



# Sacramento River Group – Spring Pulse Flow Planning Subgroup Meeting Summary

Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

## Participants

- ACID: Daniel Ruiz
- CDFW: Matt Johnson, Erica Meyers
- DWR: Ryon Kurth, Kevin Reece
- Friends of the River: Devon Pearse
- NMFS: Kyra Fitz
- SWFSC: Flora Cordoleani, Cyril Michel
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland, Jeff Laird, Diane Riddle
- SRSC: Thaddeus Bettner, Mike Deas, Yuen Lenh, Anne Williams
- USBR: Emelia Barnum, Elissa Buttermore, Lisa Elliot, Mechele Pacheco, Tom Patton, Derek Rupert
- USFWS: Matt Brown, Kevin Niemela, Bill Poytress
- Kearns & West: Terra Alpaugh, Chelsea Cullen

## Action Items

### Reclamation

- Finalize April forecast and share draft with this group by April 14th
- Finalize draft TMP to share at the monthly SRG meeting on April 23rd
- Coordinate with ACID on diversion constraints

### SWFSC

- Update pulse water-cost scenario tool with updated forecast

## **K&W**

- Circulate updated Pulse Flow Operations Plan
- Gather guidance on SRG elevation process across forums.

## **Key Discussion Topics**

### **Agenda Review**

Kearns & West (K&W) reviewed the agenda and held roll call by organization.

### **Update on early April pulse, operations, & forecast**

Reclamation provided an overview of current conditions:

- Shasta storage is currently at 4.1 MAF and peak storage will be met today (4/7).
- Keswick flows are currently at 5,000 cfs; slightly elevated inflows are anticipated with the current rain forecast.
- A four-day pulse on the Sacramento is scheduled to start tomorrow (4/8) with a release of 10,000 cfs at Keswick for four days, then a ramp down to 8,500 cfs, and to 7,500 cfs on April 13.
- A rain-heavy, limited snow storm is forecasted and expected to add runoff and increase downstream flows; this is expected to meet or exceed the 11,000 cfs threshold at Wilkins Slough.
- There is also a pulse on the American River scheduled later in the week that is intended to coincide with this pulse's arrival at the Delta.
- End-of-March Shasta storage was lower than the 90% forecast anticipated. However, the difference might balance out if the inflow forecast for April increases as a result of storms.

### ***Participant questions and comments included:***

- USFWS asked whether the 11,000 cfs target is a mean daily or instantaneous figure.
  - SWFSC responded that it's a mean daily flow metric; Reclamation concurred.
- K&W asked about fish monitoring plans for this pulse. SRSC also asked if turbidity and temperature monitoring were being done.
  - SWFSC shared that they plan to release batches of acoustic tagged salmon before, during, and after each of the pulses. Fish were released last week from Red Bluff (the "before" group), with the next batch (the "during pulse" group) scheduled for release tomorrow, April 8. There is a public web page to track the fishes' progress downstream.
  - USFWS said they plan to conduct screw-trap sampling at Red Bluff throughout the event with periods of randomized subsampling to avoid trap

overload and fish stress. Turbidity sensors are deployed at Red Bluff, Meridian Bridge, and Freeport.

- Friends of the River asked if Delta exports will be increased to recapture this pulse.
  - Reclamation responded that there are no plans to increase exports to recapture this pulse; the pulse will contribute to outflow. The State may slightly increase pumping but not nearly enough to recapture that volume.
- Friends of the River asked if monitoring will detect fish drawn toward the south Delta pumps.
  - SWFSC responded yes, the real time receiver array shows detections near the American River mouth and movement toward south Delta pumps.
- SWFSC reported that they have seen poor survival in the recent tagged groups over the past 2-3 weeks. The hope is that the pulse flow will help with survival.
- USFWS reported a large number of unmarked fish currently seen in the spring-run size class, which may be fall run, complicating run-class estimates for monitoring platforms.

## **Potential Pulse 2 Scenario Development**

Reclamation confirm the following parameters for considering a second pulse:

- Reclamation will not consider a second pulse until it has an April forecast and draft Temperature Management Plan with which to evaluate its impacts.
- A draft April forecast will be available to share with the group by the April 14th meeting, with the goal of finalizing the forecast by April 17 and then advancing a draft Temperature Management Plan. The goal is to have a draft TMP available for the SRG monthly meeting on April 23rd, but schedule is tight.
- The earliest feasible pulse timing is the week of April 27th, with the week of May 4th as another possibility.
- Reclamation will need to start discussing with ACID about the logistics of adjusting their diversion dam boards, since by late April, it is unlikely flows will reach 11,000 cfs at Wilkins Slough without releases over 14,000 cfs at Keswick. They anticipate about 4,000 cfs of diversions in early May.

### ***Participant questions and comments included:***

- Friends of the River (FOR) noted that some Delta Action Team participants suggested that a second Sacramento pulse was off the table. FOR asked about the limiting factors that would prevent a release the week of April 20th.
  - Reclamation responded that the timing will be very close; they'll have the draft forecast ready on April 13th but will still need to run temperature models.

- SRSC commented that the end-of-September storage sounds very low; they voiced their concern with considering additional pulse flows that will bring that storage number down even further.
- SRSC asked for clarification on where the final decision for a pulse is documented.
  - Reclamation responded that discussions occur in the FAWOG and that Reclamation makes the final decision. In the future, Reclamation can report back to this group immediately on any pulse decision rather than waiting for a change order.
- USFWS asked if the SWFSC tool could be updated to reevaluate a second pulse.
  - SWFSC responded that they can start by locking in the current pulse, so its water cost impact are reflected, and then incorporate the updated forecast from Reclamation when it is ready.
- SRSC raised concern that spring pulse decisions affect fall operations; they wondered whether the groups is thinking about tradeoffs, e.g., if they use water on a second pulse, would there be appetite to agreeing to protect fewer winter run redds in the fall and instead reducing flows earlier to help with minimizing fall run dewatering.
  - USFWS felt it was too early to make predictions about the likely size of the fall fish returns.
  - Reclamation noted that the Spring Pulse Flow Operations Plan acknowledges that there may be tradeoffs between a spring pulse flow and additional winter run redd dewatering. However, there are not good tools to evaluate detailed fall flow trade off scenarios. The SRG group will document concerns and can elevate to FAWOG for further discussion.
- SWFSC and SRSC asked for clarity on the scope of SRG discussions (e.g., policy vs technical advice; spring planning vs assessment of fall impacts) and where decisions are getting made. It is not clear where certain discussions should be had.
  - K&W provided some guidance, including that SRG is intended for technical analysis and guidance; policy questions or preferences should be elevated to and/or raised in FAWOG. They will inquire for further guidance.

## **Next Steps**

- K&W will send out the final PDF version of the Pulse Flow Operations Plan.
- Reclamation will provide SWFSC with an April forecast to put into their scenario modeling app.
- Reclamation and ACID will discuss and provide clarity back to this group on options for dealing with flow constraint.
- K&W will gather guidance on SRG scope and elevation process.