

Water Operations Management Team Notes

March 20, 2024

Members Attending

- Reclamation: Elizabeth Kiteck, Levi Johnson
- USFWS: Jana Affonso, Matt Nobriga
- CDFW: Kristal Davis-Fadtke, Brooke Jacobs
- NMFS: Howard Brown, Garwin Yip
- DWR: Molly White, Lenny Grimaldo
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland

Topics/Actions

- Approval of meeting notes from last meeting: 3/20/24
- Upcoming Meetings:
 - Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) (weekly on Tuesday): 3/26/24
 - Smelt Monitoring Team (SMT) (weekly on Tuesday): 3/26/24
 - Feather River Operations (monthly first and third Thursdays): 4/4/24
 - American River Group (monthly on third Thursday, and as needed): 3/21/24
 - Stanislaus Watershed Team (monthly on third Wednesday): 4/17/24
 - Clear Creek Technical Team (quarterly on third Thursday): 6/13/24
 - Sacramento River Temperature Task Group (SRTTG) (monthly on fourth Thursday): 4/25/24
- Relevant Assessments
 - Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook 3/19/24 – 3/26/24
 - Proposed Action Assessment 3/19/24
 - SaMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary 3/19/24
 - SMT ITP Risk Assessment Summary 3/19/24
- Operational Updates
 - CVP: Trinity River release is 300 cfs. Sacramento River (Keswick) release is 5,800 cfs, gradually decreasing to 4,000 cfs on 3/29/24. Clear Creek (Whiskeytown) started pulse flow today (3/20/24) and is peaking at 840 cfs; pulse flows will be complete on 4/4/24

and will decrease down to 200 cfs. American River (Nimbus) release is 5,000 cfs and will decrease down to 4,500 cfs on Friday (3/22/24). Stanislaus River (Goodwin) release is 1,500 cfs. Reclamation's Delta Pumping is at 2 units targeting 1,800 cfs. Federal share of San Luis Reservoir is at 965 TAF.

- SWP: Feather River (Oroville-Thermalito Complex) release is 10,000 cfs. Clifton Court Forebay exports are 1,300 cfs. The SWP and CVP are jointly managing to a -500 OMRI limit. State share of San Luis Reservoir is at 519 TAF.
- Hydrology Update (DWR and Reclamation):
 - The next two days will be dry, but a storm is expected on Friday with precipitation covering the northern half of the state. By Saturday, the storm will move farther south. Following Saturday, conditions will be dry again for the next few days.

Upcoming Actions, Updates, and Discussion Items

- Reclamation:
 - No actions or updates.
 - Discussion: Next steps regarding current operations at -500 cfs OMRI and when a change might be possible
- FWS:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- CDFW:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- NMFS:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- DWR:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- SWRCB:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.

Discussion Items

- *Next steps regarding current operations at -500 cfs OMRI and when a change might be possible:*
 - Reclamation noted that the current level of steelhead take is 99% of the incidental take limit. They presented data to the group that they used to try to understand what this means for the overall population including: 1) number of fish passing the Red Bluff Diversion Dam, 2) Delta Juvenile Fish Monitoring Program data from Chipps Island, 3)

historic steelhead salvage from dry vs. wet years, 4) STARS Survival model information, 5) Tillotson Table Model results, and 6) Hatchery data from 2023.

- SaMT continues to investigate Public Health and Safety export levels, -2,500 cfs OMRI, -1,500 cfs OMRI, and -500 OMRI.
- DWR summarized findings thus far from the acoustically tagged steelhead efforts: Fish have been found moving west, up into Sacramento, Benicia, and Franks Tract.
 - NMFS asked if any fish made it to the facilities. DWR responded that the farthest south they made it was to Franks Tract.
- One steelhead observed at the CVP was measured as greater than 350 mm and is outside the juvenile range, and thus was not added to the juvenile total count.
- Based on the above information, Reclamation requested that the group discuss: 1) holding conditions at -500 cfs OMRI, or 2) changing to -1,500 cfs OMRI. In addition, they also requested that the group work together to draft language to be sent to the Directors to aid in making a final operational decision.
 - DWR noted that when looking at the San Joaquin River, flows are holding steady for five days at current exports. Based on this, they would be in support of holding at the current -500 cfs OMRI for the next five days. After five days they proposed meeting/conferring with NMFS and BOR on Monday (3/25/24). If the ITL was exceeded before Monday, DWR proposed that BOR and NMFS meet and confer to discuss next steps.
 - Reclamation noted that they cannot operate on a daily basis and proposed a 14-day averaging period to implement.
 - NMFS stated that they would be in line with holding course at current operation of -500 cfs OMRI.
 - The group worked together to draft language for directors (below).
- Following the above discussions and collaborative writing, WOMT agency representatives proposed the following:
 1. Procedure for providing the Directors with information (see language below) via email to aid in making a final operational decision; and
 2. The following language to be provided within the email to Directors “WOMT discussed the current conditions and agreed upon a target OMRI no more negative than -500 cfs on a 14-day average. We believe this will provide relatively constant environmental conditions to support manage loss and support technical advice and discussions if the incidental take level is exceeded. Conditions would be reevaluated for the next week starting with agency discussions Monday, SaMT Tuesday, WOMT Wednesday, and Directors on Thursday.”
- WOMT agencies voted on the above proposal accordingly:

- Reclamation: In support
- FWS: Abstain
- CDFW: Abstain
- NMFS: In support
- DWR: In support
- SWRCB: Abstain

Elevation Items

- No elevation items.

Action Items

- No action items.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 27, 1-1:50pm