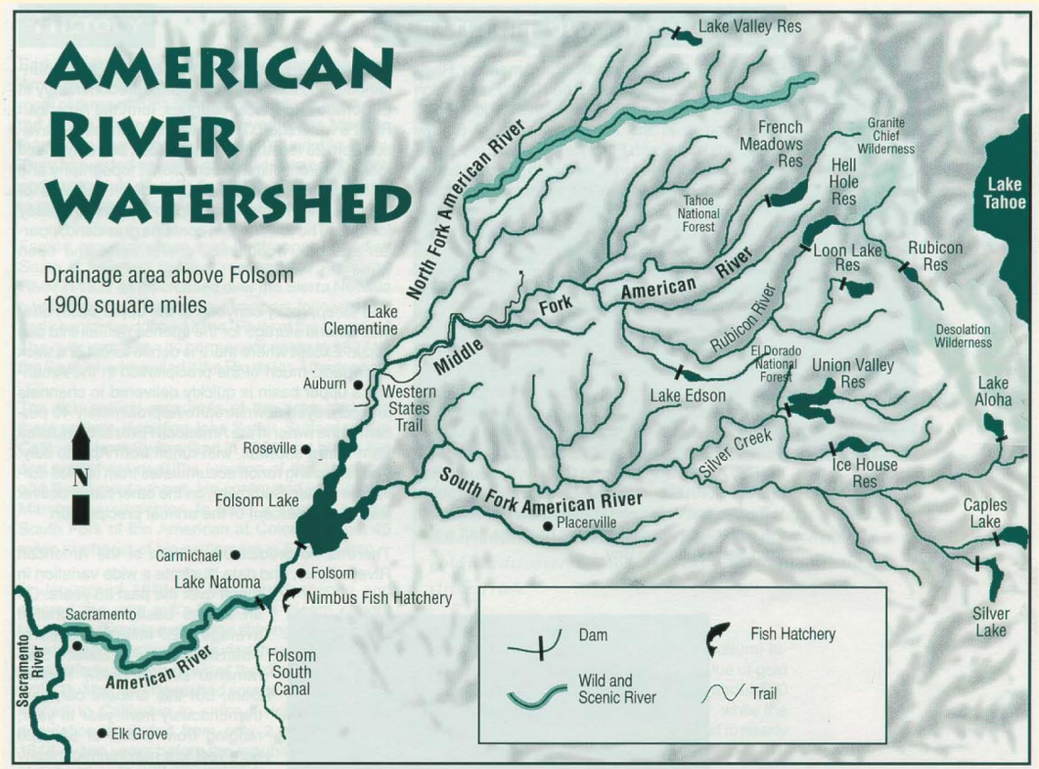
History of The American River

Native Americans have lived around the rivers of California for over 12,000 years. The rich natural resources have provided abundant areas to hunt, fish and gather plants.

The discovery of gold at a site along the South Fork of the American River in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1848 brought people from around the world and they converged on the American River. The rapid population growth resulted in profound changes in California. The American River and surrounding area became the focus of the world; getting rich quick was the goal. The American River was changed forever.

Managing water has become critical because of the huge population growth and the unpredictable water flows. Currently, Folsom Lake provides flood control, hydroelectricity, recreation, water supply distribution, regulated water for fisheries, environment, delta water quality, and agricultural purposes.



Purpose of the ARWEC

To increase the public's knowledge of the American River watershed—both the natural features and human interactions within the watershed. Emphasis is placed on increasing the publics understanding of the water cycle and watersheds, and on how individuals can actively participate in resource conservation and on Folsom Dams' multiple roles in meeting the needs of urban, industrial, agricultural, and natural systems.

Located at:
7785 Folsom-Auburn Road
Folsom, CA 95630

Mailing address:
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630

Website: www.usbr.gov/mp/arwec
Program Information: (916) 989-7132
Call for hours of operation: (916) 989-7100
FAX: (916) 989-7151
E-mail: ibr2foodarwec@usbr.gov

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

Central California Area Office

American River Water Education Center

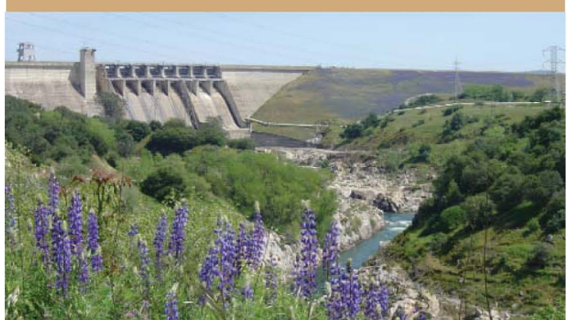
Water
Conservation
& Education

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region

Welcome!

The American River Water Education Center, located at Folsom Dam, offers an exciting way to experience the watershed of the American River and appreciate the importance of water management.

Central California Area Office's water conservation program assists local water users in financial and technical needs in preparing and developing their water management plans in delivering water to our community.



Bureau of Reclamation Mission

To manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Interactive ARWEC Exhibits include the following Hands-on Activities...

Begin your visit with an overview of our ...

Watershed & Relief Map of the Sacramento Region

Follow the river's flow through the...

American River

Canyon

History

Learn who lives along our ...

Rivers Are Alive ...

Discover the benefits and...

History of The Folsom Dam & Hydroelectric Powerplant

Understand the benefits of...

Flood Control

Learn about our ...

Groundwater

Create a river and experiment how water moves at the...

Sand Table

Divide water needs up between wildlife habitat, agricultural farming and community development with the...

Water Challenge

Understand ...

Where Your Water Comes From

How much water does it take to put food in our...

Kitchen

Learn to save water when taking a Shower ...

Explore water saving tips in our...

Water Efficient Landscape Display

See ...

Who Needs Clean Water?

Reserve your program today by calling (916) 989-7132
www.usbr.gov/mp/arwec

Programs

Reserve your free group program at the American River Water Education Center (ARWEC) by making a reservation. Choose from a center program, a learning activity, or catch a glimpse of Folsom Dam from Beals Point during a hike.

Garden

Drought tolerant landscaping using more than 100 demonstration species, some native and others non-native, are featured throughout the garden. The plants are labeled with common and botanical names, noting water usage. The garden includes bird and butterfly attracting plants. Planted in October 2007, the garden is a Certified Wildlife Habitat.

Volunteer!

Our center relies on a committed group of volunteers. Greeters, gift shop assistants, activity presenters, center & garden guides, special events, along with exhibit & program development are some of the volunteer opportunities available.

Center, Schoolhouse, Amphitheater, Garden & Picnic Grounds

Facility is open to the general public and adjacent to the American River Parkway. The schoolhouse, amphitheater & picnic grounds are available for group meetings, workshops and other water related gatherings. Facility reservations upon request. Accessibility access is available.