

Water Operations Management Team Notes

Water Year 2025 – February 05, 2025

Members Attending

- Reclamation: Present
- USFWS: Present
- CDFW: Present
- NMFS: Present
- DWR: Present
- SWRCB: Present (as Acting)

Topics/Actions

- Approval of Meeting Notes and Off-Cycle Meeting Notes from last week: Approved
- Upcoming Meetings
 - Salmonid Monitoring Team (SaMT, meets weekly on Tuesdays): 02/11
 - Smelt Monitoring Team (SMT, meets as needed on Tuesdays, met on): 01/28
 - Feather River Operations Group (meets monthly first and third Thursdays): 02/06
 - American River Group (meets monthly on third Thursday, and as needed): 02/20
 - Stanislaus River Watershed Team (meets monthly on third Wednesday): 02/19
 - Clear Creek Technical Team (meets quarterly on third Thursday): 03/20
 - Sacramento River Group (meets monthly on fourth Thursday, but maybe changing): 02/27
 - Shasta Operations Team (SHOT, meeting frequency and timing TBD)
 - Winter-run JPE Sub-Team (as needed): met on 12/20
- Relevant Assessments
 - 20250204 Fish and Water Operations Outlook
 - Storm Flex Assessment (Date: 02/02/2025) and ITP Storm Flex Assessment (Date: 02/03/2025)

- Operational Updates
 - CVP: Trinity River release is 1,500 cfs but will increase to 3,500 cfs on Friday. Clear Creek (Whiskeytown Dam) release is 300 cfs. There is currently a gloryhole spill at Whiskeytown of about 1,000 cfs recede, Sacramento River (Keswick) release is 4,000 cfs and is increasing to 40,000 cfs on Friday due to the encroachment in the flood pool. American River (Nimbus) release is reducing to 2,500 cfs on Saturday. Stanislaus River (Goodwin) release is 200 cfs. Reclamation's Delta exports are currently at maximum capacity at 4,200 cfs and operating to Storm Flex OMR of -6,250 cfs. Federal share of San Luis Reservoir is 641 TAF. Delta Cross Channel Gates are closed and will remain closed until May, unless there is a water quality issue.
 - SWP: Feather River (Oroville-Thermalito Complex) releases are at 35,000 cfs pending changes to inflows. Clifton Court Forebay exports are at 3,000 cfs and operating to -6,250 cfs for the Storm Flex OMR. State share of San Luis Reservoir is 928 TAF and climbing with current conditions.
- Hydrology Update (DWR and Reclamation)
 - Break from rain today but a storm is coming through tomorrow and distributed over state rather than being northern focus. There is another storm projected for late next week.

Upcoming Actions, Updates, or Discussion Items

- Reclamation:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- USFWS:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- CDFW:
 - No upcoming actions or updates.
 - Discussion Item: Metrics in Risk Assessment
- NMFS:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- DWR:
 - No upcoming actions or updates.
 - Discussion Item: Storm Flex Communication
- SWRCB:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.

Discussion Items

- Storm Flex Communication
 - The 2024 PA proposed 8 conditions that need to be satisfied for the projects to implement Storm Flex. DWR will provide a weekly assessment on Mondays to continue Storm Flex as long as the conditions are still being met. DWR will provide notice to WOMT if any condition requiring storm flex to be off ramped is exceeded or triggered; DWR will do the same if they anticipate an offramp criterion is likely to be exceeded or triggered. DWR will continue to report during WOMT meetings on changes or relevant information.
 - USFWS asked about the likelihood of triggers language, which is in the PA and was written into a 2-step process when one of the conditions are likely to off ramp.
 - DWR is proposing to notify to PA standards. DWR will work to meet the intent of the ITP but there would be circumstances in which DWR would not be able to provide an advanced notice (for instance, a spike in salvage) but would keep WOMT updated as information became available.
 - CDFW suggests that DWR updates WOMT on key parameters that are changing at a more frequent basis. Rather than a full risk assessment, having a short update on Friday, in addition to updates provided to WOMT on Wednesday, that looks at key parameters, such as hydrologic, turbidity, and other data updates to see if any parameters are getting close to triggering Condition of Approvals (COAs).
 - DWR will work with Reclamation on this issue.
 - CDFW asked about the communication process for off ramping and if any one of the conditions for Storm Flex is absent, would Storm Flex be off ramped?
 - DWR agreed with how Storm Flex would be off ramped. The Storm Flex Assessment states there are 48 hours to begin operation to an OMR required when a COA is triggered but doesn't state timing for off ramping due to conditions for Storm Flex not being met (such as turbidity).
 - CDFW agreed with DWR, that if a COA in the ITP is triggered that Storm Flex must cease and the controlling COA must be implemented within 48 hours. CDFW asked DWR about the timeline for off -ramping Storm Flex if one of conditions to initiate Storm Flex are not met. CDFW's interpretation of the ITP is that Storm Flex would offramp immediately, similar to the LFS Larval and Juvenile protection action (COA 8.4.2) where protections are immediately reinstated after a high-flow offramp when flows drop below a certain threshold.
 - There was a discussion on when certain data would be available for DWR to assess if the criteria to initiate Storm Flex were still present.

