

El Dorado Water Agency (EDWA) takes an integrated water management approach to ensure the county has reliable, accessible, and affordable water now and into the future. This long-term water supply is necessary to support growing agribusiness and community needs, protect the environment, maintain healthy watersheds and forests, and minimize flooding and wildfire risks.

EDWA collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to develop local water supplies and resource management strategies to proactively address water supply reliability, climate resiliency, and regulatory requirements. Our role and responsibilities in countywide water resource development and management are designed to fulfill the County's General Plan. EDWA does not own any water facilities nor provide water supply directly to any water users.

EDWA's Vision for the Future: Improving Water Supply Reliability and Drought Resiliency


Changing climate conditions are causing prolonged droughts and increased occurrences of wildfires, floods, and water shortages that impact residents, farms, businesses, and natural resources in El Dorado County. In addition to climate challenges, the state has mandated that local water agencies manage groundwater resources, assist small water systems to ensure drought resiliency, meet increased water quality standards, and put additional measures in place to protect the environment. EDWA is pursuing interrelated water policy goals and implementing programs in order to secure a sustainable long-term water supply to meet the needs of El Dorado County's growing population and agricultural sector.



Increase Water Supply

EDWA has an obligation to work with the County and regulatory entities to pursue and secure additional water supplies needed to fulfill the County's adopted General Plan. The long-term water demands needed to meet the General Plan cannot be met by conservation, recycling, and reuse alone. New sources of water need to be made available. EDWA evaluated future water demands for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses and found that the projected need for additional long-term water supplies for El Dorado County's West Slope range from 60,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) to 86,000 AFY depending on future climate change conditions.

The El Dorado Water Reliability Project, through the 2005 SMUD Agreement, designated EDWA to secure surface water rights of up to 40,000 AFY from the Upper American River and its tributaries that have been held in reserve by the state for areas of origin like El Dorado County. This additional surface water would be put to reasonable and beneficial use and would help meet some, but not all, of the projected water demands associated with planned growth in the County's adopted General Plan. Per the SMUD Agreement, EDWA represents El Dorado parties, which include the County of El Dorado, El Dorado Irrigation District, and Georgetown-Divide Public Utility District.



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Build Water Storage

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, EDWA, and other local water agencies recently released the American River Basin Study that takes a detailed, watershed-level look at how climate change is projected to reduce the availability of water supplies in the American River Basin.

The study outlines six adaptation strategies, one of which is building the Alder Creek Reservoir, a 168,000 acre-foot high-elevation, off-stream storage project. Alder Creek Reservoir would help adapt to changing climate conditions and population growth by capturing and storing earlier snowmelt. The project would improve water supply reliability in the foothills as well as the federal Central Valley Project water supply from Folsom Reservoir. It also would provide flood risk management, recreation, hydropower, and fish and wildlife protection benefits.



Protect Water Quality

EDWA plays an important role in collaborating with state and federal agencies that are responsible for maintaining forest and headwater health to ensure water quality is protected in El Dorado County. Our work includes promoting a multi-benefit approach to watershed management to support a healthy ecosystem, reduce fire risks, and maintain integrity of the headwaters.

EDWA is also focused on developing a renewed approach to stormwater resources management and is working with our partners to implement stormwater projects to address the water supply-demand imbalance, reduce localized flooding, improve water quality, and provide environmental protection and habitat enhancement.



Improve Drought Resiliency

EDWA is working with local, state, and federal partners to develop the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan which will improve long-term drought resiliency and expand mitigation planning to areas outside of public water purveyor service areas.

EDWA is also leading the effort to implement California Senate Bill 552 which includes requirements for counties to help small water suppliers and rural communities reduce their risk of inadequate water supply during a water shortage.

Achieving Water Sustainability Through Water Resources Planning

For over 60 years, EDWA has been leading countywide water resources planning and management. Our work is focused on five programs outlined in the Water Resources Development and Management Plan, a long-term policy document designed to ensure the county is prepared for an uncertain water future.



GOVERNANCE + PARTNERSHIP

Leading countywide water interests to meet current and future water needs

WATER SECURITY

Ensuring safe, sustainable, and reliable countywide water supplies

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Supporting multi-benefit actions that meaningfully contribute to water reliability in the watershed

ASSISTANCE + INNOVATION

Fostering innovation and providing education and technical assistance

COMMUNICATION + ADVOCACY

Coordinating countywide water resources communication and advocacy efforts