BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Sacramento River Group Summary

February 26, 2026

Summary of Actions

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Purpose

Mia Schiappi, Kearns & West, welcomed all participants. Mia read a draft working purpose of the SRG extracted from the Proposed Action in section 3.13.3.1.2 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's November 2024 Programmatic Biological Opinion of the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, noting that the SHOT would give final approval of the wording. The working purpose of the SRG is below:

Reclamation convenes the Sacramento River Group (SRG) to share information and gather input on operations of Shasta Reservoir and Trinity River Division. The SRG is comprised of agency representatives and interested parties. Unless impracticable, monitoring information on species and conditions will be made available through open and accessible tools. The SRG will receive notification on decisions related to monthly operations forecast, adjustments for minimum instream flows above the SAC Gage, TCCA frost protection and early season diversions, and adjustments for Wilkins Slough minimum flows. The SRG provides input on the following seasonal actions:

- Ramping Rate Deviations to Conserve Storage
- Wilkins Slough October Maximum Flows
- Central Valley Project Pulse Flows
- Voluntary Agreement Flow Measures
- Wilkins Slough Minimum Flow Relief
- Rice Decomposition Scheduling
- Fall Release Ramp Down
- Fall and Winter Base Flow
- Water Temperature Management Plan

Each year, Reclamation will prepare and make available for suggested edits by the members of the SRG, reports on:

- Water Temperature Management Seasonal Reports.
- Reservoir Refill and Spring Pulse Seasonal Reports.

This language about SRP's purpose can be read in Action 5.

Mia shared that meeting agenda and packets will be shared with participants by Thursday mornings, at the latest. Agenda items will remain relatively consistent, except for seasonally dependent items. Participants can raise additional agenda items by contacting Mia and Anna. Meeting summaries will be shared for review to ensure accuracy. This is the SRG's opportunity to provide feedback before meeting summaries are finalized, shared as final, and published.

SHOT and FWOG Operations

Mia shared the updated protocols for raising issues from SRG to the Shasta Operations Team (SHOT) and the newly formed Fish and Water Operations Group (FWOG). The SHOT, is required under ITP. The Fish and Water Operations Group (FWOG) is newly established under Action 5. Any issues or topics requiring further guidance that arise during SRG meetings will be discussed in an SRG caucus by members of the LTO agreement. During the caucus, individual agency recommendations, thoughts, and concerns will be summarized and shared simultaneously, by Kearns & West, to the SHOT and FWOG.

If you are interested in participating in the FWOG, contact Joanna and Mia with 1-2 agency representatives.

Questions & Discussion

- US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) asked if the SHOT and FWOG were multi-agency or Reclamation only groups.
    - K&W shared that the SHOT and FWOG are multi-agency groups and asked Reclamation if they would like to provide any further clarity on FWOG.
    - Reclamation shared a diagram explaining and the governance structure of the technical teams, including SRG, as related to FWOG. This information can also be found in Action 5.
- USFWS asked how the agency caucus interacts with the SHOT and FWOG and if Kearns & West facilitates the SHOT or FWOG.
    - Kearns & West does not facilitate the SHOT or FWOG. Kearns & West will continue to support drafting and consolidating recommendations being shared with the SHOT facilitators. SRG and the caucus are not decision-making or consensus spaces, but any thoughts or recommendations raised in either meeting will be raised to the SHOT and FWOG.
- USFWS asked who from USFWS is part of the FWOG.
    - Kearns & West will provide an update on US Fish and Wildlife representatives in the FWOG.

- Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) indicated they do not have the SRG caucus on their calendars and asked if they should be engaged.
    - Kearns & West will provide an update to WAPA about their attendance at SRG caucuses.
- USFWS asked if the FWOG was intended for technical level agency representatives and inquired about what purpose the FWOG serves.
    - The tributary groups provide information to the FWOG. The FWOG discusses the issues raised and confers with Reclamation and DWR, who make determinations on operations. The FWOG is essentially the Water Operations Management Team (WOMT) – it is the same governance but is now open to interested parties. The group should consist of technical representatives. Broader technical representatives participate in tributary group meetings, and 1-2 lead technical representatives should participate in the FWOG to consolidate and raise issues.

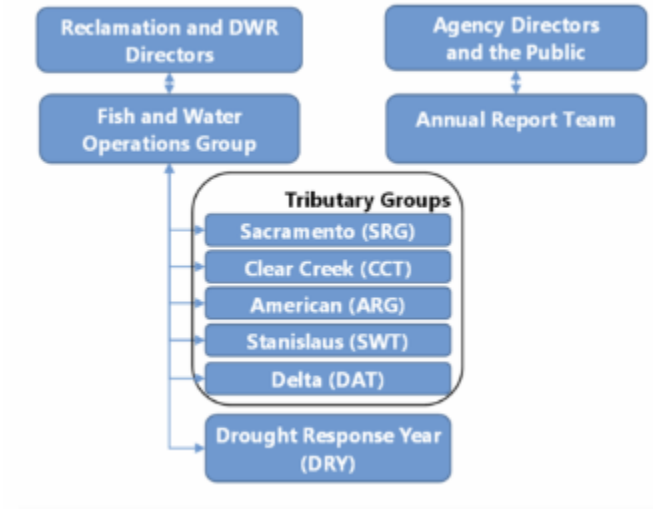

Figure 1. Engagement Forums for the Operation of CVP and SWP

Figure 1 depicts the CVP and SWP operations communications flow chart, indicating Tributary Groups consisting of SRG, CCT, ARG, SWT, and DAT, as well as Drought Response Year (DRY) roll up into the Fish and Water Operations Group (FWOG), which works directly with Reclamation and DWR.

- USFWS asked for confirmation on why the SHOT does not appear in the diagram.
    - The SHOT is a parallel process, but under the ITP, not Action 5. It is still required and they still meet.
- WAPA asked where the agency caucus fits into this workflow and how it impacts the role and purpose of SRG.

    - Reclamation shared that both the SHOT and WOMT are still occurring. Participants can now participate in the FWOG and DAT. SRG participants are welcome to participate in the new governance structure as they have previously and within the new working groups.
    - Kearns & West clarified that the caucus is held directly after the SRG meeting to help people align what is being elevated to the SHOT and FWOG. It is a smaller group of SRG representatives to hone the specifics of what is being elevated.
- USFWS confirmed that there is the SHOT and a WOMT in addition to the FWOG and other meetings. They asked if there is a possibility of meetings being consolidated to limit overlap and they asked for clarification on the difference between the WOMT and FWOG.
    - Reclamation shared that WOMT has not changed and FWOG is only different in that it includes interested parties. If you have other questions or concerns about this information, contact Joanna, Josh, and Andrea. Andrea will provide these questions and feedback for Josh and Joanna.

Hydrology Update

Tom Patton, Reclamation, provided the latest forecast and implications for the Sacramento River system and reported on current hydrologic conditions including flows. Patton presented the information contained in the meeting packet shared with the SRG. Sections below correspond to groups of graphs, images and tables in the meeting packet provided by Reclamation.

Current Storage, Releases, Water Temperatures, and Current Operations: Daily CVP Water Supply as of February 25, 2026.

- Precipitation
    - The Northern Sierra 8-Station Index is 41.0 inches, which is 117% of the average for the time of year. There were heavy periods of rain in December and early January, followed by a longer dry period.
    - Typical peak for snowpack is April 1. North to South, snowpack improves, with the North at 54% the average, the Central Sierras at 74% of average, and the South at 95% the average. Across the state, snowpack is at 73% the average for this time of year.
- Reservoir Releases:
    - 323 cfs are being released to the Trinity River.
    - Keswick Dam releases to the Sacramento River are approximately 5,800 cfs and are scheduled to decrease Monday March 2, 2026, to 5,000 cfs. Longer term, this may reduce to 4,000 cfs.

