this methodology as the technical basis for curtailment orders issued pursuant to the directives in the emergency drought proclamation. On August 19, 2021, the Office of Administrative Law approved the

regulations, which became effective upon filing with the Secretary of State on the same day.

1.4 Purpose of the Water Unavailability Methodology

The San Francisco Bay-Delta (Bay-Delta) watershed includes supplies from both the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems and their tributaries. As shown in Figure 1 below, water from about 40 percent of California's land area drains to the Bay-Delta, supporting a variety of beneficial uses of water. The Bay-Delta is one of the most important ecosystems in California, as well as the hub of California's water supply system. As the largest tidal estuary on the western coast of the Americas, it provides essential habitat to a vast array of aquatic, terrestrial, and avian wildlife in the Delta, San Francisco Bay, and near-shore ocean, as well as a diverse assemblage of species upstream of the Delta. Water from the Delta provides a portion of the supplies to more than two-thirds of Californians, supports industry, and is used to irrigate millions of acres of farmland.

Given the importance of the water supplies in the Delta watershed for multiple purposes and the extreme limitations on water supplies this year, action is needed to determine when water supplies are not available under water right holders' or claimants' priorities of right. The Department of Water Resources' (DWR) State Water Project (SWP) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Central Valley Project (CVP) (collectively Project or Projects) are responsible for providing salinity control and meeting environmental flows in the Delta, as well as specific requirements for flows and temperature management on Project tributaries. Currently many Project reservoir storage levels are well below average, creating significant concerns for salinity control, municipal water supplies, and temperature management and other environmental needs this year and next year if dry conditions continue. As a result of these concerns, the Projects submitted a request for, and were granted subject to terms and conditions, a temporary urgency change petition (TUCP) in water year 2021³ and 2022⁴ for April through June to reduce their obligations to release water from storage to meet flow and water quality requirements in the Delta. DWR and Reclamation may submit a further TUCP request for this summer and fall period. Concerns for reservoir storage levels are compounded when diversions occur by users when supplies do not exist at their priority of right, resulting in the need for additional releases of stored water from Project reservoirs to repel salinity intrusion from the ocean and meet other minimal needs.

³ The Board order conditionally approving the 2021 petition is available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/tucp/docs/2021/20210601_swb_tuco.pdf

⁴ The Board order conditionally approving the 2022 petition is available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/tucp/docs/2022/20220404_tuco_swrcb.pdf

Figure 1. Delta Watershed Location



Determining when water supplies are unavailable to users is important to ensure that supplies are available to meet current water quality and flow requirements and the demands of senior water right holders. However, it may be unclear to users when water is unavailable for their use because supplies are needed by downstream senior water right holders or because streamflows are comprised of releases of previously stored water that is released to serve contractors or to meet water quality or flow requirements.

The State Water Board has developed the Water Unavailability Methodology to identify when available data indicates that natural and abandoned water supplies are unavailable for direct diversion or diversion to storage for consumptive use by water right holders and claimants in the Delta watershed under their priorities of right. The methodology is not intended to address other supplies of water, such as rediversion of previously stored water for use by Project contractors. The methodology also does not address water unavailability for non-consumptive uses of water, such as direct diversion for hydropower production when these supplies are returned back to the source stream. However, since wet season diversions to storage for later production of hydropower may change the timing of flows and affect the availability of water for other users, the methodology does consider these demands when determining water unavailability during the wet season.

The methodology evaluates water supplies and demands at the subwatershed and watershed scale for both the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River watersheds with currently available data, reporting, and tools. The methodology utilizes the best currently available data on supplies and demands, which may include use of past and projected demand data submitted in response to the August 20, 2021 curtailment and reporting orders. The Water Unavailability Methodology improves upon methods used for determining water unavailability in prior droughts, most recently in 2014 and 2015. Major improvements are focused on ensuring that demands are not overinflated in ways that would overestimate water unavailability, causing more water users to receive notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders or resulting in those notices or orders applying for a longer time period. Other improvements include better supply estimates. With more time, better data, and improved tools, additional improvements will be possible.

This report and associated technical appendices describe the current approach and major assumptions for the Water Unavailability Methodology. Technical Appendix A describes the Water Unavailability Methodology Spreadsheet, including the input data sources, computational steps, and outputs used to develop the water unavailability visualizations. Technical Appendix B describes the process used to collect and quality control the demand datasets. Appendix C summarizes the substantive technical, factual, or legal comments regarding the Water Unavailability Methodology that were received prior to the release of the July 23, 2021 version of the report that was incorporated by reference into the emergency regulation, as well as any relevant sections of the report where those comments have been addressed. Technical

Appendix D was included to respond to comments received regarding the hydrologic complexities of the Legal Delta and to provide additional explanation regarding the assumptions used in the methodology with regard to freshwater supplies in the Legal Delta and the exclusion of tidal inflows as a source of supply. The technical appendices and spreadsheet are available on the State Water Board's [Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage](#).

The Board intends to update the methodology as needed to administer the water rights priority system using the best available information. Due to the uncertainties that exist in determining water unavailability in the Delta watershed, conservative assumptions were used within the methodology itself and will also be used in the methodology's implementation. This report will continue to be updated, as appropriate, as the methodology is updated. All revisions will be made available on the Board's Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage.

1.5 Curtailment Orders

Pursuant to the emergency regulation and based on the output of the methodology, on August 20, 2021, the Board issued curtailment and reporting orders to water right holders and claimants throughout the Delta watershed. In addition to imposing curtailments, the initial orders imposed reporting requirements on all water right holders and claimants in the Delta watershed and directed diverters to subscribe to the Board's Delta Drought email distribution list or visit the [Delta Drought webpage](#) to view the Delta Watershed Curtailment Status List (Curtailment Status List) for updates regarding these and future curtailment orders. On at least a weekly basis since August 20, 2021, updates to the curtailment status of all water right holders and claimants within the Delta watershed have been made available on the Delta Drought webpage and sent to the Board's Delta Drought email subscription list. Current curtailment statuses within the watershed will continue to be updated on a weekly basis, and more frequently if warranted due to precipitation and runoff forecasts. Additional information related to the Delta curtailment regulation and curtailment and reporting orders can be found on the Board's Delta Drought webpage.

1.6 Current Updates to the Water Unavailability Methodology Report

This April 2022 update to the report considers information and input provided in petitions for reconsideration received following the issuance of the August 20, 2021 curtailment and reporting orders. In particular, this report update describes:

- Update of the Mokelumne, Calaveras, Chowchilla, Fresno, and San Joaquin Valley Floor subwatershed boundaries (see sections 2.1.3 and 2.3.1).
- Allocation of abandoned instream flows to non-riparian water right holders and claimants only (see section 2.1.6).

- Description of the use of enhanced reporting data gathered pursuant to the curtailment and reporting orders (see section 2.2.3).
- Application of return flow factors to direct diversions only and a description of how alternative return flow factors may be developed in the future (see section 2.2.11).
- Description of the exclusion of demand arising from curtailment exceptions, such as human health and safety curtailment exceptions, from the demand dataset (see section 2.2.12).
- Description that curtailment of non-riparian diverters only occurs when no water is available at the diverter's priority of right (see sections 2.3.1 and 3.1)
- Description that points of redirection are excluded from curtailment determinations (see section 2.2.8)

Updates to Technical Appendix D addressing water unavailability issues in the Legal Delta will be forthcoming. State Water Board staff will provide an opportunity for in-Delta water right holders and claimants and any other interested parties to discuss those updates upon release and prior to consideration of readoption of the emergency curtailment regulation.

The focus of this report is factual and technical, not legal. Legal arguments made in the petitions for reconsideration will be addressed as appropriate in the Board's order responding to petitions for reconsideration of the curtailment and reporting orders rather than this report.

2 Water Unavailability Methodology

The Water Unavailability Methodology incorporates the best available supply data for the Delta watershed with the best available estimates of demand for the same area. The methodology compares this data for multiple areas within the Delta watershed: the Sacramento River watershed, San Joaquin River watershed, and headwater subwatersheds (see definition in section 2.3.1 below) to determine if supply may be insufficient to meet certain priorities of right. These comparisons are presented visually using interactive graphs and in spreadsheet format. The following sections describe the sources of the supply and demand data, adjustments made to the data as needed, and the resultant outputs of the comparisons.

2.1 Supply

The purpose of this analysis is to account for the availability of natural and abandoned flows within the Delta watershed for diversion by water right holders under their priority of right. This analysis is not intended to account for the availability of imported supplies from other watersheds that do not contribute to available supplies for general use in the

Delta watershed. Specifically, imported supplies from the Trinity River system are imported for use by Reclamation and their contractors and are not available to other users under their own water rights. The analysis is also not intended to account for releases of previously stored water for downstream delivery, use, or rediversion since those supplies are also not available to other users under their own water rights. In the case where previously stored water is released to meet instream flow requirements that apply in an upstream subwatershed but not downstream watersheds, and the water is not released for delivery to a downstream user, these flows are considered to be abandoned and part of available supplies.

The methodology incorporates the use of past and projected future full natural flow (FNF) (or unimpaired flow) estimates (see section 2.1.4 below). FNF represents the natural water production of a river basin unaltered by upstream water diversion, storage, or import from or export to other watersheds (DWR 2015). FNF is a theoretical water supply estimate rather than a reconstruction of pre-development streamflows (DWR 2016). Though FNF values are not directly measured, the locations where they are estimated are referred to herein as “gages.”

Past FNF estimates are calculated from measured streamflows, adjusted for upstream operations by subtracting imported water and adding upstream diversions, changes in storage, and evaporative losses. The past FNF values serve two purposes in the methodology: (1) to provide historical context to current water supply conditions and (2) to show water supply conditions for the current water year. Water years in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds are categorized as Wet, Above Normal, Below Normal, Dry, and Critically Dry based on equations defined in State Water Board Decision 1641 that account for the unimpaired runoff of each water year and its preceding water year (DWR 2021a). For both the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds, 2021 was considered Critically Dry, and as of the April 1 forecast, 2022 is projected to be Critically Dry, as well (see next section).

Forecasted FNF values are calculated from snowpack measurements, estimates of water content, expected weather, rates of evaporation, ground absorption, and other factors. Because future water supply cannot be predicted with absolute certainty, a forecast provides a range of expected water supply volumes. These potential volumes are assigned probabilities that they will occur based on current conditions. Probabilities are expressed in exceedances, or the percent chance that the future FNF will exceed a given amount. For example, the 10 percent exceedance indicates wetter than average conditions where there is a 10 percent chance that the FNF volume will exceed the forecast value and a 90 percent chance that the FNF volume will be less than this forecast value. Similarly, a 90 percent exceedance indicates drier conditions where there is a 90 percent chance that the FNF volume will exceed the forecast value and a 10 percent chance that the FNF volume will be less than this forecast value. A 50 percent exceedance indicates a 50 percent chance that the FNF volume will exceed the forecast value and a 50 percent chance that the FNF volume will be less than this

forecast value. Generally, this forecast is the middle of the range of possible FNF volumes that can be produced given current conditions (50 percent exceedance is equivalent to the median). As the dry season approaches, forecasts become progressively more precise as actual conditions become less variable.

2.1.1 Supply Analysis

The range of data available within the supply dataset described below allows for the comparison of historical FNF to current year estimates and forecasts. Conditions for water year 2022 to date, as well as recent 10, 50, and 90 percent exceedance forecasts (dated March 16, 2022 from the California Nevada River Forecast Center), are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below. As indicated below, water year 2022 supply conditions began near median conditions (based on 1922-2020) for a wet year but have since dropped below median conditions for critically dry years in February 2022.

Figure 2. Water Year 2022 Supply Conditions in the Sacramento River Watershed

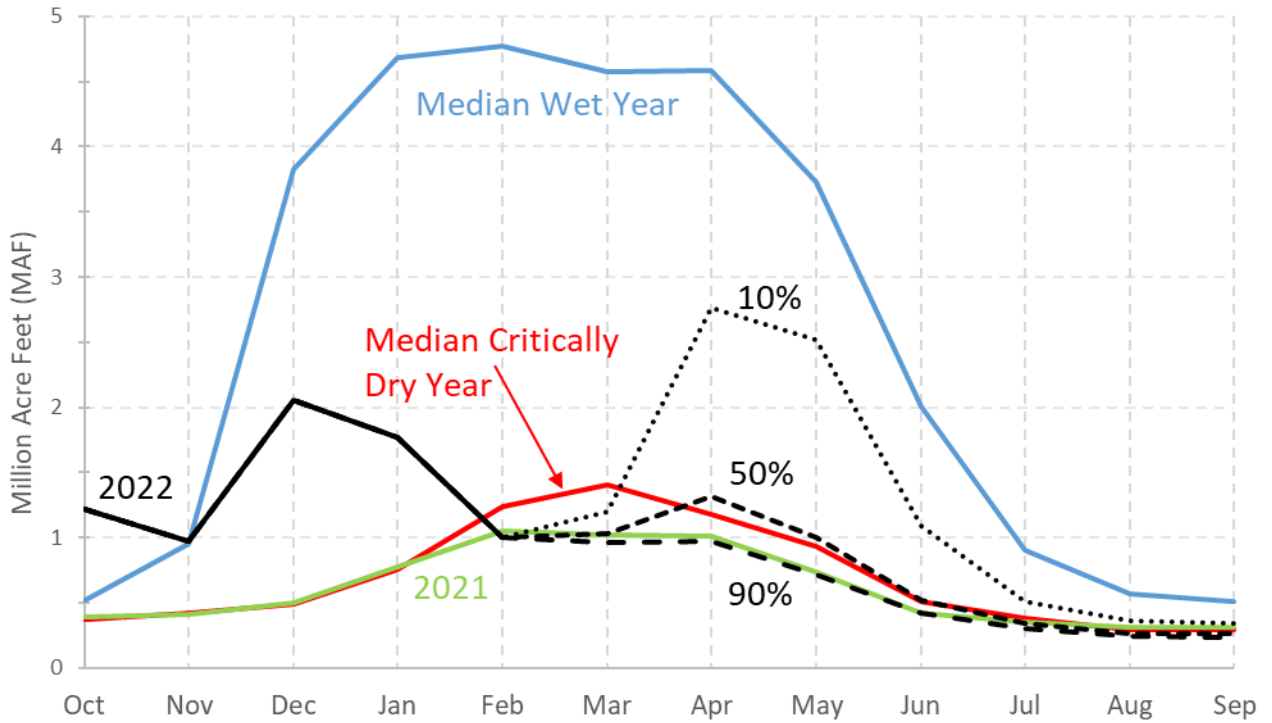
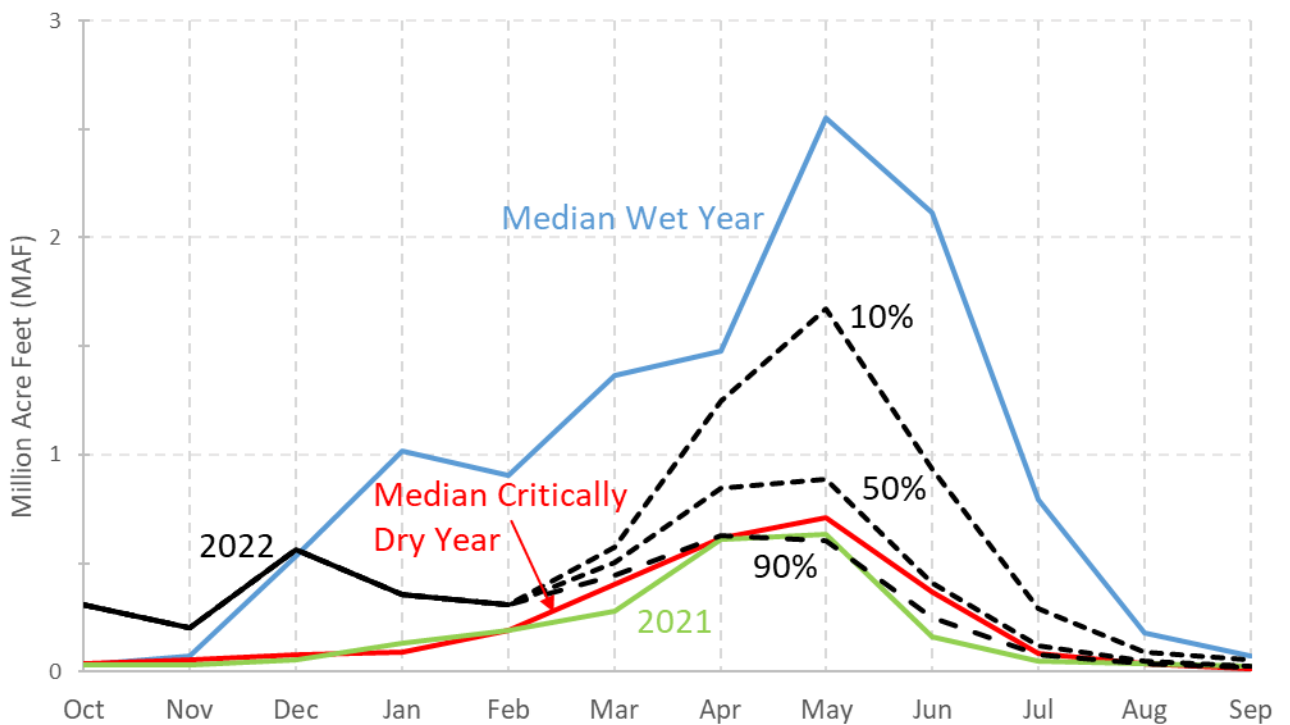


Figure 3. Water Year 2022 Supply Conditions in the San Joaquin River Watershed



2.1.2 Types of Water

The water rights system is complex. In many cases during droughts, the observable water in a stream may not be available for diversion because the water is needed to meet senior downstream demand, has been transferred for use or rediversion downstream, or is previously stored water that has been released to meet downstream demands, water quality and flow requirements, or contractual demands. This section discusses the additional complexities in determining whether water is unavailable for diversion.

