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Updated Operations Analysis Finds Water for More Than 3 Million People Could Have Been Captured If Sites Reservoir Were Operational Today

Maxwell, CA – The Sites Project Authority (Authority) announced that during this wet weather season, Sites Reservoir could have captured more than 550,000 acre-feet of water from late November 2024 through early April 2025. These results continue to show that there is water available in the Sacramento River that could be diverted in a safe and protective manner, providing new water supplies for dry years. Also, these operations simulations build confidence that the performance of the project can meet funding expectations.

“Once again, we’re seeing how well Sites Reservoir would perform during wet periods if it were operational today, by capturing and storing water for drier periods,” said **Fritz Durst, Chair of the Sites Project Authority Board of Directors**. “We know California will continue to experience more intense and wetter storms and there will be longer and drier periods that follow, so we need to have additional storage in place to capture water when it comes so it’s there when we need it.”

Sites Reservoir is specifically designed to capture and store water during wet periods to increase water flexibility, reliability, and resiliency in drier periods. The analysis, based on actual river flows, found Sites Reservoir could have diverted more than 500,000 acre-feet of water in about five months. During a nineteen-day period in February 2025, Sites could have diverted at continuous maximum rates accumulating more than 150,000 acre-feet of water in storage.

This year’s diversions would have been in addition to the approximately 850,000 acre-feet captured during the last diversion season, which runs from early September to mid-June, for a total of 1.4 million acre-feet or about 95% of Sites Reservoir’s useable full capacity.

“While rainfall may vary from year to year, our analyses continue to demonstrate that every drop counts,” added **Durst**. “Sites Reservoir will help us capitalize on rain when it does come, providing a water savings account for when California’s communities, farms, and environment need it most.”

The past three years have been a wetter period and illustrate why it is important for Sites to be part of portfolio of water management tools. For example, to make space for this year’s diversions, a portion of the water captured in 2023 and 2024 would have had to been moved out to other storage or use facilities. Water use across the state varies; however, a single acre-foot of water is enough to exceed the average annual indoor and outdoor water use of two to three California households, according to the Water Education Foundation.

Sites is an off-stream reservoir proposed north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where it would provide unique water supply and environmental benefits during dry periods, especially during extended drought. Additional information can be found at www.sitesproject.org or on Facebook and Twitter at @SitesProject.