

valley water alliance

Water Supply Report

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Water Supply Report?

The Water Supply Report was part of the investigation into San Joaquin River fishery and habitat enhancement possibilities carried out under four years of litigation settlement efforts by the Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA) and a coalition headed by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). According to a correspondence from FWUA and NRDC officials releasing the water supply study, “The purpose of the study is to provide FWUA, NRDC Coalition and other interested parties with information to help guide future planning efforts. This document does not propose any specific water supply alternative. It is a pre-reconnaissance performance analysis of defined alternatives for supplying a target level of water to support restoration of San Joaquin River habitat and fisheries while not adversely impacting Friant Division water supplies. The analysis was undertaken to establish a technical basis for estimating the comparative ability of the alternative approaches to achieve restoration and water supply goals to identify potential impacts.”

Is the Water Supply Report complete?

No. FWUA and NRDC entered the water supply study process with the expectation of doing additional work. Sufficient technical analysis was never completed to draw any conclusions about which water supply alternatives might be feasible to meet the demands of fulfilling current Friant Division supply agreements and supporting a once historic salmon fishery.

What were the original objectives of the Water Supply Report?

The original study objectives were to:

- Identify and investigate a variety of potential supplemental water supply alternatives;
- Develop a “short list” of these water supply alternatives to meet a hypothetical restoration water demand; and
- Evaluate water supply alternatives for overall sufficiency, reliability and cost effectiveness for existing water users.

What alternatives were considered in the study?

Thirteen alternatives were studied, some of which included groundwater storage, recirculation through the Delta, water purchases, conservation and some storage enhancement options. Although in-stream surface storage was discussed as a critical water management tool, NRDC would not permit serious consideration of the Temperance Flat Dam proposal or other reservoir projects.

Are there technical findings in the Report to support further study of new storage?

Yes. Technical background notes acknowledge, “If a high level of reliability for supplying restoration water demand is desired a new surface storage reservoir is needed.” And “although there would be significant environmental and institutional impacts associated with construction of a dam at Temperance Flat, no “fatal flaw” impacts were identified during the course of these preliminary studies.”

Would additional engineering studies be helpful in proving the feasibility of water supply alternatives?

Yes. As noted previously, the depth of study conducted was severely restricted. Only a preliminary level of study could be completed in a short time frame, which limited the ability to adequately analyze water rights, engineering, environmental, and institutional issues. Major assumptions were made in all areas in order to proceed with the study effort in the time allotted.

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Where did the Report assume additional water supplies would come from?

The Report assumed there would always be willing sellers regardless of the real life water year conditions and despite an unpredictable water market. Assumptions were made about crucial water rights and institutional matters without consultation with project water rights holders and system operators that were not involved in the study.

Are there additional stakeholders who should be at the table as studies continue?

Yes. The FWUA-NRDC settlement process resulted in litigation restrictions on who could be involved. Unfortunately, this caused significant limits on the report's scope. In future studies, additional stakeholders such as water right holders, water system operators, governmental agencies and impacted cities and counties need to be involved to add valuable insights about the alternatives being studied.

What was the cost of the study?

The water supply study cost \$1.6 million.

How long before the Water Supply Report can be finalized?

No dialogue is currently underway regarding the refinement of the document despite attempts by the FWUA to initiate additional study. Friant continues to recommend the water supply assumptions reviewed in the pre-reconnaissance level study be refined to weed out unfeasible alternatives and identify those components, which can successfully be implemented.



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