

The Central Valley Project

Central Valley Project (CVP) History

The CVP was originally conceived as a State of California project to protect the Central Valley from crippling water shortages and catastrophic flooding. The concept was included in the State Water Plan formulated in the 1930s, but during the Great Depression, California was unable to finance the project. Most of the water development envisioned by the State was accomplished by the Federal Government beginning with the CVP's initial authorization in 1935. Construction began in 1937 with the Contra Costa Canal which began delivering water in 1940. The next facility was Shasta Dam, the CVP's keystone. Work on Shasta began in 1938, and water storage started in January 1944. Other major facilities were developed over the next 3 decades with the final dam, New Melones, completed in 1979.

The CVP Today

The CVP is a system of 20 dams and reservoirs, some 500 miles of major canals, 11 powerplants, and numerous other facilities located mainly in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys of California. In a normal water year, the CVP develops or manages about 9 million acre-feet of water and delivers about 7 million acre-feet for urban, industrial, agricultural, and environmental uses; produces electrical power; and provides flood protection, water for navigation, fish and wildlife, recreation, and water quality benefits from the Cascade Mountains near Redding in the north to near Bakersfield in the south. The CVP is the Nation's largest water development project.

MAJOR CVP FACILITIES

Dam and Reservoir	River System	Storage Capacity (acre-feet)
Shasta Dam and Reservoir	Sacramento	4,552,000
Trinity Dam and Reservoir	Trinity	2,448,000
Folsom Dam and Reservoir	American	977,000
New Melones Dam and Reservoir	Stanislaus	2,420,000
Friant Dam and Millerton Reservoir	San Joaquin	520,000
San Luis Dam and Reservoir	Offstream Storage	966,000 (Federal share)

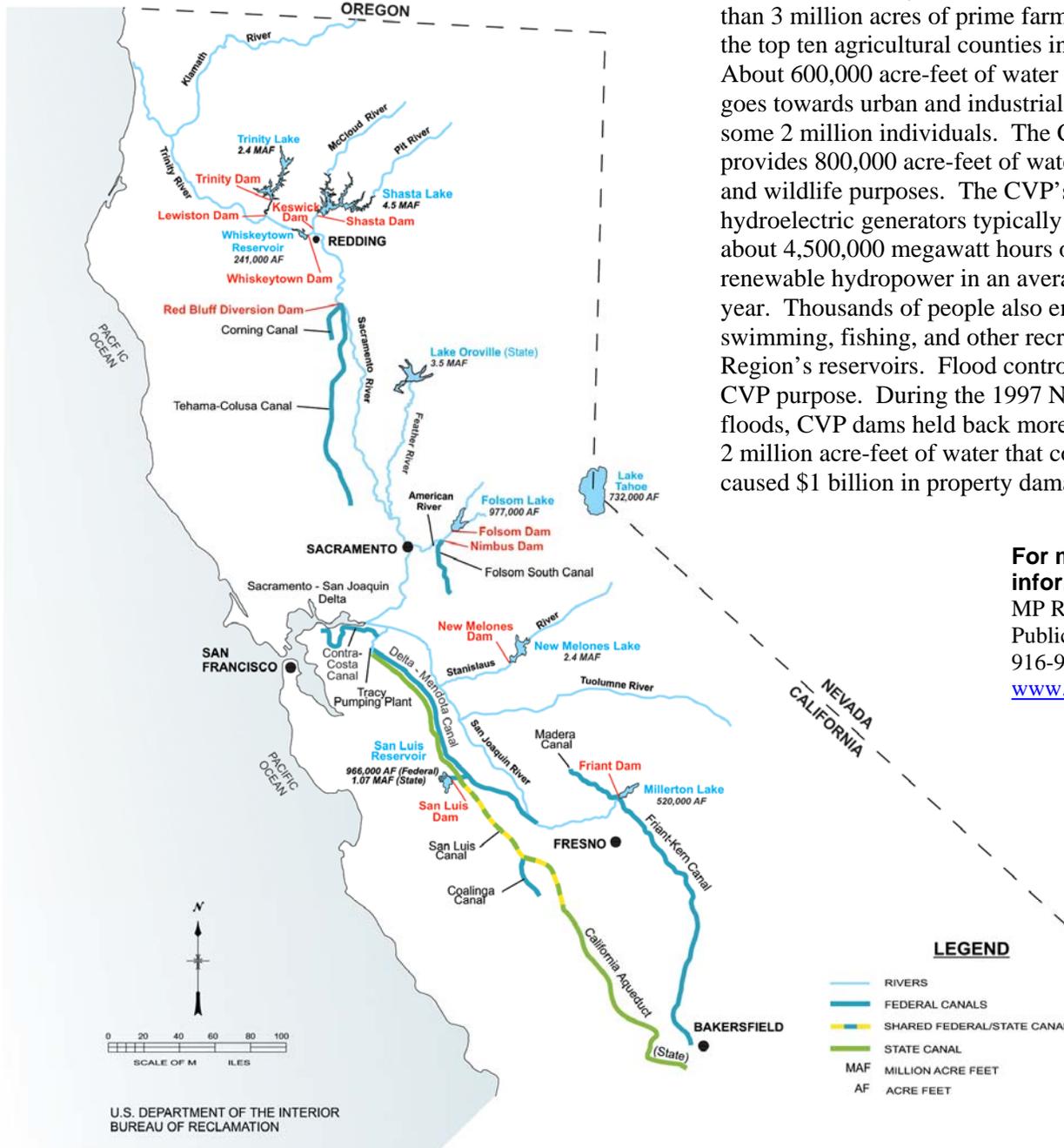
Canal	Length (miles)	Capacity (cubic feet per second)
Corning	21.0	500
Tehama-Colusa	110.9	2,530
Contra Costa	47.7	350
Folsom South	26.7	3,500
Delta-Mendota	117.0	4,600
Friant-Kern	151.8	5,000
Madera	35.9	1,250
Coalinga	11.6	1,100
San Luis (Joint Federal/State)	102.5	13,100



CVP Benefits

In a normal water year, the CVP irrigates more than 3 million acres of prime farmland in six of the top ten agricultural counties in the State. About 600,000 acre-feet of water each year goes towards urban and industrial use, serving some 2 million individuals. The CVP also provides 800,000 acre-feet of water for fish and wildlife purposes. The CVP's eleven hydroelectric generators typically produce about 4,500,000 megawatt hours of clean, renewable hydropower in an average water year. Thousands of people also enjoy boating, swimming, fishing, and other recreation at the Region's reservoirs. Flood control is a key CVP purpose. During the 1997 New Year's floods, CVP dams held back more than 2 million acre-feet of water that could have caused \$1 billion in property damage.

For more information:
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