

Water Operations Management Team Notes

February 14, 2024

Members Attending

- Reclamation: Levi Johnson
- USFWS: Jana Affonso, Matt Nobriga
- CDFW: Kristal Davis-Fadtke
- NMFS: Garwin Yip
- DWR: Molly White, Lenny Grimaldo
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland, Diane Riddle

Topics/Actions

- Approval of meeting notes from last meeting: 2/12/24
- Upcoming Meetings:
 - Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) (weekly on Tuesday): 2/20/24
 - Smelt Monitoring Team (SMT) (weekly on Tuesday): 2/20/24
 - Feather River Operations (monthly first and third Thursdays): 2/15/24
 - American River Group (monthly on third Thursday, and as needed): 2/15/24
 - Stanislaus Watershed Team (monthly on third Wednesday): 2/21/24
 - Clear Creek Technical Team (quarterly on third Thursday): 3/21/24
 - Sacramento River Temperature Task Group (SRTTG) (monthly on fourth Thursday): 2/22/24
- Relevant Assessments
 - Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook 2/13/24 – 2/19/24
 - Proposed Action Assessment 2/13/24
 - SaMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary 2/13/24
 - SMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary 2/13/24
- Operational Updates
 - CVP: Trinity River release is 300 cfs. Sacramento River (Keswick) release is 15,000 cfs. Clear Creek (Whiskeytown) release is 200 cfs. American River (Nimbus) release is 6,000

cfs. Stanislaus River (Goodwin) release is 1,500 cfs. Reclamation's Delta Pumping is at 5 units targeting 4,200 cfs. Federal share of San Luis Reservoir is 873 TAF.

- SWP: Feather River (Oroville-Thermalito Complex) releases are 3,000 cfs; increasing to 6,000 cfs on Thursday (2/15/24). Clifton Court Forebay exports are 2,900 cfs. State share of San Luis Reservoir is at 445 TAF.

Hydrology Update (DWR and Reclamation):

- The 6-day forecast for today through next Tuesday is predicting heavy precipitation throughout all, but the Southeast portion, of California with the heaviest rains on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Four to six inches is expected in the Sacramento and lower San Joaquin area. Along the coast, from Oregon down to LA, 3-4 inches is predicted. Eureka, the Bay area, and southern California are expected to get 2-3 inches, and the Los Angeles area could get anywhere from 1 – 1.5 inches.

Upcoming Actions, Updates, and Discussion Items

- Reclamation:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- FWS:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- CDFW:
 - No actions or updates.
 - Discussion item: Salvage of spring-run yearlings
- NMFS:
 - No actions or updates.
 - Discussion items:
 - Process for submitting comments and/or edits on the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, and the Proposed Action Assessments. Also, would like to discuss the comments/edits made this week.
 - 50% exceedance for steelhead threshold, and current operations for avoiding hitting the 75% exceedance threshold.
- DWR:
 - No actions or updates.
 - Discussion item: notification processes as it relates to internal processes and not meeting OMR.
- SWRCB:

- No actions, updates, or discussion items.

Discussion Items

- CDFW: Spring run salvage of yearlings.
 - CDFW notes that there have been numerous findings of yearling spring-run Chinook salmon in salvage. The amended COA 8.6.3 does not have language included to capture spring-run yearlings. Noted that salvage sharply increased when OMR went from -2,000 cfs to -5,000 cfs on 2/6/2024. The genetic/parentage information obtained indicates that a large portion of the yearlings are coming from either Mill, Deer, and Butte creeks.
- NMFS: 50% exceedance for steelhead threshold, and current operations for avoiding hitting the 75% exceedance threshold.
 - NMFS stated that on February 11, 2024, 50% of annual loss of steelhead was exceeded (noted that ~400 were lost in the last week). When this 50% threshold is exceeded, the action response is for Reclamation and DWR to operate to an OMR of no more negative than -3,500 cfs, and to review, seek technical assistance, and to discuss at a WOMT meeting. As part of the action response, NMFS wonders if Reclamation and DWR plan on developing a risk assessment.
 - Part of the weekly assessment this week indicated that there was a moderate to high risk of exceeding the 75% threshold. Regarding the 75% threshold exceedance, NMFS asked if there are any actions that can be taken to avoid exceeding this threshold. If the 75% threshold is exceeded, then OMR would be further restricted to no more negative than -2,500 cfs through the end of the season, March 31, 2024.
 - NMFS, Reclamation, and DWR discussed if the risk assessment should be done as soon as possible, or if it could/should be included in the weekly assessment. If weekly, it would be flagged for general awareness. Absorbing this assessment into the weekly assessment would be in compliance with the PA.
 - CDFW noted that to be proactive, it makes sense to do a risk assessment this week if it might lead to changes in operations because it might be too late to wait for the next meeting before making any operational changes.
 - There was agreement that an off-cycle SaMT meeting should be called. DWR and Reclamation will hold the meeting, expect 30 minutes will suffice to get clarity from the technical teams and have a quick discussion about information that could inform the risk assessment. After the risk assessment is developed SaMT would need to reconvene to review the risk assessment and provide a recommendation on operations, if necessary.
- NMFS: Process for submitting comments and/or edits on the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, and the Proposed Action Assessments.
 - Edits/comments were made on the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook and the Proposed Action Assessments via email. NMFS would like clarification on the official process for submitting edits/comments.

- Reclamation responded that sending them via email and cc'ing the WOMT team sounded fine moving forward. It was also noted that comments/edits that were up to interpretation would need to be reviewed and discussed internally before any changes would be made, but any comments/edits that note errors in information reported could be modified as soon as possible.

DWR: Notification processes as it relates to internal processes and not meeting OMR.

- Currently operating under COA 8.4.2, where OMR is no more negative than -3,500 on a 7-day average. On February 13, 2024, there was an unplanned export (due to human error) and the 7-day average came in at -3,505 cfs which is over the -3,500 cfs OMR limit. Exports have been reduced to get back into the -3,500 cfs OMR range, and a notification via email is planned to be sent out to WOMT, although there is no clear process outlined for notifications of this nature. DWR would like feedback on this approach.
- CDFW stated that this approach is good, and WOMT is the right group to receive the notification.

Elevation Items

- No elevation items.

Action Items

- NMFS will request to convene an off-cycle SaMT, and work with Reclamation and DWR to develop a risk assessment for steelhead.
- DWR will send out a notification email to WOMT regarding OMR exceeded on February 13, 2024.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 1- 1:50pm