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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION EFFORT AIMS TO HELP STEELHEAD

Work Will Take Place in American River Parkway

Sacramento, Calif. – The Sacramento Region Water Forum, working in collaboration with Sacramento County Regional Parks, the California Resources Agency, and other partners, will begin work next week on a project that will enhance steelhead spawning habitat in the lower American River (LAR).

The project will help to minimize steelhead egg nest (redd) stranding by deepening an existing side channel that is located approximately ½ mile downstream of the Sunrise Boulevard Bridge. The side channel will be deepened by excavating, re-contouring and relocating gravel to another location on the existing gravel bar to allow water (and steelhead) to move through it under lower flows.

In recent years the Sunrise Side Channel has supported up to approximately 10 percent of the total spawning habitat for wild steelhead in the LAR. The site is currently prone to dewatering when flows from Folsom Dam or Nimbus Dam are reduced. Steelhead are native to the LAR and are considered a prized recreational species in the River. Most steelhead spawn in the LAR from December to March. Steelhead are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The project will also provide secondary spawning and rearing benefits to Chinook salmon and other fish species.

Three interpretive signs will also be installed where boaters, equestrian users, anglers, bicyclists and/or pedestrians can see them. The signs, developed by Effie Yeaw Nature Center staff, will describe the steelhead life-cycle and explain the importance of steelhead spawning habitat for sustaining a threatened species.

The Sunrise Side Channel Project is partially funded by a grant from Proposition 50 administered through the Resources Agency to improve river parkways. Other funding partners include the Water Forum, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, and Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks. Consulting firms working on the project have also contributed valuable in-kind services. Those firms included EDAW; Philip Williams & Associates, Ltd.; Restoration Resources, Inc.; CBEC, Inc.; and the Sacramento State Department of Geology.

Construction on the project is set to begin the first week of October and be completed before the end of the month. While crews are working in the side channel, access in this area will be closed for safety reasons. The public will be able to view the project from Sacramento Bar on the north side of the River or upstream from the Jim Jones footbridge.

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The Water Forum is a diverse group of business and agricultural leaders, citizens groups, environmentalists, water managers, and local governments in the Sacramento region that joined to fulfill two co-equal objectives: to provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development to the year 2030; and to preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the lower American River.