

# Delta Monitoring Workgroup

## Meeting Record 11/02/2021

### Working Group Members in Attendance

- USBR: Nick Bertrand, Ian Smith, Elissa Buttermore, Suzanne Manugian, Randi Field
- USFWS: *Not in attendance – Facilitator’s accidental omission of emails from calendar invitation*
- NMFS: Jeff Stuart
- CDFW: Ken Kundargi, April Hennessy, Felipe La Luz, Crystal Rigby
- DWR: Mike Ford, Farida Islam
- SWRCB: Matt Holland
- Water Contractors: Jerry Robbins, Scott Peterson (SLDMWA); Deanna Sereno, Yuan Liu (CCWD); Darcy Austin, Chandra Chilmakuri (SWC); Shawn Acuña (MWD); Michelle Banonis (RWA); Heidi Williams (Valley Water)

### Action Items

None at this time.

### Additional Notes on Discussion Items

### Introductions

- Facilitator (Nora De Cuir, K&W) introduces the agenda and reviews meeting flow and participation practices. Notes her accidental omission of various names from calendar invite and asks group to please alert her to any others.

### Review Operations Outlook (Randi Field, USBR and Mike Ford, DWR)

- Light to moderate rainfall expected from Monday’s system, larger amounts in mountains. Another weather system anticipated later in the week with rain more likely in the valley floor, looking favorable in the north.
- Clear Creek – Releasing 200 cfs base flow downstream of Whiskeytown.
- Sacramento—Releasing 4,400 cfs; ramping down tomorrow through November 13 to a base flow of 3,250 cfs.
- American – Releasing and holding at 550 downstream from Nimbus.
- San Joaquin – Downstream from Goodwin, still in the tail of the Fall Pulse Flow, with some variability there. Getting down to a base flow of 200 cfs.

- Full exports at Jones. Recent past attempt to go to full plant operation of 4,200 cfs, did run into some issues and had to reduce, but around noon yesterday moved to the full export.
- DCC Operations—Gates currently closed as of October 25, continue to remain closed due to catch indices that are above the thresholds for fisheries. Those remain closed until we get to the appropriate number.
- Freeport and Vernalis flows up from good precipitation the previous weekend, but now going down. Vernalis is recent down from 1,700 to 1,500 cfs. Freeport is down from 38,000 to 13,000 cfs. Exports had been up to 6,680 at Clifton Court.
- Reducing releases from Oroville at 1,150 cfs today, 1,000 cfs tomorrow and 950 cfs on Thursday.
- Clifton Court Forebay - weed treatment of CCF and maintenance at Banks PP and Skinner FF is scheduled this week. Will reduce exports to 1,500 cfs tomorrow and close gates, will be at zero for Thursday and Friday. Will be exporting again on Saturday.
- Delta conditions – prior to the recent storm, projects were seeing significant salinity intrusion. Water quality has improved with storm runoff, but this runoff will drop off quickly, and there are some signs that salinity is beginning to encroach again.
  - Q: Are the gates closed from fish triggers?
  - R: Yes, fish triggers have occurred the last seven days. Today was the first day it was not triggered. PA requires that DCC gates must remain closed until the catch index is less than three fish per day at Knights Landing and Sacramento Monitoring sites.
  - Q: With the scheduled reduction at Banks and Jones already at capacity, how will that impact exports? Will we (water contractors) be giving up water as a result? Could the CVP pick that up?
  - R: The maintenance work and spraying are part of the normal routine outages we have to live with. The work was originally scheduled several days earlier but was rescheduled to be on the falling limb of runoff rather than immediately following the storm when flows peaked. Unfortunately, avoiding the maintenance altogether was not an option.
  - R: Weeds causing problems for salmonids also, not just water supply. Maintenance had been scheduled a long time ago and weed control is piggybacking on that scheduled maintenance, it is not typically done so late in the season.

## **Review PA Assessment (Suzanne Manugian and Ian Smith, USBR)**

- Salmon Monitoring Team
  - 10-15% of WR estimated to be in the Delta.
  - Loss of winter-run Chinook Salmon could occur this upcoming week, based on hydrology, but SaMT believes it is unlikely based on life history.

- Length at date spring-run observed at Knights Landing. Fish may be late emerging winter-run. SaMT estimated distribution in the Delta is 0-1%.
- 95-99% of wild steelhead have yet to enter the delta.
- One non-clipped steelhead observed at Tracy Fish Collection Facility on October 30.
- Knights landing and Sacramento catch indices exceeded last Wednesday through Monday and the general discussion is that for monitoring locations there are a lot of fish in the system and the gates will be closed until those numbers are lower.
- Smelt Monitoring Team
  - DS are unlikely to be present in the South Delta.
  - In the previous water year, one DS was detected in the Deepwater Ship Channel in August.
  - The likelihood of DS subadult entrainment is low, due to seasonal timing.
  - The rain event did not qualify as a first flush event since the fish were not ready to make that migration. Not under any OMR controlling factors until a first flush event or until December 1.
  - No non -consensus issues.
  - No salvage and no DS detected this water year.
  - The Bay Study, Fall Midwater Trawl, Brood Stock Collections and EDSM are currently on the water. Other surveys will begin later.

### **Review ITP Risk Assessment (Felipe La Luz and Crystal Rigby, CDFW)**

- Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt
  - No advice for WOMT for either DS or LFS.
  - DS ITP Risk Assessment and PA Assessment done collaboratively at SMT meetings. If there are inconsistencies, they will be noted.
  - Have not yet detected any LFS.
  - Based on LFS life history, they are not anticipated to be moving in. If so, it would be just a trickly and very early for them.
  - Fall Midwater Trawl reported their index for LFS, 1 in Grizzly Bay. No data for October yet.
  - Bay Study – 5 juvenile LFS found in San Pablo Bay and 14 in Central Bay in October.
  - EDSM – 5 juvenile LFS in Suisun Marsh outside of the area we'd associate with high risk of entrainment.

- SaMT does not project significant winter-run Chinook Salmon salvage, however, SaMT did note that they would not discount the possibility of COA 8.6.2 Early-season Natural Origin WR Discrete Daily Loss threshold of six fish within November 1-30 being triggered this week.

## Acronyms

- DCC – Delta Cross Channel
- DWR – California Department of Water Resources
- DS – Delta Smelt
- FNU -- Formazin Nephelometric Unit
- ITP – Incidental Take Permit
- 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
- PTM – Particle Tracking Model
- SaMT – Salmon Monitoring Team
- SLS – Smelt Larval Survey
- SMT – Smelt Monitoring Team
- SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board
- TFCF – Tracy Fish Collection Facility
- TUCP – Temporary Urgency Change Petition
- WCS – Winter Run Chinook Salmon
- WQ – Water Quality
- YOY – Young of Year