



Delta Monitoring Workgroup Weekly Meeting

Meeting Record 04/08/2025

Working Group Members in Attendance

- Reclamation: Chase Ehlo, Thuy Washburn, Grace Easterbrook, Cat Pien, Alexander Vaisvil, Erika Kegel
- USFWS: Not in attendance
- NMFS: Not in attendance
- CDFW: Not in attendance
- DWR: John Ford, Brian Schreier, Katie Osborn
- SWRCB: Not in attendance
- Water Contractors: Darcy Austin (SWC), Jennifer Buckman (ARSC), Bobby Phillips (WWD), Jose Rangel (WWD), Alma Atuna (WWD), Brad Cavallo (WWD), Ron Milligan (SLDMWA), Steve Micko (MWD), Ian Buck-Macleod (FWA)
- NGOs: Ashley Overhouse (Defenders), Jonathan Rosenfield (Baykeeper), Spencer Fern (Restore the Delta)
- Kearns & West: Anh Hoang, Marlys Jeane

Review Operations Outlook

- At Keswick Dam on the Sacramento River, releases are 5,400 cfs and decreasing to reach 4,600 cfs by April 11th.
- At Whiskeytown Dam on Clear Creek, releases are 250 cfs.
- At Nimbus Dam on the American River, releases are 7,000 cfs.
- At Goodwin Dam on the Stanislaus River, releases are 600 cfs.
- At Oroville Dam on the Feather River, releases are 11,000 cfs and will increase temporarily to 12,500 cfs for five days to evacuate flood space. Releases will then decrease back down to 11,000 cfs and below.
- At JPP, exports are 3,500 cfs.
- At CCF, exports are 2,700 cfs.

- Although currently not in effect, SWP exports are subject to Spring Delta Outflow ITP COA 8.12.1 regarding I/E constraints; however as long as the 3-day average Delta outflow remains above 44,500 cfs, COA 8.12.1 is not in effect. Current estimates suggest that the Delta outflow will fall below this threshold by Thursday (4/10). When that occurs, SWP export operations will be constrained and must be reduced to either 50% of the Vernalis flow or 600 cfs, whichever is greater.
- San Luis storage is 1.83 million acre-feet; Federal storage is 832,600 acre-feet.
- DCC Gates are closed for the season. They have been closed since November 2024.
- Tides are transitioning from Neap to Spring; the full moon is on April 12th.
- Currently operating at OMRI no more negative than -5,000 cfs.

Additional Questions or Comments

- No questions or comments.

Review PA Assessment and Assessment Triggers (Reclamation)

Facilitator's note: Due to the new PA, DMW will only review the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook. Moving forward, Reclamation will potentially produce assessments for relevant salmon and smelt triggers weekly. A review of the PA Assessment may occur if a real-time trigger occurs.

- Reclamation has been compiling weekly Winter-run Chinook salmon updates and sharing them with the SaMT, which are being passed along to the DMW group.
- These updates include assessments of operational impacts on Winter-run Chinook salmon, particularly in response to a few recent threshold exceedances.
- The first exceedance was a hatchery Winter-run exceedance on March 21, followed by a few exceedances of the weekly distributed loss thresholds. The ongoing assessment has concluded that the Winter-run migration through the Delta is nearing its end. Historical data suggests that most Winter-run Chinook have already exited the Delta and that salvage operations have likely captured the majority of remaining individuals.
- Based on this, Reclamation has determined that a -5,000 cfs change (presumably in water operations or flow) is unlikely to have a significant population-level effect on Winter-run Chinook. However, this conclusion reflects only Reclamation's assessment and does not represent a consensus view from the entire SaMT.

Additional Questions or Comments

- Question: Looking at the weekly fish and water operations outlooks for the weeks of 4/8 through 4/14, it says that the salmon machine learning model was run on 4/7 and recommended a -2,500 cfs OMRI for seven days. So how does that square with the assessment to stay at -5,000 cfs?
 - Answer: The -5,000 cfs isn't a finalized decision, it is part of an ongoing assessment. The situation is still under review and will be discussed further.

Specifically, the issue is being elevated to WOMT for consideration, where upper management will weigh in. Reclamation will hear back from them after that discussion.

- Question: Based on my understanding of the ITP, is the machine learning model designed to predict the potential impact of changing the OMRI index to -2,500 cfs?
 - Answer: Yes, the model is used to estimate the likelihood of fish salvage or no salvage. It predicts probabilities across categories such as absence, low presence, and high presence of Winter-run Chinook. If one of the models predicts a high probability of absence, around 0.559 or higher, at an OMRI of -2,500 cfs, that would trigger the action outlined in the operations outlook.
- Question: Do the notes indicate that the model was run and met the criteria specified in the ITP to justify going to a no more negative than -2,500 cfs OMRI requirement?
 - Answer: Yes.

Review Longfin Smelt (LFS) Distribution and ITP Triggers (DWR)

Facilitator's note: Due to the new ITP, DMW will only review the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook. A review of the Risk Assessment may occur if a real-time trigger occurs.

Additional Questions or Comments

- No questions or comments.

Acronyms

- CVP – Central Valley Project
- DCC – Delta Cross Channel
- DOI – Delta Outflow Index
- DWR – California Department of Water Resources
- DCI – Delta Mendota Canal – California Aqueduct Intertie
- DS – Delta Smelt
- EDSM – Enhanced Delta Smelt Monitoring Program
- FNU – Formazin Nephelometric Unit
- I/E – Inflow to Export
- IOP – Interim Operations Plan
- ITP – Incidental Take Permit
- ITL – Incidental Take Limit
- JPE – Juvenile Production Estimate

- LFS – Longfin Smelt
- NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit
- OBI – Old River Bacon Island Station
- OMR – Old and Middle River Tidally Averaged Flow
- PA – Proposed Action (Federal)
- PTM – Particle Tracking Model
- SaMT – Salmon Monitoring Team
- SLS – Smelt Larval Survey
- SMT – Smelt Monitoring Team
- SRDWSC – Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel
- SWP – State Water Project
- SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board
- TFCF – Tracy Fish Collection Facility
- TUCP – Temporary Urgency Change Petition
- TUCO – Temporary Urgency Change Order
- USBR – United States Bureau of Reclamation
- WCS – Winter Run Chinook Salmon
- WOMT – Water Operations Management Team
- WQ – Water Quality
- YOY – Young of Year