



FRIENDS  
OF THE  
RIVER

# A Sustainable Future for Our Rivers





## Smart Farmers Save Water

**Agriculture is vital** to California's economy and our culture. We must ensure that our farmers succeed and our food supply flourishes. At the same time, we know that water is a precious resource, not just for farming but for the health of our rivers as well. Every gallon that is wasted carries a real cost for our environment and our economy.



Fortunately, technological advances in water conservation now make it possible to use far less water to raise our crops. This is important, because four out of every five gallons of water stored in California flows to agriculture. California should utilize state-of-the-art techniques to improve agricultural water conservation by 20%. The more water we conserve, the more we can reduce pressure on our severely stressed rivers.

Making this change requires political will. Currently, water is heavily subsidized, hiding the true cost of delivering it. In fact, urban water users pay much more for a gallon of water than agricultural users. On the farm, flood irrigation and other wasteful practices remain appealing when water is so cheap.

It's time to support both our farmers and our environment by making major state investments in water-saving technologies. Helping farmers convert to modern irrigation systems costs far less than building dams or pumping water across the state to keep crops watered.

**Investing in water conservation makes good economic sense.**



## Keep It Clean

**If you're like most Californians,** you don't spend much time thinking about how your drinking water gets to your tap. For millions of us, our tap water starts in the rivers running down from the Sierra and other mountains. It's a long process between the mountains and your tap, but taking care of water quality at the source is a critical part of making sure that you and your family have clean water to drink.

Unfortunately, we haven't done as well as we should protecting the upstream quality of our water. According to the California Water Resources Board, 430 California streams and rivers fail basic water quality standards. A recent report by the Sierra Nevada Alliance concluded that 75% of all rivers and streams flowing out of the Sierra Nevada have been contaminated in the past five years. Toxins in the water behind Klamath River dams indicate a threat 100 times greater than what the World Health Organization considers a health risk.

We need to commit ourselves to protecting the upstream quality of our water supply, and not just for ourselves. The cleaner the water is in our streams and rivers, the healthier it is for the native fish and wildlife that make those streams their home.

**Clearly, we all deserve clean water.**



# Work with Mother Nature

**We all know** that the natural weather cycle of California includes wet winters. When river waters rise, they can overrun their banks and flood surrounding areas. This has been happening for tens of thousands of years and will continue to happen.

It doesn't make sense to build new homes where we know they will get flooded. It isn't right to risk people's lives by selling homes that put them in harm's way. It isn't fair to ask taxpayers to pick up the costs when floods happen in the flood plains. There is no logic in spending billions of tax dollars on environmentally devastating dams just so developers can collect short-term profits.

We need affordable housing in California, but we need to be sensible as well. We must protect our existing communities by building setback levees and flood bypasses. These work like a pressure release valve, allowing floodwaters to spread over a large area of undeveloped land. Setback levees and bypasses have a track record of success in the Sacramento Valley. Now we need to use them in other regions of California where floodways have been strangled to make room for development. We also need to maintain our levees and other critical flood control structures so they remain effective. It's irresponsible to keep building in dangerously deep flood plains.

California needs a sensible plan to improve flood management and preserve flood plains.

**It doesn't make sense to fight Mother Nature.**

# Save Rivers in Your Home

**Believe it or not,** we currently use less water for urban consumption now than we did 40 years ago – even though the population and our economy have grown dramatically. Cities like Long Beach, San Diego, and Los Angeles have invested in water-conserving technologies and made a huge impact as a result.

Urban water conservation saves taxpayers' money because the less water your city uses, the less you have to pay for. Using recycled water for golf courses, gardens, and freeway embankments makes economic and environmental sense.

The truth, though, is that we could be doing more. We can reduce urban water use by 5% – even as the population increases – using existing technologies. A smart plan would involve every city and town installing water meters and requiring all new homes to use water-saving technologies. The fact is, when people keep track of how much water they use, and when they have to pay for wasted water, they take water conservation seriously.

