

Sacramento River Temperature Task Group (SRTTG) Meeting
December 2, 2021 | 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Meeting Summary

Participants

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| Alyson Scurlock, Kearns & West | John Hannon, Reclamation |
| Ammon Danielson, WAPA | Ken Kundargi, CDFW |
| Anne Williams, MBK Engineers/SRSC | Kevin Reece, DWR |
| Bill Poytress, USFWS | Kristin White, Reclamation |
| Brian Mahardja, Reclamation | Liz Kiteck, Reclamation |
| Charlie Chamberlain, USFWS | Matt Holland, SWRCB |
| Craig Williams, SWRCB | Mike Deas, Watercourse Engineering/SRSC |
| Crystal Rigby, CDFW | Mike Prowatzke, WAPA |
| Diane Riddle, SWRCB | Miles Daniels, SWFSC/NMFS |
| Doug Killam, CDFW | Stephen Maurano, NMFS |
| Elissa Buttermore, Reclamation | Suzanne Manugian, Reclamation |
| Erica Meyers, CDFW | Taylor Lipscomb, USFWS |
| Eric Danner, SWFSC/NMFS | Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West |
| James Gilbert, SWFSC/NMFS | Thad Bettner, GCID/SRSC |
| Jeff Onsted, DWR | Tom Patton, Reclamation |
| Jo Anna Beck, Reclamation | |

**Key Discussion Topics with
Summary of Recommendations and Outcomes**

Action items

1. **Suzanne Manugian, Reclamation** - Send language from the Sacramento River section of the Fish and Water Operations Outlook to Doug Killam (CDFW) and Bill Poytress (USFWS) every 2 weeks when there is not an SRTTG meeting; Doug and Bill will update the language on behalf of the group so that the information is updated bi-monthly instead of just as the monthly SRTTG meetings.
2. **KW** - Add draft watermark to the provisional final Research Strategy developed by the USST Spring Management of Spawning Locations subgroup and distribute to the SRTTG.
3. **KW** - Continue to track the action items from the 11/10/21 USST meeting.
 - a. Stephen Maurano, NMFS, to consider convening a subgroup of the USST to discuss the potential for updating the 2006 USFWS report by Mark Gard.
 - b. Suzanne Manugian, Reclamation, to reach out to contacts at SacPAS to talk about the potential for streamlining future redd dewatering calculations.
4. **All** - Contact KW if you are interested in attending and did not receive the calendar invite for the SRSP Science Sharing Webinar on Spring Pulse Flows on Thursday, 12/9/21 from 1-3pm.

1. Introductions

Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West, welcomed everyone and reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. Purpose and Objective

In the Shasta Cold Water Pool Management Guidance Document, Reclamation “proposes to convene the Sacramento River Temperature Task Group (SRTTG), consisting of agency representatives having direct interest on cold water pool management on the Sacramento River, at least monthly February through October, share operational information monthly, and improve technical dialogue on the implementation of the temperature management plan.” Reclamation provides “a draft temperature management plan to the SRTTG in April for its review and comment, consistent with WRO 90-5.”

3. Prior Action Items

Kearns & West reviewed action items from the previous monthly meeting (see below).

Action Items from October 28, 2021

Addressed

1. **Tom Patton, Reclamation** -
 - a. Distribute second vertical profile to SRTTG when available.
 - b. Continue to communicate weekly updates to SRTTG as the group reverts back to monthly meetings.
2. **KW** - Cancel remaining weekly SRTTG meetings and add monthly meetings for November-January to continue the monthly updates and start planning for next year.

Ongoing

3. **KW** - Schedule conversations with individual agencies to collect feedback on potential process and data improvements for next year’s temperature management season.
4. **River Fish Monitoring: 1) carcass surveys 2) redd counts 3) stranding and dewatering surveys.**

Doug Killam, CDFW, presented the river fish monitoring update.

- CDFW’s fall-run Chinook carcass survey is winding down. Carcass counts in November were lower than anticipated due to the river being turbid since late October.
- Late fall-run Chinook spawning is estimated to commence by mid-December.
- No aerial redd flights have taken place recently due to the river turbidity.
- CDFW crews completed stranding and dewatering surveys when flows decreased to 3,250 cfs in November. CDFW is currently tracking the following:
 - 28 shallow spring-run Chinook redds:
 - 14 of the 28 were dewatered when flows dropped to 3,250 cfs.
 - Estimated final emergence: mid-December

- 145 shallow fall-run Chinook redds:
 - 99 of the 145 were dewatered when flows dropped to 3,250 cfs.
 - Estimated final emergence: mid- to late-December

5. Fish Distribution/Forecasts: 1) Estimated percentage of the population upstream of Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD) for steelhead, winter-run, and spring-run Chinook salmon 2) Sampling at rotary screw traps at Red Bluff Diversion Dam 3) Steelhead update 4) Livingston Stone Hatchery.