- NMFS asked that since Federal exports were at 5 units and couldn't go up higher due to Storm Flex, whether the storm flex and DWR's proposed Storm Flex process also applied to the CVP?
- DWR responded that there is not a big distinction to be made. It is the same information for what would off ramp from Storm Flex and would notify WOMT.
- Reclamation agreed and explained that the reason for current pumping levels is accounting under the Coordinated Operations Agreement. Pumping volumes could shift between DWR and Reclamation, but the combined pumping is what is relevant for OMRI.
- DWR agreed that the share of total project exports could change. Accounting determines how the total volume is shared between the projects.
- NMFS asked that given the same storm flex operation and process for the CVP and SWP, would the 48 hours timeframe for the SWP off ramp for Storm Flex apply to the CVP?
- Reclamation would want to see changes made on power schedule, which have been exercised for all changes thus far and that would include, on ramping and off ramping as much as possible. Reclamation is expecting the typical 3-day response time.
- CDFW asked if Reclamation would be able to modify operations within 48 hours, as DWR is required to do in the ITP if an OMR COA is triggered during Storm Flex.
- Reclamation said it is possible and agreed with DWR's approach for 3 days to fully implement operational changes.
- CDFW noted to DWR that there is available data, such as daily average flow, that allows for real-time evaluations and rapid response. The ITP contains COAs, like 8.4.2, that requires an immediate response based on hydrology, which is available in real time. Turbidity data daily average would be available early next day so there is ability to respond rapidly.
- DWR responded that the ITP provides a couple of days. Looking for the same arrangement since having a change in operations the same day is difficult and has consequences for electrical power suppliers and the projects. In the Storm Flex description there is a 48-hour notice for when some conditions of approval have been triggered and believes that is as stringent as it should go.
- Reclamation had similar considerations. Any change that is not on schedule is very problematic.
- CDFW and DWR scheduled a call tomorrow to discuss further the required response time for off ramping Storm Flex per the ITP.
- NMFS asked if there is any resolution decision from CDFW's and DWR's call tomorrow regarding the likelihood of a trigger, how will WOMT stay informed.

- DWR will be discussing a mutual understanding of COA, implementation timing, and when an action is called for, including Storm Flex. DWR will be providing an assessment weekly while in Storm Flex and a notification to the extent possible of the likelihood of satisfying a trigger. DWR will also notify WOMT if any of the conditions or the circumstances that are required for Storm Flex are no longer satisfied. Reclamation and DWR will work through Friday assessments and will conditionally provide them. Regarding the resolution meeting for tomorrow, an email can be sent tomorrow if there is something that needs to be put forward. As long as the agencies are involved with the timing, then it might be in an email unless there is a change.
 - NMFS will not attend tomorrow; however, it would be helpful to see some examples for triggers that can be anticipated in order to help reaction responses.
 - USFWS agreed with NMFS and stated that it would be helpful to understand the examples and what that looks like based on the proposed action. An email would be helpful or report out next week.

- Metrics in Risk Assessment
 - In response to the discussion at the 2/3 ad-hoc WOMT meeting, CDFW proposed additional information to be considered for the storm flex risk assessment to further assist WOMT in understanding the risk. CDFW recommended including the Winter-run machine learning model as part of the assessment for winter-run. CDFW suggests the spring-run assessment include YOY spring-run given there have been increasing numbers of YOY spring-run over the past few weeks in Delta monitoring stations. CDFW did not see them mentioned in the assessment that was provided on Monday. CDFW requested that DWR provide assumptions that went into the modeling for the assessment, particularly the PTM runs. Given the continued detection of longfin smelt larvae in the south and central Delta and near Clifton Court forebay, CDFW suggested initiating the larval longfin smelt monitoring in salvage to provide WOMT useful information in assessing Storm Flex and any potential risks to species.
 - DWR started to coordinate with Reclamation on assessment updates and will take into account machine learning tool.

- Action Items
 - Agencies to review the PA and ITP and talk with SaMT representatives regarding meeting frequency and how assessments will be communicated to technical staff and WOMT members.
 - CDFW and DWR to provide WOMT an email regarding the resolution from tomorrow's meeting.

- Elevation Items

- No elevation items.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 1-1:50 p.m.