

Yuba Water welcomes new General Manager Willie Whittlesey

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MARYSVILLE, Calif. (July 1, 2020) – Today marks Willie Whittlesey’s first day as Yuba Water Agency’s new general manager. Whittlesey takes the reins from Curt Aikens, who will retire early next year.



“It’s an honor to lead such an incredible agency and staff,” Whittlesey said. “In the last few years alone, the agency has laid the groundwork for projects that will fundamentally change the future of Yuba County – I’m really excited to see these projects through.”

Having served as assistant general manager since 2019, Whittlesey is already immersed in the agency’s management and operations, including areas such as flood risk reduction, hydroelectric power generation, energy sales, water rights, water supply reliability, ecosystem improvements and more. Whittlesey also takes on the role of general manager during a time of unprecedented growth for Yuba Water.

Bolstered by hydropower generation revenues from its facilities on the Yuba River, the agency has several significant projects currently underway. For example, a secondary spillway at New

Bullards Bar Dam will substantially reduce flood risk in the Yuba River watershed and Sacramento Valley, and large-scale investments in forest restoration will help protect the Yuba watershed from catastrophic wildfire and improve water supply reliability.

Yuba Water has also committed to investing \$10 million per year into the community in ways that can improve the quality of life and economic prosperity for the people of Yuba County. These initiatives include a new Watershed Experience Center to foster water education, and major water infrastructure upgrades to ensure groundwater is protected, while serving as a catalyst for economic growth in the southern part of the county.

For Whittlesey, the success of these efforts also depends on the strength of the agency's partnerships, which is why he'll focus heavily this year on building relationships.

"I want to maintain, develop and improve the relationships we have with our partners, the irrigation districts that we provide water to, the various reclamation districts in the area that are responsible for reducing flood risk, the cities and the county," Whittlesey said. "We have some big projects in the works, and to be successful, it's going to take collaboration and a lot of partners all rowing in the same direction."

"The South Yuba River Citizens League and Yuba Water Agency sit both on the same side of the table, and across from one another – depending on the issue at hand. But most importantly, we choose to sit at the table together, and we value our decades-long relationship and commitment to dialogue," stated Melinda Booth, Executive Director at SYRCL. "I have every confidence that Yuba Water will thrive under Willie's direction, and I am looking forward to our partnership

doing great things for the Yuba watershed, forest health, and watershed education.”

Whittlesey grew up in the Sierra Nevada foothills and has been working in the Yuba River watershed for 25 years in roles ranging from forestry to hydroelectric power generation. Before joining Yuba Water, he spent 13 years with Pacific Gas & Electric’s land and hydroelectric generation departments and six years in private forest management.

Whittlesey is a registered professional forester and holds a bachelor’s degree in forestry from Humboldt State University. He lives in Yuba County with his wife and has two grown children.