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El Dorado Water Agency Receives Grant for Drought Resiliency Project in the American River Basin

PLACERVILLE, Calif. – The El Dorado Water Agency (EDWA) has been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the United States Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSMART Drought Response Program: Drought Resiliency Projects. EDWA’s proposed project, “An Intelligent Hydroclimatic Information System for Water and Power Management in the American River Basin,” was one of 18 selected projects in the Western United States. This project will provide critical real-time data and support water supply forecasting needed to help the region better prepare for, identify, and respond to drought.

The project will upgrade two of 12 sensor clusters with new technology in the existing American River Basin Hydrologic Observatory wireless sensor network, install a dedicated system to gather and process real-time hydrologic data transmitted from the sensors via satellite, and develop an online, publicly accessible water-supply conditions dashboard to display the spatially representative data collected from the sensors. The Agency estimates that the improved data reporting will increase the forecast reliability and availability of up to 18,000 acre-feet of runoff in a typical water year from the American River Basin.

“Reduced snowpack during the recent drought dramatically impacts the availability of downstream water, and results in a significant reduction in reservoir storage throughout the State, including Central Valley Project water allocations from Folsom Reservoir,” said EDWA General Manager Ken Payne.

As part of its ongoing commitment to support and collaborate with other organizations for water resource-related planning, EDWA will conduct this project in partnership with the University of California (UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, and UC Merced’s Sierra Nevada Research Institute), as well as an active working group of stakeholders, to include the California Department of Water Resources, El Dorado Irrigation District, El Dorado Resource Conservation District, Georgetown Divide Public Utility District, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, CA-NV River Forecasting Center, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, State Water Resources Control Board, and Tahoe National Forest.

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“This project lays the groundwork needed for our region to better prepare for, evaluate the severity of, and respond to future droughts,” said Dr. Roger Bales, Distinguished Professor of Engineering at UC Merced, and Adjunct Professor at UC Berkeley. “The next-generation data provided by the network will be a vital upgrade in predicting runoff and thus water supply, which is of increasing importance to support decision making as water demand increases while temperatures warm and the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada decreases.”

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About the El Dorado Water Agency

The El Dorado Water Agency celebrates more than 60 years of water resource planning and management, dedicated to ensuring that El Dorado County has adequate and affordable water to maintain economic prosperity, protect the environment, and support the rural-agriculture way of life for today and in the future. El Dorado Water Agency is a public agency created under the 1959 El Dorado County Water Agency Act.