



American River Group

1:30 p.m.– 3:30 p.m.

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

Webinar: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Thursday, November 17, 2022

Notes

1. Action Items
 - a. None
2. Introductions
 - a. USBR: Thuy Washburn, John Hannon, Melissa Vignau, Brad Hubbard, Mike Wright, Lee Mao, Liz Kiteck, Spencer Marshall
 - b. NMFS: Barb Byrne
 - c. USFWS: Paul Cadrett
 - d. CDFW: Duane Linander, Erica Meyers, Crystal Rigby, Stephanie Ambrosia, Chris McKibben, Emily Fisher, Nick Bauer, Mike Healey, Gary Novack, Danny O'Donnel
 - e. SWRCB: Reza Ghasemizadeh, Michael Macon,
 - f. Water Districts: Brian Sanders, Tom Boardman, Greg Zlotnick, Michelle Banonis
 - g. City of Roseville: Sean Bigley
 - h. DWR: John Ford, Kevin Reece
 - i. WAPA: Mike Prowatzke
 - j. EBMUD: I-Pei Hsiu, Max Fefer
 - k. SMUD: Ansel Lundberg
 - l. PCWA: Ben Barker

- m. FishBio
 - n. Water Forum: Erica Bishop, Jessica Law, Clyde Macdonald, Chris Hammersmark, Ashlee Casey
 - o. PSMFC: Logan Day, Hunter Morris
 - p. CFS: Kirsten Sellheim
 - q. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians:
 - r. Other: Rod Hall, DeDe Birch, Jennifer Buckman, Anne Sanger
3. Fisheries Update
- a. CDFW provided fisheries updates.
 - i. Carcass Surveys began on October 17th. 130 total carcasses have been surveyed as of November 17th.
 - ii. High female pre-spawn mortality has occurred so far this season. Frequency appears to be increasing (18 of 26 mortalities were detected the week of November 7th).
 - iii. Hatchery pre-spawn mortality is increasing as well, mostly occurring in the pond.
 - iv. Redd surveys began October 21st:
 - 1. 63 total redds were surveyed through the week of November 7th; however, over 100 redds have already been surveyed this week which will increase that total.
 - b. Cramer Fish Sciences is also conducting bi-weekly redd surveys, under contract with the Water Forum, to fulfill California Proposition 68 habitat grant funding requirements. They are coordinating closely with CDFW field staff.
 - c. Hatchery Update:
 - i. Steelhead are healthy and mortality is down.
 - ii. Fall-Run Chinook Salmon began spawning November 1st
 - 1. 4.2 million eggs have been collected
 - 2. Temperatures were high for spawning at the start of the month, but water is cooling, and ripe females are now present.

Questions/Comments

- NMFS inquired if the carcasses from the week of November 7th could be from two weeks prior and if that is why there is a high amount of prespawn mortality.
 - CDFW responded that the carcasses appear to be fresh with significant bacterial growth. The leading hypothesis is that the deceased fish were holding during warmer temperatures and didn't survive when temperatures dropped.
- Cramer Fish Sciences offered to share files and/or a summary of the redd survey results thus far.
- CDFW inquired if fish were utilizing the new spawning gravel.
 - CDFW responded that the gravel and the restoration sites are heavily used by the fish and that crews are seeing superimposition at the restoration sites.
- NMFS questioned why hatchery Chinook Salmon eggs were about 100,000 more than expected per day. Are there more fish than expected or is there an increase in fecundity?
 - CDFW noted that extra fish were collected for enhancement projects at Nimbus to support additional fisheries.
- Cramer Fish Sciences asked if the fish were tested for thiamine deficiency.
 - CDFW clarified that testing was completed November 17th and results are expected in one to two months. It is assumed that the fish are deficient, and treatment is applied at the egg phase. CDFW is experimenting to improve the intervention.

4. Operations Update

a. SMUD

- i. South Fork American River Watershed
- ii. WY23 Fresh Pond Precipitation: 6.3 inches
 1. 100% of average November precipitation, but low runoff due to drought conditions resulting in only 60% of average November runoff.
- iii. Above average snowpack.
- iv. 243,000 AF combined storage across three largest reservoirs or 2/3 full.
- v. Flows at Chili Bar on South Fork American River for October averaged 520 cfs and totaled 32,000 AF.
 1. November flows averaged 326 cfs and totaled 9,000 AF to date.

- vi. vi. Colder temperatures and current weather may allow for storage gains.

b. PCWA

- i. PG&E has extended the transmission induced generator outage. It should conclude on December 1st.

- ii. Storage:

- 1. French Meadows: 72,000 AF

- 2. Hell Hole: 92,000 AF

- 3. Totals:

- a. 164,000 AF

- b. Reservoir Capacity at 50%

- c. WY23 Precipitation is 100% of average

- iii. Snowpack is far above average.

- 1. NOAA is forecasting December precipitation to be above average with January and February performing below average.

- iv. Runoff modeling will be conducted on the first of every month.

5. Central Valley Operations

- a. American River releases are at 1,300 cfs.

- b. Folsom Reservoir storage is at 264 TAF and is currently below conservative storage projections.

- c. Inflows are at 500 cfs due to cold weather events.

- d. Water temperature at the Folsom Dam is projected to cool over the next month from 60° F to about 55° F.

- e. Currently bypassing 500 cfs until Fair Oaks reaches 56o F or until temperature of water coming out of the dam is equivalent to the Bypass.

- f. Ambient air temperature at CSU on 11/08/2022 reached an average of 50 o F which is earlier than average.

- g. In roughly one week, water coming out of the dam should be about the same temperature as that of the lake.

- h. Seasonal drought outlook forecasts continued drought conditions.
- i. Seasonal precipitation outlook forecasts a 50/50 split between drought and above average conditions.
- j. November monthly summary:
 - i. November 9th flows decreased from 1,400 cfs to 1,300 cfs and will likely hold at 1,300 cfs through December.
 - ii. Temperature shutters are raised and are drawing out of units one through three.

Questions/Comments

- CDFW asked about the significance of 56o F.
 - USBR clarified that it is a base level of temperate egg mortality. Temperatures above 56o F see increased egg mortality and temperatures above 62o F result in 100% egg mortality. Oxygenation is a factor leading to mortality at these temperatures.
- Will Folsom storage look better at the end of December, or will cold conditions lock water in as snowpack for the season and leave storage at ~240 TAF?
 - USBR noted that storage may be nearly 240 TAF by the end of December given colder storm systems and drought conditions inhibiting runoff.
- NMFS highlighted that USBR proposed operating to 1,300 cfs as a pragmatic implementation of the 1,326 cfs minimum flow and NMFS approved.
- Water Forum asked if/how much water will be released from Folsom before December.
 - PCWA clarified that any releases depend on the PG&E outage and transmission coming back online. The best estimate for releases is December 1st. Maximum flows would be 17 TAF per day.

The next regularly scheduled ARG meeting is on Thursday, December 15th from 1:30 p.m.– 3:30 p.m.