Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Agriculture and Industry Relations Committee Meeting

Los Angeles, California

July 25, 2017

Dan Keppen, Executive Director

Family Farm ALLIANCE SM

Challenges Facing Irrigated Agriculture in the Western U.S.

Family Farm ALLIANCE SM

Dan Keppen, P.E.

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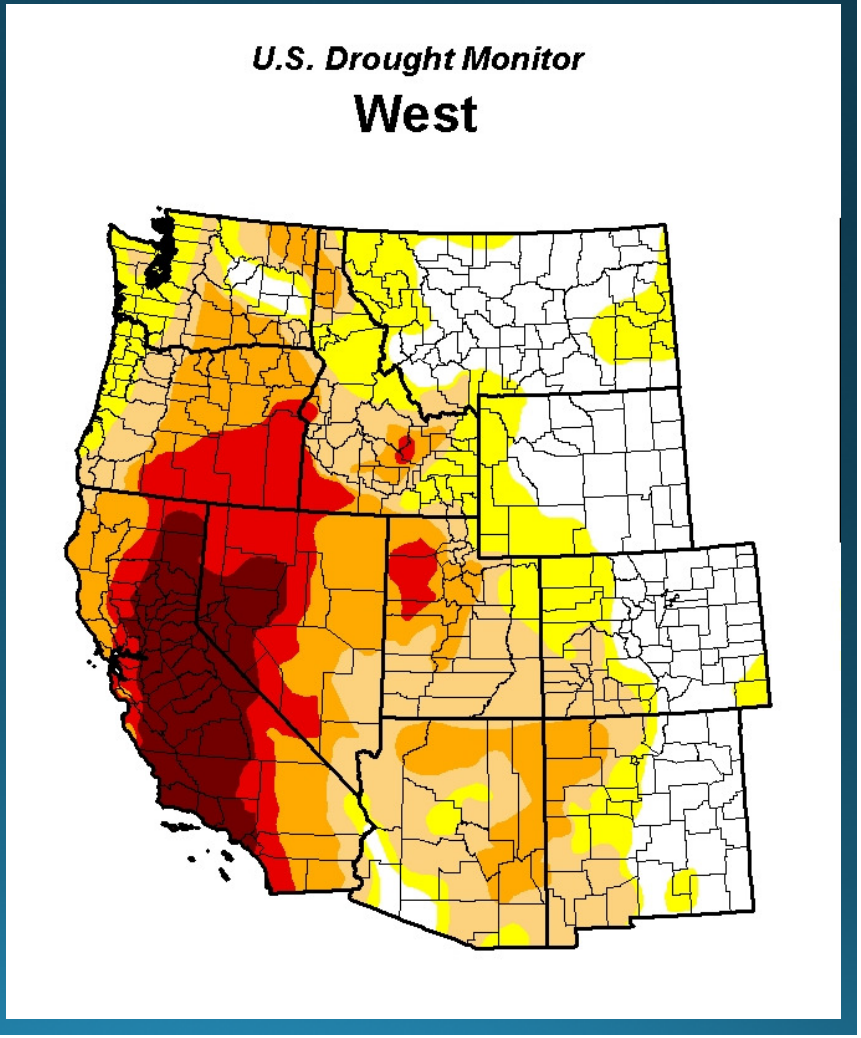
About the Alliance

The Economic Importance of Western Irrigated Agriculture

Family Farm Alliance Review, 2015

Stressors to Agricultural Water

- Drought
- Urban Development
- Aesthetics / Recreation
- Environmental Demands



2015 Farm Water Drought Impacts to California Agriculture

- 21,000 Lost Jobs = $2.7 Billion in Lost Economic Activity
- 15% Increased Prices to Consumers
- $2 Billion Direct Farm Losses
- 542,000 Acres of Farmland Fallowed

