2020 Annual Review

of the Construction and Operation

of the State Water Project

March 17, 2021

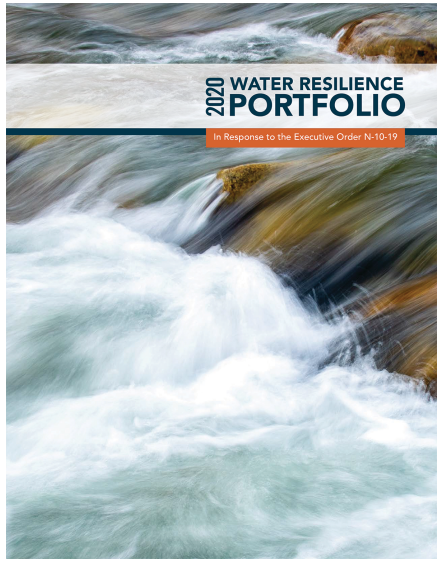
California WATER COMMISSION

The Commission's Obligation

- Water Code section 165 – conduct an annual review of the progress of the construction and operation of the State Water Project.
- The Commission reports its findings and recommendations to the DWR and the Legislature.

Highlights

- Water Resilience Portfolio
- Delta Conveyance
- COVID-19 and the Pandemic



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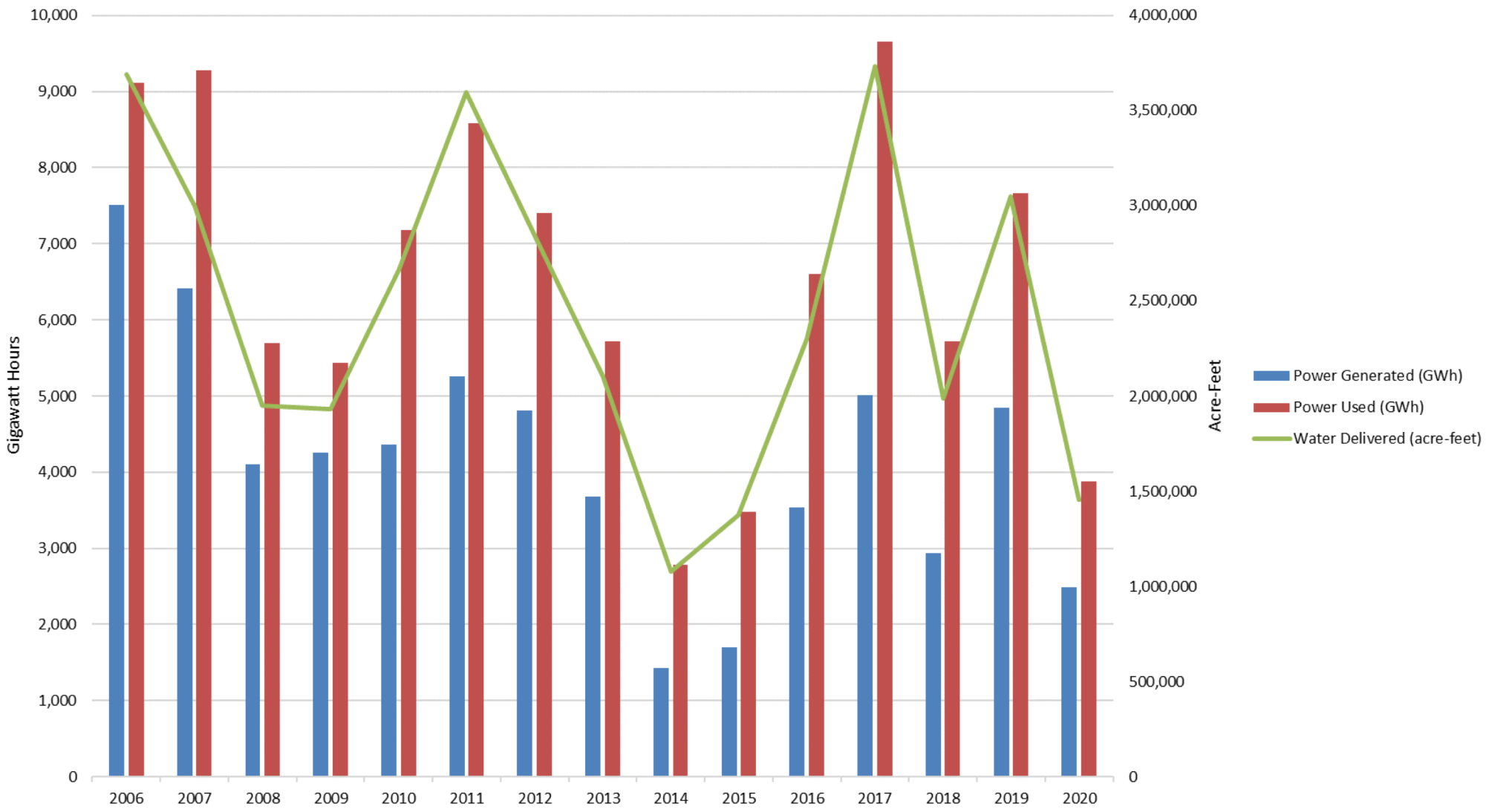
SWP Water Deliveries and Power



