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# California

## Sierra Pacific will argue spotted owl protection

By **TIM HEARDEN**  
Capital Press

ANDERSON, Calif. — Timber giant Sierra Pacific Industries asserts that proposed federal endangered-species protections for the California spotted owl are unnecessary.

The company has set up monitoring sites to observe the owl, whose listing is being considered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and found that their numbers are plentiful, spokesman Mark Pawlicki said.

The number of owls per square mile on SPI lands is comparable to densities in Yosemite National Park and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National

Parks, while the U.S. Forest Service's study areas are less densely populated, Pawlicki contends.

"We don't believe listing is warranted," he told the Capital Press in an email. "The conditions for the species are nearly identical as they were in 2006 when the service studied this species and decided that the listing was not warranted and prophetically said the true threat to this species is the fuel loading and fire risk in the Sierra Nevada forests. They urged the USFS to move forward on its proposed strategy to treat fuels."

Fish and Wildlife is considering a petition for listing the



Courtesy of Sheila Whitmore/SNAMP  
The California spotted owl has been proposed for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act.

John Muir Project and Wild Nature Institute filed late last year, arguing that the logging of for-

est trees that have been burned in wildfires is driving the owls to extinction.

Chad Hanson of the John Muir Project told The Associated Press there's evidence that these forests make prime habitat for the spotted owl. He estimates 1,200 pairs of the owls are nesting in California, according to the wire service.

The spotted owl's consideration was among 25 findings that Fish and Wildlife issued Sept. 17 on petitions to list, delist or reclassify animals or plants under the Endangered Species Act.

"In considering what factors might constitute threats, we must look beyond the exposure

of the species to a factor to evaluate whether the species may respond to a factor in a way that causes actual impacts to the species," the agency explained in its notice of findings. "If there is exposure to a factor and the species responds negatively, the factor may be a threat and, during the subsequent status review, we attempt to determine how significant a threat it is."

Timber industry insiders say salvage logging operations after a wildfire create a healthy forest, which benefits owls. They worry a listing could further harm the industry, which was sent reeling after the northern spotted owl was listed as threatened in 1990.

If the California owl is listed, such a move could lead to restrictions on activities like harvesting near known owl sites, restrictions on what months of the year loggers could harvest trees and increases in the time it takes to obtain state permits, Pawlicki said. Already that waiting time is about two years, he said.

"The listing process takes some time, and we anticipate the Service will be making decisions about the federal listing sometime in 2017," Pawlicki said. "In the meantime, we will continue to collect information on the owls on or near SPI lands, and provide the data to federal decision-makers."

## Water diversions resumed after California storm

By **TIM HEARDEN**  
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — After the season's first significant storm showered much of California last week, the state water board began rescinding stop-diversion orders for some senior right holders.

The board on Sept. 18 notified pre-1914 water right holders in the Sacramento and Feather river watersheds and in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta that there is now water available to meet their demands.

In all, the notices went out to 88 individuals or entities holding 238 water rights, said Tim Moran, a State Water Resources Control Board spokesman. Reduced monthly demand was the primary reason for allowing the diversions, Moran said in an email.

"The State Water Board will continue to monitor weather forecasts and stream gauges and notify diverters of the availability or unavailability of water," he said.

Water shortage notices are still in effect for pre-1914 right



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

The Sacramento River rushes through Redding, Calif., on Sept. 18 after the season's first major rainstorm. The state's water board has begun allowing some senior water right holders along the river to resume diversions.

holders in the Yuba, American and San Joaquin river watersheds as well as all post-1914 rights in the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds and Delta, the board advises.

The measures come after a Sept. 15 storm broke rainfall records in some regions of California.

The storm grew after a low-pressure system from the northwest part of the state combined with the remnants of

Hurricane Linda, which formed Sept. 6 in the Pacific Ocean off Mexico and later dissipated off Baja California, according to The Associated Press.

The storm dumped about a half-inch of rain in the northern San Francisco Bay area wine country Sept. 14-16 and about a half-inch in the northern Sacramento Valley, according to the National Weather Service.

Fresno recorded 0.12 inches during that period, the agency

reported.

The storm could be a down payment on what is expected to be a wet winter in southern and central California, brought on by strong El Nino ocean conditions that are expected to persist until next spring.

The water board's latest action offers a ray of hope for farmers after a dry spring and summer in which shutoff orders were issued to more than 300 senior right holders and more than 8,000 junior right holders throughout California.

Water attorneys and experts have been advising landowners to keep detailed records of their water rights handy in case they're challenged or curtailed by state officials. The advice follows a Sacramento County judge's siding with an irrigation district that challenged previous curtailment notices on the basis that the water board denied its right of due process.

The water board is urging landowners to keep records of diversions, warning that diverting water when there isn't enough to support their priority of right could bring enforcement actions.

## Water district eyes building huge sewage recycling plant

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Southern California's largest water provider said it's looking into partnering with sanitation districts to create what officials say could be one of the world's largest systems for recycling sewage water.

