



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

American River Group

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Conference Line: +1 (321) 209-6143; Access Code: 780 506 355#

Webinar: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Notes

1. Action Items
 - a. All – Let Ansel at SMUD know if you are interested in any SMUD presentations.
 - b. KW – Provide Microsoft Teams tutorial at the beginning of the April ARG meeting.
 - c. KW – Check-in with Barb Byrne in May regarding a presentation on FMS under the 2019 Consultation and calculating the MRR.
2. Introductions:
 - d. USBR: Ian Smith, Thuy Washburn, Liz Kiteck, Drew Loney, John Hannon, Brad Hubbard, Melissa Vignau
 - e. NMFS: Barb Byrne, Katrina Poremba
 - f. USFWS: Paul Cadrett
 - g. CDFW: Crystal Rigby, Tracy Grimes, Jason Julienne, Emily Fisher, Chris McKibbin, Mike Healy, Gabe Singer, Gary Novak, Nick Bauer
 - h. SWRCB: Michael Macon
 - i. PCWA: Ben Barker, Darin Reinties
 - j. EBMUD: I-Pei Hsiu, Max Fefer

- k. SMUD: Ansel Lundberg
 - l. City of Folsom:
 - m. City of Sacramento: Brian Sanders
 - n. San Juan Water District: Paul Helliker, Greg Zlotnick
 - o. Westlands: Tom Boardman
 - p. City of Roseville: Sean Bigley
 - q. DWR:
 - r. WAPA: Mike Prowatzke
 - s. FishBio:
 - t. Water Forum: Jessica Law, Clyde MacDonald, Ashlee Casey, Erica Bishop, Chris Hammersmark
 - u. CFS: Kirsten Sellheim
 - v. PSMFC: Logan Day, Austin Galinat
 - w. Shingle Springs Miwok Band:
 - x. Kearns & West: Rafael Silberblatt, Mia Schiappi, Karis Johnston
 - y. CSUS: Dede Birch
 - z. Other: Rod Hall
3. Housekeeping & Announcements
- a. The meeting summary review time will now have a shorter turnaround. ARG members will have 2 business days from the time they receive the meeting summary to review and provide edits and comments.
4. Fisheries Update
- a. Nimbus hatchery reported that almost all steelhead have hatched and are being held in indoor tanks.
 - b. Cramer Fish Science (CFS) noted that as of their last redd survey 86 steelhead redds have been observed. Stranding surveys are being conducted by CFS and CDFW and thus far juvenile Chinook and steelhead have been observed at stranded pools in the Sunrise area. Spawning surveys will restart the week of 3/21/2022.
 - c. PSFMC noted that the rotary screw traps have been sampled continuously since the last ARG meeting. There has been an average of 100-200 length-at-

date fall-run observed per day during the last week. All fall-run fish are fry and parr life stages with an average size of 42 mm. Most unmarked steelhead caught are at the fry life stage and have an average size of 26 mm. The second trap efficiency report showed a 6% efficiency the first week of March. The third trap efficiency report will be released on 3/17/22.

- Question/Comments:

- NMFS asked how many ad-clipped steelhead versus natural steelhead have been seen during spawning surveys.
 - CFS replied that even if a fish is still on the redd it can be difficult to identify the ad-clip status, so it is hard to give an accurate ratio.
- CDFW noted that they have observed a significant amount of mortality of juvenile salmonids in the stranded pools.
- NMFS asked whether there was any possibility to move Nimbus hatchery steelhead to the Mokelumne hatchery during the summer or to use chillers.
 - CDFW responded that chilling raceway water is not possible because of the volume of water needed. There will be discussions with USBR and EMBUD on whether moving these fish to the Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery is appropriate.
- CDFW asked about summer temperature projections for the purposes of planning for steelhead over summering at the Nimbus Hatchery.
 - USBR responded with information indicating that temperatures are likely to be "as bad or worse" than last year on the Lower American River.

5. Operations Forecast

- a. SMUD provided an update on its operations. See handout for details.
 - i. The Bulletin 120 put the upper American River project into a "below normal" year type. SMUDs FERC license classification is almost a "dry year" which means there will be less recreational boating flow releases required from Chili Bar Dam and Slab Creek. If the April Bulletin 120 is also a "dry year" type, the FERC license will classify their year as "super dry" which is based on consecutive dry years. The "super dry" year type will reduce the minimal and recreational flow requirements.
 - ii. Chili Bar Dam releases have increased to an average of 800 cfs.
 - iii. The long-term forecast was completed. There will be a reduced amount of releases for the remainder of the water year.
 - iv. Loon Lake, which has not been releasing significant amounts of water due to work being performed, should be back online later this month.

- v. The storage at Union Valley (SMUD's largest reservoir) has almost recovered from the near full release that was required in 2021 for a boat ramp repair.
 - b. PCWA provided an update on its operations. See handout for details.
 - i. Generation is in conservation mode and only running an hour a day.
 - ii. Snowpack is stable at 89% of average.
 - iii. PCWA will determine flows for the rest of the water year when the May Bulletin 120 is published.
- Questions/Comments:
 - USFWS asked whether PCWA has calculated the current runoff efficiency.
 - PCWA responded that it is likely still near 60% as reported last month, but it hasn't been fully updated.
- 6. Central Valley Operations
 - a. USBR provided an update on its operations. See handout for details.
 - b. American River releases are at 1,250 cfs and will be reduced to 1,200 cfs on 3/18/2022.
 - c. Folsom Dam storage is at 523,000-acre feet and the lake is beginning to stratify. Unit 2 lowered the bottom panels, Units 2 and 3 lowered their middle panels, and Unit 2 lowered one of the upper panels. It was not possible to lower the upper panel on Unit 3 even though it is also deganged, because there aren't sufficient stems.
 - d. Storage is higher and the water is colder this year as compared to this time last year.
 - e. The March ARI-based minimum release requirement (MRR) is 1,733 cfs based on a 50% exceedance and 1,197 on a 90%. The Redd Dewatering Protective Adjustment (RDPA) based MRR for steelhead is 1,215 cfs. USBR considers the 1,197 ARI-based MRR based on the 90% exceedance to be the controlling MRR and releases will be reduced to 1,200 cfs to conserve water into Folsom Reservoir.
 - f. The March operations forecast is currently being drafted and the goal is to have it distributed by the end of next week.
 - g. USBR submitted a Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) to the SWRCB on 3/13/2022. The TUCP requests a relaxation of some Delta water quality requirements in order to reduce the water needed to meet downstream requirements and preserve storage in Folsom, Oroville, and Shasta.
- Questions/Comments:
 - NMFS asked if the shortage of stems is a short-term limitation or if that will affect the ability to drop individual panels for the rest of the summer.

- USBR responded that no additional stems will be available this year, but also noted that stems are needed only to lower deganged panels. When the reservoir elevation drops to a point when USBR begins to degang shutters, individual panels can be lifted without needing stems.
- CDFW expressed concern regarding the egg and juvenile mortality rate associated with recent and planned flow decreases and asked if anyone from their agency was involved in the current flow release and temperature plan decision-making process (e.g., to weigh in on potential mitigation strategies).
 - USBR replied that there had not been anyone from CDFW involved and that USBR made the decision to preserve reservoir storage in light of the March forecast.
- San Juan Water District asked if the snow melt that is anticipated to occur from the potential heat wave next week will have an impact on the amount of Folsom releases.
 - USBR replied the elevation in storage is well below the allowable storage and inflow from the low elevation snow melt is not expected to be an issue for an increase in releases.

7. The next meeting is on **Thursday, April 21, 1:30-3:30pm.**