Water in a stream system may consist of a combination of “natural flows,” imported supplies, storage releases, abandoned flows, and return flows:

1. **Natural flow** – Natural flows are the natural runoff of a river basin unaltered by upstream water diversion, storage, or import from or export to other watersheds. Natural flows, quantified as FNF, are the basis of this methodology.
2. **Imported Supplies** – Imported supplies include supplies that are brought from one water supply source to another for consumptive uses or non-consumptive uses. In the Delta watershed, imported supplies are brought in from outside of the watershed from the Trinity River. Other projects may import water to one subwatershed from another, entirely within the Delta watershed (e.g., the Yuba-Bear and Drum-Spaulding projects, see section 2.2.10 below). These additional water supplies are not accounted for in this analysis because these supplies do not constitute natural or abandoned flows.
3. **Previously Stored Water** – Seasonally stored water, including releases of previously stored water for downstream use, is not available for diversion or use by diverters other than the entity that stored the water, their contractors, or recipients of a transfer. Accordingly, the methodology does not account for these storage supplies.
4. **Abandoned water** – Abandoned water is water that has been used or dedicated for a specific purpose for which it is no longer needed. If it was previously diverted, the diverter lays no further claim to the water, such as is commonly the case with return flow from agricultural uses. If the water was dedicated for instream use, it becomes abandoned once it flows out of the reach for which it was dedicated. Abandoned flows are available for downstream diversion.
 - a. **Abandoned instream flows** – Water for instream use may be comprised of previously stored water releases that are foreign in time, imported from another watershed, or bypassed natural flow that is provided for the purposes of preserving or enhancing wetlands, protecting fish and wildlife, and/or recreation. Some instream flows that only apply to a certain reach of a stream can be considered abandoned past that reach. Instream flows that are required to meet Delta instream flow, outflows, and salinity requirements are not considered abandoned. Section 2.1.6 below describes adjustments to the supply analysis to account for certain abandoned instream flows.

- b. **Abandoned return flows** – Return flows from other uses such as irrigated agriculture or municipal water treatment plants may be discharged back to the stream system with no residual claim of control, dominion, or right of further use. In such a case, this water would be available to appropriative diverters and may be available to riparian diverters if not foreign in time or source. Section 2.2.11 below describes adjustments made to the demand dataset to account for return flows from use within the Delta watershed.

The Water Unavailability Methodology assumes all FNF is available for diversion. The methodology also includes assumptions for return flows and abandoned instream flows that are available for diversion. Return flows are incorporated by reducing demands for direct diversion because a component of that diversion is introduced back into the system. As a simplifying assumption, the methodology does not distinguish between the types of water available within a stream system except with regard to abandoned instream flows, as described in section 2.1.6 below. Additional analysis would be needed to distinguish supplies originating from abandoned returned flows that are foreign in time or watershed and are therefore not available to riparian diverters.

2.1.3 Subwatershed Delineation

The supply-demand analysis begins at a “subwatershed” level. Subwatershed boundaries were defined using the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) and National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), which delineate land areas draining to streams. Subwatersheds in the Delta watershed were primarily delineated based on Hydrologic Unit Code level 8 watersheds (HUC8s), which represent areas of sufficient size to capture as much of the available flow as possible within the watershed given the existing network of FNF gages.

Some subwatershed boundaries were defined as a combination of multiple HUC8s due to the presence of multiple HUC8s upstream of a single FNF gage location. These subwatersheds include the Sacramento River above Bend, the Upper American River, and the Upper Feather River. Some HUC8s containing small tributaries on the valley floor were also combined into a single subwatershed due to the locations of supply estimates produced by DWR,⁵ including the Upper Sacramento River Valley, Sacramento River Valley Floor, and San Joaquin Valley Floor subwatersheds. Due to the presence of some demands not met by local supplies within their HUC8 boundaries, the Mokelumne, Chowchilla, Fresno, and Calaveras River subwatersheds were instead delineated as a combination of smaller Hydrologic Unit Code level 10 (HUC10) watersheds and stream buffers (see section 2.3.1). A total of 20 Delta subwatersheds were used in the Water Unavailability Methodology: 10 each in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds (see Figure 4). Consistent with the USGS WBD, the

⁵ See DWR’s March 2016 Report on Unimpaired Flows in the Bay-Delta Watershed, described in section 2.1.4 below.

methodology assumes that the Cosumnes, Mokelumne, and Calaveras Rivers are part of the San Joaquin River watershed.

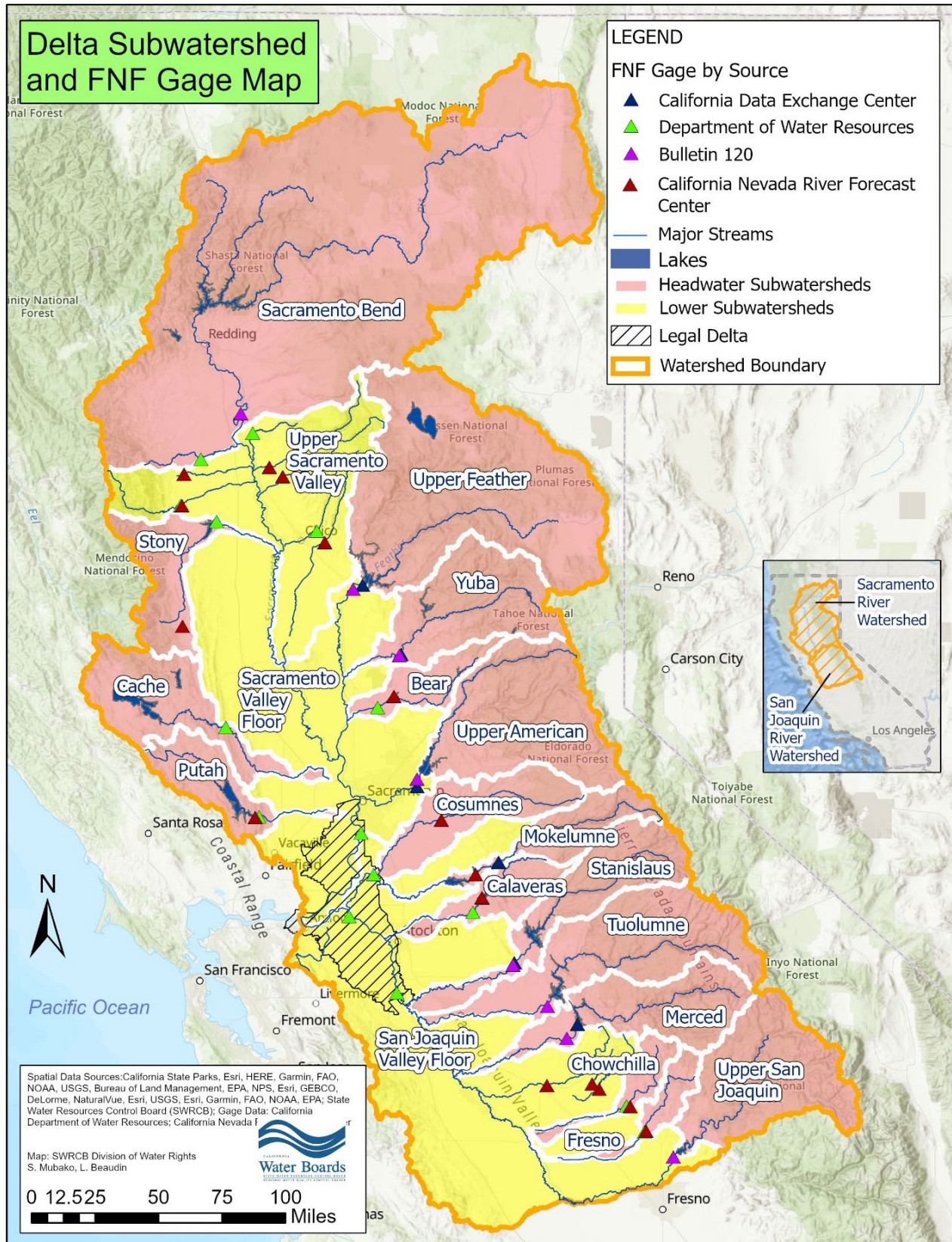
An inventory of available FNF gages from multiple sources (see section 2.1.4 below) was compared to the subwatershed boundaries, NHD stream maps, and water right points of diversion (PODs) to identify target FNF gages that are representative of water supplies and demands met by them within each subwatershed. These target FNF gages were considered during the prioritization of available supply data sources discussed in more detail in section 2.1.4 below.

The Water Unavailability Methodology assumes that water supply data at each FNF gage shown in Figure 4 below is representative of the total FNF for the subwatershed as a whole, not only the portion of the subwatershed upstream of the location. This assumption may result in minimal underestimation of supply within certain upstream subwatersheds and minimal overestimation of supply in corresponding downstream subwatersheds. Given the broad spatial coverage of the methodology and the use of generally conservative estimates regarding supply, this assumption is not anticipated to significantly impact watershed-wide determinations of water unavailability.

Supplies and demands from the Goose Lake subwatershed, the Panoche Creek subwatershed, and Tulare Lake watershed (including the Kings, Kern, Kaweah, and Tule Rivers) are not included in the Water Unavailability Methodology. Goose Lake, located on the border of California and Oregon, is expected to only overflow into the North Fork of the Pit River during very wet conditions. Therefore, the methodology excludes supply and demand that occurs within the boundaries of the Goose Lake HUC8. The methodology also excludes supply and demand within the Panoche Creek HUC8, a relatively small tributary in the southwest corner of the San Joaquin River watershed. There is no available FNF supply data for Panoche Creek, and aerial imagery indicates that it terminates in agricultural fields west of Mendota, so it is assumed not to significantly contribute to available water supplies within the Delta watershed.

Natural flows from the Tulare Lake watershed, despite not being a part of the Delta watershed, at times enter the watershed, largely from the Kings River via Fresno Slough. However, surface water contributions of the Tulare Lake region have historically been minimal and may have been significant only in wet years (DWR 2016). Natural flow would not reach the Delta watershed from the Tulare Lake watershed during the dry season of a critically dry year. Similarly, during the wet season it is unlikely that natural flow from the Tulare Lake watershed would reach the Delta watershed as long as shortage conditions persist in the Delta watershed. Therefore, supplies and demands from the Tulare Lake watershed have been excluded from the methodology.

Figure 4. Delta Subwatershed and FNF Gage Map



2.1.4 Supply Data Sources

Because there is no single data source that provides both past and forecasted FNF estimates for the entire Delta watershed, supply data is derived from multiple sources which vary by location, timescale (i.e., historical data, including prior months of the current water year, and future forecasted data), and temporal resolution (i.e., daily or monthly). For past supply data, the data sources were considered hierarchically; that is, if data for a particular subwatershed was not available from the preferred data source, the next source was checked. If the data was available there, that data was incorporated into the dataset, and so on down the list.

The sources of past supply data, in order of priority of use, are:

1. The [California Data Exchange Center \(CDEC\)](#), which contains published FNF estimates made by water system operators within each watershed. These are primarily available for larger rivers and contain monthly data as far back as WY 1901 in some subwatersheds.
2. [DWR's March 2016 Report on Unimpaired Flows in the Bay-Delta Watershed](#), which contains monthly FNF estimates for water years 1922 through 2014.
3. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service [California Nevada River Forecast Center \(CNRFC\)](#) estimates of daily FNF.⁶ These estimates are available for many streams beginning with WY 2013. This source was used only for streams where no other data was available.

If data was available from multiple sources for the same subwatershed (e.g., past data from both CDEC and DWR or forecasted data from both B-120 and CNRFC), both datasets were compared for an overlapping time period to validate that there were no substantial inconsistencies between them. These comparisons did not result in any changes to any assumed hierarchy of data sources described above.

The sources of forecasted supply data are:

1. DWR's California Cooperative Snow Surveys [Bulletin 120](#) Water Supply Forecast (B-120),⁷ which contains monthly FNF forecasts for the current water year for only larger rivers. B-120 Water Supply Index (WSI) products include forecasts

⁶ CNRFC data is published on a daily scale, which is summed to generate values over longer periods for the purpose of this analysis. Any negative daily FNF values were included as-is in the sums.

⁷ B-120 provides monthly FNF forecasts for the state's major watersheds, which are prorated to convert to shorter timesteps as necessary. B-120 WSI products are updated monthly from December to May of each year, while B-120 DIST forecasts are updated weekly from February through early June. B-120 FNF calculations are made using DWR's own database of diversions upstream of unimpaired flow stations, which were not cross-checked against the Board's records of reported diversions.

with 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, and 99 percent exceedance probabilities, while the B-120 Distribution (DIST) product includes only 50 percent exceedance forecasts.

2. CNRFC ensemble forecasts,⁸ which contain daily FNF forecasts for the next 365 days, are available for both major and minor tributaries. Exceedance probabilities were calculated from the available forecast data.

Initially, the methodology used the B-120 forecast for streams where that data is available. However, given that CNRFC forecasts may better reflect expected hydrologic conditions over the short-term (7 to 14 days), CNRFC data has been relied on more recently. Near-term CNRFC forecasts summed to monthly timesteps are substantially similar to B-120 forecasts produced in the same month. Therefore, either data source may be considered.

The use of primarily monthly (shorter time steps have been used for curtailment suspensions) supply forecasts and demand estimates (see section 2.2 below) for curtailments is assumed to negate the need to consider the water's transit time within the Delta watershed (i.e., it takes less than a month for water to flow from its headwaters to a downstream diverter). For the purposes of short-term considerations of curtailment suspensions due to precipitation and runoff events, sub-monthly (e.g., weekly) data are be considered to ensure that curtailments are suspended on a timestep commensurate with available supplies. Water unavailability analyses for the purpose of issuing curtailments in the Legal Delta are not performed on a timestep any shorter than 30 days (i.e., monthly).

CDEC provides both monthly and daily FNF estimates for many rivers in California. These daily FNF estimates are less accurate than monthly estimates because they are based on less data than is available at the completion of each month (DWR 2015). Therefore, daily CDEC FNF values are not used in water unavailability analyses.

Table 1 and Table 2 below summarize the sources of both past and forecasted supply data for each subwatershed included in the supply dataset for the Sacramento River watershed and the San Joaquin River watershed, respectively. The source information includes the agency from which the data was obtained and the unique identifier for each FNF gage site. Past source data is broken down into the sources of monthly and daily estimates; daily sources with date ranges in Table 1 and Table 2 were summed to generate monthly past data, while those shown without date ranges were used only for periodic forecast monitoring (see section 3.1.1). The monthly past source data also includes the years for which data is available (e.g., WY 1906 to present). For forecasted supply data, information is provided on the resolution, frequency, and format of forecast updates. Subwatersheds where gap-filling procedures were applied (see

⁸ CNRFC forecasts are presented in the form of 41 different daily FNF "traces." These daily values are summed over longer timesteps and exceedances are calculated from the resulting forecasts.

section 2.1.5 below) are denoted with asterisks, and all gap-filled values are specifically identified as such in the supply dataset.

