



Sites Reservoir

Overview

The North-of-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation, often referred to as Sites Reservoir, is a joint investigation between Reclamation and Sites Project Authority authorized by Congress in 2003. Sites Reservoir would add a new, offstream storage facility in northern California, 10 miles west of the town of Maxwell in rural Glenn and Colusa counties. The reservoir would capture and store stormwater flows from the Sacramento River for later release by beneficiaries throughout the state of California.

Background

The current project is based on a collaborative effort that evaluated the feasibility of a reservoir size between 1.3 million-acre-feet to 1.5 million-acre-feet. The reservoir would provide additional water supply for agriculture and municipal purposes, Central Valley Project (CVP) operational flexibility, benefits to anadromous fish, water supply for wildlife refuges, Delta ecosystem enhancement, flood damage reduction, and recreation opportunities.



When operated in coordination with other Northern California reservoirs such as Shasta, Oroville, and Folsom, Sites Reservoir would increase flexibility, reliability, and resiliency of statewide water supplies in drier years.

Sites Reservoir would increase Northern California's water storage capacity by up to 15 percent.

The proposed Sites Reservoir is an offstream facility that would not dam a major river nor block fish migration or spawning. Rather, Sites Reservoir offers multiple benefits.

Proposed Sites Reservoir would:

- Provide water for up to 1.5 million homes for one year
- Increase needed water storage capacity for the state
- Create reliable water supplies for environmental, agriculture, and municipal uses

Benefits

Sites Reservoir would provide increased water supply and improve the reliability of water deliveries for environmental, municipal, and agricultural uses, especially during drought conditions.



Photo showing an aerial view of the proposed Sites Reservoir location in Glenn and Colusa counties.

Sites Reservoir would benefit anadromous fish (including endangered winter-run Chinook salmon) and other aquatic species by providing opportunities for improved management of salmonid habitat, particularly in the Sacramento River above Red Bluff Diversion Dam.



Sites Reservoir would allow Reclamation to preserve more cold water in Shasta to help critically endangered salmon and improve water quality conditions, especially in dry and critical years.

The project would provide additional water to relieve some of the existing operational constraints in the CVP and help meet obligations under federal and state law.

Sites Reservoir would enhance the Delta ecosystem by providing water to convey food resources from the floodplain to the Delta, thereby improving the food chain and quality of the Delta's estuarine habitat for use by Delta smelt and other native species.

Sites Reservoir would also provide opportunities to reduce flooding in local watersheds in addition to recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, camping, boating, and mountain biking.



Sites Reservoir would provide water supply to Central Valley wildlife refuges.

Project Status

Reclamation completed a Feasibility Report for the project and transmitted to Congress in December 2020.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was completed in 2017. In October 2019, Sites Project Authority initiated a value planning process to identify and evaluate additional alternatives that could make the project more affordable while also addressing comments received on the 2017 Draft EIR/EIS. A Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS was released on November 12, 2021, to evaluate a project that can meet the water supply benefits required by the participating agencies.



The existing Tehama-Colusa Canal would be used to help convey Sacramento River water to Sites Reservoir.

Environmental compliance and water right processes are expected to continue through 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2025.

Visit <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nodos/> for more project information.



Photo showing an artist's rendition of the proposed reservoir.