Bill Poytress, USFWS, presented the fish distribution/forecasts update for RBDD.

- Winter-run Chinook numbers have tapered off. Spring-run Chinook numbers are increasing.
- USFWS is currently having genetic samples from spring-run Chinook from the late October to November timeframe analyzed.
- USFWS does not typically see many Steelhead this time of year.
- River flows increased to unprecedented levels in October due to the heavy rain events. USFWS crews were off the water for two days and missed samples. They are looking into how their precision may be impacted from two days of missed sampling.

Charlie Chamberlain, USFWS, provided an update on Clear Creek.

- USFWS is seeing high counts of spring-run Chinook fry in Clear Creek; 2,700 fish on average have been observed in fish traps in the last few weeks.

The Livingstone Stone Hatchery representative was not present to provide an update on their fish distribution/forecasts.

The SRTTG reviewed the Fish and Water Operations Outlook language focused on the status of current species in the Sacramento River that is circulated weekly to the Delta monitoring teams. Reclamation has requested this be done at every meeting to ensure the Sacramento River-focused technical experts are providing their expert assessment of fish status to the monitoring teams.

Kearns & West will send the updated language below to Reclamation:

- Winter-run Chinook Salmon juveniles present in low numbers above RBDD and distributed throughout the Sacramento River and to the Delta
- Spring-run Chinook Salmon, some eggs and alevins in gravel, fry present
- Fall-run Chinook Salmon adults spawning, eggs and alevin in gravel, and some adults waiting to spawn in early December
- Late fall-run Chinook adult Salmon holding
- Green Sturgeon adults and juvenile present
- Adult and juvenile steelhead present

The group discussed where the data in the Fish and Water Operations Outlook originates and the process for updating the report.

- Reclamation creates the Fish and Water Operations Outlook weekly using observed and historical data. Data in the report could be two to three weeks old if it is only updated during the monthly SRTTG meetings.
- Reclamation will coordinate with CDFW and USFWS in between the monthly SRTTG meetings so that the report is updated bi-monthly.

6. Questions/Comments on Hydrology Update, Operations Update and Forecasts, and Temperature Management

Tom Patton, Reclamation, provided a brief update on hydrology, operations and forecasts, and temperature management.

- There has not been another rain event of significance since October. Water temperatures are cool and air temperatures are cooling off.
- Keswick flows are currently being held at 3,250 cfs; Reclamation does not have any plans to change flows.
- Whiskeytown Reservoir storages are lower for wintertime operations. Clear Creek is currently releasing 200 cfs, and the Trinity River is releasing 300 cfs below Lewiston.
- The October forecast was produced before the large rain event in October. The November forecast appears to be wetter, but storages are not looking good for next year.

The group discussed the following:

- Assumptions included in the November 50% and 90% operations forecasts
 - Reclamation – The November 90% forecast assumes the outflow component of Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) February through April. The 50% forecast does not assume a TUCP.
- History of having Sacramento River releases of 3,250 cfs during April and May
 - Reclamation – Releases would likely not be at 3,250 cfs during April and May. Forecasts in October and November are very broad; more information becomes available in December. The December forecast is the first forecast that incorporates current conditions, but there is still a lot of uncertainty this early in the water year.
 - CDFW – Keswick releases were in the 3,250 cfs range for portions of April and May in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2018.

7. Spring Management of Spawning Locations

Elissa Buttermore, Reclamation, provided an update on the outcomes of the Upper Sacramento Scheduling Team (USST) Spring Management of Spawning Locations subgroup.

- A subgroup of agency representatives was formed in Summer 2021 to discuss the Spring Management of Spawning Locations Action. The purpose of the Action was to help establish research to determine if colder water releases in April and May induce earlier peak spawning, and if warmer April and May Sacramento River temperatures induce later peak spawning.

- The subgroup developed a Research Strategy for how to implement the Action, building off of the Salmon and Sturgeon Assessment of Indicators by Life Stage (SAIL) effort to help describe factors that might affect adult spawning distributions.
- Next steps include having the LTO interagency group review the Research Strategy.
- KW will distribute the provisional final Research Strategy to the SRTTG.

8. Upper Sacramento Scheduling Team

The last USST meeting occurred on 11/10/21. Group members discussed planning for the 2022 Temperature Management Season and will continue working on the following action items:

- NMFS to consider convening a subgroup of the USST to discuss the potential for updating the 2006 USFWS report by Mark Gard.
- Reclamation to reach out to contacts at SacPAS to talk about the potential for streamlining future redd dewatering calculations.

9. Review Action Items

Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West, reviewed the action items.

10. Future Meeting Scheduling

The next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, January 27, 2022.