



Briefing on American Rivers Environmental Benefits Model

Background

American Rivers is a non-profit organization working to protect and restore the nation's rivers and streams. The California Region of American Rivers has been active in the development of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, efforts to restore rivers and floodplain ecosystems, establishing ecosystem flow requirements, restoring Sierra meadows, removing barriers to salmon migration, and improving dam operations on the Yuba, Bear and San Joaquin rivers.

Katie Jagt, an engineer for American Rivers, will brief the Commission on a model that has been developed to quantify the ecologic benefits of river and floodplain projects. This metric was designed to provide a consistent, objective tool to measure the benefits of water projects on the quality and quantity of floodplain habitat for a variety of species and objectives. The model utilizes current hydrology and hydraulic models to estimate floodplain habitat values. It can be used to assess the effects of physical changes to a system such as levee setbacks, new bypasses, or flood plain grading, or hydrologic alterations such as reservoir reoperation or new instream flow requirements. The presentation will discuss how the model was developed, how it is used to quantify ecological benefits, and its applications and benefits.

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