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2020 Briefings

- Delta conveyance
- Emissions reduction and power generation
- Hydropower license planning and compliance
- Incidental take permit
- Delta restoration
- Subsidence
- Construction update

2020 Findings

Delta conveyance

- DWR kept the Commission and the public informed as to it plans for a single-tunnel Delta conveyance and is advancing a process that is inclusive of diverse stakeholders.

2020 Findings

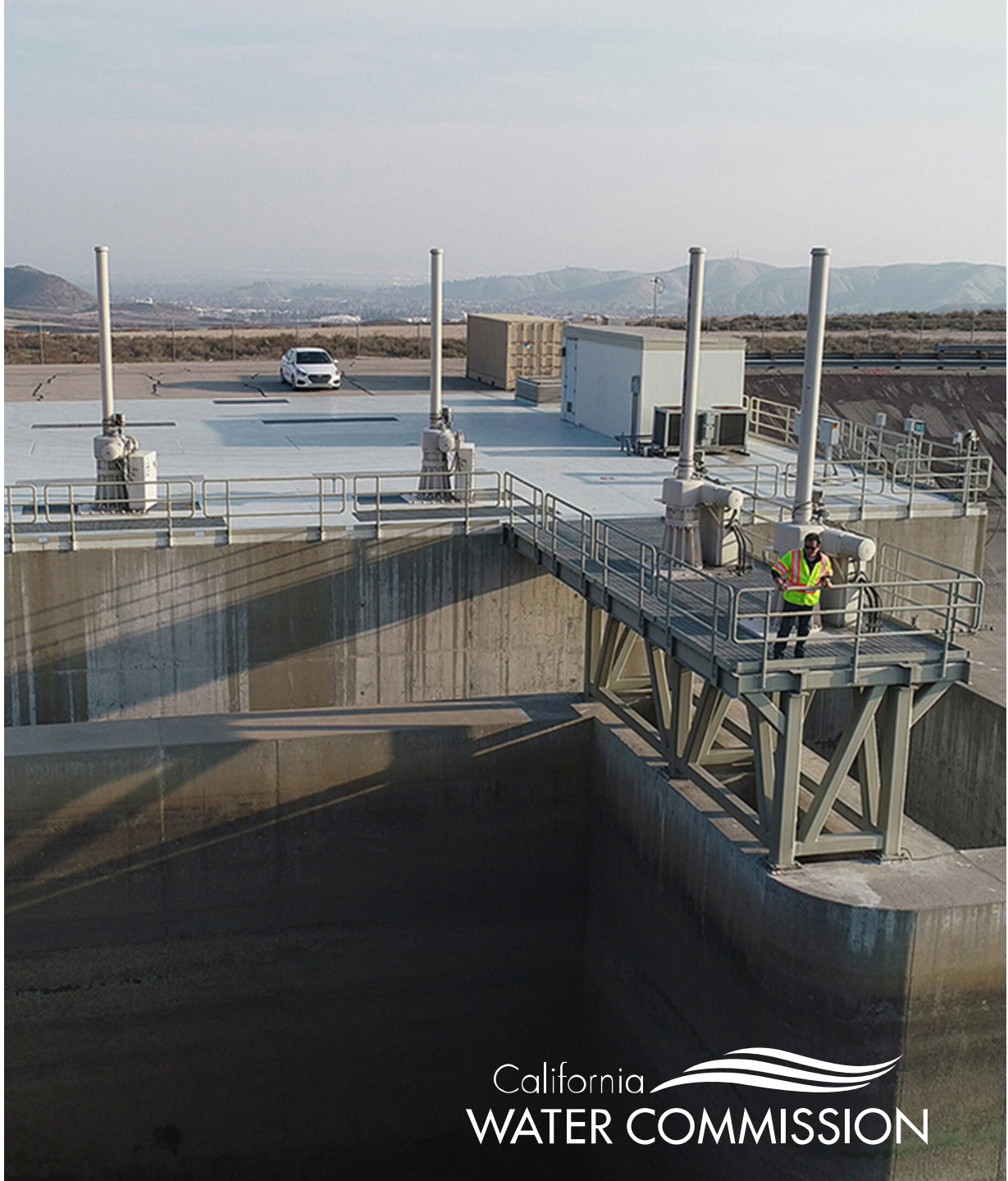
Emissions reduction and power generation