Table 1. Sacramento River Watershed Supply Data Sources

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources (Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)
	Monthly (Agency, Gage, Date Range)	Daily (Agency, Gage, Date Range if applicable)	
Sacramento River at Bend	CDEC SBB: Sacramento River above Bend Bridge, sensor 65 (WY 1906-Present)	CDEC BND: Sacramento River at Bend Bridge, sensor 8	DWR B-120 SRWSI and DIST: Sacramento River above Bend Bridge (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC BDBC1: Sacramento River-Bend Bridge (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Stony Creek	DWR UF4: Stony Creek at Black Butte (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC EPRC1: Little Stony Creek-East Park Reservoir (WY 2015-Present)*	CNRFC EPRC1: Little Stony Creek-East Park Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)*
Cache Creek	DWR UF3: Cache Creek above Rumsey (WY 1922-2014)	*	*
Upper Feather River	CDEC FTO: Feather River at Oroville, sensor 65 (WY 1906-Present)	CDEC ORO: Oroville Dam, sensor 8	DWR B-120 SRWSI and DIST: Feather River at Oroville (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC ORDC1: Feather River- Lake Oroville (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources (Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)
	Monthly (Agency, Gage, Date Range)	Daily (Agency, Gage, Date Range if applicable)	
Yuba River	CDEC YRS: Yuba River near Smartville, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC YRS: Yuba River near Smartville, sensor 8	DWR B-120 SRSWI and DIST: Yuba River near Smartville plus Deer Creek (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC HLEC1: Yuba River-Englebright Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Bear River	DWR UF10: Bear River near Wheatland (WY 1922-2014)	*	*
Upper American River	CDEC AMF: American River at Folsom, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC NAT: Lake Natoma (Nimbus Dam), sensor 8	DWR B-120 SRWSI and DIST: American River below Folsom Lake (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC FOLC1: American River-Folsom Lake (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Putah Creek	DWR UF2: Putah Creek near Winters (WY 1922-2014)	*	*

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources (Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)
	Monthly (Agency, Gage, Date Range)	Daily (Agency, Gage, Date Range if applicable)	
Upper Sacramento River Valley	DWR UF5: Sacramento Valley West Side Minor Streams (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC EDCC1: Elder Creek-Paskenta + TCRC1: Thomes Creek-Paskenta (WY 2015-Present)*	CNRFC EDCC1: Elder Creek-Paskenta + TCRC1: Thomes Creek-Paskenta (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)*
	DWR UF7: Sacramento Valley East Side Minor Streams (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC MLMC1: Mill Creek-Los Molinos + DCVC1: Deer Creek-Vina + BKCC1: Butte Creek-Chico (WY 2015-Present)*	CNRFC MLMC1: Mill Creek-Los Molinos + DCVC1: Deer Creek-Vina + BKCC1: Butte Creek-Chico (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)*
Sacramento River Valley Floor	DWR UF1: Sacramento Valley Floor (WY 1922-2014)	*	*

*Gap filling procedure used to adjust existing data or fill-in missing data (see section 2.1.5).

Table 2. San Joaquin River Watershed Supply Data Sources

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources (Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)
	Monthly (Agency, Gage, Date Range)	Daily (Agency, Gage)	
Chowchilla River	DWR UF20: Chowchilla River at Buchanan Reservoir (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC BHNC1: Chowchilla River-Buchanan Reservoir (WY 2015-Present)	CNRFC BHNC1: Chowchilla River-Buchanan Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources <i>(Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)</i>
	Monthly <i>(Agency, Gage, Date Range)</i>	Daily <i>(Agency, Gage)</i>	
Upper San Joaquin River	CDEC SJF: San Joaquin River below Friant, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC SJF: San Joaquin River below Friant, sensor 8	B-120 SJWSI and DIST: San Joaquin River inflow to Millerton Lake (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC FRAC1: San Joaquin River-Millerton Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Fresno River	DWR UF21: Fresno River near Daulton (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC HIDC1: Fresno River-Hensley Lake (WY 2015-Present)	CNRFC HIDC1: Fresno River-Hensley Lake (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Merced River	CDEC MRC: Merced River near Merced Falls, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC EXC: New Exchequer-Lake McClure, sensor 8	B-120 SJWSI and DIST: Merced River below Merced Falls (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC EXQC1: Merced River-Exchequer Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources <i>(Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)</i>
	Monthly <i>(Agency, Gage, Date Range)</i>	Daily <i>(Agency, Gage)</i>	
Tuolumne River	CDEC TLG: Tuolumne River-La Grange Dam, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC TLG: Tuolumne River-La Grange Dam, sensor 8	B-120 SJWSI and DIST: Tuolumne River below La Grange Reservoir (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC NDPC1: Tuolumne River-New Don Pedro Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Stanislaus River	CDEC SNS: Stanislaus River-Goodwin, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC GDW: Goodwin Dam, sensor 8	B-120 SJWSI and DIST: Stanislaus River below Goodwin Reservoir (monthly TAF for current WY in 6 exceedances); CNRFC NMSC1: Stanislaus River-New Melones Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Calaveras River	DWR UF15: Calaveras River at Jenny Lind (WY 1922-2014)	CDEC NHG: New Hogan Lake, sensor 8 (WY 2015-Present)	CNRFC NHGC1: Calaveras River-New Hogan Reservoir (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)

Subwatershed	Past Supply Data Sources		Forecasted Monthly Supply Data Sources (Agency, Gage, Forecast Resolution)
	Monthly (Agency, Gage, Date Range)	Daily (Agency, Gage)	
Mokelumne River	CDEC MKM: Mokelumne River-Mokelumne Hill, sensor 65 (WY 1901-Present)	CDEC MKM: Mokelumne River-Mokelumne Hill, sensor 8	B-120 DIST: Mokelumne River below Pardee Reservoir (monthly TAF for current WY for 50% exceedance); CNRFC CMPC1: Mokelumne River-Mokelumne Hill (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
Cosumnes River	CDEC CSN: Cosumnes River at Michigan Bar, sensor 65 (WY 1908-Present)	CDEC MHB: Cosumnes River at Michigan Bar, sensor 8	B-120 DIST: Cosumnes River at Michigan Bar (monthly TAF for current WY for 50% exceedance); CNRFC MHBC1: Cosumnes River-Michigan Bar (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)
San Joaquin River Valley Floor	DWR UF12: San Joaquin Valley East Side Minor Streams + UF17: San Joaquin Valley Floor + UF24: San Joaquin Valley West Side Minor Streams (WY 1922-2014)	CNRFC MPAC1: Mariposa Creek-Mariposa Reservoir + OWCC1: Owens Creek-Owens Reservoir + MEEC1: Bear Creek-McKee Road*	CNRFC MPAC1: Mariposa Creek-Mariposa Reservoir + OWCC1: Owens Creek-Owens Reservoir + MEEC1: Bear Creek-McKee Road (daily TCFS for next year in 41 traces)*

*Gap filling procedure used to adjust existing data or fill-in missing data (see section 2.1.5).

2.1.5 Filling Supply Data Gaps

After the compilation of supply data from the sources listed in section 2.1.4 above, data “gaps” remain for some subwatersheds in the Delta watershed. These gaps include periods of missing past or forecasted data and past or forecasted data that cover only a portion of a subwatershed, as defined for this analysis (see section 2.1.3 above). These gaps were filled using extrapolation and augmentation processes, respectively, to create a complete supply dataset for use in the Water Unavailability Methodology. Technical Appendix A contains descriptions of specific gap-filling processes for each subwatershed where they were applied.

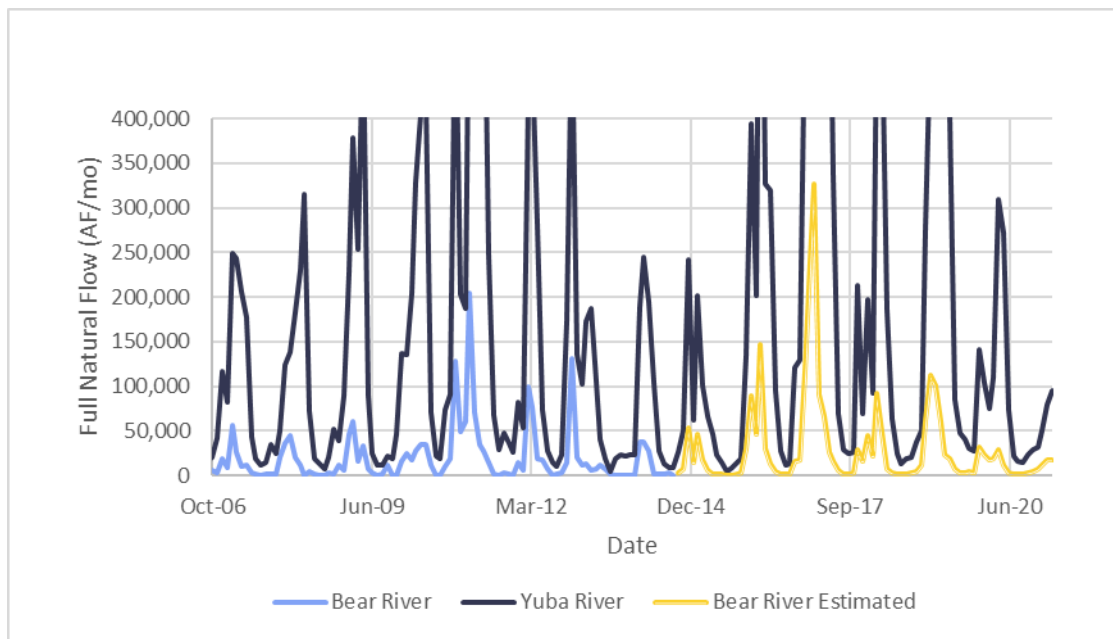
2.1.5.1 *Extrapolation*

To fill missing past or forecasted supply data gaps, overlapping historical data between the subwatershed with missing data (“Stream”) and a nearby watershed with similar hydrology but more robust data (“River”) were analyzed. The Stream:River ratio was calculated⁹ for each month over this period, and outliers outside three standard deviations from the overall mean were removed. Then, the River FNF estimates were multiplied by the average monthly Stream:River ratio to extrapolate reasonable FNF estimates to fill the gaps in the subwatershed’s dataset.

For example, February 2021 supply data for the Bear River subwatershed was not available from any of the sources listed in section 2.1.4 above. Therefore, prior February FNF estimates for the Bear River subwatershed were compared to the neighboring Yuba River and a ratio of 1:5 was calculated (Bear:Yuba). Missing February data for the Bear River subwatershed was estimated by multiplying the Yuba River subwatershed’s February 2021 FNF estimate by this ratio. Figure 5 below illustrates the Bear:Yuba extrapolation for the period of WY 2014 to present.

⁹ The Stream:River ratio calculation is analogous to a linear interpolation each month, with the y-intercept always set to zero.

Figure 5. Extrapolation Example: Estimation of Bear River FNF (WY 2014–present) Based on Yuba River FNF



2.1.5.2 **Augmentation**

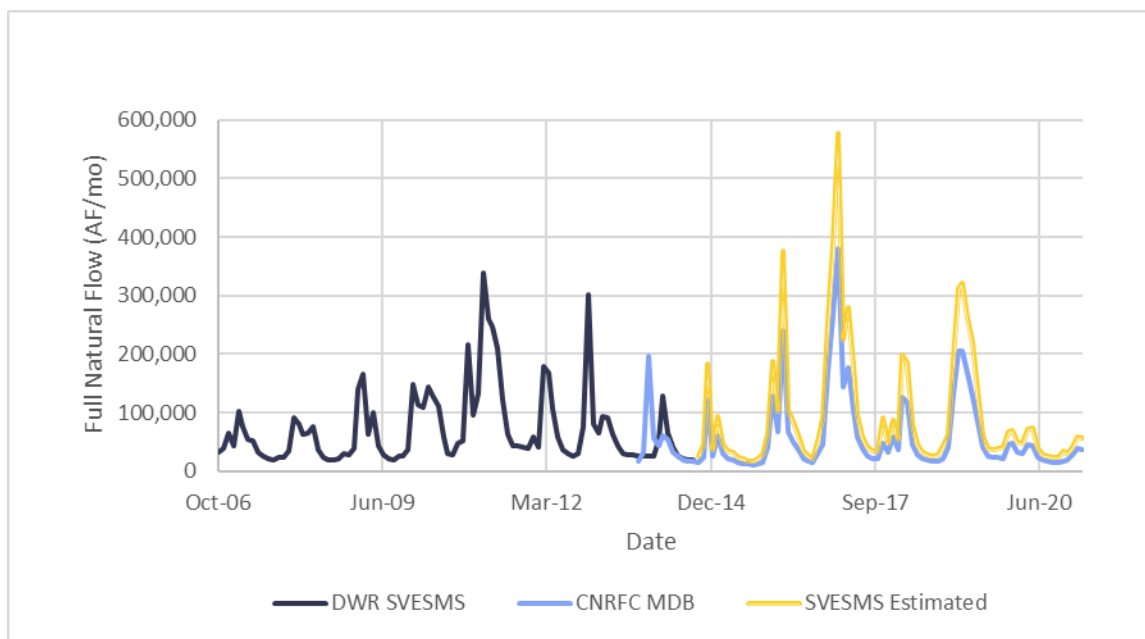
In other areas, past or forecasted data may exist but not represent the entire FNF supply of a watershed that would be expected to be available for diversion. This was the case for watersheds consisting of multiple small tributary streams in which only some streams have available supply forecasts through CNRFC. DWR’s 2016 Bay-Delta Unimpaired Flow Report includes past FNF estimates that cover all tributaries in these subwatersheds. To increase the “CNRFC” forecasts to approximate a forecast for the entire subwatershed (as the past supply estimates from “DWR” do), overlapping historical data between the two sources were analyzed. The ratio DWR:CNRFC was calculated on a monthly basis over this period, and outliers outside three standard deviations from the overall mean were removed.¹⁰ Then, the past and forecasted CNRFC values were augmented by multiplying them by the monthly average DWR:CNRFC ratio to produce a reasonable FNF forecast estimate for the subwatershed.

For example, DWR’s past (WY 1922–2014) unimpaired flow estimates for the Sacramento Valley East Side Minor Streams (SVESMS, known as UF7 in DWR’s Report), part of the Upper Sacramento Valley subwatershed, include Antelope Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek, Big Chico Creek, Butte Creek, and other minor tributaries from Big Chico Creek to the Feather River (DWR 2016). CNRFC only has past (WYs 2013–

¹⁰ Because the DWR FNF values include data for all of the CNRFC streams and additional tributaries, the value of the DWR:CNRFC ratio is always greater than one. This ratio calculation is analogous to a linear interpolation each month, with the y-intercept always set to zero.

present) and forecasted FNF data available for Mill, Deer, and Butte Creeks (MDB, in total). By comparing historical FNF values for a period with overlapping data (WYs 2013 and 2014), a monthly relationship ratio can be calculated. In this example, for February, the total Sacramento Valley East Side Minor Streams unimpaired flow was about 1.5 times the MDB supply. Therefore, missing February data in the Upper Sacramento Valley subwatershed would be estimated by multiplying the MDB supply by 1.5. The Upper Sacramento Valley subwatershed also includes supplies from West Side Minor Streams, which were estimated using a similar method with different DWR and CNRFC gages. Figure 6 below illustrates the SVESMS:MDB augmentation to estimate FNF for the Sacramento Valley East Side Minor Streams.

Figure 6. Augmentation Example: Adjusting CNRFC Data for Mill, Deer, and Butte Creeks (MDB) to Estimate FNF Within Sacramento Valley East Side Minor Streams (SVESMS), a Portion of the Upper Sacramento Valley Subwatershed, Based on DWR’s FNF Estimate for SVESMS



2.1.6 Abandoned Instream Flows

Specific reaches of streams within the Delta watershed may be subject to minimum instream flow requirements due to water right permit/license conditions, Board orders/decisions/regulations, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower license conditions, biological opinion requirements, or private agreements. If these instream flow requirements are met by diverters bypassing natural flow, these flows are already included in FNF values. If these instream flow requirements are met via releases of stored water, these flows are not captured by FNF calculations. Beyond the reach for which they are intended for instream use, these storage releases are available for diversion and therefore may theoretically be considered alongside FNF

values to more accurately represent the amount of water available for downstream diversion unless there are provisions making these flows unavailable for use.

Current data limitations prevent a precise accounting of when instream flow requirements that will be abandoned have been met by stored water. Therefore, to incorporate abandoned instream flows into the supply dataset without artificially inflating estimates of available supply by assuming all abandoned instream flows have been met by releases of stored water, the methodology uses the greater of the FNF value and the abandoned instream flow value to represent the amount of supply contribution of the subwatershed to the respective watershed-wide supply. In other words, it was assumed that if the FNF is greater than the instream flow requirement then the instream flow requirement is being met by FNF; conversely, if the instream flow requirement is greater than the FNF then it was assumed that the instream flow requirement is met at least in part by storage releases which can be considered abandoned below their intended reach.

For the purpose of this analysis, all abandoned instream flows whose intended reach ends near the bottom of a subwatershed were considered. If two instream flow requirements exist in series in a watershed, it is possible that the same water could be used to meet both requirements. To avoid double counting of additional supplies, the methodology does not include instream flows that end higher up in the subwatershed. Using data from the State Water Board's Sacramento Valley Water Allocation Model (SacWAM)¹¹ and Water Supply Effects (WSE) model,¹² a total of seven instream flow requirements that would produce abandoned flows were identified. These flow requirements, locations, and amounts are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4 below for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds, respectively. Water released by the Projects to meet water quality and flow requirements included in State Water Board Decision 1641 is not considered abandoned because those flows are intended to remain instream through the Delta and as outflow from the Delta.

Instream flow requirements are often based on a given water year type and are therefore subject to change. Generally, the requirements listed in Table 3 and Table 4 assume dry or critical conditions, resulting in the lowest possible flow requirements.

¹¹ SacWAM is a hydrologic and system operations model developed by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and State Water Board using the Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) platform to represent the Sacramento River watershed, Delta, and eastside tributaries to the Delta (the Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne Rivers). Information on SacWAM is available at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/sacwam/

¹² WSE is a hydrologic and system operations model developed by the State Water Board to represent the lower San Joaquin River and its lower tributaries (the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers). Information on WSE is available at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/bay_delta_plan/water_quality_control_planning/2018_sed/

Different flow requirements may be used in the methodology if appropriate due to varying hydrologic conditions during the applicable time period.

