



## American River Group Notes

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

Webinar: Join Microsoft Teams Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2024

### Action Items

1. N/A

### Introductions

1. USBR: Antonia Salas, Brian Willard, Carolyn Bragg, Drew Loney, John Hannon, Liz Kiteck, Mechele Pacheco, Myrna Giraldo Perez, Spencer Marshall, Thomas Patton, Zarela Guerrero
2. NMFS: Barb Byrne, Robert Sheffer
3. USFWS: Paul Cadrett
4. CDFW: Crystal Rigby, Emily Fisher, Erica Meyers, Gary Novak, Jason Julianne, Jennifer O'Brien, Molly Shea, Nick Bauer, Travis Apgar
5. SWRCB: Claudia Bucheli
6. California State Parks: N/A
7. Water Districts: Greg Zlotnick, Paul Helliker
8. Regional Water Authority (RWA): Michelle Banonis
9. City of Sacramento: Brian Sanders, Megan Thomas
10. Sacramento County: N/A
11. Environmental Council of Sacramento: N/A
12. City of Roseville: N/A
13. Cramer Fish Sciences: Jamie Sweeney, Kirsten Sellheim, Maeghen Wedgeworth, Mollie Ogaz
14. City of Folsom: N/A
15. DWR: John Ford

16. EBMUD: I-Pei Hsiu, Max Fefer
17. SMUD: N/A
18. PCWA: Ben Barker, Darin Reintjes
19. Water Forum: Ashlee Casey
20. PSMFC: Logan Day
21. USACE: N/A
22. CBEC Engineering: Chris Hammersmark
23. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians: N/A
24. CSUS: Dede Birch
25. Kleinschmidt Group: N/A
26. WAPA: N/A
27. BKS Law Firm: Jennifer Buckman
28. Other: Rod Hall

## Announcements

- N/A

## Housekeeping

- Reminder to use the most updated ARG Roster if sending out a group email.
  - Not all members are able to open the MS Teams link that was shared, so Kearns & West suggested some other options for accessing the roster.

## Fisheries Update

### CDFW Updates

1. Carcass Surveys
  - a. Lower American River (LAR) carcass surveys began on 10/14/2024.
  - b. 493 carcasses were processed in the first five weeks of the survey (as compared to 881 carcasses observed at the same time last year).
    - i. 58% were found in the range between Nimbus Basin and Sunrise Blvd.
    - ii. 31% were found between Sunrise Blvd and El Manto Dr.
    - iii. 11% were found between El Manto Dr and River Bend Park.

- c. During the first half of the sixth week of surveying (11/18 – 11/20), 750 carcasses have been found.
- 2. Chinook spawning
  - a. By the end of the week of 11/11/2024, 137 females were assessed for spawn status.
    - i. 66% of those were classified as Spawned
    - ii. 26% were classified as Unspawned
    - iii. 7% were classified as Partially Spawned
- 3. Redd surveys
  - a. Surveys started at the end of October.
  - b. As of 11/20/2024, 294 redds have been observed this season.
- 4. Nimbus Hatchery Operations Update
  - a. Spawning has begun for mitigation collection.
  - b. As of 11/18/2024, CDFW has spawned over 2.4 million eggs (roughly 58% of CDFW's spawning goal through 11/18).
  - c. CDFW had planned to spawn 10/31 and 11/4, but there were no ripe females.
  - d. The hatchery is now seeing an increase in ripe females and are attempting the catch up by collecting more eggs to achieve spawning goals.
  - e. An additional 1.2 million eggs are scheduled to be taken during spawning on 11/21/2024.

## Questions

- 1. N/A

## Cramer Fish Sciences Updates

- 1. Cramer Fish Sciences (Cramer) and Water Forum presented spawning survey data that focused on the restored habitat areas and nearby control sites. Crews observed significantly more fish spawning during the 11/18 survey (389 redds) than the 10/28 survey (8 redds).
  - a. Most spawners were seen at Nimbus Basin and Lower Sailor Bar.
- 2. Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
  - a. Cramer shared DO levels downloaded on 11/20/2024 (note: the logger stopped logging in mid-November, so the data from the "below Folsom" logger does not extend past 11/13).

- b. Flows have been relatively stable through November.
- c. DO Coming out of Folsom has greatly improved, peaking at 11 mg/L and consistently staying above the 7 mg/L threshold.
- d. The spill is occurring at the radial gate and is the main action being taken to improve the DO.

#### Questions

1. N/A

#### PSMFC Updates

1. PSMFC is planning to install two rotary screw traps (RSTs) the week of 12/30/2024 with sampling to begin in January on a schedule of seven days per week.
2. American River RST data is updated through 2024 on the [Environmental Data Initiative \(EDI\) Portal](#).