- DWR continued to take significant steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, putting it on track to meet its target of zero emissions for the SWP by 2045, and is studying how best to utilize and provide renewable energy resources more broadly to advance statewide emissions reduction goals.

2020 Findings

Hydropower license planning and compliance

- DWR advanced a stakeholder-driven process for the renewal of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing for the Devil Canyon and South State Water Project hydropower facilities.



2020 Findings

Incidental take permit

- DWR implemented its 10-year incidental take permit (ITP) to ensure that operation of the SWP provides robust environmental safeguards for state-listed endangered species and used adaptive management to adjust real-time operations and monitoring protocols.

2020 Findings

Delta restoration

- In compliance with federally-issued Biological Opinions, DWR continued its work to mitigate the effects of the long-term operations of the SWP on numerous federal and state protected fish species by restoring more than 8,000 acres of intertidal and subtidal habitat in the Delta and Suisun marshes, and is on track to complete this work by 2024.

2020 Findings

Subsidence

- DWR developed and began implementation of short- and long-term objectives to deal with the California Aqueduct's capacity and conveyance loss due to subsidence in the valley.

2020 Findings

Construction update

- DWR kept the Commission apprised of the progress of its numerous construction efforts within the SWP, including the restoration of the Ronald B. Robie Thermalito Pumping–Generating Plant, which suffered a catastrophic fire in 2012 that rendered the plant inoperable. The plant returned to full operation in August 2020.

2020 Findings

- DWR continued to operate the SWP during the pandemic, providing its core services of water delivery, flood protection, dam safety, and infrastructure maintenance, and has adopted special measures to ensure that its essential workers can safely carry out their service to the public.

2020 Recommendations

- DWR, in its briefings to the Commission, consider the beneficiaries of the multiple benefits that the SWP provides.
- DWR continue to keep the Commission apprised of on-going efforts to repair and modify aging infrastructure and to develop new infrastructure in a manner that accounts for and addresses the impacts of a changing climate. Specifically:
  - how asset management is being applied to key SWP maintenance and infrastructure investments, including those that are a response to climate change vulnerabilities;
  - how planning for new Delta Conveyance is progressing, and how it is considering impacts to the Delta as place; and
  - how projects to address the near-term impacts of subsidence on the California Aqueduct are being coupled with efforts to stem the underlying causes of subsidence.

2020 Recommendations, continued

- DWR keep the Commission apprised of how it plans to adapt the operation of the SWP over the long term to accommodate and mitigate the expected effects of climate change. Specifically:
  - progress in meeting greenhouse gas reduction goals and the status of the Flexible Resources Study to assess the SWP's potential to support the state's clean energy policy, as required by SB-49, Energy: appliance standards and State Water Project assessment;
  - how the Department is addressing dam safety and emergency planning in light of changing climatic conditions;
  - how infrastructure, including levees, and flows in the Delta will be managed and maintained to meet the co-equal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem; and
  - opportunities to apply Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operation to better manage multi-benefit water storage under changing hydrologic conditions.

2020 Recommendations, continued

- DWR update the Commission on watershed planning in the Upper Feather River watershed and the possibility for green infrastructure projects to enhance SWP operations, including how watershed management and green infrastructure could be used to address the damages associated with wildfires.
- DWR keep the Commission apprised of the role of the SWP in supporting the implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans and increasing groundwater recharge efforts in the State, including the SWP's nexus with flood-managed aquifer recharge efforts, water transfers, and DWR's work, under Action 19.3 of the Water Resilience Portfolio, to conduct a feasibility analysis for improved and expanded conveyance facilities to enhance water transfers and markets.
- DWR provide information to the Commission about how the SWP is promoting the Human Right to Water and serving diverse beneficiaries across the state, including Disadvantaged Communities.