Table 3. Sacramento River Watershed Flows Considered to Contribute Abandoned Supplies¹³

Subwatershed		Upper Feather River ^a	Yuba River ^b	Bear River ^c	Upper American River ^d	Putah Creek ^e	Total
Abandoned Instream Flow (cfs)	Jan.	180	400	10	246	5	841
	Feb.	225	400	10	246	5	886
	Mar.	300	400	10	246	5	961
	Apr.	300	433	25	287	5	1050
	May	300	500	25	350	5	1,180
	Jun.	300	500	25	425	5	1,255
	Jul.	300	250	10	425	5	990
	Aug.	300	250	10	420	5	985
	Sep.	250	250	10	325	5	840
	Oct.	180	400	10	251	5	846
	Nov.	180	400	10	246	5	841
	Dec.	180	400	10	246	12	848

^a Upper Feather River flow requirements are based on FERC project P-2107 license conditions for Upper North Fork Feather River flows below Poe Dam.

^b Yuba River flow requirements are based on State Water Board Decision 1644 requirements at Marysville (assuming an Extreme Critical water year and not including flows transferred to DWR).

^c Bear River flow requirements are based on FERC P-2997 license conditions for flow below Camp Far West Diversion Dam (not including flows transferred to DWR).

^d Upper American River flow requirements are based on FERC P-2155 license conditions for South Fork American River flows below Chili Bar (assuming a Dry year and including Conditions 1 and 3) and P-2079 requirements for flows on the North Fork American River below the American River Pump Station.

^e Putah Creek flow requirements are based on the 2000 Putah Creek Accord's requirements for outflow to the Toe Drain.

¹³ Abandoned flows from Stony Creek were included in the May 12, 2021 version of the methodology but have been excluded from this updated version because, given current hydrology, any abandoned instream flow from Stony Creek is expected to seep into the underlying groundwater basin prior to reaching the Sacramento River and contributing to available downstream supplies.

Table 4. San Joaquin River Watershed Flows Considered to Contribute Abandoned Supplies

Subwatershed		Merced River ^a	Tuolumne River ^b	<i>Total</i>
Abandoned Instream Flow (cfs)	Jan.	60	150	210
	Feb.	60	150	210
	Mar.	60	150	210
	Apr.	60	245	305
	May	60	311	371
	Jun.	15	50	65
	Jul.	15	50	65
	Aug.	15	50	65
	Sep.	15	50	65
	Oct.	38	125	163
	Nov.	75	150	225
	Dec.	75	150	225

^a Merced River flow requirements are based on FERC project P-2179 license conditions for flows below Crocker Huffman Diversion Dam (assuming a Dry year).

^b Tuolumne River flows are based on FERC P-2299 license requirements for flow below La Grange Diversion Dam (assuming the San Joaquin River 60-20-20 index is between 1.5 and 2.0 million acre-feet (MAF) from May–September or less than 1.5 MAF October–April).

To account for the limitation on riparian rights to the diversion of only natural flow, not flow that is foreign in either time or source, the Water Unavailability Methodology allocates any portion of the incorporated instream flow requirements in excess of the FNF to only non-riparian diverters.

2.2 Demand

The Water Unavailability Methodology evaluates demands for natural and abandoned flows by basis of water right. It is not intended to account for demands for previously stored water, imported supplies, and contractual demands. The analysis to date has relied on reported demand data from the State Water Board's Electronic Water Rights Information Management System (eWRIMS) computer database.¹⁴ The State Water Board may also rely upon updated reporting of projected demands for larger users that is provided pursuant to the emergency regulation. Projections of demands during the wet season are expected to be more accurate than historical diversion data for purposes of estimating demands, particularly for storage which historically occurred

¹⁴ A public version of the eWRIMS database is available at: <https://ciwqs.waterboards.ca.gov/ciwqs/ewrims/EWPublicTerms.jsp>

when flows were present, which does not necessarily reflect demands that would exist this year.

The eWRIMS data system contains information regarding water rights, including but not limited to:

- Water right ownership information
- Water right type (e.g., “Appropriative” or “Statement of Diversion and Use”)
- Water right claim type for Statements of Diversion and Use (e.g., “Riparian,” “Pre-1914,” etc.) as reported in the diverter’s Initial Statement of Water Diversion and Use or annual Supplemental Statements of Diversion and Use
- Water right status (e.g., active, inactive, revoked, etc.)
- Authorized diversion seasons and volumes
- Authorized beneficial uses, including both consumptive (e.g., irrigation) and non-consumptive (e.g., hydropower generation) beneficial uses
- Spatial location of PODs,¹⁵ including HUC8 watersheds
- Electronically reported water diversion and use information, available on a monthly basis

The eWRIMS database system contains information for various water right types, including both riparian and appropriative water rights. Within the eWRIMS database system, post-1914 appropriative water rights are categorized as “Appropriative,” and other claims of right, which mainly consist of pre-1914 appropriative and riparian claims, are categorized as “Statements of Diversion and Use.” The eWRIMS database system also includes information for other minor water right types, such as water right registrations.

Currently, all diverters whose diversion and use is not reported by a watermaster¹⁶ are required to submit annual reports of water diversion and use (annual reports) to the

¹⁵ The eWRIMS database contains a mapping application to view the spatial location of PODs.

¹⁶ Watermasters are empowered to ensure water is allocated according to established water rights as determined by court adjudications or agreements (DWR 2021b). Some watermasters report the diversion and use of water within their areas of oversight to the Board via other means than the eWRIMS Report Management System. This data is not currently incorporated into the eWRIMS database except to the extent that individual diverters may have also mistakenly reported their diversions to the Board via the eWRIMS Report Management System. As a result, diversions in watermaster service areas are generally not included in the methodology’s demand dataset and did not

State Water Board electronically through the eWRIMS Report Management System (RMS). The annual reports are mandatory filings that document water diversions and uses made during each month of the previous calendar year, including monthly direct diversion volumes, monthly diversion to storage volumes, and monthly water use volumes. A separate annual report of water diversion and use is required for each water right each year; therefore, a diverter may be required to submit more than one annual report if they hold or claim more than one right. During 2021, reports for the prior calendar year were due by April 1 for appropriative water rights, stockpond certificates,¹⁷ and registrations¹⁸ and by July 1 for statements of water diversion and use. Future annual reporting periods and deadlines will change pursuant to Senate Bill 155, signed into law on September 23, 2021.¹⁹ Diversion data contained within annual reports forms the basis for estimates of water demand used in the Water Unavailability Methodology. Water right holders and claimants that divert water under Statements of Diversion and Use also provide information about the water right claim type (e.g., riparian, pre-1914 appropriative, etc.) in annual reports.

For this analysis, water demand is based on the total monthly diversion amount reported for each water right record, including monthly direct diversions and monthly diversions to storage. The demand dataset used in the Water Unavailability Methodology is based on reported annual diversion data. Currently, data from calendar year 2018, the most recent drier year (below normal) for which quality controlled demand data is available, is used. Adjustments to this dataset will be made as

receive the August 20, 2021 curtailment and reporting orders or prior notices of water unavailability. Initial investigations suggest that a total of ten such watermaster service areas covering at least 16 different adjudications are located in the Delta watershed and overseen by DWR and Modoc County. From the standpoint of diverters included in the methodology, the omission of watermaster service areas results in an underestimation of watershed demands that may result in less curtailments. In the future data from watermaster reports may be incorporated into the demand dataset and water rights within these watermaster service areas may be issued curtailment orders.

¹⁷ Stockpond certificates are appropriative water rights issued by the State Water Board through 1997 and are limited to diversion of 10 acre-feet (AF) or less per year.

¹⁸ Water right registrations are appropriative water rights issued by the State Water Board through an expedited acquisition process for certain small projects, which first became available in 1989. Water right registrations are available for small domestic use, livestock stockpond use, small irrigation use, and cannabis small irrigation use.

¹⁹ Senate Bill 155 changes the reporting period for all water rights and claims from the calendar year to the water year (October 1 through September 30) and consolidates the reporting deadlines into a single date for all water rights and claims. To transition to this new system, water diversion and use reporting for January 1 through September 30, 2021, will be due for all diverters on April 1, 2022. Thereafter, diversion and use reporting for each water year will be due on February 1 of the subsequent year (e.g., water diversion and use reporting for October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022, will be due by February 1, 2023).

appropriate based on updated reliable demand projections. This may include data submitted as part of the enhanced reporting requirements under the emergency regulation and other reliable sources. While data from enhanced reporting is being evaluated and compared against 2018 demand data for various purposes, compliance rates for the enhanced reporting and the quality of that data limit its usefulness in completely replacing the 2018 demand dataset for those users subject to the enhanced reporting requirements. . .

In some cases demand data are prorated from monthly values to shorter timesteps (assuming uniform average daily demand throughout each month) in order to better reflect the effects of precipitation and runoff events that occur on a shorter time scale in order to inform decisions to temporarily suspend curtailments. Appendix A contains additional information about how water demands for various periods are estimated using monthly data. As described below, current compliance with new diversion measurement and reporting regulations have not made substantial daily and/or real-time diversion information available for even the largest water users in the Delta watershed.

Diversion data from 2018 is used because it is the first drier year for which quality controlled diversion data is available since updated water right measurement and reporting requirements went into effect with Senate Bill 88 (SB88). Pursuant to regulations implementing SB88, all water right diverters authorized to divert more than 10 AF annually from rivers, creeks, springs, or subterranean streams must comply with measurement requirements. There are three ways to achieve measurement compliance: (1) install, use, and maintain a device capable of measuring the rate of direct diversion; (2) propose an alternative compliance plan; or (3) utilize a measurement method for multiple diverters. SB88 set expectations for both the accuracy of measurement devices as well as the monitoring frequency of the device and included measurement device installation deadlines of January 1, 2018 or earlier.

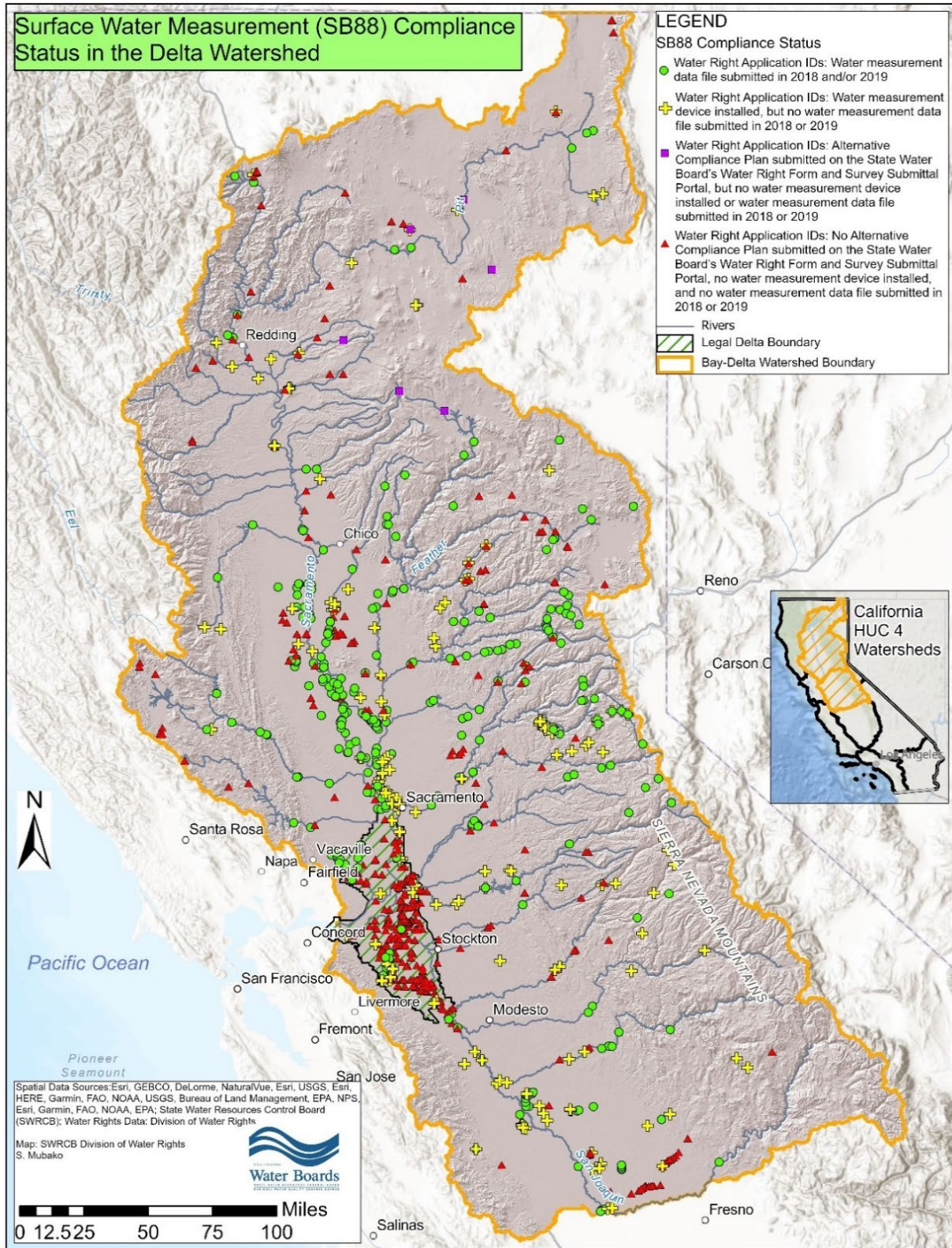
Although the implementation of SB88 has increased the frequency of required reporting for many diverters and may help to improve the quality of reported diversion and use data submitted to the State Water Board, many diverters have not yet achieved full compliance with the water right measurement requirements even though the measuring device installation deadlines have now passed. For example, among the 244 largest consumptive water right records in the Delta watershed located outside of the Legal Delta, diverters installed a measuring device and submitted a measurement data file for 2018 or 2019 in accordance with SB88 for only 57 percent (140) of the records. Diverters submitted proposed Alternative Compliance Plans pursuant to SB88 for an additional 2 percent (4) of the records. Diverters installed a measuring device but failed to submit a measurement data file for 2018 or 2019 for 27 percent (65) of the records, and did not install a measuring device, submit a measurement data file for 2018 or 2019, or submit a proposed Alternative Compliance Plan for 14 percent (35) of the

records. Compliance with the measurement requirements may be even lower for smaller diverters.

Figure 7 below shows the locations of the PODs associated with the largest (those with a 5,000 AF or larger face value or 5,000 AF or larger of reported diversions) consumptive water right records in the Delta watershed and displays their SB88 compliance status as of March 2, 2021.

As discussed in more detail below, diversion data contained within annual reports is self-reported and is not systematically verified for accuracy upon submittal. As a result, an internal review and quality control effort was conducted.

Figure 7. Surface Water Measurement (SB88) Compliance Status of Large Rights and Claims in the Delta Watershed20



2.2.1 Initial Selection of Water Right Records

A subset of the water right records in the eWRIMS database for the Delta watershed were selected for use in the Water Unavailability Methodology based on several criteria:

- Spatial Location: POD(s) located within the Delta watershed²¹
- Water Right Status: Active status types only, thereby excluding inactive-type statuses (e.g., inactive, revoked, cancelled, etc.)
- Water Right Type: “Appropriative” (i.e., post-1914 appropriative, excluding registrations and stockpond certificates) and “Statement of Diversion and Use” (i.e., pre-1914 appropriative and riparian), thereby excluding demands for minor water right types²²
- Beneficial Uses: All beneficial uses except exclusively non-consumptive beneficial uses²³

Water right records with active-type statuses were selected to best approximate current year water demand since it is unlikely that inactive-type statuses (e.g., inactive, revoked, cancelled, etc.) would be reactivated during the current year. Only the demands for water right records with “Appropriative” and “Statement of Diversion and Use” water right types were included because minor water right types, such as registrations and stockponds, were assumed to constitute a negligible amount of the water diversion and use within the Delta watershed.²⁴

²⁰ Figure 7 currently shows a watershed boundary that includes Goose Lake. The Goose Lake subwatershed will be removed from a future iteration of this report to accurately reflect its exclusion from the Delta watershed for the purposes of this analysis due to disconnection.

²¹ All PODs within the Delta watershed were selected except for those within the Panoche Creek subwatershed. As described in section 2.1.3 above, supply data is not available for this subwatershed; therefore, neither supply nor demand for this area were included in this analysis. PODs within the Goose Lake subwatershed were also excluded due to its assumed disconnection with the Delta watershed.

²² Minor right types, such as stockponds and water right registrations, are included in the current version of the demand dataset but are assumed to constitute a negligible demand. Accordingly, all demand values for these records have been set to zero in the demand dataset.

²³ As discussed in section 2.2.4, demands for storage under non-consumptive water rights and claims have been incorporated into the demand dataset only during the wet season.

