

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

In 2012, the state of California (through the Department of Water Resources and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board) prepared a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. An update of the 2012 Plan is due mid-2017. Required by legislation passed in 2007, the Flood Plan is intended to guide an estimated **\$14 billion to \$17 billion** of investment in the Central Valley state-federal flood system over a 20-to-25-year period.

A major feature of the long-term Flood Plan is the creation of a proposed **40,000 acres** of new flood space or system capacity, by means of "**setback levees**" and "**bypass expansions**" on lands that are mostly now farmland. Of this approximately 40,000-acre footprint, the Draft Flood Plan indicates that 25 percent (about 10,000 acres) would become permanent habitat. According to the Draft Plan, the remaining 75 percent (about 30,000 acres) would remain farmable, subject to flood easements and seasonal flooding, similar to farming in the existing bypasses today.

In addition to these 40,000 acres of habitat and 10,000 restored habitat in new or existing flood bypass areas, the 2012 plan proposes to modify levees and acquire flood easements on an overlapping **50,000-75,000 acres**. The purpose of these easements would be to allow lands in agricultural and rural areas to provide additional flood protection to urban areas downstream and to function as "transitional storage" by temporarily receiving excess flood waters. Specifically, the 2012 plan proposes creating the equivalent of **200,000 acre-feet** of "transitional storage" in the Sacramento Valley, and **100,000 acre-feet** in the San Joaquin River system.

In addition to **10,000 acres** of restored habitat, new bypass and setbacks on **40,000 acres** of acquisition, and **50,000-75,000 acres**, the Flood Plan proposes to place **70,000 to 115,000 acres** of Central Valley land under agricultural conservation easements. While it seems these lands would continue to be farmed, it is presently unclear what types of restrictions would apply.

Additional or somewhat differing habitat and flood bypass and levee setback proposals have been proposed since the 2012 plan in a 2015 Draft Conservation Strategy and a 2016 Draft Sacramento River Basin-wide Feasibility Study. (See related content under "Advocacy" and "Floodplain Regulation and Flood Protection.")

The footprint and rough locations of the proposed setback and bypass expansion features from the 2012 Flood Plan can be seen [here](#).

Elements of the Flood Plan could have major implications for farmers and ranchers in the Sacramento Valley and require meaningful involvement from affected communities and individuals. Farm Bureau, through this webpage and other efforts, will work to inform landowners and other affected people in the Sacramento Valley so that this involvement can occur.

Background information, pertinent documents, links, and periodic updates will be posted at

www.cfbf.com under “Advocacy,” “Land Use,” and “Floodplain Regulation and Flood Protection.”

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- [Flood plan impact on farmland continues to evolve](#) (February 25, 2015)
- [Flood plan could require more land as habitat](#) (February 4, 2015)
- [Flood plan raises concerns about loss of farmland](#) (August 7, 2013)
- [Flood protection efforts shift to local, regional groups](#) (December 5, 2012)
- [Valley flood plan to be adopted; next phase begins](#) (June 27, 2012)
- [Commentary: Public must stay involved in Central Valley flood planning](#) (May 2, 2012)
- [At hearings, farmers express concerns about flood plan](#) (April 11, 2012)
- [Draft flood plan includes some farmland losses](#) (February 1, 2012)