



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Stanislaus Watershed Team

10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Stanislaus Watershed Team Notes
<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/bdo/stanislaus-watershed-team.html>

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

1. New Actions
 - a. Peggy – Distribute updated packet materials
2. Introductions
 - a. USBR: Suzanne Manugian, Peggy Manza, Spencer Marshall, Luke Davis, Melissa Vignau, Liz Kiteck
 - b. NMFS: Katrina Poremba, Barb Byrne
 - c. USFWS: JD Wikert, Craig Anderson
 - d. CDFW: Gretchen Murphey, Crystal Rigby, Steve Tsao, Gabe Singer
 - e. SWRCB: Yongxuan Gao, Erin Foresman
 - f. SSJID:
 - g. OID:
 - h. Stockton East:
 - i. Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District:
 - j. DWR: Jamieson Scott, Joshua Black, Matt Meyers
 - k. WAPA:
 - l. FISHBIO:
 - m. Other: Austin Galinat

- n. Kearns & West: Karis Johnston, Mia Schiappi
3. Announcements
- a. Barb followed up with Jarom Zimmerman at Tri-Dam about operational constraints for flow shaping purposes. They can go between a minimum of 200 cfs to 2,500 cfs any time of day and week because the operation is done remotely. An additional 700 cfs can be operated remotely through the Howell Bunger Valve. Anything that requires them to operate the spill gates would be preferred to be done during the day on weekdays.
4. Operations Update and Forecasts/Hydrology
- a. Daily Operation Report:
 - i. Stanislaus River releases out of Goodwin Dam were 455 cfs on 4/19/2022 and are ~650 cfs today, 4/20/2022.
 - ii. The current forecast is not finished for April-May.
 - iii. The Stanislaus River spring pulse flow is occurring. At the end of the pulse, flows will decrease to either the base flow or the required flow to meet modified Vernalis D1641 flow requirements in the Temporary Urgency Change Order (TUCO) through June 30th.
 - iv. In July-September, operations may be higher (up to ~300 cfs) than the Stepped Release Plan's minimum flows (150 cfs in a Critical year type) to meet either the dissolved oxygen requirement at Ripon or the salinity standard at Vernalis.
 - b. New Melones:
 - i. Storage is currently at approximately 928 thousand acre feet (TAF).
 - ii. Inflow to date is 373 TAF. The current precipitation is only minimally affecting the Stanislaus Basin.
 - iii. Water precipitation accumulated to date is 18.04 inches.
 - c. Tulloch:
 - i. Reclamation is releasing water in a pattern based on downstream needs for the mainstem and diversions.
 - d. Goodwin Reservoir:
 - i. Releases are currently at ~650 cfs.

Questions/Comments:

From May through June, the monthly average flow requirement at Vernalis is 710 cfs based on the TUCO.

If flows at Vernalis begin to decrease dramatically, SWRCB and Reclamation will have a conversation about defining the minimum daily average flow.

USFWS and CDFW requested a warning if flows in June through August are expected to be under 400 cfs because operating the Mossdale trawl monitoring becomes difficult at flows that low.

The New Melones storage is estimated to be at 600 TAF at the end of September.

5. Temperature Updates

- a. NMFS provided an overview of Temperature Updates (see Figure 9).
- b. Temperature Updates
 - i. The pattern of water temperature at Orange Blossom Bridge is indicative of the pattern at other downstream locations. There is seasonal warming occurring and the max daily temperatures over the past month hit ~61 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - ii. The spring pulse flow will likely buffer water temperatures and keep water temperatures suitable for rearing juvenile salmonids.

6. Flow Planning

- a. The Stepped Release Plan has no flow features to shape until it is time for a fall pulse flow.

7. Stanislaus River Forum (SRF) Call Review

- a. CDFW informed SRF that the San Joaquin River Restoration Program Spring-run will likely stray into the Stanislaus River (Stan) this year because the San Joaquin River will be disconnected and most of the water in the system this spring/summer will likely be coming from the Stanislaus River.
- b. Discussed the adipose-fin clipped *O. mykiss* that passed the weir in March and April may be either from the Mokelumne hatchery production release or 6-year study fish.
- c. FishBio is planning to continue to operate the weir until the end of May and are collecting DNA samples from Chinook at the Oakdale Rotary Screw Trap for genetic-based run identification to assess whether some outmigrants may be spring-run Chinook salmon.

8. Fish Monitoring and Studies

- a. FishBio is running the weir through the spring in support of the steelhead lifecycle monitoring Reclamation included in their Proposed Action.
- b. Since March 1, there have been 13 more *O. mykiss* observed at the weir. 12 of the 13 are less than 16 inches and thus likely not returning from the ocean. Four of the 13 were ad-clipped. While it is not known which hatchery they are

from, they are most likely either from the Mokelumne hatchery production release or the 6-year study fish releases at Durham Ferry.

- c. There is no acoustic hydrophone on the Stanislaus River to detect the acoustic-tagged 6-year study fish, but the 6-year study fish are PIT-tagged as well, and Cramer Fish Sciences has a PIT antenna array in the lower Stanislaus River that might have detected those fish.
- d. The steelhead redd survey is still ongoing and monitoring will continue through next week.
- e. In the first week of April, the Mossdale trawl caught one tagged Chinook and one spring-run sized Chinook. The week of 4/11 they caught two spring-run sized Chinook. The week of 4/18 they caught one tagged Chinook, 3 spring-run sized, and one winter-run sized, according to length-at-date (LAD).
- f. There are not many fish being observed in the Oakdale rotary screw traps, but this may increase with the spring pulse flow.

Questions/Comments:

- g. Due to the dry hydrology, the San Joaquin River upstream of the Merced River will likely run dry this year, preventing migration of returning spring-run Chinook salmon adults to the restoration area below Friant Dam. The San Joaquin Restoration Program asked CDFW to be on the lookout for spring-run Chinook from the San Joaquin River straying into the Stanislaus River system.

There was a possible green sturgeon sighting less than a mile upstream of the weir. CDFW is on site attempting to catch and identify the fish. They will also PIT-tag it so they can monitor whether it leaves the Stanislaus River. They plan to relocate the fish downstream of the weir so that it will leave the river on its own, since they do not have the proper equipment to move a fish that large a significant distance.

9. Restoration Project Updates

- a. Spawning and rearing habitat restoration
 - i. No update
- b. Temperature management study
 - i. No update

10. Progress Update on Proposed Action Elements

- a. No update

11. Other Discussion Items

- a. Curtailments
 - i. No update

- b. Annual reporting check-in
 - i. No update
- c. Items to elevate to WOMT
 - i. No items to elevate to WOMT

12. Next Meeting

- a. **Wednesday, May 18, 2022 (10am-12pm)**