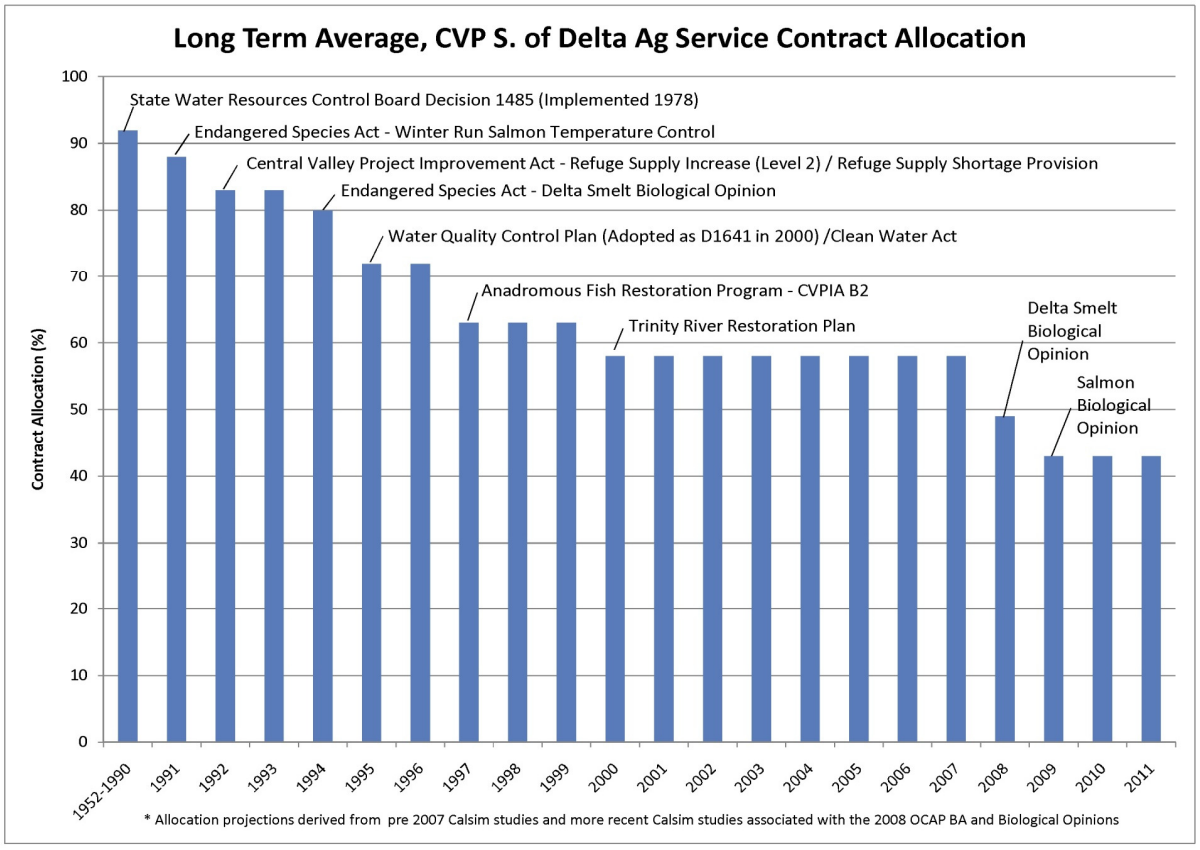
Central Valley Project Impacts

- For two years in a row, many agricultural water users received **no allocations** at all from the federal Central Valley Project (CVP), one of the largest water projects in the world. Last year, they received **5%.**

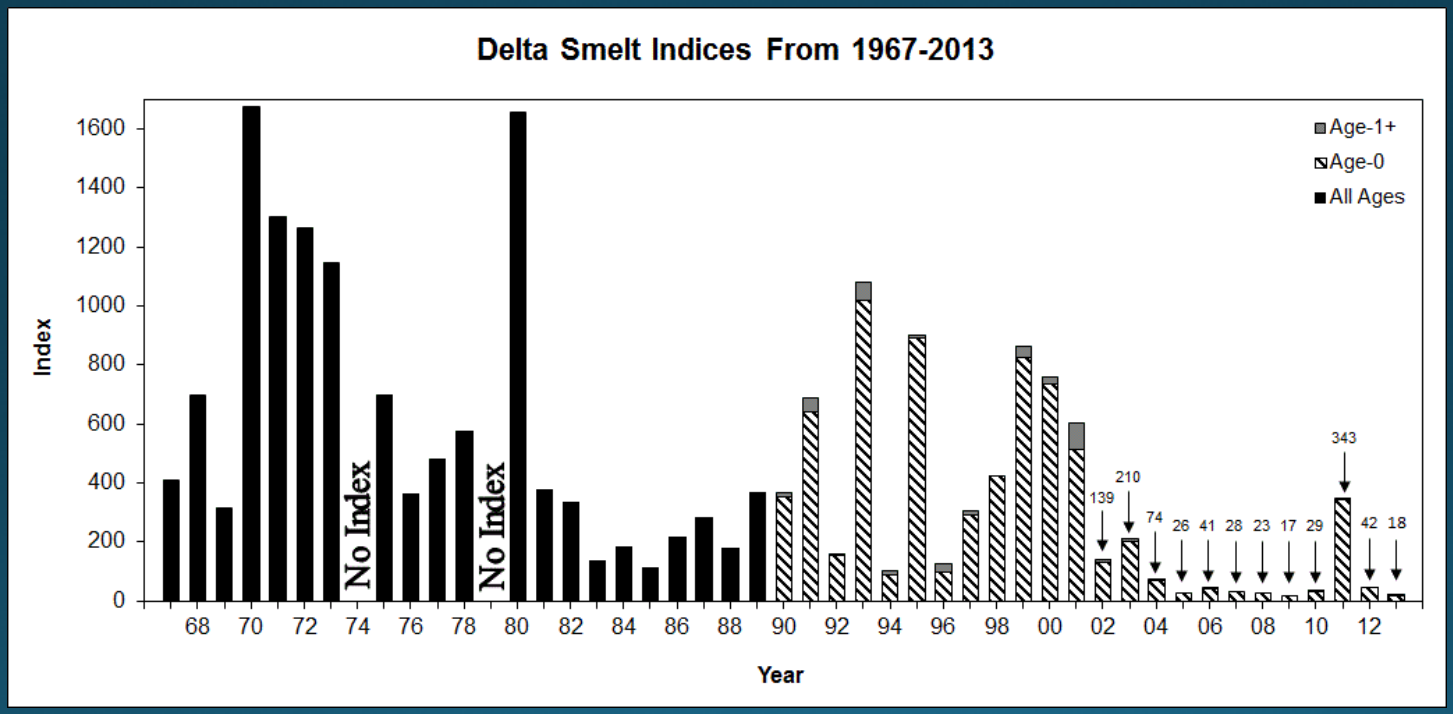
Central Valley Project Water Allocations (2014 & 2015)

Contractors	Percent Supply	
	05/13/14	02/27/15
North of Delta		
Agricultural Contractors (Ag)	0%	0%
Urban Contractors (M&I)	50%	25%
Wildlife Refuges	75%	75%**
Settlement Contractors / Senior Water Rights	75%	75%**
American River M&I Contractors	50%	25%
In Delta-Contra Costa	50%	25%
South of Delta		
Agricultural Contractors (Ag)	0%	0%
Urban Contractors (M&I)	50%	25%
Wildlife Refuges	65%	75%**
Settlement Contractors / Senior Water Rights	65%	75%**
Eastside Division Contractors	55%	0%
Friant – Class 1	0%	0%
Friant – Class 2	0%	0%
** - May be reduced if dry conditions persist		

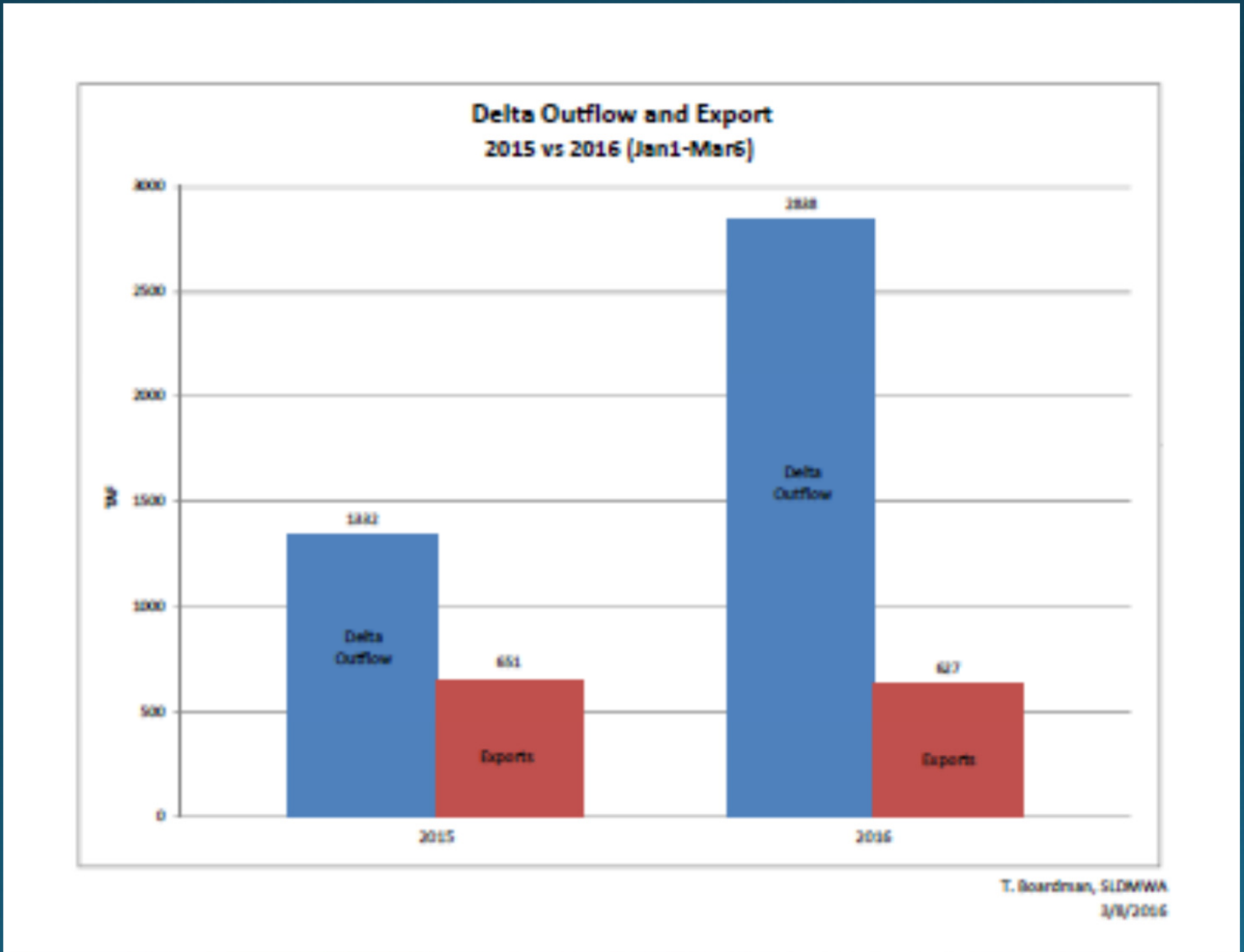
Death by two dozen regulatory cuts



How have delta smelt populations responded?



REGULATORY DROUGHT:
A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



Competing Demands: Colorado River Basin

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

Interim Report No. 1

Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

June 2011

Basin Study Projections

Significant shortfalls are projected between expected water supplies and demands in the Colorado River Basin in coming decades.

Basin Study Projections

- One million acre-feet of water can be conserved from agriculture by the year 2060 to fill the estimated gap that will exist between water supply and demand – primarily through temporary, rotational fallowing and deficit irrigation practices.

Basin Study Projections

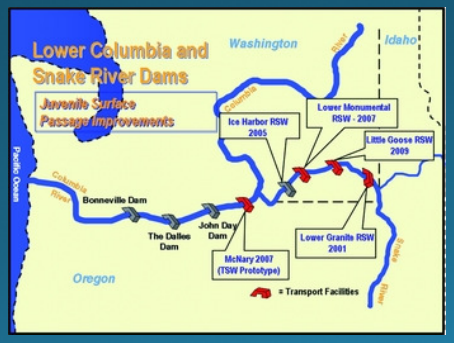
- Irrigated acreage in the Colorado River Basin will decrease by 300,000 to 900,000 acres during the time period 2015 to 2060.

“Newbies” with Different Priorities

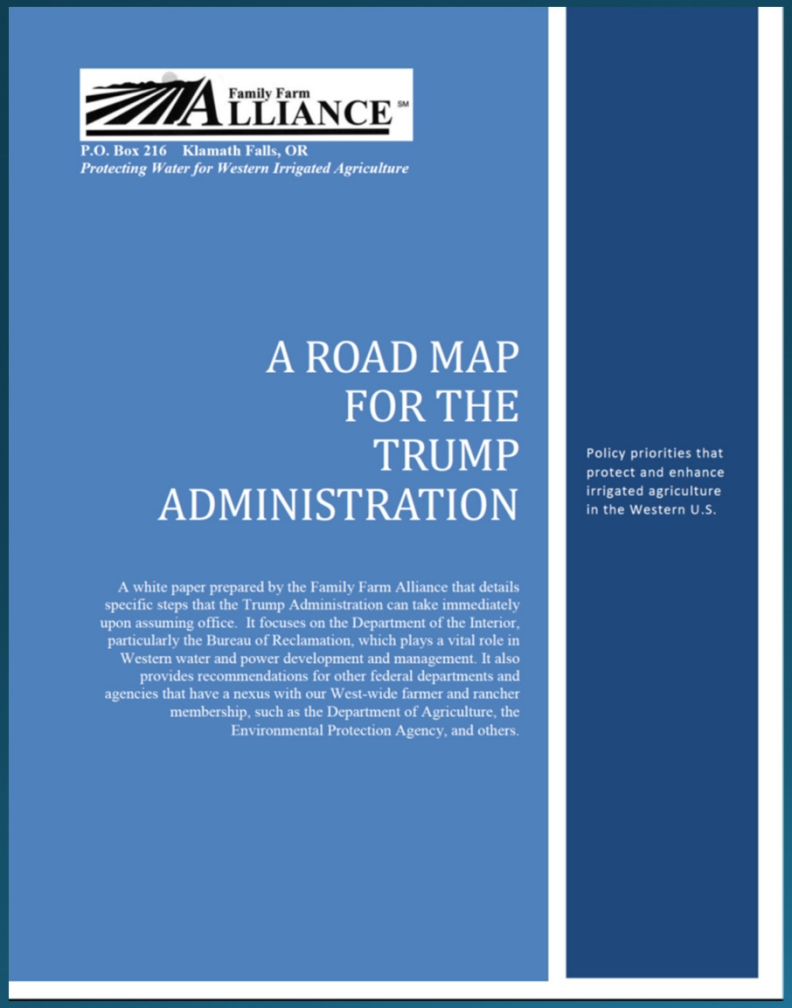
Irrigation districts say it conserves water and money, but as century-old waterways are enclosed in pipe, some landowners are doing all they can to prevent it. This, in turn, doesn't sit too well with their farming neighbors.

Other Western Water "Hot Spots"

- Columbia / Snake River System: Focus on Dam Removal
- Klamath River Basin
- Platte River
- Rio Grande



Alliance Transition Efforts



- 50 pages
- Important background information describing the unique nature of the American West
- Identify key challenges
- Recommendations developed for Interior, Agriculture, EPA, BOR, fishery agencies

What Can be Done?

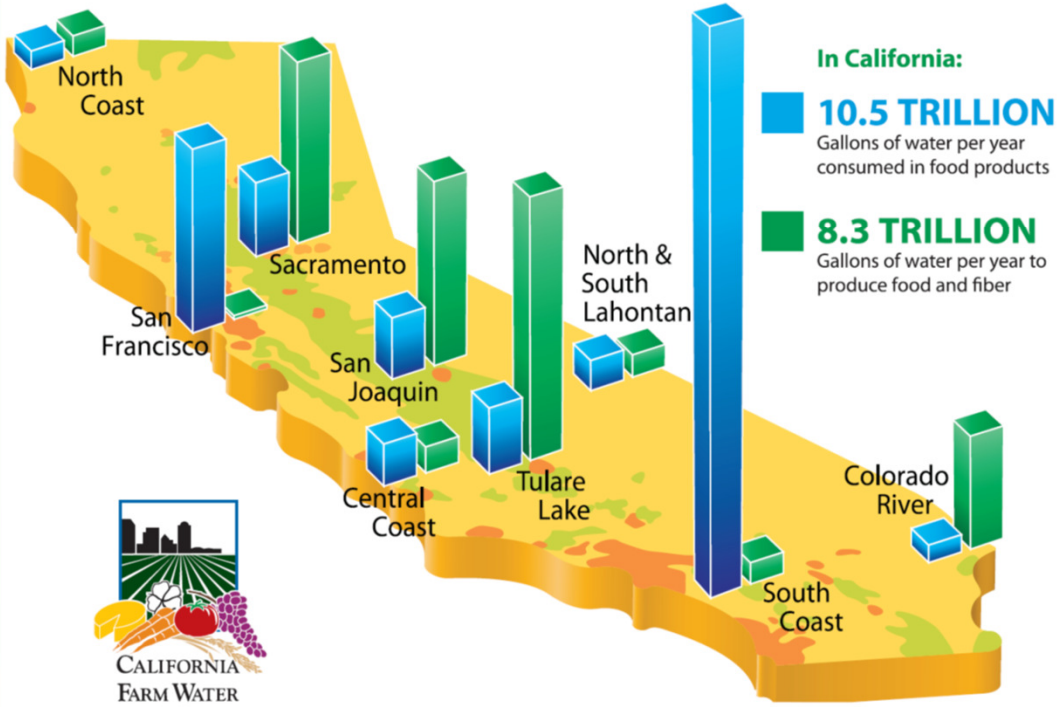
- Encourage accurate measurement and portrayal of water use and beneficial use data.

WHERE does farm water go?

Water that grows farm products doesn't stay on the farm

It becomes part of the food we eat and clothing we wear.

The green bars below represent the amount of water used to irrigate California's 9.6 million acres of farmland. The blue bars represent the water consumed as food by the people in each region.



CALIFORNIA FARM WATER COALITION

FOOD GROWS WHERE WATER FLOWS

farmwater.org
916-391-5030

DATA SOURCES:

Agricultural water numbers are based on depletion, or the amount of water used that is no longer available for other uses. Population figures based on California Water Plan Regional Reports. Water use is 10 year average (2001-2010). http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov

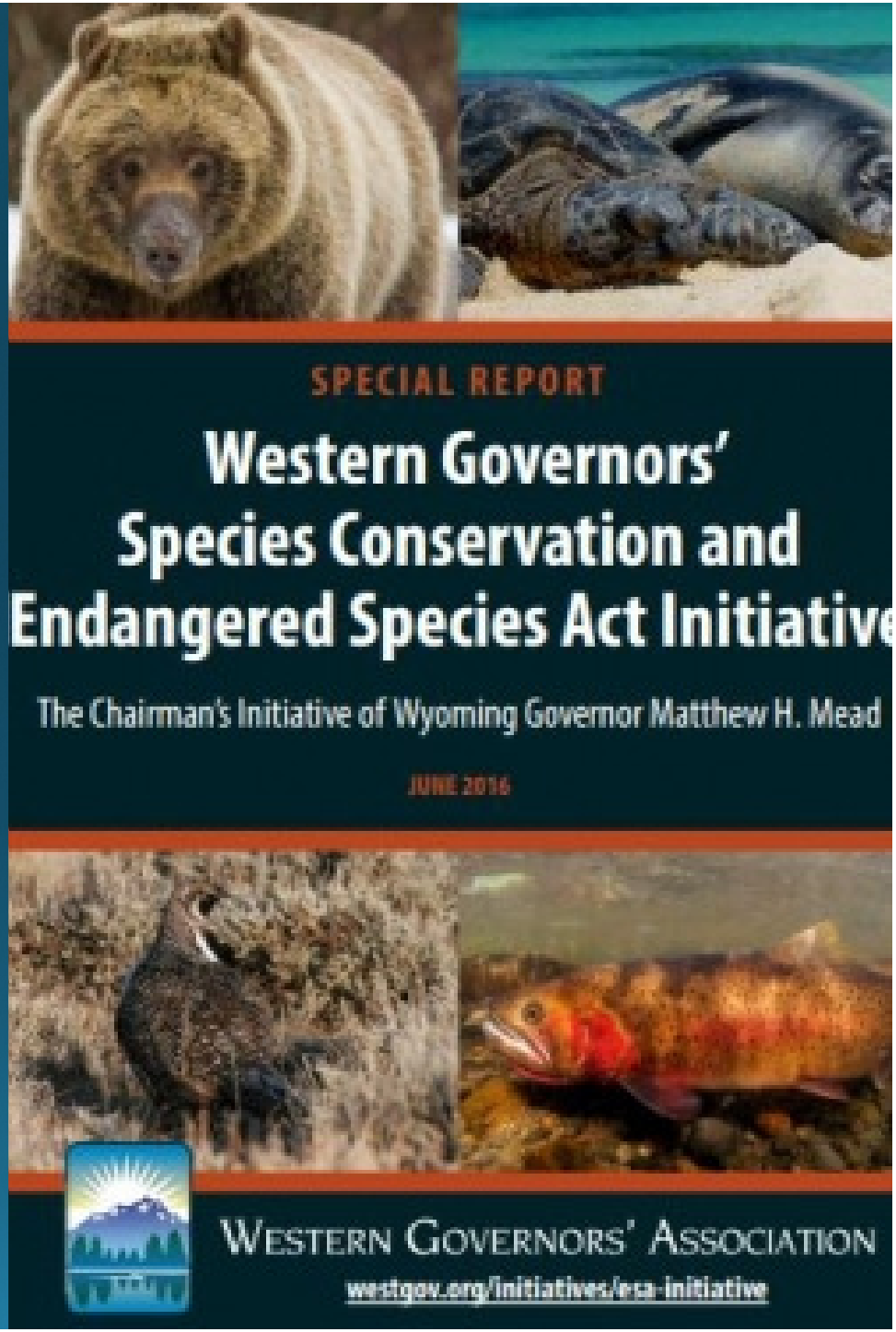
Per capita water demands for food supply is from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations http://www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/WRM_FP5_waterfood.pdf

Opportunity: Return flexibility to water management in the West

- Single –species management under the ESA
- Litigation and the manner in which certain federal agencies administer the ESA are driving more water management decisions.
- Federal agencies need more flexibility under environmental laws & water management regulations to respond to drought.
- We need to rein in the environmental litigation "industry" that so often is the cause of inflexible federal decision making in water resource management.

What Can be Done?

- Improve ESA transparency and species recovery



Opportunity:
Hold environmental water management to a higher standard of accountability.

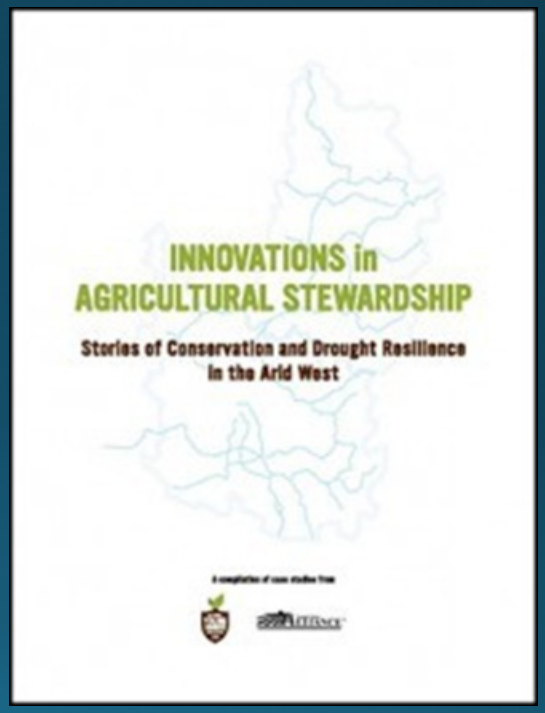
Dead Kokanee salmon in the Upper Trinity system, 2014

Opportunity:
Address aging water infrastructure to protect future water supply reliability

- Streamline regulatory hurdles to assist in developing new water infrastructure improvements.
- New tools to assist in financing major improvements to aging water infrastructure will be needed in the coming years to ensure that farmers and ranchers charged for these upgrades can afford repayment.

Opportunity:
Streamline delivery of federal water conservation programs and provide more leadership opportunities for irrigation districts

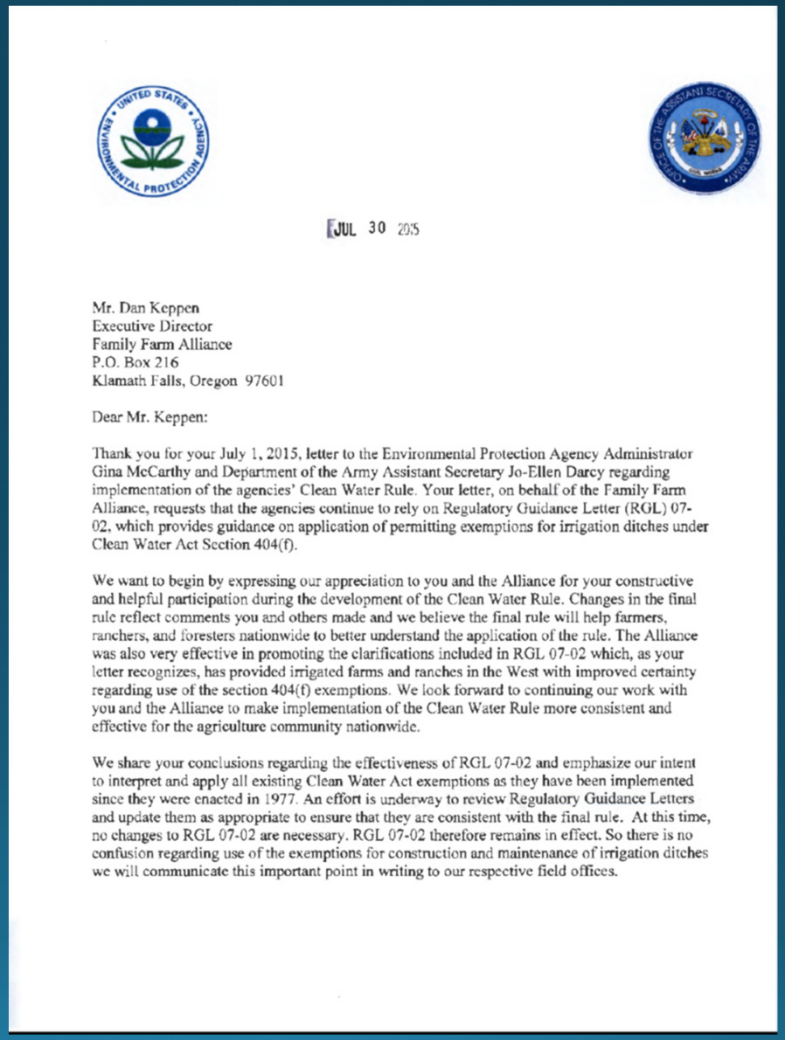
- 2015 report completed and co-authored by Family Farm Alliance and National Young Farmers Coalition, with funding assistance provided by the Walton Family Foundation.



Opportunity:
Reduce WOTUS Uncertainty

"Waters of the U.S."
Repeal & Re-write

Congressional Action



JUL 30 2015

Mr. Dan Keppen
Executive Director
Family Farm Alliance
P.O. Box 216
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

Dear Mr. Keppen:

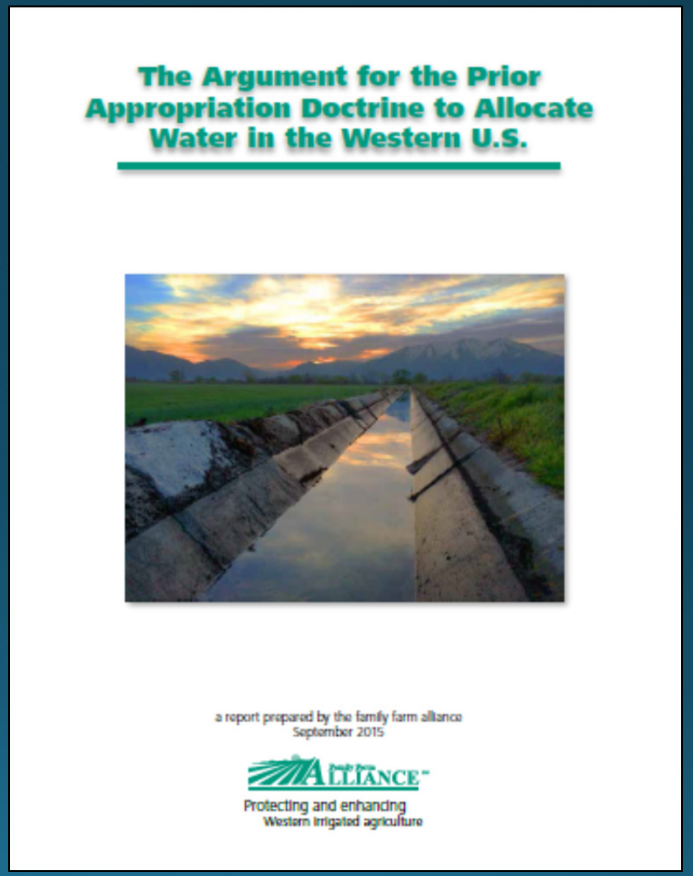
Thank you for your July 1, 2015, letter to the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy and Department of the Army Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy regarding implementation of the agencies' Clean Water Rule. Your letter, on behalf of the Family Farm Alliance, requests that the agencies continue to rely on Regulatory Guidance Letter (RGL) 07-02, which provides guidance on application of permitting exemptions for irrigation ditches under Clean Water Act Section 404(f).

We want to begin by expressing our appreciation to you and the Alliance for your constructive and helpful participation during the development of the Clean Water Rule. Changes in the final rule reflect comments you and others made and we believe the final rule will help farmers, ranchers, and foresters nationwide to better understand the application of the rule. The Alliance was also very effective in promoting the clarifications included in RGL 07-02 which, as your letter recognizes, has provided irrigated farms and ranches in the West with improved certainty regarding use of the section 404(f) exemptions. We look forward to continuing our work with you and the Alliance to make implementation of the Clean Water Rule more consistent and effective for the agriculture community nationwide.

We share your conclusions regarding the effectiveness of RGL 07-02 and emphasize our intent to interpret and apply all existing Clean Water Act exemptions as they have been implemented since they were enacted in 1977. An effort is underway to review Regulatory Guidance Letters and update them as appropriate to ensure that they are consistent with the final rule. At this time, no changes to RGL 07-02 are necessary. RGL 07-02 therefore remains in effect. So there is no confusion regarding use of the exemptions for construction and maintenance of irrigation ditches we will communicate this important point in writing to our respective field offices.

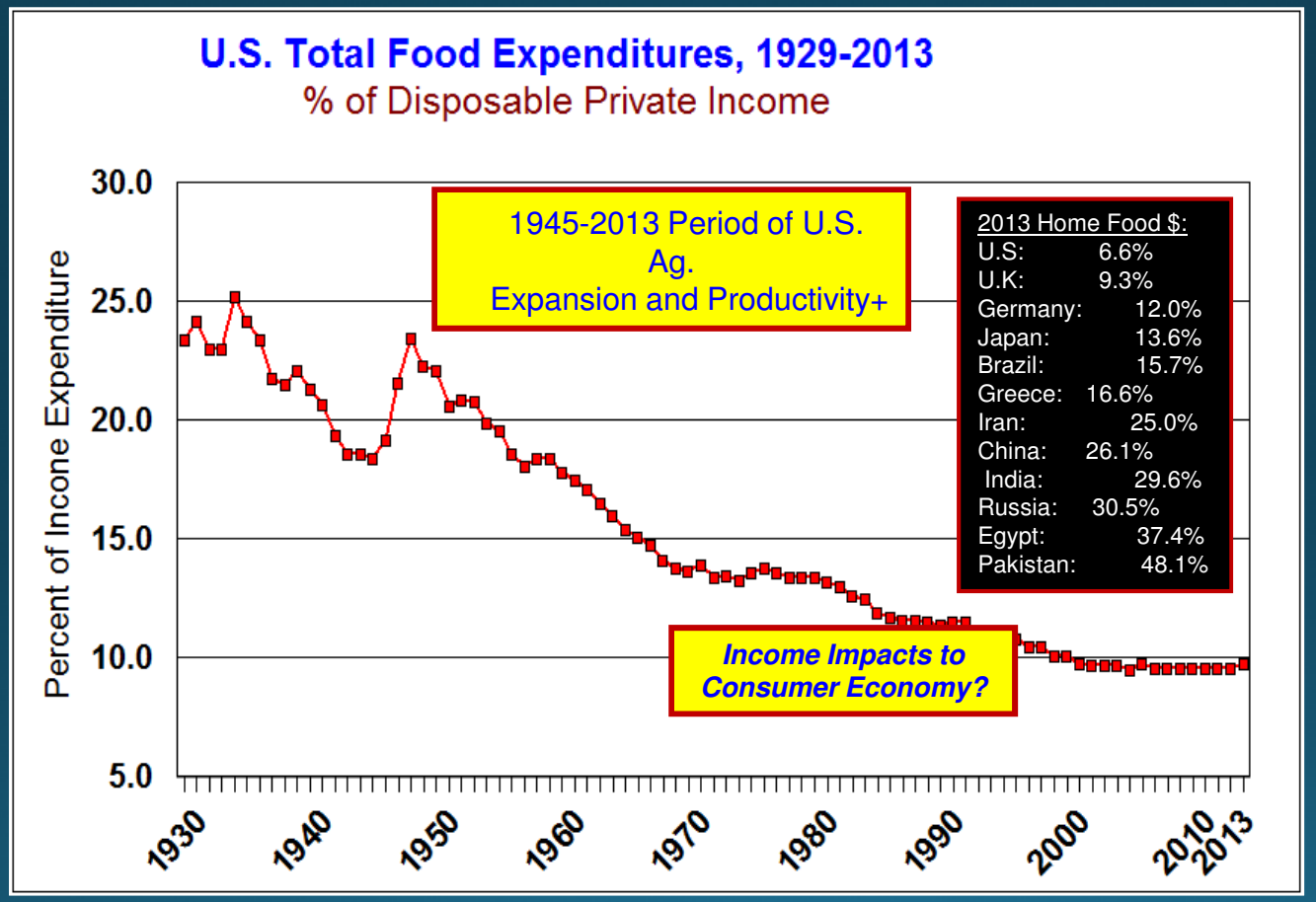
What Can be Done?

- Protect and respect water rights
- WRPA



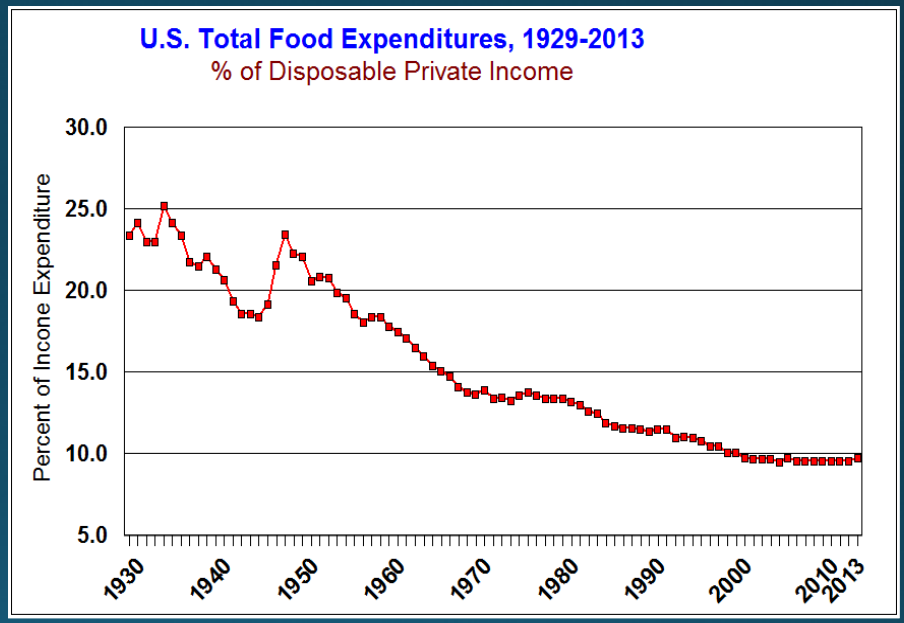
What can be done?

Underscore the Economic Significance of Agriculture

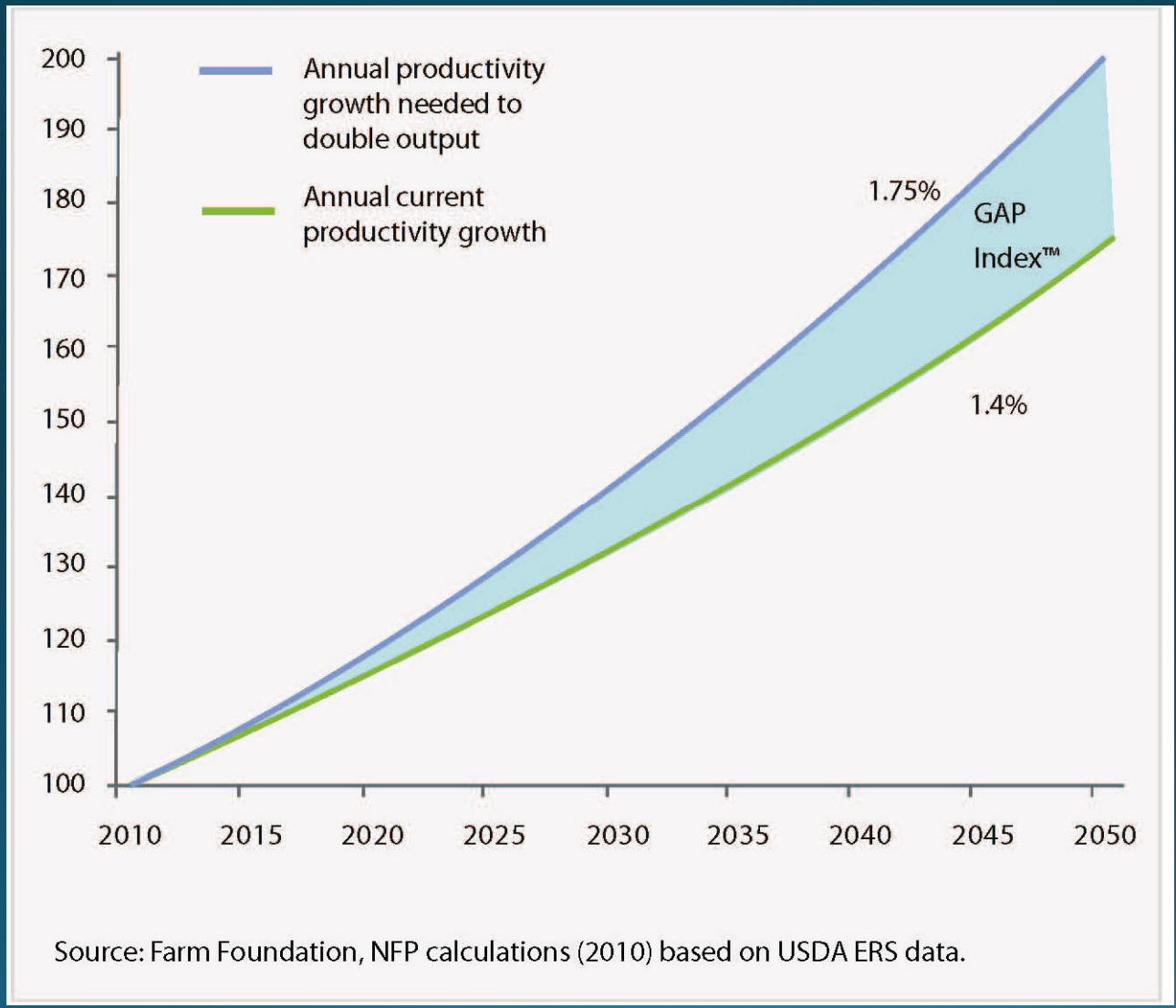


Other Ways to Improve Decision Making

- Bring the question of U.S. food security into the economic analysis of irrigation projects.
- Make sure the issue is recognized by decision makers.



The World Food Supply "GAP"



Source: Farm Foundation, NFP calculations (2010) based on USDA ERS data.

A New Paradigm

- We would like to see water policy officials run another scenario: one that assumes that irrigated acreage will not be diminished, and may, in fact, need to be expanded.

Concerns

- We cannot continue to downplay or ignore the negative implications of reallocating more agricultural water supplies from Western watersheds to meet new urban and environmental water demands.

Conclusions

- Policy makers and elected officials must clearly understand the importance of Western irrigated agriculture and the implications associated with drying up land currently producing food in the West.

- We'll do our best to advocate towards that end.

Questions?

e-mail me at dankeppen@charter.net