



Sacramento River Group – Spring Pulse Flow Planning Subgroup Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 9:00-9:45 a.m.

Participants

- CDFW: Crystal Rigby, Erica Meyers, Matt Johnson, Gang (Gary) Zhao
- DWR: Ryon Kurth, Kevin Reece
- NMFS: Paula Higginson, Evan Sawyer, Kyra Fitz
- SWFSC: Cyril Michel
- SWRCB: Craig Williams
- SRSC: Yuen Lenh
- USBR: Elissa Buttermore, Tom Patton, Brian Mahardja, Alexander Vaisvil, Emily Van Seeters, Lisa Elliott
- USFWS: Matt Brown, Brett Galyean
- WAPA: Jeffrey Trow
- Yurok Tribe: Chris Laskodi
- Kearns & West: Terra Alpaugh, Briana Moseley

Action Items

Reclamation will touch base with ACID, and report back to the group if they can accommodate Keswick releases above 14,000 cfs for the third pulse flow.

Reclamation will send an update on the outcomes of the third pulse flow to the group either next week or the following week.

Kearns & West will coordinate with SWFCS on presenting 2025 pulse flow results at a subsequent SRG meeting.

Key Discussion Topics

Agenda and Objectives Recap

Terra Alpaugh, facilitator, described the intent of this meeting: 1) to report on implementation of the second spring pulse flow and discuss any lessons learned, and 2) to hear about current conditions and discuss any implications for the proposed approach to the third spring pulse flow.

Operations Update and Report Out on Pulse 2 Implementation

Tom Patton, USBR, provided an update on current conditions and reported on implementation of the second spring pulse flow.

- For the second pulse flow, Keswick Reservoir flows went to 14,000 cfs. Reclamation had thought maybe ACID could accommodate flows closer to 15,000 cfs but because second pulse was on a weekend with the general manager of ACID on vacation and flows were just below the catwalk across the river, ACID and Reclamation were not comfortable with flows higher than 14,000 cfs.
- With releases of 14,000 cfs, Wilkins Slough flows peaked at exactly 11,000 cfs. Demands are high right now, and with dry conditions since April and not much additional flow coming from the creeks, it is harder to meet these downstream targets.
- For the third pulse flow, Reclamation will increase flows to at least 14,000 cfs; they can check with ACID again and potentially go slightly higher than 14,000 cfs.
- Reclamation shared that it is possible that demand could drop slightly during the next pulse, though they cautioned not to expect it.
- Reclamation shared that air temperatures are expected to increase and then experience a cool down over the weekend. No major heat waves are anticipated in the near future.
- Reclamation will schedule the May 20th pulse flow this Friday, May 16, with a midnight pulse flow start time on May 20th. At midnight on May 20th, flows will start at 14,000 cfs. Then, if the conditions are good at daylight and if ACID is agreeable, Reclamation could inch up the flows to 15,000 cfs in the daylight hours. On Saturday, May 24th, Reclamation we will start ramping down the flows by 15% per day stopping at 9,000-10,000 cfs.

Questions and comments related to pulse timing and coordination shared by subgroup members included:

- USFWS asked what flows Reclamation expects to see at Freeport?
 - Reclamation responded that Freeport flows are getting lower but remain in the 10,000 cfs range. The Feather is down to 1,700 cfs, but that might have to go up when Oroville is filled. There are no changes in the Yuba system currently.

- Reclamation does not plan to lower the Keswick release below 9,000 cfs before or after the third pulse and will increase to approximately 10,000 cfs at the end of May.
- USFWS inquired whether there are any results from acoustic telemetry fish available.
 - SWFSC responded that there is a [website that posts results hourly](#). So far, the results show about two times higher survival during the pulse periods compared to the in-between periods, but in general, survival is lower this year compared to last year. There is still some work to be done to understand why that is, perhaps due to tagging or river conditions.

Hatchery Planned Releases Update

Brett Galyean, USFWS, gave an update of the hatchery operations, the releases completed, and future planned releases.

- 2 million fall run were released at Coleman hatchery last Wednesday, at Colusa on Thursday, and at Tisdale Wier on Thursday evening and Friday.
- There are five raceways left, which are about 2.2 to 2.3 million fish. About 40% of those are marked and tagged. The rest will be tagged next week and ready to go out next week on May 20th-23rd with the third pulse flow. They have not confirmed the location for the releases, but they most likely will not be released on site or upriver, but rather somewhere downstream closer to Colusa, Butte City, or Tisdale.

Questions and comments related to pulse timing and coordination shared by subgroup members included:

- USFWS inquired whether the hatchery needed a trucking trigger assessment for next week and whether a contract will be available to truck fish.
 - USFWS shared that a trucking trigger assessment would be helpful to determine how far upriver the fish can be released. The trucking contract was cancelled because it couldn't be completed in time. Last week, CDFW sent four trucks but that support likely will not be available next week. Likely only Coleman trucks will be available, so trucking the fish will likely take all week. USFWS still hopes to have one truck from CDFW.

Next Steps

- The facilitator shared that this is the last planned meeting on the calendar since the group is discussing the last pulse.
- Reclamation will send an update of the outcomes of the third pulse flow to the group either next week or the following week.
- The group will consider when to have SWFSC present on the outcomes from the three pulses. This could be done with a smaller group or at one of the SRG meetings.

The meeting adjourned.