



**Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region**



**National Marine
Fisheries Service**

Shasta Dam Fish Passage Evaluation Fact Sheet

Background

The Sacramento River is home to Central Valley steelhead and four runs of Chinook salmon. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued, on June 4, 2009, a Biological Opinion (BO) and Conference Opinion on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP). The BO concluded that, as proposed, CVP and SWP operations were likely to jeopardize the continued existence of four federally-listed anadromous fish species: Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, California Central Valley steelhead, and



Coldwater habitat upstream of Shasta Lake

Southern distinct population segment (DPS) of the North American green sturgeon. The BO set forth a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) that allows continued operation of the CVP and SWP in compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

For CVP operations, the RPA obligates the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to evaluate the feasibility for the reintroduction of winter-run and spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead upstream from Shasta, Folsom and New Melones dams. The Shasta Dam Fish Passage Evaluation is the first effort to be launched. It features a Pilot Implementation Plan projected for completion in late 2014.

Pilot Implementation Plan

The Pilot Implementation Plan is a near-term experimental effort to determine the feasibility of reintroducing Chinook salmon to tributaries above Shasta Lake and transporting migrating juvenile fish to the Sacramento River below Keswick Dam. The Plan will evaluate possible approaches to capture, transport and release of fish at different life stages. Key elements of the Pilot Implementation Plan will be the review of existing information on the species and habitat conditions to be supported by additional field surveys and experiments to determine the condition of existing habitat and potential locations and methods for the collection and release of fish. If shown as feasible, lessons learned during the experimental studies will be applied to a long-term fish passage program. As part of this process, Reclamation will coordinate with landowners and stakeholders in the region, and will consider social economic factors.

Steering Committee

The Pilot Implementation Plan is being led by the Interagency Fish Passage Steering Committee (IFPSC). The IFPSC was formed in 2010 by Reclamation in coordination with NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California State Water Boards, and the University of California.

Focus Areas

To guide the Shasta Dam Fish Passage Evaluation, the participating agencies have identified six focus areas:

- **Habitat:** Conduct habitat-related work including surveys, data collection, habitat mapping, and address related habitat issues and decisions. This work will culminate in a habitat assessment report.
- **Fish Passage Technology:** Develop and assess technologies for the safe and effective collection, passage, and transport of juvenile and adult Chinook salmon necessary to reach the project goals. The fish passage technology subgroup will study passage efficacy, design, reservoir hydrodynamics, fish screen criteria, and operations.
- **Fish Health and Genetics:** Assess the health of existing fish populations in tributaries above Shasta Lake, and identify broodstock selection, and the health and genetics of the potential broodstock.
- **Pilot Planning:** Compile information from the Habitat, Fish Passage Technology, Fish Health and Genetics, and Policy and Regulation focus areas, as well as identifying other management activities and monitoring programs to successfully implement a Pilot Implementation Plan for fish reintroduction.
- **Policy and Regulations:** Define and comply with NEPA, NHPA, Wild and Scenic, and ESA permits and regulations as they relate to reintroduced salmon.
- **Public Outreach:** Coordinate and foster broad awareness and transparency of the Shasta Dam Fish Passage Evaluation among the public, agencies, landowners, organizations, elected officials, and other interested parties.

Contact Information

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