

**Sacramento Valley Environmental Water Caucus (SVEWC)  
Campaign Proposal Form for Consideration at the October 11, 2003 Meeting  
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**A. Possible Campaign Title:**

**Dam Removal in the Sacramento Valley**

**1. Website (if available) for more information on the campaign**

<http://www.friendsoftheriver.org>

**B. Short Description:** 98% of the historical salmon and steelhead spawning habitat in the Sacramento Valley has been blocked by dams. Removing some dams (particularly older and marginally operating dams) is a key component of any strategy to comprehensively restore anadromous fisheries. Some of the more politically feasible dams have already been removed on lower Butte Creek, Clear Creek, and Mill Creek. But current dam removal projects under study on the Sacramento River, Battle Creek, upper Butte Creek, and the Yuba River are under attack by water and agribusiness interest and are not likely to occur unless the environmental community organizes and implements an aggressive public campaign.

**C. Purpose and Goals:**

Restore a significant portion of the Sacramento Valley's historical salmon and steelhead habitat by removing, breaching, or modifying dams.

**D. Lead Organizations:**

Friends of the River, [www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)

**E. Supporting Organizations:**

Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations  
Northern California Council Federation of Fly Fishers  
South Yuba River Citizens League  
Friends of Butte Creek

**F. Lead Individuals and contact information:**

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**G. Major Milestones and timeline towards success.**

Sacramento River: Permanent "open" operation of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam to facilitate salmon, steelhead, and green sturgeon passage was the subject of a draft EIR/S was circulated for public review in 2002. Such operation would increase spring run salmon migration by as much as 54%. This dam is a gate keeper for salmon and steelhead projected to use restored habitat in upstream tributaries such as Clear Creek and Battle Creek. A decision is delayed pending reevaluation of CVP operations by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Battle Creek: A draft EIS/R proposing removal of up to 5 PG&E hydro dams and building \$32 million fish ladders on 3 remaining dams is currently being circulated for public review with a comment deadline of 10/16/03. Friends of the River is proposing an alternative removing all 8 dams downstream of the creek's natural fish barriers, which would provide 100% restoration at a cheaper cost to the public.

Butte Creek: Spring run chinook salmon and steelhead are blocked from seeking more suitable upstream habitat and water temperatures by PG&E's Centerville diversion dam. Large fish kills have occurred the past two years due to high water temperatures below the Centerville diversion. Removal of the Centerville dam and other upstream diversion structures, as well as potential modification of natural fish barriers, could provide permanent restoration. PG&E's Desabla-Centerville project will be relicensed by FERC in the next 5 years.

Yuba River: Currently, the Daguerre Point dam on the lower Yuba River blocks as much as 60% of the river's salmon and steelhead migration, depending on fluctuating flow conditions. Further upstream, the Englebright dam blocks all fish migration. The Department of Water Resources will publish a feasibility report on fish passage options for Daguerre dam (including removal, breaching, and improved fish ladders) in late 2003, early 2004. CALFED is facilitating a stakeholder process examining fish passage options for Englebright dam. This is a multi-year process.

#### **H. Potential Impact.**

Significant restoration of the Sacramento Valley's threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead populations, as well as other sensitive fish species such as the green sturgeon.

Significant restoration of free flowing river ecosystems, including restoration of natural flow regimes, sediment transport, and water quality.

#### **I. Value of it being selected as a SVEWC campaign priority**

##### **1. How much difference could it make to have the SVEWC choose it as a priority campaign to support? How?**

Currently, individual groups are working on specific projects (Battle Creek: FOR, Butte Creek: Friends of Butte Creek, Yuba River: SYRCL). Making dam removal in general in the Sacramento Valley a SVEWC priority would bring in a larger community to help on this projects.

##### **2. How would the campaign help increase the number of volunteers and activists?**

Broader participation by the environmental community, means more letters on specific projects, and more public support.

#### **J. Education and Reframing the Issues**

##### **1. Will the campaign help reframe the mindset of the public that water belongs to the public and the public needs to ensure that habitat receives its fair share of the waters of the state?**

Significant restoration of threatened and endangered species, mandated by law, can not be accomplished without restoring at least some of the historical habitat blocked by dams. Restoring this habitat by removing SOME dams will reduce ESA conflicts overall and meet the intent of CALFED to restore habitat while increasing water supply reliability.

## **2. What key messages will the campaign deliver?**

See J1 above. Plus: Many of these dams are not needed. Their functions, if any, can be replaced with more environmentally benign alternatives. It is a more cost effective use of public funds to remove a dam than build a very expensive fish ladder over a dam.

## **K. What tools and efforts are needed to achieve success? Provide an explanation if available.**

### **1. Grassroots organizing**

Essential to mobilize active public support for dam removal.

### **2. Public education and media relations**

Essential for gaining public support, as well as assuring people that we are not removing dams that provide essential water, power, flood protection, recreation, etc.

### **3. Legislation**

Lobbying needed in support of state and federal budgets providing public funds for dam removal.

### **4. Litigation**

Possible litigation may be needed to challenge incomplete environmental documents used to justify decisions not to remove dams.

### **5. Science (including monitoring and modeling needs)**

The science already strongly supports restoration through dam removal. Additional studies may be needed on specific projects.

### **6. Coalition building (including with "strange bedfellows")**

Sport and commercial fishing organizations.

Native American tribes.

### **7. Other**

N/A

## **L. Supporting documents and articles.**

Go to [http://www.friendsoftheriver.org/Articles/2003\\_BringingDownTheDams.html](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org/Articles/2003_BringingDownTheDams.html)