BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

American River Group Notes

Conference Line: +1 (321) 209-6143; Access Code: 985 598 947#

Webinar: Join Microsoft Teams Meeting

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Action Items

1. Temperature Modeling Team to provide updated presentation/packet on modeling efforts to ARG as updated information becomes available.

Introductions

1. USBR: Kevin Thielen, Myrna Girald-Perez, Randi Field, Ryan Lucas, Spencer Marshall, Erika Holcombe, Zarela Guerrero, Mechele Pacheco, Carolyn Bragg. Steven Melavic
2. NMFS: Barb Byrne
3. USFWS: N/A
4. CDFW: Emily Fisher, Nick Bauer, Travis Apgar, Gary Novak, Jennifer OBrien, Jason Julienne, Gary Novak,
5. DWR: John Ford
6. SWRCB: Claudia Bucheli, Natalie Niepagen
7. California State Parks: N/A
8. EBMUD: I-Pei Hsiu
9. City of Sacramento: Brian Sanders, Ryan Palmer
10. Sacramento County: N/A
11. Environmental Council of Sacramento: N/A
12. City of Folsom: N/A
13. City of Roseville: N/A
14. Cramer Fish Sciences: Kirsten Selheim
15. PCWA: Benjamin Barker

16. PSMFC: Hunter Morris
17. SMUD: Tyler Belarde
18. USACE: N/A
19. cbec Eco Engineering: Chris Hammersmark
20. Watercourse Engineering: Mike Deas
21. Water Forum: Erica Bishop, Ashlee Casey
22. Water Districts: Michael Spencer, Deanna Sereno
23. Regional Water Authority (RWA): N/A
24. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians: N/A
25. CSUS: N/A
26. Kleinschmidt Group: Vanessa Martinez
27. WAPA: Vanessa Armentrout
28. BKS Law Firm: N/A
29. Sunzi Consulting: Yung-Hsin Sun
30. Kearns & West: Karis Johnston, Jackson Gould
31. Other: N/A

Announcements

1. NOAA representatives mentioned that Rachel has left NMFS for SWRCB and Stephen and Paula will coordinate on who is their agency lead.
2. Karis Johnston shared that the next power bypass SDM session will be held August 27th, from 9:30-12:30pm. This meeting will be 3 hours and is of particular importance to the process as it will introduce the swing weighting process.

Housekeeping

1. N/A

Fisheries Update

CDFW Updates

1. N/A

Cramer Fish Sciences (Cramer) Updates

1. Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
    a. The loggers at Lake Natomas are showing low DO, with levels around 5 mg/L.
    b. Loggers at Lake Natoma Powerhouse and monitoring spill, which concluded on August 5, both showed drops in DO, with levels around 7 mg/L.
        i. Upticks in DO levels are seen when the water is spilled.
        ii. Cramer will continue to monitor the loggers.
        iii. Additional detailed information is available in the meeting handout.
2. Questions and Comments
    a. CDFW asked whether the current drop in DO matches what is normally observed year to year in terms of timing.
        i. Cramer shared that the timing of the drop is normal given a lack of spill from Lake Natoma, and levels will continue to drop until they bottom out in September.
    b. NMFS asked Reclamation whether they would consider opening one of the radial gates on Lake Natoma to bolster DO levels.
        i. Reclamation responded that they are ready to evaluate a formal request from NMFS to take that action but will wait until that point.
        ii. CDFW added that they have not observed or detected Chinook in the American River yet based on surveys.
        iii. Cramer shared the DO levels typically do increase, based on monitoring data, as water moves down river to the riffles around Nimbus Hatchery.
        iv. Reclamation reiterated that if conditions change, they are ready to evaluate a request for power bypass from CDFW or NMFS.
    c. NMFS asked Reclamation if the request for power bypass should lean on the values from the Basin Plan with 7 mg/L DO levels.
        i. Reclamation suggested that the Basin Plan should be a component of the request and focus on the biological benefits and needs of increased DO.
    d. CDFW asked Reclamation whether the Power Bypass request should be part of the ongoing SDM or a separate request.

i. Reclamation responded that the current SDM efforts are for the fall bypass for Folsom. A power bypass request related to Natoma would be a separate process.

PSMFC Updates

1. No Updates.

Operations Forecast

SMUD

1. The cumulative precipitation is slightly below average at around 87% of average. There is the possibility of a small storm dropping 0.5”-0.75” on 8/25-8/26.
2. The snowpack has completely melted.
3. Reservoir storage is slightly above average due to the cool summer with less peaking energy load needed, allowing SMUD to hold more water in storage.
4. Slightly below average releases into the South Fork American River are expected to continue and units will be taken offline in October and November for maintenance. Facilities are anticipated to come back online in December and January.
5. Additional detailed information is available in the meeting handout.
6. Questions and Comments
    a. Reclamation asked SMUD how the upcoming small storm would influence operations.
        i. SMUD responded that they would hold as much of the water in their reservoirs as possible depending on the severity of the storm and storage capacity.