²⁴ Exclusion of the demands for these minor right types from the methodology represents a conservative assumption because it underestimates overall demand and

Water right records identified as non-consumptive based on their beneficial use type (e.g., hydropower generation, fish and wildlife preservation and enhancement, etc.) were also originally excluded from the analysis. Non-consumptive uses, such as for hydropower generation, may change the timing of flows but do not reduce the amount of supply available unless they result in an interbasin diversion (see section 2.2.10 below). During the dry season, the potential impact of these non-consumptive diversions on the timing of flows is not assumed to be significant given the negligible amount of hydropower-related storage assumed to be occurring during the dry season. As discussed below in section 2.2.5 (Wet Season Demand Adjustments), during the wet season non-consumptive water right records that divert water to storage can make water unavailable for other users for periods of time greater than the temporal resolution of the analysis (e.g., weekly or longer). Therefore, diversions to storage under non-consumptive rights such as hydropower rights are included in the demand dataset only during the wet season to accurately reflect where these diversions make water unavailable within a month.

This initial selection of water right records resulted in a demand dataset consisting of approximately 12,000 total post-1914 appropriative water rights (excluding minor appropriative water right types) and statements of diversion and use. Of these, approximately 5,000 were post-1914 appropriative water rights and 7,000 were statements of diversion and use. The demand dataset also includes approximately 4,000 additional minor water rights, such as stockponds and registrations; the demand values for these records is assumed to be negligible and have been set to zero in the demand dataset.

As discussed in section 2.2.4, demands for storage under non-consumptive water rights and claims were later incorporated into the demand dataset during the wet season. After incorporating these demands, the demand dataset includes approximately 17,000 total water right records, including 6,000 appropriative water rights (excluding minor appropriative water right types), 7,000 statements of diversion and use, and 4,000 additional minor water rights (such as stockponds and registrations).

2.2.2 Initial Quality Control

Water diversion data contained within the eWRIMS database originates from annual reports of water diversion and use electronically submitted by diverters. This self-reported data is not systematically verified for accuracy upon receipt and contains inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and other errors. Staff conducted a quality control effort following the initial selection of water right records for the demand dataset.

The approximately 12,000 total post-1914 appropriative water rights and statements of diversion and use existing within the demand dataset after initial selection were too

may thus result in fewer curtailments. These diverters are still issued notices of water unavailability and curtailment orders in keeping with the principles of the water rights priority system.

numerous to feasibly review in their entirety at this time. Therefore, the scope of the review was narrowed to appropriative water rights with a face value (maximum diversion amount) of 5,000 AF or greater and statements of diversion and use with reported diversions of 5,000 AF or greater in either calendar year 2018 or 2019. This produced a manageable subset of approximately 580 water right records, including approximately 360 post-1914 appropriative rights and approximately 220 Statements of Diversion and Use, which could be reviewed within a limited timeframe. These records account for approximately 90 percent of the water diverted in the Delta watershed in 2018 and 2019 but less than 10 percent of the users.

For this narrower set of records, the 2018 and 2019 annual reports of water diversion and use associated with each record were reviewed to identify potential inaccuracies in the diversion data. During the review process several types of data errors were identified and corrected, if the appropriate correction was discernable.²⁵ These corrections included:

- Correction of diversion data entry and reporting issues, such as incorrect units of measurement and decimal placement errors.
- Removal of duplicate diversion values, such as the same diversions reported under multiple water right records.
- Removal of non-consumptive diversions improperly appearing as consumptive.
- Correction of diversion values as necessary where reported diversion exceeds the water right's face value.

During the quality control process, if the appropriate correction was unclear the affected records were flagged for potential further investigation beyond the information readily available in eWRIMS.

In addition to the records review described above, approximately 100 post-1914 appropriative rights were identified that reported diversions less than 5,000 AF but in excess of the face value of the water right. Most of these diversions are very small. Due to time constraints, these records were not investigated individually. Instead, for these rights, the reported diversion amounts within the demand dataset were updated to equal the face value of the right.

Except for the correction to reported diversions in excess of the face value of post-1914 rights, all post-1914 appropriative water rights and statements of diversion and use with

²⁵ Comments provided within the annual reports of water diversion and use often contained critical information to inform these corrections. For example, some diverters stated that their purpose of use is entirely non-consumptive. Others indicated that a particular diversion was fully reported under two or more separate rights (i.e., duplicated).

a face value or reported use under 5,000 AF were included in the demand analysis without a quality control review. As mentioned above, these records constitute only about 10 percent of the total demand within the Delta watershed.

2.2.3 Additional Quality Control

After conducting the initial quality control review of 2018 and 2019 annual reports for the largest diversions and applying corrections to rectify errors as discussed above, some diversion values remained flagged as potentially including incorrect demand information with outstanding issues that could not be resolved without further information.

Examples of these issues include:

- Possible duplicate reporting of diversion volumes under multiple water right records where it was not possible to quantify the duplicate reporting amount.
- Possible overreporting of diversion volumes that could not be corrected to reflect a best estimate of the actual diversion volume based on the available information. For example, some annual reports contained information that appeared to indicate that the diversion volume was not measured and, as a result, the maximum diversion amount authorized under the permit or license had been reported.
- Apparent inclusion of both consumptive and non-consumptive uses in the reported diversion amount where it was not possible to quantify the volume of water diverted only for consumptive uses.
- Other potential data reporting issues where an error was detected but the appropriate correction was unclear.

In these cases, additional information may be needed to determine the appropriate correction or resolve other reporting-related issues. State Water Board staff has contacted numerous water right holders, claimants, or their agents to gather this information. Diversion volumes within the demand dataset were updated according to the responses provided. However, it was not feasible to contact all water right holders, claimants, or agents in all cases where a potential reporting related error was identified or a correction applied to a diversion value. Efforts were prioritized to contact water right holders or agents based on several factors, including reported diversion size and relative level of uncertainty regarding potential reporting-related inaccuracies. In addition, some water right holders, claimants, and agents did not provide responses to inquiries regarding potential reporting related errors. In the absence of additional information provided by the water right holder, claimant, or agent, best estimates of the actual diversion values were used based on information contained within the annual report of water diversion and use and supplemental information available within the eWRIMS database.

Further refinements to the demand dataset used in the Water Unavailability Methodology may occur. Diverters who are aware of reporting issues, including but not limited to the items discussed above, should contact the State Water Board at Bay-Delta@waterboards.ca.gov. In addition, the quality-controlled 2018 and 2019 demand datasets were compared to FNF for each of these years, respectively, at the subwatershed scale (see section 2.1.3 above) and at the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watershed scales to assess the reasonableness of the demand datasets. The demand datasets used in the Water Unavailability Methodology represent the State Water Board's current best estimate of demand for these years based on the available information.

2.2.4 Enhanced Reporting Forms

Enhanced reporting information submitted by water users in accordance with the emergency regulation may also inform future refinements to the demand dataset. Pursuant to the emergency regulation, on August 20, 2021, the Board issued curtailment and reporting orders to water right holders and claimants throughout the Delta watershed. The orders require monthly reporting of water diversion and use for water rights and claims in the Delta watershed that have a face value or recent annual reported diversion volume of 5,000 AF or greater. For these water rights and claims, diverters are required to provide monthly reports of water diversion and use information for prior months and monthly reporting of projected water demand by completing the Delta Watershed Enhanced Reporting of Actual Diversions and Projected Demand Form (Enhanced Reporting Form). The Enhanced Reporting Forms are required monthly during the effective period of the emergency regulation unless otherwise specified by the State Water Board.

Staff are currently evaluating the water diversion and use information submitted in the Enhanced Reporting Forms. Projected demand data supplied in these forms is being compared to the 2018 diversion information contained within the demand dataset to identify any instances where the demand dataset may be overestimating demands. This comparison of 2018 diversion information and the enhanced reporting of projected demand will be generated on a monthly basis and consulted prior to curtailment implementation. In addition, the projected demand data is being consulted during the evaluation of specific curtailment exception proposals that have been submitted by water right holders and claimants.

Additionally, prior water diversion and use information supplied through the Enhanced Reporting Forms is being evaluated and may be used to inform future updates of the demand dataset. Prior month reporting now comprises an additional year of dry year diversion data for 2021, providing a relevant comparison to the 2018 diversion data contained in the demand dataset. The prior diversion data may also be used to inform other refinements to the water unavailability methodology, such as stream depletion effects.

2.2.5 Wet Season Demand Adjustments

Prior versions of the demand dataset were intended primarily to identify when available data indicated that natural and abandoned water supplies were unavailable for water users in the Delta watershed during the dry season. This section describes adjustments to the demand dataset for application during the wet season.

As noted in section 2.2.1, water right records identified as non-consumptive based on their beneficial use type (e.g., hydropower generation or fish and wildlife preservation and enhancement) were previously excluded from the analysis due to its prior focus on dry season operations. During the dry season these non-consumptive uses of water do not typically significantly alter the timing of flows or change the amount of water available downstream. However, during the wet season water right records with non-consumptive beneficial use types such as hydropower generation can significantly alter the timing of flows when water is diverted to storage. These diversions can make water unavailable for diversion by other users within a month. The demand dataset has now been adjusted to incorporate approximately 500 additional post-1914 appropriative water rights and statements of diversion and use with non-consumptive beneficial use types that were originally excluded from the demand dataset (see Appendix B and the Water Unavailability Methodology Spreadsheet). For these records, the diversion values contained in the demand dataset reflect only diversion to storage volumes. Non-consumptive direct diversions do not alter the timing of flows or change the amount of water available downstream and are therefore not included in the demand dataset.

A wet season adjustment quality control review effort was conducted following selection of the additional water right records with non-consumptive beneficial use types. Similar to the previous quality control review effort, the scope of the review was narrowed to produce a manageable subset of records to review within a limited timeframe. For this quality control review, post-1914 appropriative water rights and statements of diversion and use with a reported diversion to storage volume of 5,000 AF or greater in either 2018 or 2019 were selected. Approximately 75 records were included in this quality control review effort. The 2018 and 2019 annual reports of water diversion and use for these records were reviewed to identify and correct potential inaccuracies in the diversion to storage data.

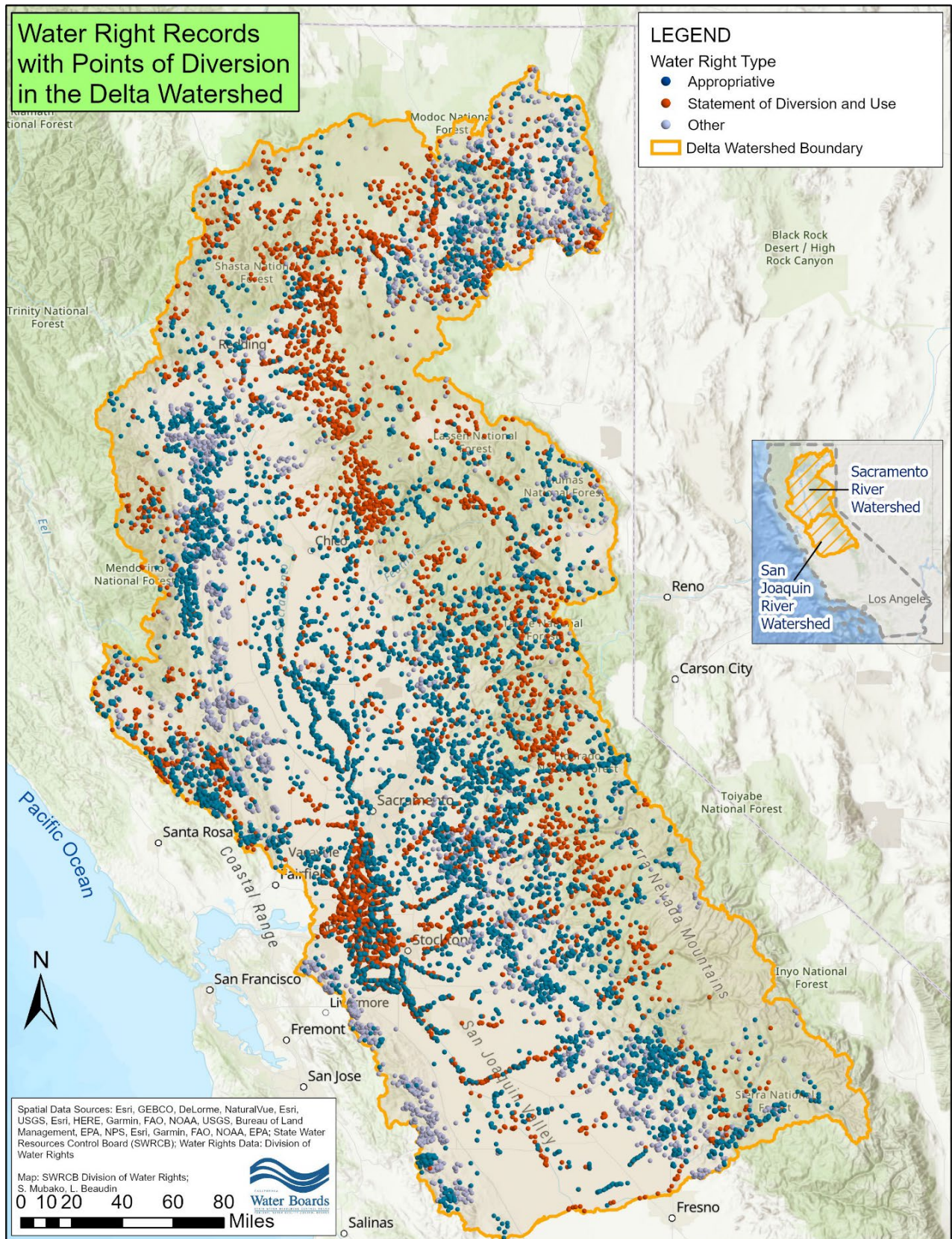
In addition, this quality control review addressed occurrences of duplicative reporting of diversions to storage under overlapping consumptive and non-consumptive use rights. Staff compiled 2018 and 2019 reported diversion to storage volumes for all water right records, including those associated with consumptive uses, held by the same primary owners of the approximately 75 largest water right records with non-consumptive beneficial use types. When identical diversion to storage volumes were reported for consumptive and non-consumptive water right records held by the same primary owner and associated with the same location, the reported diversion to storage volumes were assumed to be duplicative and the demand value for the non-consumptive water right record was changed to zero to avoid overreporting of diversion to storage volumes.

Staff also reviewed information regarding overlapping reporting between consumptive and non-consumptive water right records submitted in the September 2021 Enhanced Reporting Forms, which were required pursuant to the emergency regulation. Staff's review of information regarding overlapping water rights and claims contained in the September 2021 Enhanced Reporting Forms identified additional occurrences of overlapping reporting of diversions under consumptive and non-consumptive water right records. In these cases, the demand value for the non-consumptive water right record was changed to zero.

Further refinements to the demand values for non-consumptive use rights included in the demand dataset may occur. Diverters who are aware of reporting issues, including, but not limited to overlapping reporting of diversions to storage between consumptive and non-consumptive water right records, should contact the State Water Board at Bay-Delta@waterboards.ca.gov.

Points of diversion for all water right records included in the demand dataset at this time are shown in Figure 9 below. The figure has been updated since the August 20, 2021 version of this report and now includes points of diversion for the approximately 500 non-consumptive water right records described above. Figure 9 displays points of diversion for approximately 17,000 water right records in the Delta watershed, including 6,000 Appropriative water rights, 7,000 Statements of Diversion and Use, and 4,000 additional minor rights (e.g., stockponds and registrations).

Figure 8. Water Right Records with Points of Diversion in the Delta Watershed



2.2.6 Disaggregation of Statements of Diversion and Use

Statements of Diversion and Use were assigned a category based on the water right claim types reported by diverters in Initial Statements of Water Diversion and Use and in 2018 and 2019 annual reports. This user-submitted information was not reviewed for accuracy as part of this analysis but represents the best information currently available. This information may be updated based on additional information, including information submitted by water right claimants through the emergency regulation process.

The following Statement of Diversion and Use categories are currently included in the demand dataset: Riparian, Pre-1914, “Riparian or Pre-1914,” Reserved, Other, and Unclassified. The vast majority (over 95 percent) of the Statements of Diversion and Use included in the demand dataset were categorized as Riparian, Pre-1914, or “Riparian or Pre-1914.” For the purposes of assigning priority within the Methodology, those water right records categorized as “Riparian or Pre-1914” or Other were assumed to have the more senior priority of right, i.e., Riparian.²⁶

Technical Appendix B further describes the process used to categorize and assign priority dates to Statements of Diversion and Use.

2.2.7 Disaggregation of Total Diversion Amounts

Prior versions of the demand dataset included monthly and annual total diversion amounts, which combined the reported direct diversions and diversions to storage for each water right record. The total diversion amounts have now been disaggregated into discrete direct diversion and diversion to storage amounts based on information submitted in annual reports for calendar years 2018 and 2019. The disaggregation of total diversions into discrete direct diversion and diversion to storage amounts in the demand dataset informed refinements to the methodology, including the different spatial assignment of demand based on POD type (direct diversion or storage reservoir), the exclusion of return flows from availability to meet storage demands, and the application of return flow factors to direct diversion demand only (as described in section 2.2.11 below).

