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INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE: A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

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Today marks World Water Day — an annual day to focus our attention on the importance of water. This year's theme is "Nature for Water," exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges we face in the 21st century. Here in California, where water is a precious and limited resource, the theme is especially on point.

There's a balance that must be achieved between meeting the water needs of 25 million Californians, more than 750,000 acres of farmland, and protecting fish and wildlife species that make our waterways their home. The answer lies at the intersection of science and nature. And California's scientific community is making new discoveries every day to further our understanding of the state's fragile Delta, its tributaries and native fish and wildlife species — so we can achieve and sustain that balance.

The State Water Contractors (SWC) is part of the scientific community, investing over \$1 million annually in science and research. Together with state and federal agencies, academic institutions and experts in the private sector, the SWC and its members are contributing to California's knowledge bank on estuarine and freshwater environments and best practices in water supply management.

Earlier this month, our research efforts were showcased at the 2018 Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) Annual Workshop in Folsom, California. Scientists from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), along with experts from global consulting firm ICF and the University of California, Davis, shared information and preliminary findings on several research efforts underway to explore the factors affecting longfin smelt populations in the Delta.

In other research, the SWC is contributing to the IEP program to study the biological composition of water in the Delta with the goal of improving our understanding of the endangered Delta smelt and the effects water delivery operations have on their outcomes. Our member agencies also are charging ahead with their own scientific studies. For example, MWD and a team of scientists from partner agencies and organizations, recently revealed new information about the endangered winter-run Chinook salmon's migration patterns, providing new insight into their protection.

For decades, California has relied on ineffective strategies to protect fish species. Our collaborative efforts are shedding new light on species and habitats — helping us find solutions to our state's water supply challenges.

New science and research is key to ensuring a flexible and reliable water supply while preserving the Delta ecosystem. At the SWC, we believe protecting California's complex environment is a partnership in responsibility and action. By looking at our ecosystems and water management practices through a scientific lens, we're building a foundation for policymaking and modern water supply management practices that protect California's most critical resource for people, farms and the environment.

Our collective commitment to advancing science is crucial for California's future and for the survival of all who depend water each and every day.

For more information on the SWC's work to advance science, please visit the [SWC Science webpage](#).