



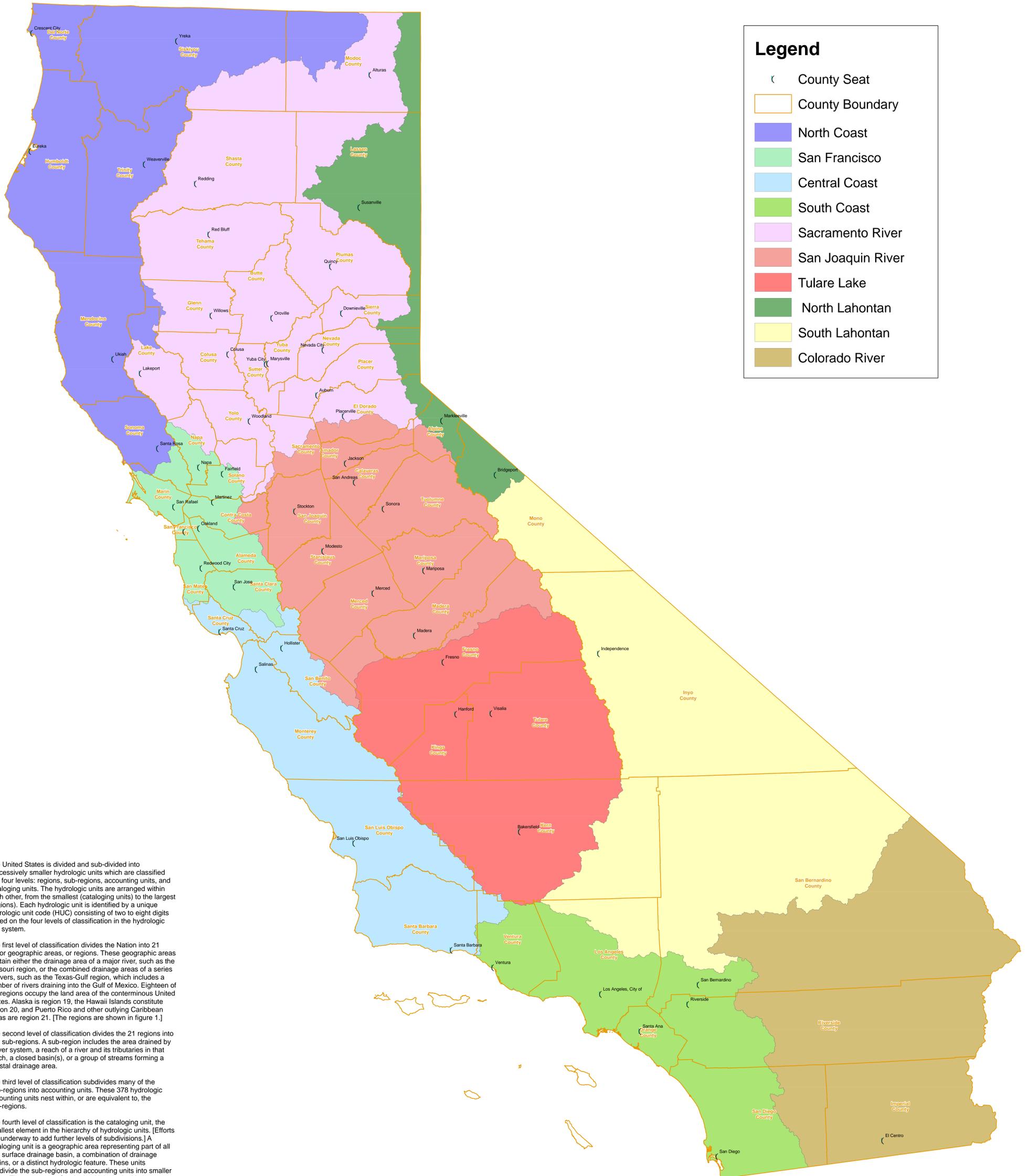
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
Lester A. Snow, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Derek Chernow, Acting Director

Hydrologic Regions

Department of Conservation
Division of Land Resource Protection
Watershed Coordinator Grant Program



Legend

- County Seat
- County Boundary
- North Coast
- San Francisco
- Central Coast
- South Coast
- Sacramento River
- San Joaquin River
- Tulare Lake
- North Lahontan
- South Lahontan
- Colorado River

The United States is divided and sub-divided into successively smaller hydrologic units which are classified into four levels: regions, sub-regions, accounting units, and cataloging units. The hydrologic units are arranged within each other, from the smallest (cataloging units) to the largest (regions). Each hydrologic unit is identified by a unique hydrologic unit code (HUC) consisting of two to eight digits based on the four levels of classification in the hydrologic unit system.

The first level of classification divides the Nation into 21 major geographic areas, or regions. These geographic areas contain either the drainage area of a major river, such as the Missouri region, or the combined drainage areas of a series of rivers, such as the Texas-Gulf region, which includes a number of rivers draining into the Gulf of Mexico. Eighteen of the regions occupy the land area of the conterminous United States. Alaska is region 19, the Hawaii Islands constitute region 20, and Puerto Rico and other outlying Caribbean areas are region 21. [The regions are shown in figure 1.]

The second level of classification divides the 21 regions into 221 sub-regions. A sub-region includes the area drained by a river system, a reach of a river and its tributaries in that reach, a closed basin(s), or a group of streams forming a coastal drainage area.

The third level of classification subdivides many of the sub-regions into accounting units. These 378 hydrologic accounting units nest within, or are equivalent to, the sub-regions.

The fourth level of classification is the cataloging unit, the smallest element in the hierarchy of hydrologic units. [Efforts are underway to add further levels of subdivisions.] A cataloging unit is a geographic area representing part of all of a surface drainage basin, a combination of drainage basins, or a distinct hydrologic feature. These units subdivide the sub-regions and accounting units into smaller areas. There are 2264 Cataloging Units in the Nation. [Cataloging Units sometimes are called "watersheds."

A Watershed Protection Approach is a strategy for effectively protecting and restoring aquatic ecosystems and protecting human health. This strategy has, as its premise, that many water quality and ecosystem problems are best solved at the watershed level rather than at the individual water body or discharger level. Major features of a Watershed Protection Approach are: targeting priority problems, promoting a high level of stakeholder involvement, integrated solutions that make use of the expertise and authority of multiple agencies, and measuring success through monitoring and other data gathering.

Spatial and tabular data compiled by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. Source for Hydrological Unit Code boundary coverage is the United States Geological Survey. County lines provided by the Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program from United States Geological Survey 1:100,000 scale topographic maps. Copyright © 2007, California Department of Conservation. The Department of Conservation makes no warranties as to the suitability of this product for any particular purpose.