**Every gallon saved helps restore our rivers.  
It isn't hard to do.**

Utilizing state-of-the-art techniques to improve agricultural water conservation by 20%, protecting upstream water quality, improving flood management and preserving flood plains, and reducing urban water use by 5% are part of the Friends of the River common sense plan to preserve, restore, and sustain California rivers. Learn more about these proposals and our entire 20-year plan on the next page and at [www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org).



# A Plan for Our Rivers

California's rivers belong to everyone, and everyone should enjoy their environmental, economic, and recreational benefits. Friends of the River advocates a long-term plan to preserve, restore, and sustain our state's amazing rivers. We propose an achievable, seven-point plan to benefit all Californians that can be fully realized within twenty years.

**Preserve 6,000 miles – or 3% – of California's most pristine rivers through Wild & Scenic designation.** California's wild rivers provide unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation, important habitat for fish and wildlife, and a critical source of clean water. Protecting our most beautiful rivers as Wild & Scenic will preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

**Establish 1,700 miles of river parkways with easy public access.** River parkways offer recreational opportunities for biking, walking, school outings, and picnics. They bring nature into our urban areas, provide habitat for dozens of native species, and offer critical flood protection to our communities. Everyone has access to California's unique coast; they should also have access to our beautiful rivers.

**Ease the impact of existing dams & remove those that are obsolete.** Returning rivers to their natural flows allows native species and natural ecosystems to recover and creates opportunities for increased recreational tourism like fishing and rafting. While some of California's more than 1,400 dams provide important services for our modern society, many are obsolete or fail to meet modern environmental standards.

**Utilize state-of-the-art techniques to improve agricultural water conservation by 20%.** California is the most important agricultural producer in the nation. Using existing technologies we can both preserve this critical part of our economy and significantly reduce water use - dramatically easing the pressure on our rivers.

**Protect and restore water quality for people & wildlife.** Every living thing needs clean water - and for most of us that water comes from a river. Protecting and restoring the water quality in our rivers is a critical component of meeting the fresh water needs of all Californians.

**Increase investment in urban water conservation & reduce consumption by 5%.** Many California cities and their water districts are leaders in conservation, but more can be done. Delivering water more efficiently, and using water more wisely, in every city can reduce the impact on our rivers.

**Improve flood management & preserve flood plains.** Floods occur naturally in California. Smarter management, expanded floodways, and fewer developments in flood plains will reduce the human cost and taxpayer expense of flooding. Working with the natural cycle of our rivers, and whatever changes may occur due to global warming, is our most cost effective and practical choice.

Learn more about this plan and other ways Friends of the River is helping to save California's rivers at

**[www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)**

915 20th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 442-3155



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# JOIN Friends of the River NOW

California's rivers cannot protect themselves. Our magnificent rivers face increasing pressure from developers, polluters, and dam builders.

Friends of the River, California's statewide river conservation organization, advocates a common sense approach to preserving our wild rivers, restoring rivers that have been damaged, and promoting sustainable water management to ease pressure on all our rivers.

Our policy experts earn the respect of state officials. Our volunteers educate thousands of people each year. Most important, our members take action. They write letters. They attend meetings. They tell agencies and corporations that we care about California's rivers. The more members we have and the more active you are, the more effectively we can implement our river-saving plan.

We know – and you know – that our rivers are treasures to be preserved, not just resources to be exploited. Join Friends of the River now and help us put our plan to work.



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Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 442-3155

**Yes,** I want to join  
**Friends of the River**  
and help save our rivers.

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL ADDRESS (we need your email address to reach you with urgent alerts)

### Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

\$35     \$50     \$100     \$250

Other \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a check made payable to:  
Friends of the River

I prefer to charge my contribution to my:

Visa     MasterCard     American Express

CARD #

NAME - AS IT APPEARS ON THE CARD

SIGNATURE

[www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)