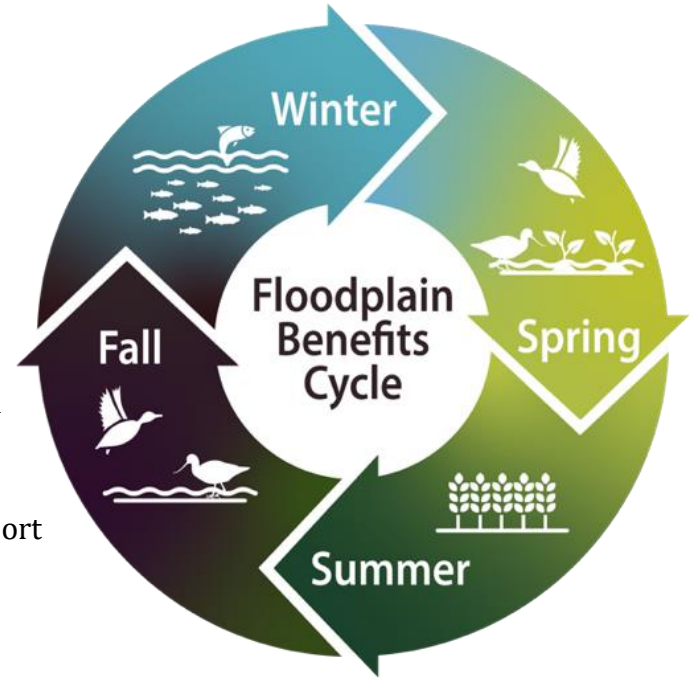
FLOODPLAINS REIMAGINED

PROGRAM BRIEF



Vision

Improve floodplain function for multiple purposes through voluntary collaborative partnerships with private landowners, sovereign tribal entities, government, and non-government representatives.

This program will work in concert with a constellation of efforts underway in the Colusa, Butte, and Sutter Basins in the Mid-Sacramento River Valley region to improve the floodplain functional connectivity to support salmon, birds, and agriculture.

Priorities

Floodplain functional connectivity complements the multiple priorities including: • floodplain connectivity • floodplain wildlife • ecosystem health • water supply • flood control • agriculture • water quality • indigenous cultural values • economic prosperity • recreation • community way of life • carbon as a greenhouse gas • collaboration • urgency • resiliency and flexibility.

Principles

1. Voluntary, locally driven program.
2. Respect and work within existing land ownership and uses; indigenous land stewardship and cultural resources; and flood management functions, including operations and maintenance.
3. Seek to share understanding of each other's interests, joint investigation, and collaborative generation of options and evaluation.
4. Cultivate mutual respect and appreciation between sovereign tribal entities, private landowners, government, and non-government representatives.
5. Promote coordinated and efficient actions.

Program Structure

Steering Committee

- **Membership:** Eleven (11) appointed members from the Advisory Committee.
- **Role:** Steer the program, adopt key deliverables, and work with the Program Team to design and provide feedback on the process, approach, and materials.

Advisory Committee

- **Membership:** Broad representation of interests including agricultural landowners; hunting clubs and wetland preserves; local, state, and federal agencies; tribes; flood managers and maintainers; water suppliers; research institutions; river, wildlife, and agriculture NGOs.
- **Role:** Make recommendations to the Steering Committee.

Ad-Hoc Groups

- **Membership**: Technical representatives who contribute to the quantification of benefits, constraints, modeling, and evaluation of potential structural and biological options.
- **Role**: Provide science and technical input, make proposals to the Advisory Committee.

Program Team

- **Reclamation District 108** – Program Director and grant recipient
- **KSN** – Project Manager and engineering support
- **Kearns & West** – Stakeholder involvement and facilitation services
- **Larsen & Wurzel Associates** – Process advisors
- **cbec** – Hydrologic & hydraulic model development
- **Cramer Fish Sciences** – Fisheries analyses
- **Point Blue** – Bird analyses
- **San Francisco Estuary Institute** – Habitat benefit quantification analyses

Phase I: Feasibility Study and Technical Assistance

In Phase I, California Natural Resources Agency funded RD 108 to convene the Floodplains Reimagined Program during 2021-2024. In cooperation with landowners, the Floodplains Reimagined Program evaluated the feasibility of reintroducing low flows during the agricultural off-season, onto lands owned by willing landowners of the Butte Sink, Sutter Bypass and Colusa Basin. The program explored the feasibility of combinations of actions to increase floodplain function connectivity, which is reconnecting rivers to their historical floodplains.

Phase II: Technical Assistance and Science

In Phase II in 2024-2025, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation funded the Floodplains Reimagined Program to focus on two objectives:

1. Continue to provide technical assistance to landowners to consider options to increase floodplain function on their lands;
2. Develop and synthesize science that supports development of beneficial options for floodplain management.

Geographic Region

The basins of focus within the historic floodplain of the Sacramento River are defined by current and potential accessibility by juvenile salmon and areas that could produce fish food for the Sacramento River including the Butte Sink down to the top of the Yolo Bypass.

Colusa Subregion

- Defining infrastructure: Colusa Basin Drain
- West of the Sacramento River, Delevan Wildlife Refuge to top of the Yolo Bypass

Butte Subregion

- Defining infrastructure: Sanborn Slough Bifurcation Structure
- East of the Sacramento River, from M&T Ranch to Butte Slough Outfall Gates

Sutter Bypass ***Subregion***

- Defining infrastructure: Sutter Bypass East and West Borrows and adjacent properties
- East of the Sacramento River, Butte Slough Outfall Gates to the end of the Sutter Bypass

Geographic Area

Floodplain Benefits - Existing