



# SRG, Fall Flow Reduction Coordination Meeting Summary

Tuesday, August 26, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

## Participants

- CDFW: Travis Apgar, Tracy Grimes, Erica Meyers, Colby Hause, Matt Johnson, Doug Killam, Crystal Rigby
- DWR: Ryon Kurth, Kevin Reece, John Ford
- NMFS: Kyra Fitz, Stephen Maurano
- Reclamation: Elissa Buttermore, Tom Patton, Emily Brenton, Andrea Hamilton
- SRSC: Mike Deas, Yuen Lenh, Anne Williams
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland
- SWFSC: Miles Daniels
- USFWS: Matt Brown, Bill Poytress
- WAPA: Eric Mork,
- Kearns & West: Terra Alpaugh, Chelsea Cullen

## Action Items

- **Reclamation** will reduce flows at Keswick to 9,000 cfs tonight/tomorrow and will consider reductions down to 8,500 cfs early next week.
- **CDFW and Pacific States** will monitor flow reductions and have new shallow redd estimates available prior to the next Fall Flows meeting on 9/9.
- **Tom Patton** will follow up on whether the additional upper Sac River modeling that could inform dewatering estimates can be shared.
- **Reclamation** will confirm whether contractor decomp demands will be similar to or more than last year.
- **All participants** to review K&W's proposal to operationalize PA instructions for elevating topics to SHOT ([available on page 3](#), header highlighted in yellow); reach out to K&W with any questions, concerns, and/or proposed improvements.

- **K&W** to send an invite to staff from USBR, NMFS, USFWS, DWR, CDFW, and SWRCB to a post-SRG Fall Flows caucus meeting to be used as needed to coordinate on topics that are identified for elevation to SHOT. [DONE]
- **All participants** encouraged to review the comparative analysis between field and modeled dewatering percentages by Gosselin and Beer (2024) found [here](#) to better understand the appropriate uses and limitations of fall run dewatering estimates.

## Topics

### Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Kearns & West reviewed the agenda and action items from the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- **Tom Patton (Reclamation)** to develop flow reduction scenarios bound by water costs that are off the table. To the extent possible, relate water volume costs to the expected number of redds dewatered, allowing exploration of trade-offs and efficiency.
- **Reclamation** to check-in with all via email if they drop flows further than 9,000 cfs before the August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. [Update] Flows are at 9,250 cfs with reduction to 9,000 cfs scheduled for 8/27.
- **All participants** to review the [Interests and constraints timeline](#) from WY2024 and to make comments on any items that should be added, removed, or amended.
- **KW** to fix link so attendees can access agenda and other materials through Sharepoint. [DONE]

### SRG-SHOT Communication

- Based on questions after the last meeting, K&W proposed a process to operationalize the Proposed Actions's instructions for elevating issues to SHOT. They asked for participant feedback on the proposed communication and elevation process.
- K&W requested clarification from participants as to whether there are more than 5 agencies in SHOT, which is what is stated in the PA. Participants confirmed that six agencies participate in SHOT: USBR, USFWS, NMFS, CDFW, DWR, and SWRCB.
- Participants generally supported the proposed process as a helpful clarification, emphasizing the need for proper elevation of issues requiring SHOT attention.

### SHOT Report Out

- SWRCB and USFWS SHOT representatives reported that in that group's discussions, Reclamation was leaning towards flow scenarios A4 and B4, which prioritize better outcomes for fall run Chinook but may impact more winter run redds, while still aiming to stay under the 1% take limit for winter run redds.
- Reclamation added that SHOT asked to be informed about any discussions involving rescue or salvage of redds to ensure appropriate coverage for CDFW and other agencies.

- WAPA asked about the additional upper Sac river modeling that could inform dewatering estimates, which Reclamation confirmed is not currently available but are continuing to follow up to obtain.

## Current Conditions & Shallow Water Redd Dewatering Estimates

- CDFW presented the latest shallow redd monitoring data:
  - They are currently tracking 213 shallow redds with 11 already dewatered and expecting this number to increase as flows decline.
  - The carcass survey was counted around 2,800 female redd carcasses. Using an average expansion factor of 2.8, they estimate about 7,840 total females for the season, suggesting the 1% take limit corresponds to roughly 78-79 dewatered redds. Projections estimate 75 redds could be dewatered by flows of 6,500 cfs and 88 by 6,000 cfs; CDFW noted that these estimates are independent of hatch timing, i.e., some of the at-risk redds could emerge before they are dewatered depending on how soon flows drop but that is not reflected in the estimates.
  - CDFW stressed the unusually late spawning timing this year, which largely involves hatchery fish (brood year 2022). There have been a significant number of fish still spawning in August. Given the temperatures, eggs will take three months before emergence (November for those spawned in August).
  - CDFW noted minimal fall run spawning occurs in September, with peak spawning expected from late September through mid-November; thus, flow stability over months is more important than immediate flow reductions in September.
- Reclamation outlined current flow reductions:
  - Currently at 9,250 cfs at Keswick with a scheduled drop to 9,000 cfs tomorrow and potential further reductions in the coming weeks. They currently estimate flows in the 7,500-8,500 cfs range in September and October, though they would likely be lower than 8,500 cfs. October flows may be constrained by rice decomposition demands, so they will likely remain above 7,500. Reaching 6,500 cfs flows (the B4 scenario) would be rare without wetter conditions in October.
  - SRSC reported that contractors have been ramping down. As of right now, they are reducing to 3,500 cfs towards the beginning of September and ramping down another 1,000 cfs towards the end of September. They are projecting similar rice decomposition demand to last year, i.e., a 1,500 cfs – 2,200 cfs peak in October.
  - Reclamation confirmed that, since they try to keep Wilkins Slough at 5000 cfs, they will need to maintain flows of 2,000 or 2,500 cfs to meet contractor demand during that October period.
  - USFWS asked if there is increased demand for decomposition water or if it's similar to last year.

- Reclamation will verify with SRSC and confirm with this group.
- Reclamation currently estimates an average flow of 5,000 cfs in November, but they will be aiming to get down to 4,000 cfs later in the month. They could extend reductions into November to protect more winter run, but they would have to discuss tradeoffs to fall run.
- Reclamation reported on their updated shallow redd dewatering projections tied to four flow reduction scenarios, two of which were designed to try to minimize winter run dewatering (C2 and C3). In evaluating the impacts, they stressed the importance of accurate expansion factors and the inherent limitations of forecasting tools.
  - Reclamation stressed that the fall run estimates should be used as comparisons between scenarios, because they tend to overestimate actual dewatering.
  - All scenarios keep EOS storage above 2.2 MAF.
  - CDFW noted that it is unclear exactly what redds will be dewatered in a given month because the flows are still averages, i.e., do not reflect a slow ramping down of flows. From operations perspective, what does the implementation of the reductions actually look like?
    - Reclamation highlighted the distinction between monthly average flow projections and real-time operational flexibility, encouraging incremental adjustments informed by monitoring.

### Next steps

- Reclamation plans to reduce flows to 9,000 cfs 8/26 and 8,500 cfs early next week with midweek monitoring to evaluate effects.
- CDFW will be doing another shallow redd survey next week with updated depths and associated dewatering estimates. In addition, the next meeting's analysis will also reflect updated carcass counts, since that will impact what constitutes 1% of the population.
- The group agreed to meet for the regularly scheduled September 9 meeting to discuss what has been learned from the most recent flow reductions and associated shallow redd data.