    - Oroville Dam is making flood releases of 10,000 cfs due to flood encroachment.
    - Folsom Dam is also making flood releases due to encroachment, at approximately 5,000 cfs but releases will reduce.
- Storage and Inflow:
    - Trinity Reservoir storage is at 2.1 MAF, which is 135% of the 15-year average of 1.547 MAF. Accumulated inflows are 159% the 15-year average.
    - Shasta was recorded at 3.6 MAF at the time the meeting packet was created, but is likely up to 3.7 MAF, which 119% of the 15-year average. Accumulated inflows are 126% the 15-year average. Shasta's flood curve drops in the fall and, depending on how wet the basin is, increases at the end of December. Earlier in the year, warm storms created good inflow, with limited snowpack. During flood encroachment, releases increased to 15,000 cfs before the dryer period began. With current wetness, Shasta releases have been reduced, and downstream flows are meeting Delta needs.
    - Folsom's storage is also above the 15-year average, at 111%. Accumulated inflows are 109% the 15-year average.
    - Whiskeytown Lake is seeing good inflow and water is being moved through Spring Creek power plant into Keswick to back water up into Shasta. A small amount of water is being diverted through the Carr power plant from Trinity to help regulate Trinity storage which was impacted earlier this year when safety of dams' criteria was reached.
- Temperature Management
    - The Shasta Temperature Control Device (TCD) is releasing water at about 50°F. Temperatures are comparable to last year, except at the bottom of the lake, which is a bit cooler this year at 45°F.
    - Currently, all the upper and middle gates of the TCD are open. Because the reservoir is not anticipated to drop, there should be room to close the middle gates to preserve cold water release until Spring.
    - Trinity River temperatures remain cool.
    - Upcoming air temperatures are mild and will have little to no effect on Shasta or Trinty.

Reservoir Profiles and Cold-Water Pool: Graphs on Isothermobaths-2026, Graphs on Cold Water Pool Volume, Percent Exceedances (1998-2023)

- Shasta Reservoir
    - Shasta's isothermobath plot shows mostly uniform temperatures from top to bottom of the lake, all under 52°F.

    - The cold water pool volume ≤52°F is comparable to both wetter years and the 2024 average. It is closer to the 25% exceedance.
    - The ≤50°F and ≤48°F are a bit lower than average but expect March to be closer to the average for wetter years. Exceedance for both is on the lower side, which is expected due to milder water and air temperatures.
- Trinity Lake
    - Trinity Lake cold water pool is above long-term averages.
    - The cold water pool volumes ≤52°F are near the 5% exceedance.
- Whiskeytown Lake
    - Whiskeytown Lake is comparable with what is expected this time of year.

Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation

- Based on the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center, mid-February precipitation and temperature estimates for Norther California in March 2026 indicate equal chance of being above or below the average.
- Summertime temperature forecast is aligned with previous years, showing anticipated above average temperatures for July, August, and September.

90% Exceedance Forecast:

- The 90% Exceedance Forecast is for a drier scenario to ensure water is not overallocated. Two forecasts are made every month, which will be discussed at every meeting. The actual scenario at the moment appears between the 90% and 50% exceedance, operating around 75% exceedance.
- Looking at the end of February 2026, Shasta is at 3.755 MAF. Shasta is projected to peak at 3.9 MAF at the end of April 2026. The end of the water year for Shasta is at 2.0 MAF.
- Trinity Lake is just below 2.2 MAF with 3.0 MAF carryover projected for the end of the water year. Trinity releases are estimated at 300. Elevated flows have a placeholder of the default rod flows. Overall, elevated flows do not yet account for elevated base flows and are somewhat adjusted for peak flows seen in December.
- On the Sacramento River, releases are reduced to 4000 cfs in March and pick back up to 12,000 cfs during summer months to balance the storage between Trinity and Shasta. The minimum flow is projected for November, at 3250 cfs.

50% Exceedance Forecast:

- Under the 50% Exceedance Forecast, Shasta is anticipated to be full in the spring, and Trinity will be almost full.

- The forecast balances Shasta and Folsom releases with a13,000 cfs maximum at Keswick Dam.
- The forecast shows continued diversions from the Trinity in the fall, tapering down to zero in December, and then slowly increasing across the spring; it also reflects the limitations of only one functional unit at Spring Creek power plant.

Temperature Forecast Modeling

- This early in the year, the uniformity of temperature profiles and uncertainty in storage levels, prevents useful modeling. There are no temperature models for February, but they may be done next month.
- For bin classification, looking at Shasta storage in April, which is at 3.9 MAF, and September which is 2 MAF. This considers peak storage and how much volume is used throughout the season. This is an early estimate that will be impacted by weather conditions. At this stage, possibly looking at a 1B or 2A/2B year depending on end of September Shasta storage.

Questions and Discussion

- USFWS asked what can be done, if anything, to influence bin classification and when pulse flows may be possible in terms of bins?
    - Reclamation shared that they are looking to have additional pulse flow meetings outside monthly SRG meetings. In the past, more than 4 MAF in Shasta at the end of April led to excess management which allows pulse flows.
- USFWS asked if snowpack factors heavily into bin classification.
    - Reclamation stated that in February, DWR provides forecasts, called B-120 updates, that assesses upstream snowpack, which includes runoff. It is included in future models. Elevation also plays a role. Anything at elevations above 1035 can use upper gates to better support temperature water management, instead of using cooler, middle gates.
- USFWS asked if snowpack is factored into B-120 top of conservation pool, flood control, or risk calculations.
    - Reclamation explained that for Shasta, the diagram is based on inflow parameter. For example, in a 50% scenario, wetter conditions are assumed and to goal is filling the reservoir. Flood control does factor in but does not drive things.
    - USFWS followed up to clarify, looking at last year at this time, the lake was at 3.5 MAF and Top of Conservation (TOC) was at 3.5 MAF. This year the lake is at 3.7 MAF and TOC is up to 4.0 MAF. Is this explained by less snowpack resulting in less inflow?

        - Reclamation explained that future TOC is based on the forecast. Historical TOC is based on actuals.

- The Yurok Tribe commented that, though many factors are being balanced for storage in Shasta and Trinity, fish in Trinity benefit from pushing diversions after July 1 or late June to allow the system to warm up.
    - Reclamation shared that they are trying to divert into the summer as much as possible, or into fall if there is capability. The limitations at Spring Creek power plant may have a significant impact on when diversions may happen.
    - WAPA commented that delayed diversion is also beneficial for power.
    - Reclamation indicated that they are aware of the power benefits of summer versus spring releases for the Trinity River Diversions to the Sacramento River.
    - USFWS added that delayed diversion is less ideal for Whiskeytown, especially without Spring Creek power plant to support cooling.
        - Reclamation responded, saying they hope to fill Whiskeytown with natural runoff to minimize diversions and have Whiskeytown filled by Memorial Day.

Fall Flows Updates

- Pulse flow action is included in Action 5, 2.11 to provide benefits to outmigrating juvenile salmonids by providing flow cues for out migration and increasing travel rates.
- Volume is up to 150,000 AF.
- Reclamation will continue to engage through SRG to develop an operations plan for pulse flows.

Questions and Discussion

- USFWS noted 2.11 indicates pulse flows should happen between April and May. They asked if it was possible, under Action 5, to have a pulse flow earlier.
    - Reclamation responded that there should be flexibility through the language around “spring” and “adaptive management.”
    - USFWS followed up, commenting that the phrasing can be ambiguous and recommended that use of terms like “spring” or “winter” be more clearly defined (e.g., is this referring to meteorological spring?).

USFWS Fish Conditions, Forecasts and Hatchery Updates

Brett Galyean, USFWS, provided an update on Coleman Fish Hatchery.

- A number of fish were spawned in October 2025 at Coleman. In a one-week stretch, 17M eggs spawned. Last year, Coleman had a low run, which required transfers in November and December.
- This year, fish will be ready for release in March. Coleman will be looking for water earlier than last year.

Kaitlin Dunham, USFWS, provided an update on the Livingston Stone Hatchery.

- Livingston released 380,000 juveniles on February 18 and the remaining 107,00 juveniles on February 19. A portion had acoustic tags being monitored by NOAA. The winter run was released into the Sacramento River at Bonneville boat ramp.
- Adult trapping started on Tuesday February 24. 37 were captured in the Keswick trap, and 21 were kept for brook stock.

Bill Poytress, USFWS, shared the following chat about juvenile fish at Red Bluff.

- Red Bluff DD juvenile fish monitoring is updated weekly at SacPAS. The status of BY2025 Winter Chinook is at 99.1% passage, Fall run at 62.3% passage, and Steelhead at 0.1% annual passage.

Adjourn