



PRESS RELEASE

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Swift Action by Army Corps of Engineers Averts Immediate Dry Conditions in Lake Mendocino, Russian River

(Santa Rosa, CA) — The swift response by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to retain water in Lake Mendocino will assist with dry conditions this year. After a dry start into spring, with March only producing .32 inches of rainfall in Santa Rosa, the Agency sought the water supply increase to ensure enough water is available for its municipal water customers, threatened Russian River salmonids, the agricultural community and various recreational activities.

“After receiving our request to increase the water supply pool in Lake Mendocino, the Corps quickly responded,” said Agency Deputy Chief Engineer of Operations Pam Jeane. “Having the ability to implement flexible and proactive measures with the Corps is exactly what our region needs as we learn more about climate change and its impacts to our water resources.”

To date, Lake Mendocino holds approximately 80,700 acre-feet of water. At this same time in 2007, the lake held 71,400 acre-feet of water. The additional 9,000 acre-feet means that the Agency has more flexibility in its water supply operations. The water supply would be 3,000 acre-feet more had Ukiah hydropower plant operators deferred flow testing that was conducted recently at Coyote Valley Dam.

The Agency is asking residents, businesses and the agricultural community to continue planning and implementing water conservation practices. Conservation efforts reduced the Agency’s Russian River diversions by more than 15 percent last summer, compared to the same time period in 2004.

“Now is the time of year residents, businesses and the agricultural community should be planning how they will reduce their water consumption for this year. We encourage the public to visit our Web site for conservation tips,” said Jeane.

The Agency will also appear before the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on May 6 to discuss new water management challenges in the Russian River Watershed. The Agency will discuss potential amendments to instream flow requirements contained in the Agency’s water rights permits, the Potter Valley Project, the Russian River Water Rights Accounting Program, strategies related to illegal and unscheduled water diversions from the Russian River and an update on water conservation practices. For more information about this meeting go to www.sonomacountywater.org.

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Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at www.sonomacountywater.org.