

# Water Operations Management Team Notes

January 11, 2023

## Members Attending

- USBR: Kristin White, Liz Kiteck
- USFWS: Jana Affonso, Matt Nobriga
- CDFW: Brooke Jacobs, Kristal Davis-Fadtke
- NMFS: Garwin Yip
- DWR: Lenny Grimaldo, Mike Ford (Acting)
- SWRCB: Diane Riddle, Matt Holland

## Topics/Actions

- Approval of January 4, 2022, Meeting Notes: Approved
- Upcoming Meetings
  - Salmonid Monitoring Team (meets weekly on Tuesdays): 1/17
  - Smelt Monitoring Team (meets weekly on Tuesdays): 1/17
  - Feather River Operations Group (meets monthly first and third Thursdays): 1/19
  - American River Group (meets monthly on third Thursday, and as needed): 1/19
  - Stanislaus River Watershed Team (meets monthly on third Wednesday): 1/18
  - Clear Creek Technical Team (meets quarterly on third Thursday): 3/16
  - Sacramento River Temperature Task Group: 2/23
  - Shasta Planning Group: not currently meeting
- Operational Updates
  - CVP: Trinity River releases are at 300 cfs after briefly going up to 700 cfs over the weekend. Sacramento River (Keswick) releases are currently at 4,250 cfs to handle side flow into Keswick, but flows will be lowered to 3,250 cfs as inflow drops. Clear Creek (Whiskeytown) releases are spilling through glory hole spillway 3000 cfs. American River (Nimbus) releases were at 35,000 cfs over the weekend, but Reclamation submitted a change order today for 16,000 cfs. Stanislaus River (Goodwin) releases are back to 400 cfs today after higher flows due to releases from Tulloch Dam. Reclamation's Delta pumping tomorrow will

be at 5 units targeting 4,100 cfs managing to -2000 OMR for First Flush. Federal share of San Luis Reservoir is 338 TAF.

- Note: New Melones gage was briefly reporting incorrectly, but it should be fixed soon. Millerton/Friant Dam is currently in Flood Operations, targeting 8000 cfs in the San Joaquin river; it is expected to be in flood releases for some time.
- SWP: Feather River (Oroville-Thermalito Complex) releases are at 950 cfs. Exports from Clifton Court Forebay are targeting 3,600 cfs and scheduled to increase to approximately 4,000 tomorrow to follow the rising limb of the hydrograph at Vernalis. Oroville storage is 1,680 TAF. State share of San Luis Reservoir is 478 TAF.
- Relevant Assessments
  - Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook 1/10/23 – 1/16/2023
  - 20230110 Proposed Action Assessment
  - SaMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary dated 1/10/2023
  - SMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary dated 1/10/2023
- Upcoming Actions
  - Reclamation:
    - No actions.
    - Discussion Item - OMR Averaging Period (see below)
  - FWS:
    - No actions.
    - Discussion Item - Given ongoing high turbidity in the Delta, WOMT should discuss the plan for OMR Management with First Flush ending and Turbidity Bridge Avoidance beginning (see below)
  - CDFW:
    - No actions. No discussion items beyond those already mentioned.
  - NMFS:
    - No actions. No discussion items beyond those already mentioned.
  - DWR:
    - No actions. No discussion items beyond those already mentioned.
  - SWRCB:
    - No actions. No discussion items beyond those already mentioned.

- Hydrology Update (DWR and Reclamation)
  - Periods of rain, snow, and winds today, heaviest on the Coast Range. The next storm system is coming in tonight and Thursday, and another on Saturday. The forecast beyond this weekend looks wet.
  - Some hydrologic milestones to celebrate:
    - Shasta Storage expected to exceed 2.0 MAF tonight or tomorrow!
    - Oroville storage has reached average!
    - Rainfall totals this year in northern California (29 inches) have almost reached the same precip we had at this same time last year, but we have more precip on the way!
    - Total snowpack for California is above 100% of peak/max, but it is not evenly distributed. It is about 81% in the north and 120% in the south.
- Discussion Items
  - First Flush action is currently in effect. The end of the 14-day period is Monday 1/16 at midnight. Based on the forecast and Outlook, turbidity is still very high and doesn't seem to be going down. It is likely that Turbidity Bridge Avoidance will start immediately after first flush ends. FWS would like to check in about planned operations.
    - USBR and DWR confirmed that First Flush ends 1/16. DWR reviewed the ITP, and Reclamation reviewed the Proposed Action and Biological Opinion. Both water agencies understand that they would roll right into an OMRI no more negative than -2000 cfs per the Turbidity Bridge Avoidance Proposed Action measures if turbidity remains higher than the threshold. Even though a turbidity bridge has already formed, DWR, Reclamation, CDFW, and FWS are confident the action would be helpful for fish but acknowledged that it may not be able to avoid high turbidity, given ongoing storm events. .
  - DWR asked whether, at the conclusion of 5 days for SWP ITP COA 8.5.1 (Turbidity Bridge Avoidance), the Risk Assessment makes a recommendation of -2000 to -5000 cfs based on Turbidity Avoidance?
    - CDFW clarified that the Risk Assessment would evaluate risk of entrainment, not just turbidity.
    - DWR said they would like to convene consultant team to increase monitoring in the OMR corridor to inform risk of entrainment. This would provide additional information for SMT in addition to EDSM and trawls. Enhanced monitoring

would ideally start late next week to have information before SMT convenes on 1/24.

- FWS and CDFW asked to review the monitoring plan when it is available, and DWR agreed to send it out.
- WOMT discussed the timeline for providing a risk assessment and OMR management recommendation for Turbidity Bridge Avoidance.
  - FWS: The Biological Opinion requires that Reclamation and DWR provide an assessment to FWS for 24-hour review. Reasonable and Prudent Measure 1: Term and Condition 4 states that the action would continue until FWS, USBR, and DWR are all in agreement about whether or not the action should continue to be implemented.
  - CDFW: COA 8.5.1 is in effect for 5 days through Saturday, if turbidity is above 12 FNU, so SMT may want to convene on Friday to proactively discuss.
  - Reclamation: Maybe they should meet Thursday, given the 24 hour notice required to FWS.
  - DWR plans to provide an update at the Director's meeting on Thursday. This is not an elevation, just an update.
- From SMT Notes: "The SMT agreed to bring the [turbidity bridge avoidance] topic to WOMT and request clarification on the averaging period for a turbidity bridge avoidance action given ambiguity in the regulatory language."
  - DWR said that a single day average OMR is not workable for operating.
  - USBR added that, based on how they've operated in the past, a five-day average seems reasonable.
  - CDFW recognizes that operating to a daily average is very difficult and is open to using an average. The reason it is daily is because it could off-ramp at any time. CDFW will check internally and will circle back about the averaging period.
- WOMT did not come to a decision about the averaging period, but representatives agreed to discuss further and make a decision by the end of the week.

[Update from discussions on 1/12 and approved via email: WOMT representatives agreed to a five-day averaging period for OMR under the Turbidity Bridge Avoidance measure if it were to be triggered on the 17<sup>th</sup>]

- Action Items:

- Two questions: How is averaging period calculated? Does it start on Day 1 of the Turbidity Bridge Avoidance measure, or does it account for previous days? And what is the averaging period? Not an elevation item; RESOLVED 1/12 AND WOMT APPROVED VIA EMAIL 1/17
- DWR will send WOMT proposal for additional monitoring
- CDFW will draft decision statement for the WOMT – DONE 1/12
- Elevation Items
  - No items to elevate to the Directors.

## Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 1-1:50 p.m.