Previous quality control review efforts focused on corrections to total diversion amounts and did not apply specific corrections to the direct diversion and diversion to storage

²⁶ For the purpose of curtailment, diverters who claim both a riparian and a pre-1914 appropriative water right to serve the same place of use (or have reported diversion pursuant to a combination of such unadjudicated claims among their Initial Statement of Water Diversion and Use and their 2018 and 2019 annual reports) are treated solely as riparian claimants. Assuming, solely for curtailment determinations, that the diverter has a valid riparian right, they may continue to divert under that right, subject to its restrictions, unless and until the riparian right is curtailed. In nearly all scenarios this represents a conservative simplifying approach within the Methodology because riparian rights are assumed to be senior to all appropriative rights absent specific evidence to the contrary.

components of the total diversion. Accordingly, a supplemental quality control review effort was conducted with a focus on the water right records for which a correction to the total diversion amount was previously applied, and both direct diversion and diversion to storage amounts were reported for 2018. Approximately 200 records were included in this supplemental quality control review effort. For these records, the 2018 and 2019 annual reports were reviewed and appropriate adjustments to the direct diversion and diversion to storage amounts were applied.

2.2.8 Demand Aggregation by Subwatershed

The Water Unavailability Methodology requires that both the supply and demand data be aggregated to a common spatial resolution for comparison purposes. The supply data is generally only available at the HUC8 watershed scale or larger, while the demand data includes both the HUC8 watershed and the precise spatial location (latitude and longitude) of each POD. For the purpose of this analysis, demand values within the demand dataset were aggregated at the same subwatershed scale as supply values within the supply dataset (see section 2.1.3 above). The subwatershed assignments of specific PODs, such as those located near Folsom, Oroville, and Friant Dams, were reassigned on a case-by-case basis within the demand dataset to better fit the demand to the subwatershed from which it draws supply.

All of the PODs of most water right records are geographically located within a single subwatershed. In these instances, all of the demand associated with these rights is attributed to that subwatershed. Sixty-three water right records in the Delta watershed have PODs that span multiple subwatersheds. Of these, nine are Project water rights, which frequently have PODs upstream at the major storage reservoirs, downstream on major tributaries, and within the Legal Delta. As described in section 2.2.9 below, the Water Unavailability Methodology treats these demands differently because of the unique circumstances of the Projects' diversions. For the rights that have PODs within multiple subwatersheds, demands for direct diversion and storage under each water right record were split among the applicable subwatersheds based on the proportion of the total active PODs diverting natural flow located within each subwatershed. No demand was split to PODs which are inactive or which are solely points of rediversion. For example, if a water right record had 3 associated PODs, one of which was located within the Sacramento Bend subwatershed and 2 within the Upper Sacramento Valley subwatershed, one-third of the total demand for the water right would be attributed to the Sacramento Bend subwatershed and two-thirds to the Upper Sacramento Valley subwatershed. These water rights are only curtailed in the methodology if water is unavailable within all of the subwatersheds where they have demands. If all of a water right's PODs within a subwatershed are points of rediversion or inactive, these PODs are not factored into curtailment decisions (i.e., curtailment is only determined based on unavailability in subwatersheds where a water right has active demands that are met by natural flow).

For rights with PODs in multiple subwatersheds that reported both direct diversions and diversions to storage in 2018 or 2019, demands were split differently based on the nature of each POD associated with the right; direct diversion demands are only split among PODs that divert directly, while storage demands are only split among PODs which divert to storage. For example, a right associated with an upstream storage reservoir in the Upper Feather River subwatershed and a downstream point of direct diversion in the Sacramento Valley Floor subwatershed would have all of its storage demand assigned to the reservoir POD and all of its direct diversion demand assigned to the direct diversion POD in Sacramento Valley Floor. An apportionment of demand based on the actual amounts diverted at each POD is not possible at this time because water diversion and use information is typically reported by water right and not for individual PODs. However, these proration amounts may be updated based on more specific information for specific water rights as appropriate.

2.2.9 Project Demands

The Projects divert and store water for use by contractors both within and outside of the Delta watershed. These contractors include contractors that do not have their own basis of right and contractors that have their own bases of water right that may also receive supplemental contract supplies (referred to as settlement contractors). Settlement contractors entered into contracts with the Projects to resolve water right disputes related to construction of the Projects. These contracts are not synonymous with the underlying rights but are instead negotiated agreements. Project contractors that do not have their own water rights include CVP service contractors and SWP Table A contractors. CVP service contracts and SWP Table A contracts include contracts for use within the Delta watershed and use outside of the Delta watershed. Diversions by the Projects for uses outside of the Delta watershed are subject to area of origin protection pursuant to the Water Code.²⁷ This protection prohibits the Projects from diverting for purposes of exporting natural and abandoned flows needed for uses within the Delta watershed.

In recognition of area of origin protection, Project demands were assumed to have the lowest priority date among Delta watershed rights. Given the extreme dry conditions and associated limited exports out of the Delta watershed by the Projects in 2022, this assumption may be modified to only assign the portion of Project demand that is exported out of basin a lower priority date and to assign the remaining diversions for inbasin purposes the water right priority date. , However, changes to Project priority dates do not have a significant effect on the analysis given the Projects' relatively junior water right priority. Since two of three of the New Melones Project water rights (A014858A and A014858B) are not authorized for export out of the Delta watershed, these demands are all assumed to be met in accordance with the original priority date of the rights.

²⁷ Wat. Code, §§ 11128, 11460.

2.2.9.1 ***Trinity River Imports***

Several consumptive water rights associated with the CVP Trinity River Division (A005628, A015374, A015375, A016767, and A017374) have PODs within the Delta watershed, but the water they divert originates from the Trinity River watershed. These water rights and correlating diversion data were removed from the Delta watershed demand dataset for analysis because the water associated with these diversions is imported to the Delta watershed and does not impact natural flow supplies in the watershed.

2.2.9.2 ***Settlement Contractor Demands***

As discussed above, there are various water users in the Delta watershed that have settlement type contracts with DWR and Reclamation that provide a contractual entitlement of a certain supply to these users. These contracts are intended to satisfy these users' underlying rights and to provide supplemental supplies. Because these users have both their own water rights or claims of right for which they likely report use and contractual supplies for which DWR and Reclamation report use, there may be overlapping reporting of demands.

For the purpose of this analysis it is assumed that most settlement contractors, with the exception of the Exchange Contractors on the San Joaquin River (see below discussion), have demands for natural and abandoned flows in accordance with their water use reports and that these users will take water pursuant to their senior water rights first if it is available. The fact that the supply may not be available at the senior priority of right or claim of right is not assumed to diminish the demand. Accordingly, settlement contractors may receive curtailment orders under their own water rights and would then need to rely upon contractual supplies to the extent those supplies are available.

Sacramento River and Feather River Settlement Contractor Demands

As a result of the very dry hydrologic conditions this year, allocations to Feather River settlement-type contractors during the contract period are expected to be reduced to 50 percent. Under the Sacramento River Settlement Contracts with Reclamation, this year is projected to be a Shasta Critical Year in which contract supplies are reduced to 75 percent, which is close to historical use amounts. However, due to historically low storage in Shasta Reservoir substantial reductions below the 75 percent contract allocation and associated land use changes are expected by the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors (SRSCs).²⁸ The demands included in the water unavailability analysis will be modified as appropriate in accordance with the best available public

²⁸ Information on Shasta Reservoir operations for the 2022 irrigation season can be found at: <https://calepa.ca.gov/2022/03/29/informational-statement-state-federal-agencies-and-sacramento-river-settlement-contractors-agree-on-approach-for-2022-water-operations-on-the-sacramento-river/>

information to reflect changes in demands this year, including changes in return flows associated with changes in land use.

Exchange Contractors

In most years, the Exchange Contractors receive replacement supplies exported from the Delta in exchange for use of water from the San Joaquin River under the Exchange Contractors' underlying rights as part of settlement contracts related to the development of the Friant Project by Reclamation. Accordingly, until April 2022 all Exchange Contractor demands were assumed to be met with previously stored CVP supplies rather than San Joaquin River water diverted under the Exchange Contractors' underlying water right claims. Starting in April 2022 the Exchange Contractors are expected to be receiving a significant portion of their demand from the San Joaquin River. The Exchange Contractor demand assumptions are being adjusted accordingly.

2.2.10 **Interbasin Diversions (Yuba-Bear and Drum-Spaulding)**

Non-consumptive uses are generally not included in demand estimates under the methodology at this time. However, the May 12, 2021 draft methodology identified that adjustments were planned to be made to account for the interbasin diversions that occur from the Yuba River watershed to the Bear and American Rivers as part of highly complex hydroelectric project operations under Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) Upper Drum-Spaulding Hydroelectric Project and Lower Drum Hydroelectric Project and Nevada Irrigation District's (NID) Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project. Under Upper Drum-Spaulding and Yuba-Bear hydroelectric project operations, water is exported from the Yuba River watershed to the Bear River via the South Yuba Canal and the Drum Canal.

Since May 12, 2021, adjustments to the demand dataset to account for interbasin diversions between the Yuba River watershed and Bear River watershed were considered. However, a review of information contained within the applicable PG&E and NID water right records indicated that diversions through the South Yuba Canal and Drum Canal are already reported under water right records located in the Yuba River subwatershed. In addition, it appears that previously stored water accounts for a large portion of the water transferred from the Yuba River to the Bear River during the summer months. Therefore, adjustments were not applied to account for the interbasin diversions at this time. Adjustments may be considered in the future as appropriate.

2.2.11 **Accretions and Return Flow Estimates**

Accretions in the valley floor during the dry season are primarily due to return flows. In recognition that only a portion of diversions are actually consumptively used due to return flows from irrigation and, to a lesser extent, municipal uses, a return flow factor was applied to diversion values within the Delta watershed demand dataset. Return flows are water that is diverted and returned to the river as part of agricultural and urban uses. Agricultural return flows include operational spills from canals, flow through and

draining of rice paddies, and drainage from other agricultural fields. The volume of return flows from agriculture varies based on type of use, crop type, location, soils, and season. Urban return flows are primarily comprised of treated effluent from wastewater treatment plants. Natural depletions due to stream-groundwater interaction and demand by riparian vegetation are difficult to estimate and not accounted for in the methodology, which represents a conservative assumption that may overestimate water availability and reduce curtailments.

Out of the hundreds of return flow sources in the Delta watershed, the rates and volumes of most are unknown and only a handful have measurement gages. Rates of return flow can be estimated using models developed to simulate surface and groundwater hydrology. Models that have been developed for the Delta watershed include SacWAM, CalSim, C2VSIM, and regional water budgets developed by DWR. Of these models, CalSim 3 is the most complete hydrologic simulation model of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds. SacWAM provides detailed representations of the hydrologic processes including return flows in the Sacramento River watershed but does not include a representation of the San Joaquin River watershed. CalSim 3 return flow rates show similar trends to SacWAM results for the Sacramento River watershed. DWR's surface-groundwater model, C2VSIM fine grid, may provide useful information on return flows with future calibration efforts, but at this time the surface hydrology does not correspond well with observed data during dry periods. DWR's regional water budgets may also provide useful estimates of return flows in the future, but at this time they are not available.

Prior versions of this report as applied during water year 2021 relied upon return flow factors based on CalSim 3 model results for water year 2014, based on similar hydrology and land use. As discussed above in section 2.2.9.2, land use in the Sacramento Valley is likely to be substantially reduced relative to a typical irrigation season, and reuse of tailwater is likely to be maximized. In particular, rice agriculture dominates modeled return flows in the Sacramento Valley and is likely to be substantially reduced in areas drained by the Colusa Basin Drain. Consequently, return flow assumptions used in the methodology during water year 2022 may be informed by supplementary modeling analyses incorporating the best available information regarding land use, recycling of applied water, and actual gaged return flows where available. These supplementary analyses may be conducted using CalSim 3, SacWAM, or other quantitative tools. Future curtailment status updates will specify any changes made to return flow assumptions and disclose the technical basis to water right holders and the public.

Spatially, most diversions and return flows occur in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley regions. Accordingly, return flow factors are only applied to demands in the Sacramento Bend, Upper Sacramento Valley, Sacramento River Valley Floor, and San Joaquin River Valley Floor subwatersheds.

During the wet season, diversion to storage may account for a significant proportion of total diversions. Because diversions to storage do not produce return flows until stored water is released and rediverted for consumptive use, demands for diversion to storage should not be scaled by a return flow factor. At the time of publication of prior versions of this report, the demand data had not been fully disaggregated between diversions to storage and direct diversions. The disaggregation of direct diversion and diversion to storage, described above in section 2.2.8 has allowed elimination of return flow factors for all diversions to storage.

2.2.12 Exclusion of Curtailment Exceptions

Pursuant to the emergency regulation, water users can seek an exception to curtailment for several purposes. These purposes include diversions for minimum human health and safety needs, diversions for non-consumptive uses that do not decrease downstream flows in the watershed, alternative water sharing agreements that achieve the same results as curtailment, and other proposals that curtailment is inappropriate and would not make water available to serve senior downstream water rights and claims.

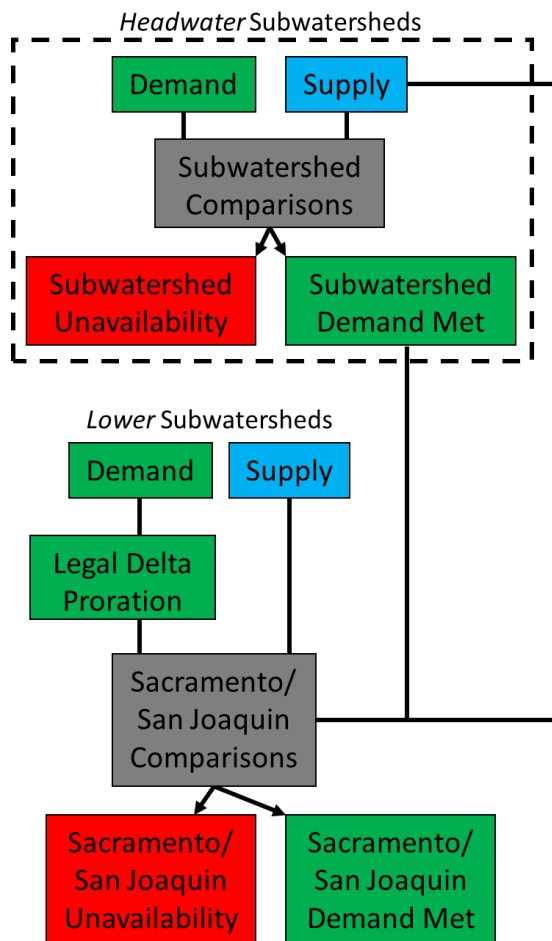
Of these exceptions to curtailment, only those for minimum human health and safety needs represent a net consumptive use of water. Staff have analyzed the quantity of water associated with the minimum human health and safety exceptions received to date and have found that they represent a negligible quantity of water for the most part. The demand resulting from this exception is not incorporated into the demand dataset or larger methodology due to this largely negligible quantity and because its exclusion favors fewer curtailments. Demands associated with the exceptions will continue to be evaluated and substantial, significant exceptions may be incorporated into the methodology's demand dataset in the future, if appropriate.

2.3 Adjustments to the Supply and Demand Datasets

2.3.1 Elimination of Unmet Demand

A significant improvement over the water unavailability methodology used in the previous drought is the implementation of a more granular analysis, evaluating supply and demand on both a subwatershed level (e.g., a single tributary like the Upper Feather River) and watershed-wide level (the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds). The watershed-wide analysis also includes water rights that divert from within the Legal Delta (see section 2.3.3 below). This allows for water unavailability to be determined based on physical supplies within a headwater stream and for the accounting of senior demands that may have priority to divert that supply further downstream. Supply and demand are compared at a subwatershed level for those subwatersheds that are not downstream of any other subwatershed. Demands within these "headwater" subwatersheds can only be met by supply originating within the subwatershed itself. Figure 9 below is a schematic showing how this analysis was performed using the supply and demand data previously described.

Figure 9. Schematic of Supply and Demand Analysis at the Subwatershed and Watershed Levels



As shown in Figure 9, supply and demand are first compared within headwater subwatersheds. While supplies from headwater subwatersheds are considered available to meet downstream demands in the larger Sacramento or San Joaquin River watershed analyses, only headwater subwatershed demand that is able to be met by available supply in the headwater subwatershed is considered in the watershed analysis.

The headwater subwatersheds in the Sacramento River watershed include the Sacramento River and its tributaries above Bend, Stony Creek, Cache Creek, Putah Creek, the Upper Feather River above Oroville Dam, Yuba River, Bear River, and the Upper American River above Folsom Dam (see Figure 4). The headwater subwatersheds in the San Joaquin River watershed are the Chowchilla River, Upper San Joaquin River above Friant Dam, Fresno River, Merced River, Tuolumne River, Stanislaus River, Calaveras River, Mokelumne River, and the Cosumnes River. Figure 10 below shows a schematic of the subwatersheds previously mapped in Figure 4. A small number of rights in the headwater Putah Creek, Stanislaus River, Calaveras

River, Mokelumne River, and Cosumnes River subwatersheds which lie within the Legal Delta were excluded from the headwater subwatershed analysis and included only in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watershed-wide analyses, as they have access to water from both the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers (see section 2.3.3 below).