## Operations Forecast

#### SMUD

1. November 2024 precipitation totals 1.32 inches through 11/18/2024. Average November precipitation is 6.87 inches.
2. Total reservoir storage is nearly 62.4% full at approximately 236.5 TAF.
3. Snowpack is 64.1% of average at selected snow sensors.
4. Chili Bar daily average releases are forecasted at the following flow rates:
  - a. November: 328 cfs
  - b. December: 604 cfs
5. SMUD's current hydro-release strategy is focused on water conservation and meeting FERC release requirements at Chili Bar.
6. There is plenty of room in reservoir storage to absorb the precipitation and inflow forecasted for the current atmospheric river event.
7. Releases will likely remain conservative until SMUD has a clearer picture of the water year type or the Central Valley receives multiple precipitation events.

#### Questions/Comments

1. N/A

#### PCWA

1. Storage at French Meadows is currently 62 TAF, or 46% capacity.

2. Storage at Hell Hole is currently 76 TAF, or 37% capacity.
3. Combined storage totals 138 TAF, or 40% capacity. This represents 83% of the 15-year average.
4. Middle Fork American River (MFAR) daily average releases are approximately 300 cfs.
5. North Fork American River (NFAR) daily average releases are approximately 360 cfs.
6. Total precipitation for Lake Spaulding during WY25 through 11/20/2024 was 7 inches, or 72% of average.
7. PCWA is accruing storage the current storm system. The Upper American River is receiving high levels of precipitation. Expecting 8 inches of rain over the next week, followed by a dry pattern.
8. Annual maintenance activities have been completed and all units are back online.

## Central Valley Operations

### USBR

1. As of 11/20/2024, a major storm system is moving through the northern part of CA; the American River expects to receive some snow and runoff as a result.
2. Peak inflow from the storm is anticipated to be approximately 9,000 cfs into Folsom with hopes of accumulating storage over the next week.
3. Folsom Reservoir releases are at 1,970 cfs to meet the Minimum Release Requirements (MRR) of 2,000 cfs for November.
4. Folsom storage levels are approximately 345 TAF as of 11/19/2024.
5. Water temperatures at Watt Ave. have averaged 58.4°F through 11/19/2024 with slightly higher temperatures upstream. However, temperatures are expected to further cool through the weekend.
6. USBR shared a chart depicting temperature fluctuations below Folsom Dam as a result of the combination of the power bypass and the powerplant.
  - a. From 10/22 through 11/5, temperatures range from 52°F at the lowest point up to 63°F at the highest. This pattern follows a peaking, summertime operation.
  - b. After 11/5, temperature fluctuations are most subtle, with the overall temperature dropping through 11/19. During this period, releases switched to a winter-time operations pattern where the powerhouse is running overnight in addition to throughout the day.
7. The shutters remain in the following positions:

- a. Top shutters: Units 1-3 are raised;
  - b. Middle shutters: Units 1-3 are raised;
  - c. Bottom shutters: Units 1-3 are raised.
- 8. At the 50% and 90% exceedance operations forecasts, the monthly American River release levels are anticipated to be 2,000 cfs for November, and 2,000 cfs for December, and 1,750 cfs for January.
- 9. At the 90% exceedance operations forecasts, the monthly American River release levels are anticipated to be 2,000 cfs for November, and 2,000 cfs for December, and 1,000 cfs for January.
- 10. Follow-up on the Power Bypass
  - a. USBR noted that water temperatures are trending down and they are now meeting target temperatures at Watt Ave.
  - b. The 250 cfs bypass is continuing at Folsom Dam through the weekend. USBR is unsure at this time if the releases combined with storm inflow will be enough to create an isothermal situation in the lake.
  - c. USBR will collect the next temperature profile on 12/1 but will be monitoring conditions in the meantime.
  - d. Once temperatures up and down the American River reach the 56°F target, USBR will gradually ramp down the power bypass. This could potentially occur the week of 11/25.

### Questions/Comments

- 1. CDFW asked about the timeline for potentially increasing releases over 2,000 cfs in the LAR for flood control purposes, given the precipitation from the current atmospheric river.
  - a. USBR noted that Lake Folsom water levels are still low and therefore they don't anticipate having to increase the scheduled 2,000 cfs releases as a flood control measure. The atmospheric river is not clearly centered over the American River, and there is plenty of space in Folsom Reservoir to capture stormwater.
- 2. Regarding the upcoming ramp down of the power bypass, CDFW noted that they observed redds in the LAR at temperatures above the 56°F target; this is where they saw egg mortality happening. The number of eggs lost is unknown, but some were seen in late October when the temperatures were above 56°F.

## Discussion

### Annual Report

N/A

## **Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled ARG meeting is on Thursday, December 19. The meeting will be virtual.