

Study: California needs to manage water for today

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

A new report released Wednesday on California's well-recognized water management problems might be most noteworthy for what it does not include.

The report by the Public Policy Institute of California, "Managing California's Water," does not suggest deep water conservation on farms.

It also does not presume that all of the state's native fishes can be saved. Or that all its aquatic habitats should be restored to some pre-settlement ideal.

Rather, the report's theme is "reconciliation," which the authors define as managing California's water resources to benefit the environment and the economy of today.

"We have to keep in mind, we don't have a natural system left in California," said Peter Moyle, one of the co-authors and a fisheries professor at UC Davis. "We need to build a system that works as well for people as it does for fish."

The authors propose a shift from managing water and habitats based on the needs of a single endangered species to one that preserves whole ecosystems. They go so far as to suggest this may mean sacrificing some species for a greater good.

The 500-page report focuses on statewide water problems, but the eight authors acknowledge the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta remains at the heart of many issues.

Read the whole story