

Delta Monitoring Workgroup

Meeting Record 01/24/2023

Working Group Members in Attendance

- USBR: Kristin Arend, Randi Field, Brian Mahardja, Elissa Buttermore, Cat Pien, Erika Kegel, Michael Beakes
- USFWS: Leif Goude
- NMFS: Not in attendance
- CDFW: Crystal Rigby, April Hennessey
- DWR: Mike Ford, Brian Schreier, Farida Islam
- SWRCB: Matt Holland
- Water Contractors: Shawn Acuña (MWD), Deanna Sereno (CCWD), Yuan Liu (CCWD), Chandra Chilmakuri (SWC), Darcy Austin (SWC), Cindy Meyer (SLDMWA), Heidi Williams (Valley Water), Tom Boardman (WWD), David Vang (WWD), Jose Rangel (WWD)

Review Operations Outlook (USBR, DWR)

- Dryer and cooler weather conditions this week; scattered chance of showers across the state with a higher chance of precipitation along the spine of the Sierras; without significant precipitation in the forecast, we are seeing flows in the Delta drop.
- Whiskeytown Dam is currently releasing 200 cfs into Clear Creek; last Thursday concluded the spill flow.
- Currently releasing 3,450 cfs downstream of Keswick Dam on the Sacramento River; anticipating some cuts in releases because of the drying weather patterns and reduced inflow from side channels, returning to baseflows.
- Currently releasing 7,700 cfs, decreasing to 7,000 cfs tomorrow 01/25/2023 from Nimbus Dam on the American River; lower flows later in the week to reach less than 5,000 cfs through the end of the week.
- In the San Joaquin system, flows from Goodwin Dam are at 400 cfs with change orders to reach 200 cfs; dryer patterns are resulting in greater confidence in receding inflows coming into the afterbays.
- In the Delta, anticipating declines in inflows due to dryer weather patterns; anticipating ranges at Freeport and Vernalis this week.
- Freeport flows are at 56,000 cfs today and dropping to 40,000 cfs in the next few days.
- Vernalis flows are at 19,000 cfs today and dropping to 13,000 cfs in the next week.

- JPP exports are currently at 4,200 cfs target, managing the -3,500 cfs OMRI.
- DCC Gates are closed with no expectations for opening.
- Clifton Court exporting 9,500 cfs and is expected to be at this level for a few more days.
- Oroville releases are at 950 cfs on the Feather River; Oroville storage is over 2.2 million acre feet today.
- See the Operations Outlook for more information.

Additional Questions or Comments

- No questions or comments.

Review PA Assessment (USBR)

Reclamation provided the PA Assessment update. For more information, please refer to the PA Assessment document.

Review ITP Risk Assessment (DWR)

DWR provided the LFS update. For more information, please refer to the ITP Risk Assessment document.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Comment (CDFW):** There is an ITP amendment for Condition of Approval 8.6.3. Initially, upon seeing an older juvenile salmon, Condition of Approval 8.6.3 will be triggered, but if the genetics test comes back before the timeframe of the off-ramp, and it is confirmed that it is not Winter Run, then the condition will be off-ramped.
- **Question:** Where was the experimental release last week? Were there any challenges with the trailer method of release?
 - **Answer:** Last week the release was in Rio Vista. This week the release will be in the Deep Water Ship Channel.
 - **Answer:** We transported a little over 3,000 fish in a 500-gallon trailer and the transport generally went well. While there were no mortalities observed from the transport itself, there was some loss when some fish got impinged in the gate trackway or were crushed under some air stones during the release itself. USGS had cameras in the water at the Sandy Beach Boat Launch and observed fish swimming away. USGS also observed some larger fish, possibly predators, in the vicinity of the release. All in all, the trailer release was a tentative success and additional trials are being planned.
- **Question:** Was the DS caught by EDSM in the South Delta in Franks Tract specifically?
 - **Answer:** Yes, that's correct.
 - **Comment:** I request to make this fact clearer in the main summary, namely, to clarify that the DS was found in Franks Tract and not the "South Delta," which could be interpreted as being close to the export pumps.
- **Question:** Is the moderate risk designation based on PTM runs or is it a subjective assessment based on the one fish that was found in Franks Tract?

- **Answer:** While there are ongoing discussions related to the risk assessment, the moderate risk designation is based on the fact that DS are still in the migration period and will move around due to turbidity. Given turbidity is high throughout the Delta and that the Delta is an area where DS can get entrained, the risk is currently designated as moderate.
- **Comment (Facilitator):** I want to clarify for those who did not see the note in earlier email, SMT did not reach a consensus recommendation on the OMR target. Subsequently, this will be an item for WOMT's discussion this week.
- **Follow Up Action:** *Facilitation team will circle back with DWR and USBR this week and share status updates with DWM on the OMR target deemed protective for DS.*
- **Comment:** After nearly 20 days of restrictions, it is important to make these decisions based on modeling evidence rather than on historical conditions. I recommended that if the monitoring teams are headed toward elevating the risk level, it should be based on current flow conditions and PTM.
 - **Response:** It has been hard to make recommendations based on what information is available. However, we have done some DSM2 modeling and SMT discussed that thoroughly during the meeting. We did not do particle tracking modeling because it would not take into account adult DS behavior. DSM2 modeling was used to inform our decisions as best we can.

Acronyms

- DCC – Delta Cross Channel
- DWR – California Department of Water Resources
- DS – Delta Smelt
- FNU -- Formazin Nephelometric Unit
- GCID – Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- 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