Tentative plans for creating what could be a \$1 billion system to purify and reuse as much as 168,000 acre-feet of water a year were presented at a committee meeting of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

On average, an acre-foot of water, or 326,000 gallons, is enough to serve two households for a year.

Creating such a system would require that MWD build a treatment plant and facilities that would meet various environmental regulations, the *Los Angeles Times* reported Tuesday.

The proposal comes in the fourth year of one of the worst droughts on record in California and during a time when the state's cities are under orders to reduce water consumption by 25 percent. If implemented, it

would transform MWD from a supplier of water obtained from other sources to one that also develops its own supplies.

"I'm not afraid of talking about another business model," the agency's board chairman, Randy Record, said. "None of us should be."

The agency currently provides water from a variety of sources to 26 public agencies in six counties. Its water reaches more than 19 million people.

MWD staffers are asking that the agency's 37-member board enter into an agreement with two dozen sanitation agencies by November to look into the feasibility of a recycling project.

If the MWD gives that approval, officials say a demonstration project could be launched in about 20 months that would purify about a million gallons of water a day.

Such a project would cost about \$15 million, said MWD Assistant General Manager Debra Man, some of which could come from water bond money approved by voters last year.

## Statewide grazing rules no longer considered

By **TIM HEARDEN**  
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — The state's water board has agreed to discontinue developing blanket regulations affecting grazing near streams — at least for now.

Employees recommended the State Water Resources Control Board stop preparing the Grazing Regulatory Action Project, or GRAP, after receiving testimony from ranchers and others and visiting several ranches earlier this year.

The board voted to do so, 4-0 with Chairwoman Felicia Marcus absent, on Sept. 16 but left the door open to further state involvement in a year to 16 months if they're not satisfied with regional and voluntary efforts to control water pollution from grazing.

"I would not want to say that GRAP is over," Vice Chairwoman Frances Spivy-Weber said. "We will be engaged."

Board member Steven Moore agreed.

"It's something like 40



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Cattle graze on the farm at California State University-Chico. The State Water Resources Control Board has discontinued developing a statewide plan to regulate grazing near streams, at least for now.

million acres in California that are grazed," he said. "It's definitely a footprint on our landscape, and when there's a footprint there's definitely an impact on water. The state water board is not discontinuing looking at grazing, but (is considering) collaboration, third-party expertise and non-regulatory components. There's a non-regulatory component to virtually everything we do."

As it is, the board's resolution encourages the state's

nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards to consider imposing best management practices and monitoring their use. The decision came during the board's regular meeting at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Sacramento, which was streamed online.

Board member Tam Doduc requested that officials come back with a report in 12 to 16 months, at which point the state body could reconsider its role.

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 JD 8770, 7675 hrs, 4WD, Quad Range Trans, 20.8-42 Duals, 3 Remotes ..... **\$50,000** Walla Walla #4681  
 JD 9400, 7644 hrs, 4WD, PS Trans, 1000 PTO, 710-42 Duals, 4 Remotes ..... **\$105,900** Tangent, #41372  
 JD 8630R, 957 hrs, IVT Trans, ILS Axle, 4 Remotes, 620/70R-46 Duals ..... **\$280,000** Donald, #71414  
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 JD 9650ST5, 3343 hrs, Small Grain, 914P BPU Platform, straw chopper ..... **\$87,000** Tangent, #685747  
 Case IH 2588, 1809 hrs, small grain, hillside, 30' cutting platform ..... **\$210,000** Walla Walla #303583  
 JD 9650ST5, 2246 hrs, Small Grain, 914P BPU Platform, straw chopper ..... **\$92,500** McMinnville, #685945  
 JD 9650ST5, 3456 hrs, Small Grain, 914P BPU Platform, straw chopper ..... **\$80,000** Tangent, #686102  
 JD 9650ST5, 3557 hrs, Small Grain, straw chopper ..... **\$99,950** Harrisburg, #686910  
 JD 5680, 881 hrs, 35% Rahco Leveler, 635F Platform, Stoss Cart ..... **\$436,300** Four Lakes, #685668  
 JD 5680, 1246 hrs, Rahco Leveler, 4WD, 635F Platform & Cart ..... **\$486,525** Tekoa, #746303  
 JD 5690, 824 hrs, 35% Rahco Leveler, 635F Platform, Stoss Cart ..... **\$583,200** Colfax, #745738  
 JD 9750ST5, 2500 hrs, Hillco Leveler, Small Grain, Button Tread Duals ..... **\$131,000** Colfax, #686502  
 JD 9750ST5, 3230 hrs, Rahco Leveler, 4WD, 930R Platform and Cart ..... **\$130,000** Colfax, #691057  
 JD 9770ST5, 1462 hrs, Rahco 35% Leveler, 30' 630R Platform, Stoss Cart ..... **\$295,000** Colfax, #730456  
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 JD HPX, Diesel, 4x4, Canopy, All Terrain Tires, Front Bumper ..... **\$9,800** Salem, #DM110816  
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