



Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency

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sutterbutteflood.org

COUNTIES

Butte County
Sutter County

CITIES

City of Biggs
City of Gridley
City of Live Oak
City of Yuba City

LEVEE DISTRICTS

Levee District 1
Levee District 9

Oroville Wildlife Area Robinson's Riffle Restoration Project

Project Area

The project area includes the Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) in Butte County, California as well as the South Oroville Industrial Area located east of the Feather River.



Background

The OWA was used for gold dredging operations between 1898 and 1930 and then as a borrow source for the construction of Oroville Dam in the 1960s. Following the dredging activities and construction of the dam, most of the vital topsoil was removed and the mine tailings were configured into berms to keep the Feather River separated from these areas. To this day, the existing landscape continues to constrict flood flows, thereby diminishing fish and avian habitat and exacerbating flooding in the South Oroville Industrial Area.

Project Description

The project is a multi-benefit initiative to restore the OWA to a naturalized floodplain surface by improving the activation of side channels and removing obsolete berms and tailing piles. The project is in the planning phase in which an alternatives analysis will be conducted to identify a preferred alternative that provides the most hydraulic, ecological, and recreational benefits. The preferred alternative will be developed in coordination with established/interested stakeholders and resource agencies through individual meetings and a series of workshops to build consensus support for moving the project forward through the planning stages and eventual construction.



Figure 1: OWA A-Unit to the West (Left) and South Oroville Industrial Area to the East (Right) of the Feather River

Primary Goals

- **Reduce Flood Stages** – Reduce 100- and 200-year flood stages in the Feather River main channel.
- **Floodplain Restoration** – Restore and reestablish the floodplain within the OWA to recover key ecosystem processes and self-sustaining ecological functions.
- **Improve Recreational and Educational Opportunities** – Increase public access and improve various recreational and educational opportunities.



Figure 2: Tailing Piles within the OWA F-Unit

Supporting Goals

- **Improve Flood Risk Management** – Decrease flood hazards and improve overall flood system function, flexibility, and resiliency to climate change.
- **Serve Disadvantaged Communities** – Provide hydraulic, ecological, recreational, flood management, and educational benefits to disadvantaged communities.
- **Increase Economic Activity** – Stimulate the local economy through short- and long-term construction activities and improved recreational opportunities.

Funding and Project Costs

Funding has been awarded by both California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the planning, design, and permitting of the project. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has awarded funding for the design, permitting, and construction of recreational improvements at the Thermalito Afterbay Outlet. CDFW under the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Act (SFRA) is currently in the process of finalizing the grant agreement that would provide additional funding for the Thermalito Afterbay Outlet. See table below for funding breakdown.

Grantor	Fund Source	Description	Cost
DWR	Floodplain Management, Protection, and Risk Awareness (FMPRA) Program	Planning hydraulic modeling and alternatives evaluation for the OWA Robinson’s Riffle Restoration Project	\$1,144,800
CDFW	Watershed Restoration Grants Branch	Design and permitting of the floodplain elements of the OWA Robinson’s Riffle Restoration Project	\$2,115,000
WCB	Proposition 68	Design, permitting, and construction of recreational improvements at the Thermalito Afterbay Outlet	\$4,415,000
CDFW/ USFWS	Sport Fish Restoration Act	Design, permitting, and construction of recreational improvements at the Thermalito Afterbay Outlet	\$3,306,000
Total			\$10,980,800

The current funding need is approximately \$40,000,000, which is the cost associated with construction of the project. This estimate will be further refined as the planning and design efforts move forward.