Lower subwatersheds are defined as such because they contain demands that can be met by supplies from outside tributaries (the headwater subwatersheds). The Upper Sacramento River Valley and Sacramento River Valley floor subwatersheds are considered lower watersheds because demands within them may be met from the mainstem of the Sacramento River flowing in from the Sacramento River at Bend. Similarly, the San Joaquin River Valley Floor includes demands on the mainstem of the San Joaquin River that can be met by inflow from the Cosumnes, Mokelumne, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, Chowchilla, Fresno, and Upper San Joaquin River subwatersheds.

Some headwater subwatersheds in the San Joaquin River watershed were delineated based on a combination of smaller HUC10 watersheds and stream buffers because their HUC8 boundaries (see section 2.1.3 above) contain demands that are not met exclusively by supplies from within the subwatershed. The Chowchilla River HUC8 (Middle San Joaquin-Lower Chowchilla) also includes minor east side tributaries and the mainstem of the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River, so the Chowchilla River headwater subwatershed was instead defined as a combination of two HUC10s representing only the Chowchilla River drainage (Upper Chowchilla River and Lower Chowchilla River), as well as a buffer along Ash Slough below Berenda Reservoir.

The Fresno River HUC8 includes diversion points on the Eastside Bypass that are supplied by San Joaquin River flood flows, so the Fresno River headwater subwatershed was instead defined as a combination of three HUC10s (Upper Fresno River, Coarse Gold Creek, and Middle Fresno River), as well as buffers along Dry Creek below Avenue 16 ½, the mainstem of the Fresno River between Road 16 and the Eastside Bypass, and the mainstem of the Fresno River between the Road 9 diversion structure and the confluence with the San Joaquin River.

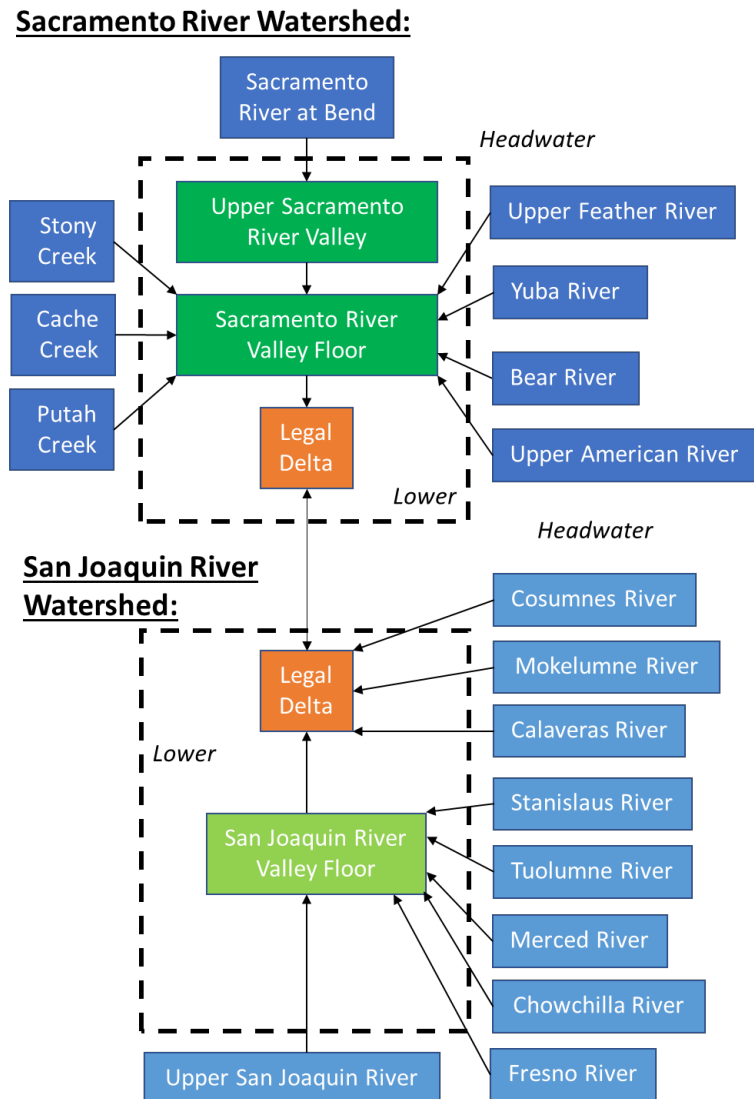
The Mokelumne River HUC8 (Upper Mokelumne) includes demands on the mainstem of the San Joaquin River within the Legal Delta, so the Mokelumne River headwater subwatershed was instead defined as a combination of five HUC10s (Upper Mokelumne River, South Fork Mokelumne River, Middle Fork Mokelumne River, Upper North Fork Mokelumne River, and Lower North Fork Mokelumne River) and a buffer along the Mokelumne River between Camanche Reservoir and the confluence with Dry Creek.

Finally, the Calaveras River HUC8 does not include demands along Mormon Slough that are supplied from the Calaveras River, so its subwatershed boundary was modified to include Mormon Slough between the Bellota Weir and the Stockton Diverting Canal.

Previous versions of this report derived the delineation of the Mokelumne River, Chowchilla River, and Fresno River subwatersheds from the HUC8 boundaries, which resulted in their classification as lower subwatersheds. By deriving the delineations from the HUC10 boundaries as described above, these subwatersheds are able to be treated as headwater subwatersheds within the analysis; thereby enabling a headwater subwatershed-level analysis to be conducted in these areas. As discussed in more detail below, this enables headwater subwatershed level analyses to be conducted in these areas and for any unmet demand to be eliminated from the wider watershed-level analysis (of which the lower reaches of these subwatersheds are now a part).

The Legal Delta is not a distinct subwatershed; it is a category of rights within several subwatersheds which have access to water from both the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers (see section 2.3.3 below).

Figure 10. Subwatersheds Schematic



Diverters within headwater subwatersheds whose demand cannot be physically met by the supply available within those subwatersheds may receive notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders based on the headwater subwatershed-level analysis. Currently, rights and claims are only curtailed if there is zero supply available to meet their demands (i.e., a right or claim is currently not curtailed even if a portion of its demand cannot be met by available supply). However, this assumption may be refined in the future. If demand in a headwater subwatershed exceeds the available supply, the excess demand is eliminated from the larger watershed-wide analysis. As a result, demand that cannot be met by physically available supplies is not “charged against” supplies from elsewhere in the Delta watershed.

The evaluation of water unavailability at the headwater subwatershed scale is only part of the evaluation of water unavailability. Though water may be physically available within a headwater subwatershed, it may be needed to meet the demand of senior users downstream that may have the right to some of the water originating in the headwater subwatershed. This broader unavailability is shown in the watershed-wide analysis for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds.

2.3.2 Treatment of Riparian Demands and Elimination of Supply and Demand in Disconnected Headwater Subwatersheds

The Water Unavailability Methodology does not currently specifically evaluate water unavailability for individual riparian claimants unless there is no flow available.²⁹ In times of shortage, riparian rights provide for sharing of those shortages. Given the scale and complexity of the Delta watershed, the methodology does not yet fully evaluate how that sharing should occur. However, the methodology can be used to evaluate general quantities of water that may be unavailable for riparian claimants and when riparian claimants should implement measures to address those shortages. In the future, refinements to the methodology may be made to further address water unavailability for riparian claimants.

If the headwater subwatershed analysis indicates that the total demands of riparian claimants exceed the available supply in a particular headwater subwatershed, the headwater subwatershed’s supplies and demands are removed from the watershed-wide analysis for the period of analysis (e.g., 7 days or 31 days). In other words, the methodology assumes that the given stream would not have continuity with the larger Delta watershed and would be considered “disconnected” due to fulfillment of the local senior water right demands.

The Water Unavailability Methodology Spreadsheet, available on the State Water Board’s Delta [Water Unavailability Methodology webpage](#), contains a table in the

²⁹ Demands by Riparian-priority claims are assumed to be senior in priority to all other demands for the purposes of the methodology. As discussed above, there may be instances where a pre-1914 appropriative right is senior to a riparian. In those cases, adjustments can be made.

'Supply Final' tab that summarizes which headwater subwatersheds were assumed to be disconnected from the Delta watershed during the analyzed period .

2.3.3 Proration of Legal Delta Demands

Diverters with appropriative water rights with points of diversion within the Legal Delta (as defined in Water Code section 12220) may have access to water supplies entering the Delta from both the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds. To account for this, appropriative demands within the Legal Delta are prorated between the two watersheds based on the proportion of connected supply available (see section 2.3.2 above) from each watershed. For example, if the Sacramento River watershed contributes 80 percent of the water supply reaching the Legal Delta during the analysis period, 80 percent of Legal Delta appropriative demand is charged against Sacramento River watershed supply for that period and 20 percent is charged against San Joaquin River watershed supply. The proration of Legal Delta appropriative demands is only applicable to the assessment of water unavailability at a watershed-wide scale and does not impact the assessment of water unavailability at the headwater subwatershed scale. Water rights and claims with points of diversion within the Legal Delta that claim only appropriative water rights will only receive notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders if both the Sacramento River watershed analysis and the San Joaquin River watershed analyses show that water will be unavailable at their priority of right. The hydrology of the Legal Delta is complex, and this proration method offers a simplified and generous assessment of water unavailability to appropriators in the Legal Delta during this critically dry period.

Consistent with the analysis contained in State Water Board Order WR 89-8, the methodology assumes that riparian claims do not have access to supply outside the watershed where they are located (i.e., a riparian claim along the San Joaquin River in the Legal Delta does not have a right to divert natural or abandoned flow of water originating from the Sacramento River). Therefore, Statements of Diversion and Use with points of diversion within the Legal Delta that claim only riparian rights are excluded from the Legal Delta proration process described in the previous paragraph and are only charged against supply in the watershed where they are located. Statements of Diversion and Use with points of diversion in the Legal Delta claiming both riparian rights and pre-1914 or other non-riparian categories of right were assumed for the purposes of the methodology to be riparian claims and were therefore accorded senior priority over all appropriative water rights (see section 2.2.6 above).³⁰

³⁰ This categorization of colorable riparian claims within the Legal Delta is consistent with the legal principles described in a memorandum dated December 15, 2017, regarding Issues Related to Overlap between Pre-1914 and Riparian Water Right Claims in the Delta and available on the website of the Office of the Delta Watermaster ([Overlap Memo](#)).

Supply ratios for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds are calculated using the exceedance forecast selected for use in determining water unavailability for each watershed (see section 3.1.1 below). These supplies include abandoned instream flows in excess of FNF (see section 2.1.6 above) and do not include flows from headwater subwatersheds assumed to be disconnected from the Delta watershed (see section 2.3.2 above).

Although the methodology has the flexibility to evaluate water unavailability over sub-monthly timesteps to consider short-term precipitation and runoff events, water unavailability analyses for the purpose of issuing curtailments in the Legal Delta are not currently performed on a timestep any shorter than 30 days (i.e., monthly). The methodology does not assume there is supply available longer than a month in the Legal Delta such that water unavailability would be affected, given the extremely dry conditions that have persisted for an extended period and the supplementation of flows in the Delta with previously stored water for many months. The methodology also only accounts for freshwater natural flows from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers as part of the available supplies and does not include any water supplies from tidal inflows to the Legal Delta. Saline water entering the Legal Delta from the San Francisco Bay via tidal action is assumed to be of insufficient quality to be usable for agricultural or municipal purposes. Technical Appendix D explains the technical analysis that supports these assumptions.

2.4 Water Unavailability Visualizations

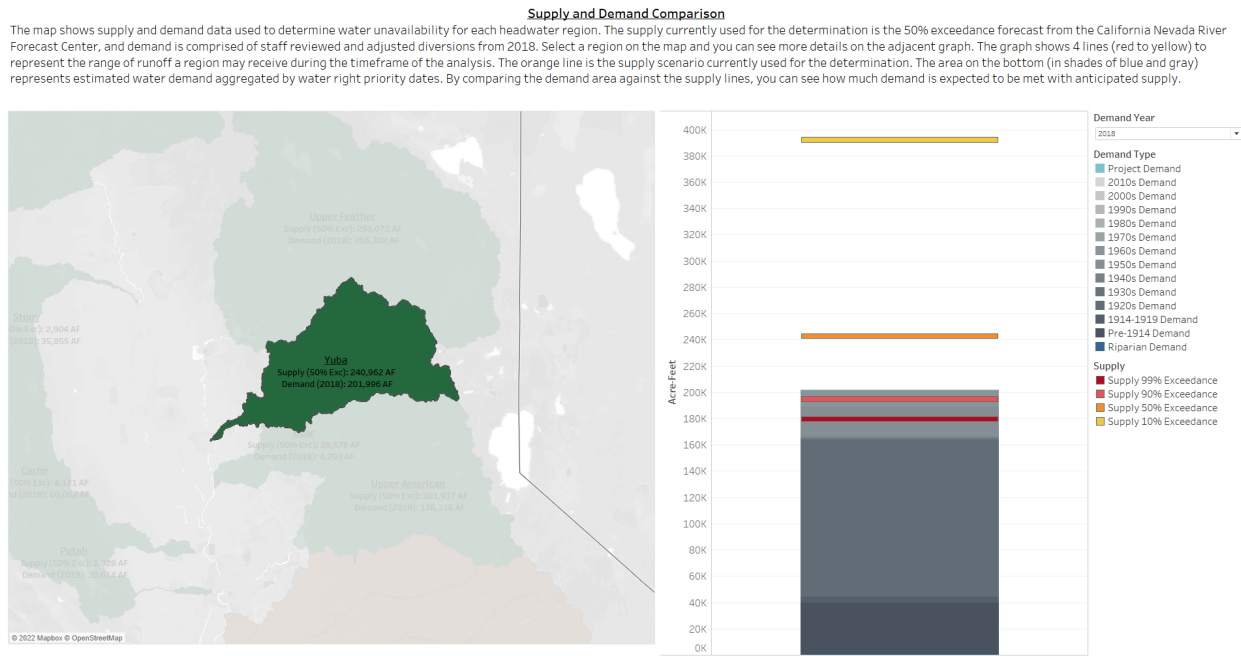
The Water Unavailability Methodology includes two major types of water unavailability visualizations: the headwater subwatershed visualizations (17 in total) and the watershed-wide visualizations,³¹ consisting of one for the Sacramento River watershed and one for the San Joaquin River watershed. Samples of these graphs are provided below in Figure 11, Figure 12, and Figure 13. Each graph can display demand data from either the 2018 or 2019 demand datasets. The demands are sorted by water right priority, with riparian demand at the bottom of the graphs, followed by pre-1914 appropriative demand and post-1914 appropriative demand, which are grouped by priority decade. Project demands are stacked at the top (see section 2.2.9 above).

The subwatershed visualization displays four water supply scenarios: the 10 percent, 50 percent, 90 percent, and 99 percent FNF exceedance forecasts, representing optimistic, neutral, pessimistic, and extremely pessimistic forecasts, respectively. When conditions in the Delta watershed were extremely dry, the adjustments to the supply and demand datasets described in section 2.3 above were done using the 90 percent FNF

³¹ Supply and demand within the watershed-wide analyses are adjusted as described in section 2.3 above.

exceedance forecast.³² During the wet season when precipitation conditions were dynamically evolving, the 50 percent FNF exceedance forecast was used. Other scenarios, such as the 75 percent FNF exceedance forecast, have also been used as appropriate (see section 3.1.1 below). The watershed-wide visualizations display a single supply scenario that has been adjusted to account for disconnection at the subwatershed scale. The sample watershed-wide visualizations below display the adjusted 50 percent exceedance forecast.

Figure 11. Sample Headwater Subwatershed Water Unavailability Visualization (Yuba River)



³² Section 3.1.1 below describes how daily FNF may be used to determine which monthly FNF exceedance forecast most closely represents actual conditions. From May through September 2021, the water supply forecasts used in the visualizations were the 90 percent exceedance forecast from DWR’s May B-120. Beginning in October 2021, B-120 forecasts are not available; therefore, CNRFC forecasts have been used since October.

Figure 12. Sample Sacramento River Watershed Water Unavailability Visualization

Supply and Demand Comparison

The map shows supply and demand data used to determine water unavailability for each watershed. The supply currently used for the determination is the 50% exceedance forecast from the California Nevada River Forecast Center, and demand is comprised of staff reviewed and adjusted diversions from 2018. Select a watershed on the map and you can see more details on the adjacent graph. The red line represents estimated runoff in the for the timeframe of the analysis, after adjusting for disconnection and other factors. The area on the bottom represents estimated water demand aggregated by water right priority dates. By comparing the demand area against the supply line, you can see how much demand is expected to be met with anticipated supply.

