



Water Management Goal

The other primary objective of the San Joaquin River litigation Settlement is the Water Management Goal. The Water Management Goal is to reduce or avoid adverse water supply impacts to Friant Division Contractors. As part of the Settlement, water supplies used by the 28 Friant Division contractors for the last half century will be re-directed down the San Joaquin River to support the fishery restoration program. Friant's agricultural and municipal customers are dependent upon these supplies to support farms and cities in the Friant Division.

It is crucial to Friant water users that tools be developed and implemented under the Settlement to return water supplies used in restoration to the Friant Division. Models estimate water available to Friant water contractors could on average decrease approximately 19% or 242,000 acre-feet (a.f.) from the current average of 1,281,000 a.f. (An acre-foot of water covers a football field one foot deep). In dry years, when water supplies are already inadequate, supplies could be reduced by as much as 23% or 145,000 a.f. from an average dry year supply of 629,000 a.f. Although the Settling Parties are pledging to do everything possible to implement activities under the Water Management Goal, Friant may have to explore other means of developing water supply to minimize supply impacts over the long haul should the tools developed prove inadequate.

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT'S ROLE

The Interior Department and its U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which administers the CVP and operates and maintains Friant Dam, are to immediately begin working with the environmental coalition led by NRDC and the Friant water users on ways and means of implementing the Water Management Goal.

Those efforts are to include:

- **A plan for recirculation, recapture, reuse, exchange or transfer** of the Interim Flows and Restoration Flows to reduce or avoid impacts to all Friant Division water deliveries. Means of funding activities are to be included in the plan. A number of concepts will be developed as to how any or all of these activities could be accomplished physically. The Settlement says that any such activities cannot adversely affect the Restoration Goal, downstream water quality or fisheries and must comply with various laws and agreements.

- **A Recovered Water Account** program to make water available to all Friant Division long-term contractors that provide water for Interim Flows or Restoration Flows for the purpose of reducing or avoiding impacts of such flows on contractors. Water deliveries under this provision are expected to be used primarily to support feasible groundwater programs.
 - Although complex and technical, these provisions will permit each long-term Friant contractor's Recovered Water Account to accrue one acre-foot of water for each acre-foot of reduction in water deliveries.
 - If "buffer flows" are required, Friant contractors will be credited in their account with 1.25 acre-feet of water for each one acre-foot reduction in water deliveries.
 - Water will be made available to contractors only in wet years when it is not needed for Restoration Flows or water contractor obligations, at a reduced cost of \$10 per acre-foot. Those funds are to be deposited in a Restoration Fund that is to be established under federal legislation authorizing settlement implementation.