



American River Group

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

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

Webinar: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Thursday, February 15, 2022

Notes

1. Action Items
 - a. None
2. Introductions
 - a. USBR: Thuy Washburn, John Hannon, Melissa Vignau, Zarela Guerrero, Mechele Pacheco, Carolyn Bragg, Leeyan Mao, Todd Plain, Brad Hubbard
 - b. NMFS:
 - c. USFWS: Paul Cadrett, Craig Anderson
 - d. CDFW: Nick Bauer, Chris McKibbin, Emily Fisher, Vivian Paredes, Jennifer O'Brien, Mike Healey, Chris Ronshausen, Duane Linander
 - e. SWRCB: Reza Ghasemizadeh, Michael Macon
 - f. Water Districts: Michelle Banonis, Brian Sanders, Brett Ewart
 - g. City of Sacramento: Anne Sanger
 - h. City of Roseville: Sean Bigley
 - i. City of Folsom: Marcus Yasutake
 - j. DWR: Mike Ford
 - k. WAPA: Mike Prowatzke
 - l. EBMUD: I-Pei Hsiu, Mike Fefer
 - m. SMUD: Tyler Belarde

- n. PCWA: Ben Barker
 - o. FishBio:
 - p. Water Forum: Erica Bishop, Jessica Law, Chris Hammersmark, Ashlee Casey, Liana Huang
 - q. PSMFC: Logan Day
 - r. CFS: Kirsten Sellheim
 - s. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians:
 - t. Other: Rod Hall, DeDe Birch, Jennifer Buckman, Tom Boardman, Deanna Sereno
3. Fisheries Update
- a. CDFW provided updates for the Nimbus Fish Hatchery.
 - i. All Chinook salmon have emerged.
 - ii. Fish will likely be moved to the outdoor raceways in March.
 - iii. Steelhead spawning is ongoing and 1.3 million eggs have been collected.
 - b. Cramer Fish Science provided updates on their redd surveys.
 - i. Stranding surveys showed 5 stranded salmonids. Water quality was good in the pools.
 - ii. Steelhead spawning surveys identified nine steelhead redds. There were two redds in the sunrise side channels: one without defining features and one that couldn't be measured due to the presence of anglers.
 - iii. Steelhead spawning surveys will continue from 2/22/23 to 2/24/23 and will occur through the spring.
 - iv. CFS is working with the Water Forum to do snorkel surveys in restoration sites to monitor juveniles beginning the week of 2/20/23 and continuing through May. They will coordinate with CDFW.
 - c. PSMFC
 - i. Both PSMFC's Rotary Screw Traps (RSTs) were lowered on 1/24/23 and have been in operation continuously since then.

- ii. (Using run identification based on length-at-date criteria) 12,778 fall-run salmon, 11 spring-run salmon, and 15 winter-run salmon have been caught as of 2/14/23.
- iii. There have been an average of 1,000 fall-run Chinook caught per day since 2/14. All fish are in the alevin and fry life stages and average 35-45 mm in fork length.
- iv. At the beginning of the sampling season a higher proportion of alevin to button up fry was observed as compared to previous seasons. Currently a higher proportion of button-up fry is being observed (likely due to water temperatures).
- v. No unmarked O. mykiss have been observed at the traps but they are expected to start appearing towards the beginning of March.

d. Questions/Comments

- i. CDFW asked what the egg take goal is at Nimbus Fish Hatchery.
 - 1. CDFW hatchery representatives commented that they are unsure about the egg take goal but the release goal is 430,000 fish.
- ii. CDFW commented that PSMFC's fork length distribution table highlights an issue they have with the spring pulse flow offramp criteria (especially in lower water years), namely: the size of fry shown in the table indicates that a "pulse flow" in February provides less benefit to achieving the biological intent of the spring pulse flow action than a pulse later in the season (March – May) when juvenile Chinook salmon are of larger size to move through and exit the American River and into the Delta.

4. Operations Updates

a. SMUD

- i. South Fork American River Watershed
 - 1. There have been approximately 2.83 inches of liquid water precipitation in February at 30% of average. Total precipitation year to date is 51.75 inches, which is 151 % of average.
 - 2. Snowpack is at 125% of average.
 - 3. Storage at Loon Lake, Union Valley, and Ice House is approximately 70% full at 107% of average.
 - 4. Releases from Chili Bar are at 3,890 cfs.

b. PCWA

- i. Storage:

1. French Meadows: 97 TAF at 71% capacity.
 - a. There are two large radial gates that will be lowered on April 1st to increase capacity.
 2. Hell Hole: 147 TAF at 70% capacity.
 3. Combined Storage Totals:
 - b. 245 TAF
 - c. Reservoir Capacity at 72%
 - d. WY23 Precipitation is 94% of average.
 - e. Snowpack is a 161% of average.
 - f. February water year type is “wet”
 - g. There is above average run-off for the year.
 - ii. The Middle Fork Project is back online and went to full load on 2/8/23.
 - iii. Oxbow powerhouse is offline.
5. Central Valley Operations
- a. American River releases are at 4,000 cfs. Releases have not been cut due to downstream demands and the amount of inflow occurring.
 - b. Folsom Reservoir storage is at 520 TAF. Storage is holding below the conservation line of 566 TAF but will begin to increase as of March 1.
 - c. Inflows are at approximately 4,000 cfs with a total cumulative inflow of 1,408 TAF which is 168% of the 15-year average of 838 TAF.
 - d. River temperatures are cool.
 - e. The February 2023 season drought-outlook forecasts “drought removal likely”.
 - f. Seasonal precipitation shows that there is an equal chance of being either below or above normal.
 - g. All temperature shutters are currently raised. The bottoms and the middles will be down by the end of 2/16/23.
 - h. There was a lot of debris in front of the Dam on 2/9/23 that caused damage to the booms. This caused a drop in flows to 750 cfs for approximately one hour.
 - i. The February 90% exceedance operations outlook shows an increase in storage as well as an increase in releases during March, April, and May.

These numbers are projected based on what is needed for the entire system. There may be additional triggers in the Delta or lack of water from other rivers that will require increased releases.

- j. The February minimum release requirement (MRR) is 1,750 cfs.
- k. Releases in February were high enough to meet the offramp criteria for a spring pulse flow per the FMS. A pulse flow, while not required, may occur if there is another large storm event and associated flood management releases.
- l. Questions/Comments
 - i. CDFW asked what the projected inflows into Folsom Reservoir would be in March?
 - 1. USBR responded that based on the 90% exceedance inflows should be at 6,000 cfs.
 - ii. CDFW requested more timely notification of any future emergency drops in flows.
 - 1. USBR responded that on this occasion they were unaware of the drop in flows until after the fact and they provided an update as soon as they were able.
 - iii. Water Forum asked if the February 90% exceedance includes assumptions in respect to the TUCP that was recently filed.
 - 1. The TUCP was not accounted for in this forecast because there are outstanding decisions to be made regarding the TUCP. The 90% exceedance is based on trying to meet requirements for Port Chicago.

The next regularly scheduled ARG meeting is on **Thursday, March 16 from 1:30pm-3:30pm.**