

# Water Operations Management Team Notes

January 20, 2023 – Off-Cycle Meeting

## Members Attending

- USBR: Kristin White, Liz Kiteck
- USFWS: Jana Affonso, Matt Nobriga
- CDFW: Brooke Jacobs, Kristal Davis-Fadtke
- NMFS: Garwin Yip
- DWR: Molly White, Louise Conrad (Acting)
- SWRCB: Matt Holland

## Topics/Actions

- Roll Call, Review Agenda and Goal of Meeting
- Relevant Assessments
  - Draft ITP Risk Assessment for Off-Cycle Meeting on 1/19/23 (in prep)
  - 20230119 Proposed Action Assessment
- Update from Director's Meeting on 1/19
  - The DWR Director was not able to attend yesterday, and it was decided that a decision could wait until Friday. Directors asked WOMT to provide an assessment of risk if OMR limitations were to change over the weekend, using the most up-to-date information
  - If agencies cannot reach consensus at WOMT, the Directors will meet this afternoon. If the agencies can reach consensus at WOMT, the Directors may not need to meet.
- Update on Hydrology and Operations
  - Based on 1/20 Forecast: Still in Excess. OMR today is about +300 cfs and forecasted to be approximately -2,000 cfs by next Tuesday. Hydrologic conditions through the weekend and until Tuesday expected to continue high flows in the San Joaquin River. Vernalis is likely to be in the 20,000 cfs range that would support full exports through Monday or Tuesday. The 18,000 to 20,000 cfs range is right about where OMR would be approximately -2,000 cfs.
  - Because SMT will meet on Tuesday and WOMT on Wednesday, decisions made today would likely guide operations between Sunday and Next Thursday.

- Reclamation and DWR Proposal for Operations after 1/21/23
  - Reclamation and DWR need to have a plan in place in case Vernalis flows drop and OMR becomes controlling. Even though the five-day average is used for compliance, DWR and Reclamation need to plan ahead and may need to limit pumping as soon as flows at Vernalis drop to approximately 18,000 cfs.
  - Reclamation walked through the PA Assessment from 1/19 and WOMT members made Live Edits (Document Attached)
- Decisions and Next Steps
  - WOMT reached consensus supporting operational flexibility beginning 1/22 to maintain maximum exports through the weekend until at least Tuesday, at which point conditions will be updated. This may result in OMR more negative than -2,000 cfs but is not anticipated to result on OMR more negative than -3,500 cfs. DWR and Reclamation will maintain the 5-day average Turbidity Bridge Avoidance of OMR no more negative than -2,000 cfs through 1/21.
  - With the additions of the assessment and rationale, FWS is comfortable with the proposed operational flexibility up to approximately -3,500 cfs. Reclamation agreed to send a summary document providing the rationale for why it is infeasible to reduce turbidity by maintaining OMR no more negative than -2,000 cfs and why OMR no more negative than -3,500 is protective. The summary document will include the proposed operation and rationale and will attach the PA Assessment.
  - CDFW stated that the request for operational flexibility up to approximately -3,500 is not unreasonable, but stressed that they will be carefully tracking conditions in real-time, including flows, turbidity, salvage, fish presence, etc. to determine if changes are necessary to be protective of Delta Smelt. CDFW will also require documentation for compliance with the ITP, and it would be best if it were the same documentation as provided to FWS.
  - NMFS and Water Board abstained.

Adjourn