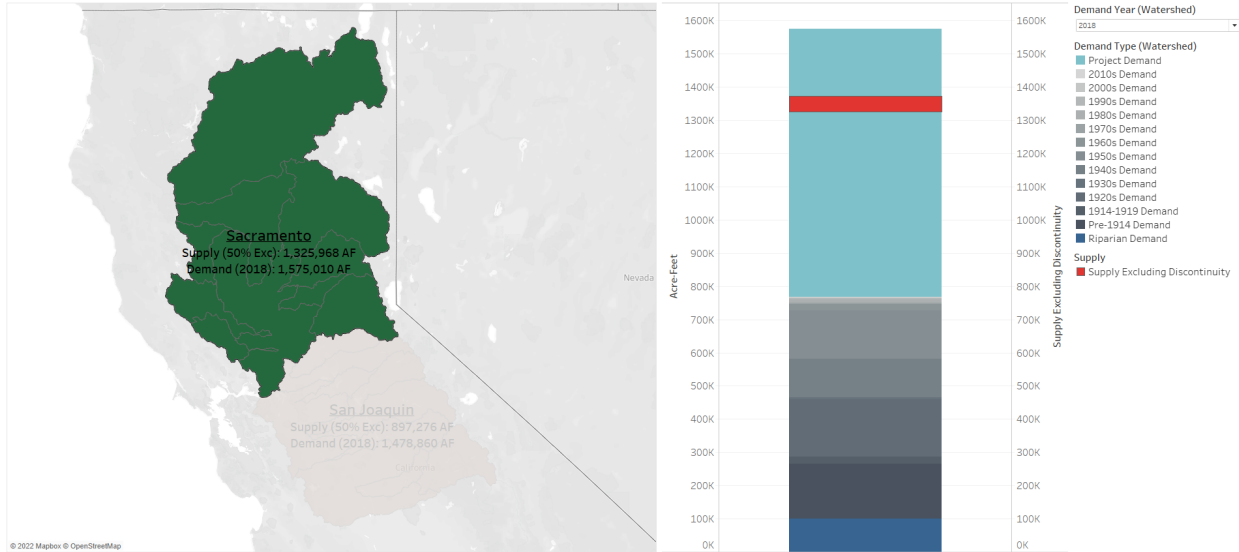
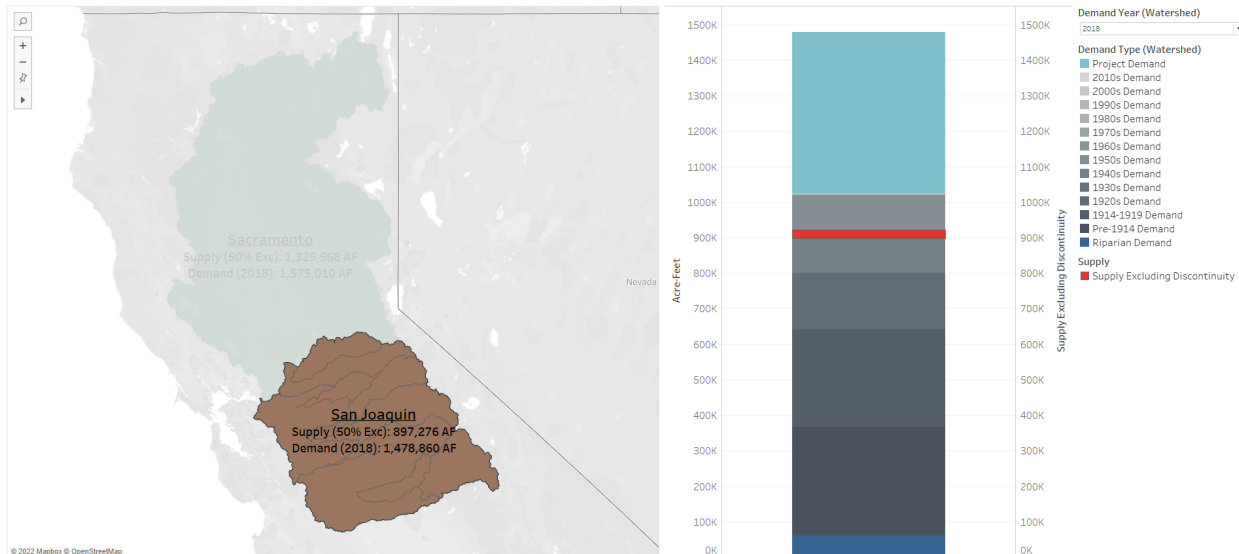


Figure 13. Sample San Joaquin River Watershed Water Unavailability Visualization

Supply and Demand Comparison

The map shows supply and demand data used to determine water unavailability for each watershed. The supply currently used for the determination is the 50% exceedance forecast from the California Nevada River Forecast Center, and demand is comprised of staff reviewed and adjusted diversions from 2018. Select a watershed on the map and you can see more details on the adjacent graph. The red line represents estimated runoff in the for the timeframe of the analysis, after adjusting for disconnection and other factors. The area on the bottom represents estimated water demand aggregated by water right priority dates. By comparing the demand area against the supply line, you can see how much demand is expected to be met with anticipated supply.



The visualizations have been made available on the Board's [Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage](#) using the Tableau interactive platform and will be updated to reflect current supply conditions and forecasts. As discussed above, the 2018 demand dataset is planned to be used to assess if insufficient supply is available to meet demands (i.e., the demands positioned above the applicable supply line(s) in the visualizations). In cases where riparian demand exceeds supply (i.e., in disconnected headwater subwatersheds or for riparian demands above the applicable supply line(s) in the visualization) there may be insufficient water available to meet all riparian demands. Section 3.1 below describes the process for issuing notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders to diverters.

3 Implementation

3.1 Issuance of Notices of Water Unavailability and Curtailment Orders

The Water Unavailability Methodology is being used to determine when there is insufficient supply to meet diverters' priorities of right within the Delta watershed based on the best available information, either at the scale of a headwater subwatershed or the wider Sacramento or San Joaquin River watersheds. Based on prior outputs of the methodology, on June 15 and July 23, 2021, the State Water Board issued notices of water unavailability (also referred to simply as "notices") to water right holders and/or claimants in the Delta watershed indicating that water supplies are not available for their use. Notices, unlike curtailment orders, are not directives to stop diverting. Rather, they inform affected diverters that water is expected to be unavailable for their diversion in a future time frame. These notices also play an important policy and public relations role by offering the opportunity for voluntary compliance prior to formal enforcement action by the Board. Diverting unavailable water can result in penalties for injuring more senior water right holders and public trust resources.

Given the dire water supply conditions in the Delta watershed, on August 20, 2021, based on the output of the methodology and the authority granted to the Board under the emergency regulation, the Board issued curtailment orders to all post-1914 appropriative water right holders in the Delta watershed, many pre-1914 appropriative claimants, as well as some riparian claimants. Unlike notices of water unavailability, curtailment orders are directives to stop diverting. The curtailment orders, which will continue to be updated as conditions change, require affected right holders and claimants to cease diversions when water is not available under a water right holder's or claimant's priority of right unless and until (1) they have authorization to continue diverting pursuant to one of the exceptions enumerated in the regulation or (2) they receive notice that the curtailment order has been temporarily suspended or permanently lifted. In addition, the emergency regulation authorizes the State Water Board to require enhanced reporting of some larger water users to provide additional

information on past diversion and use, and future projected use. That information is planned to be used to better inform future curtailment decisions.

During exceptionally dry conditions in the fall of 2021, curtailments were issued when the methodology determined that any portion of a water right or claim's demand was unavailable. Despite large precipitation events early in the water year, 2022 has remained critically dry. Nevertheless, due to continued needs to refill storage reservoirs and capture precipitation and snowmelt from short duration events, the methodology was modified to only issue curtailments when zero supply is available to meet a water right or claim's demand (i.e., if any portion of a right's demand can be met by available supply, then it is not curtailed). Further adjustments may be made to this assumption to reflect limited availability, particularly for larger rights.

As discussed above, appropriative diverters in the Legal Delta will only receive notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders if supply is unavailable to them from both the Sacramento and the San Joaquin Rivers, the issuance of which will be coordinated with the Office of the Delta Watermaster. In addition, implementation of this methodology will operate separately from issuance of curtailment notices pursuant to standard water right Term 91, which was in effect from April 29 to October 26, 2021 and will be reimposed if the conditions or triggering Term 91 curtailments occur (the Projects are required to release previously stored water to meet water quality requirements in the Delta).

3.1.1 Period of Analysis and Exceedance Forecast Selection

To evaluate water unavailability, water demands are evaluated against an appropriate supply forecast (e.g., 10%, 50%, 90%, or other exceedance forecasts) for a specified period of analysis. The most appropriate values for these two variables, exceedance forecast and period of analysis, or averaging period, are selected based on the best available data.

During the initial implementation of the Water Unavailability Methodology in summer 2021, a static calendar month timestep was used for the analysis due to the relatively stable hydrology at this time of year. As conditions during the fall and winter became more dynamic different averaging periods were applied that had the effect of generally reducing curtailments. This includes a shorter averaging period(7 days) that was used for curtailments of rights and claims outside the Legal Delta that provided for more dynamic suspension of curtailment orders if forecasted or actual precipitation events were expected to generate sufficient runoff during a particular week. A rolling 31-day averaging period was also used that provided for greater suspension of curtailments during the winter and spring. When the hydrology stabilizes in late spring, the Board anticipates returning to a static calendar month timestep that better reflects the shift from predominately precipitation driven reservoir storage demands to more static direct diversion demands for agricultural purposes.

Demand values, instream flows, and gap-filling factors used in the analysis are prorated to the same averaging period as supply. Due to issues related to transit times and the duration of supply availability, the issuance of curtailments within the Legal Delta continue to be considered based on an analysis using a monthly (i.e., no shorter than 30 days) timestep. However, shorter term expected precipitation and runoff data can still be considered as appropriate in determining whether to temporarily suspend curtailments in the Legal Delta.

The selected supply data source and averaging period helps to inform the selection of the most appropriate exceedance forecast for the analysis. For example, if a 7-day CNRFC forecast is used, the 50 percent exceedance forecast, which is based on forecasted precipitation events, is expected to be the most likely predictor of supply over that period. Over longer periods, general climatic trends have a greater influence over the forecast. Therefore, for a longer averaging period during a critically dry year, a drier forecast such as the 75 or 90 percent exceedance forecast may be more appropriate. Recent weekly curtailment status updates from the Board have described the exceedance forecast and averaging period used in the analysis. As described above, earlier updates used a static calendar month period of analysis. Due to variable conditions throughout the Delta watershed, different exceedance forecasts may be used for the Sacramento River watershed, the San Joaquin River watershed, and individual subwatersheds, if appropriate.

Additional available datasets that may be used to monitor and forecast precipitation and runoff include qualitative Area Forecast or Hydrometeorological Discussions from NOAA and CNRFC, Quantitative Precipitation Forecasts (QPF) from CNRFC, Atmospheric River (AR) Activity sub-seasonal outlooks from the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, use of the USGS Basin Characterization Model, and other tools.

3.2 Water Quality and Public Trust Resources

The Water Unavailability Methodology does not account for any of the following: (a) water needs for public trust resources; (b) natural instream losses and evaporation; or (c) non-agricultural consumptive uses in the Delta (e.g., open water evaporation, riparian vegetation, etc.).³³ Currently, notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders are not proposed to be issued to make water available for the environment, only to make water available for senior water right holders and claimants and to prevent the unlawful diversion of storage releases, which are intended to meet water quality and flow requirements or contract demands. The methodology does not affect other obligations that water users may have for meeting flow and other requirements.

³³ For context, the State Water Board's 1977 Drought Report Appendix, Table 14 estimated that non-agricultural consumptive water use in the Delta was as high as 74,560 AF in June 1977.

3.3 Communication and Public Engagement Strategy

State Water Board staff has engaged with a number of water users on issues related to the development of the Water Unavailability Methodology. In addition, a public workshop regarding the May 12, 2021 draft version of the methodology was held on May 21, 2021, during which numerous parties provided oral comment. Numerous written comments on the draft methodology were also timely received by the May 25, 2021 deadline. Since that time, modifications have been made to the methodology to support the determination of water unavailability for water right holders and claimants in the Delta watershed. These changes are described throughout this document, as well as its technical appendices. This version of the report also includes report updates that consider topics raised during the October 20, 2021 technical staff workshop and those raised in petitions for reconsideration of the August 20, 2021 curtailment and reporting orders.

The State Water Board will continue to regularly update the information used to determine water unavailability in the methodology as new data becomes available and as needed to address wet season information needs as described above. Regular updates regarding issues related to water unavailability will be provided to the public during Board meetings. Regular updates will also be provided on the Board's [Delta Drought](#) and [Delta Water Unavailability Methodology](#) webpages, including updated water unavailability visualizations.

This methodology does not represent a static assessment of how the State Water Board will determine water unavailability within the Delta watershed. The methodology may change as the seasons progress and based on new information and refined analyses, as appropriate. This methodology is a first step toward refining the Board's process for issuing notices of water unavailability or curtailment orders, which includes refinements upon the 2014 and 2015 methodology that were feasible given existing time and data constraints. Additional refinements to the methodology beyond those discussed above may be needed as conditions change.

Public engagement was also an important component in the development of the emergency regulation ultimately adopted by the Board on August 3, 2021. Public comment was solicited and received during a July 27, 2021 workshop and at the Board meeting, which led to refinement of the regulation.

4 Areas of Potential Refinement

4.1 Near-Term Opportunities

4.1.1 Supply

California water supply data is generated by agencies other than the State Water Board and is, therefore, subject to the data quality assurance programs and improvements of those agencies. In the near-term, the State Water Board will continue to focus refinement efforts on improvements to the preparation of supply data for use in water unavailability analyses. These improvements relate to analysis repeatability, automation of the data preparation process, and data documentation. Within the next few years, the Board may further improve the preparation of supply data via the implementation of additional data validation methods, refinement of the process to identify and fill data gaps, and incorporation of new supply data as it becomes available. The Board may also alter the assumptions of the analysis to reflect increased understanding of groundwater interactions, riparian evapotranspiration, and evaporative losses.

4.1.2 Demand

The State Water Board will continue to refine the demand dataset used in the Water Unavailability Methodology as appropriate by streamlining existing processes and improving demand estimates and accounting. This includes the identification of additional data entry errors, estimation of demand values where necessary and feasible, and additional data quality control methods. In addition, as discussed above, the emergency regulation provides that the submittal of demand projections may be required and these projections may be used in the methodology as appropriate. Refinement of the representation of non-consumptive uses will also be evaluated. The Board will also continue ongoing work with diverters to improve water accounting by minimizing instances of duplicate reporting, identifying incorrectly reported re-diversions, refining estimates of return flows from larger scale diverters such as those diverting more than 100,000 AF per year, and increasing compliance with the regulations that resulted from SB88. The Board may also consider specific demand issues within the Legal Delta for lands below sea level, as described in the emergency regulation.

Over the next few years, the State Water Board plans to develop cross-validation methods using other datasets such as aerial imagery, OpenET, and land use datasets to assess the validity of reported demand values. The Board may also refine the subwatershed demand aggregation method (see section 2.2.8 above) by developing more accurate estimates of proportional demand for water rights that have PODs located in more than one subwatershed. In addition, the Board may use the historical demand record to develop statistical and predictive approaches to identify outliers in the

demand dataset and, in conjunction with outside datasets, develop higher temporal resolution for demand estimates.

4.2 Longer-Term Opportunities

In the next several years as part of larger efforts, the State Water Board will work toward developing a data management plan for the demand dataset. The plan's primary functions will be to formalize quality assurance measures, improve data intake processes, and publish the dataset in accordance with Assembly Bill 1755 and the State Water Board's Open Data Resolution to the extent feasible. During the plan development, the Board will expand upon existing data validation efforts using land use-based demand estimates and collaborate with other agencies or organizations to identify where the installation of telemetered diversion gages is needed to enable the validation of demand data to an acceptable level of accuracy. The Board may also look to refine internal and external accounting methods for contracted water, water transfers, and other issues.

Ultimately, the demand data is most limited by the number of required or available telemetered diversion measurement gages and the relatively infrequent manual reporting requirements. These spatial and temporal limitations prevent the State Water Board from conducting a finer scale analysis and responding in real time to limited water availability. New requirements for reporting diversions and transitioning to land use-based demand estimates could improve the spatial and temporal coverage of water demand data in California and improve the Board's ability to effectively monitor and manage water supplies.

In the long-term, the Board is also planning to evaluate the use of more sophisticated dynamic evaluation tools capable of addressing the complexities of water unavailability issues in the Delta watershed and other areas of the state with greater spatial and temporal resolution. To be effective, however, these tools are dependent on data of adequate quality.

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Technical Appendix A

Technical Appendix A: Methodology Spreadsheet Description is available on the Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage at

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_tools_methods/delta_method.html

Technical Appendix B

Technical Appendix B: Demand Dataset Description and Preparation is available on the Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage at

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_tools_methods/delta_method.html

Appendix C

Appendix C: Summary of Public Comments is available on the Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage at

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_tools_methods/delta_method.html

Technical Appendix D

Technical Appendix D: Assessment of Water Unavailability Issues within the Legal Delta is available on the Delta Water Unavailability Methodology webpage at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_tools_methods/delta_method.html