

# The Rest of the Story Banking Water for the Future

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A wet 2011 helped California rebound from the multi-year drought that has plagued much of the state, and early rains and snow this fall are a sign that 2012 may be another good water year. But what exactly did we do with all of that water?

With the water year coming to an end in September, much is being made recently about the amount of water exported from the Delta in 2011.

Some have tried to mislead the public into believing that increased water deliveries in 2011 translated into farms, residents and businesses wasting water at the expense of fish and the environment; but, in reality, there is a much more positive story.

Surplus water supplies made available by a record Sierra snowpack have been responsibly, and wisely, stored south of the Delta, wherever storage capacity exists.

As record amounts of water flowed out to the ocean, farms and urban areas were also provided with additional water supplies to replenish underground aquifers and off-stream storage facilities. These water banks and reservoirs were leaned on heavily to mitigate the impacts of previous drought years and will help to offset the negative impacts of future droughts.

Without the banked water supplies, the devastation to Central Valley farmers and water rationing for urban residents would have been far more dramatic during the drought years of 2007-2009.

Recharging groundwater banks and surface water reservoirs when water is abundant is exactly the type of responsible water management that all stakeholders should encourage and applaud.



Kern County alone has recharged a half million acre-feet of water into its aquifers to help mitigate future droughts. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has been able to replenish its reserves by storing 749,000 acre-feet of water in 2011, enough to supply almost 1.5 million households (6 million residents) for an entire year.

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Californians have to live with the reality of an extremely variable water

supply. We must undertake flexible and responsible water management to adapt to whatever conditions Mother Nature provides us.

Sending surplus water south of the Delta to recharge our water banks, reservoirs and groundwater basins during times of plenty is a smart and responsible decision. Those who are trying to misrepresent the issue and mislead the public should be ashamed!



# Delta Watch

## A Project of the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta