Tulare Basin Conservation Plan Water Supply Strategies Report

As an over-arching goal for this report, the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) set out to determine what the water needs are for the wetland and riparian habitat identified for protection and restoration in the four TBWP Tulare Basin Conservation Plans and to determine how those needs might be supplied. In addition, through this report, the TBWP aimed to develop strategies that would:

- Identify the most effective ways for obtaining the needed water supply;
- Provide information essential to the development of feasible, site-specific plans for TBWP priority conservation project implementation in the Tulare Basin; and
- Identify and quantify environmental water needs of the region for use in other planning efforts.

Tulare Basin Habitat Water Needs
The Tulare Basin Conservation Plans propose management of 94,078 acres of wetland and riparian habitat and the restoration of 75,595 acres for a total of 169,673 acres of wetland and riparian habitat. The goal for the Tulare Basin is 31,389 acres of riparian habitat, 14,747 acres of permanent wetland habitat, 109,927 acres of winter seasonal wetland habitat, and 13,610 acres of summer seasonal (reverse cycle) wetland habitat. Of this habitat, 94,100 acres are currently in existence (including 20,400 acres of riparian habitat) and 75,600 acres are planned for restoration (including 10,100 acres of riparian habitat).

The Tulare Basin Conservation Plan Water Supply Strategies Report concluded that the total environmental water need for the Tulare Basin is approximately 540,000 acre feet annually, of which 440,000 acre feet are needed for wetland habitat and
100,000 acre feet are needed for riparian habitat. These water needs for wetland and riparian habitats are for maximum utilization and management of all acres of existing and potential habitat. Much of the existing and restored habitat identified in the TBWP plans is and will be flooded only in wet years (or else is flooded for reasons other than wetland management and is not managed to optimize wildlife use). While these areas are opportunistic wetlands and do not require a firm water supply, their habitat value is primarily correlated with the frequency with which they are flooded.

Read more of this report.