PCWA

1. The cumulative precipitation is slightly above normal at 104% of average.
2. Reservoir storage is holding around 95% of average, very similar to last year.
3. Average temperatures this summer are well below last year, reducing power demand.
4. PCWA anticipates 35TAF releases through the end of August and around 26TAF releases for September.
5. The annual outage is planned for October.
6. Questions and Comments

a. N/A

Central Valley Operations

USBR

1. Nimbus flows are currently below median and below last year's releases.
2. Folsom Dam storage as of 8/21/2025 is at 92% of average.
3. Precipitation at Blue Canyon is around 109% of the 15-year average.
4. Folsom releases have dropped to 1,700 cfs, which will likely be the minimum flows for the next month, and are below average for this time of year.
5. Nimbus Dam power units were returned to service after debris removal. No estimated return to service for unit 2. Unit 1 is on the lower, Unit 2 is out of service, and Unit 3 is on the middle shutters.
6. The water temperature target has been adjusted from 67°F to 68°F based on consensus discussions with NMFS.
7. Water temperatures at Watt Ave. 67.6°F as of 8/19/2025.
8. There is a 0.5-degree difference between CDEC and USGS gages for Watt Avenue. USGS and CDEC are working to address the issue.
9. Additional detailed information can be found in the meeting handout.
10. Questions and Comments
    a. NMFS asked Reclamation if the Unit 2 shutters are staged.
        i. Reclamation responded that the shutter configuration on Unit 2 is such that it is ready to operate when returned to service.
        ii. NMFS asked a follow up on whether the issue is with the TCD unit on the powerplant side.
        iii. Reclamation responded that there is a part on the powerplant side on the turbine.

Discussion

Temperature Modeling Results for Folsom Lake and the LAR

1. Reclamation presented the results from recent temperature modeling efforts.
2. ICPMM temperature model was run using 2014 meteorology, substantially warmer than this summer, and resulted in a temperature schedule of 44 as opposed to the current temperature schedule of 36. The schedule 44 results in a target of 69°F in

August and September and 65°F in October with a 59°F target for November. Using the average meteorology for ICPMM indicates ability within the current temperature schedule of 36 which highlights the uncertainty inherent due to meteorology. Reclamation is not proposing an adjustment to the ATSP schedule based on this modeling although Reclamation is open to having a conversation about that.

3. USBR requested input from the ARG regarding operations during the remainder of the season based on modeling results.
4. Questions and Comments
    a. Water Forum asked whether the flows for October are supposed to be 1,000 cfs with the 90% outlook.
        i. Water Forum asked a follow-up question about whether the 1,000 cfs is below the MRR.
        ii. Reclamation shared that they are targeting 1,700 cfs and the MRR is 1,636 cfs for August and September.
        iii. Water Forum asked what the MRR is for October.
        iv. Reclamation responded that the October to December MRR is 990 cfs.
    b. NMFS asked for confirmation that the options presented were representative of the real-world capacity of the shutters.
        i. Reclamation answered that yes, as long as it utilizes two units. Any configuration that doesn't have three configurations is possible.

Structured Decision Making (SDM) Updates

1. The intention is still to have the SDM process influence the fall power bypass discussion. The intent is to develop a framework for application in future years and use this as a process for an evaluation for power bypass in this current year. Reclamation is aware that the timeline is tight and that the current alternatives might need adjustment based on current conditions come October. We are still on track, but should anything arise, that could negatively impact the timeline Reclamation will be sure to inform people.
2. Questions and Comments
    a. N/A

CVP Water Temperature Modeling Platform (WTMP) Update

1. The CVP WTMP Team presented an update on the rollout of the WTMP. They presented the parallel analysis portion of the effort. Details can be found in the presentation slides shared with the ARG.
2. Questions and Comments
    a. NMFS asked about the buzz plots, noting that the model seems to be able to adjust shutters more than is feasible for operations. In early September, it seems like given that releases are less than 2,000 cfs, that it is achievable by blending water, is that right?
        i. Reclamation noted that it is possible but there would need to be confidence that the configuration would be fine. There would be one unit on with two out.
        ii. NMFS sought additional clarification about whether temperature targets could be achieved in reality vs. in the model.
        iii. Reclamation shared that mostly, that was the case given the two operational units.

Next Meetings

1. Power Bypass SDM Meeting – Wednesday, August 27, 9:30-12:30pm
2. Regular Monthly ARG Meeting - Thursday, September 18, 1:30-3:30