



Proposed Site’s Reservoir Project stirs controversy as Environmental impact report is approved

by Anna Montemor

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CHICO, Calif. – The site’s reservoir that would create new water storage in Eastern Colusa and Glenn counties is moving onto the next step, but not everybody is thrilled about the progress.

“There will be conflicts between environmentalists and the beneficiaries down in southern California,” said Senior Policy Staff of the Friends of the River, Ronald Stork.

The Sites Reservoir project is officially moving forward with planned operations after the project authority approves the reservoir’s environmental impact report.

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“The critical decision is whether or not the State Water Resources Control Board will approve a water right for the project with conditions favorable enough to the Authority and unfavorable enough to the environment to actually make the project feasible,” said Stork.

According to the Site's Project Authority board, the reservoir would create an additional 1.5 million acre-feet of off-stream storage for dry periods as well as increase Sacramento Valley water storage capacity.

Sites Project Director, Jerry Brown, said that this project has a significant component for environmental purposes. “What storage does for water users is it creates flexibility and resilience and that is exactly what we need to create for our environment going forward.” Brown continued, “Because in the same way that human beings are being impacted by climate change, so are the first and the birds.”

It's with this same argument that Friends Of The River Organization view the Sites project to be harmful. “The Sacramento River has been tapped a lot already, the first squeeze of an orange you get a lot of juice, then the second squeeze you don't get as much, and then the third squeeze you get even less juice and that's where Sites are at,” Stork told KRCR.

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Now the Friends Of The River are gearing up to start dialog with the authority as well as the State Water Resources Control Board. “Start discussions on the kind of conditions that should be imposed on the project for the project to be environmentally responsible,” Stork added.

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