



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Stanislaus Watershed Team

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

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

1. Old Actions
 - a. Peggy – Look into scheduling a drought planning presentation for Feb
 - b. Peggy – Check with the Operations team regarding the feasibility of sending flow through irrigation district canals for release into the river downstream of Goodwin canyon.
2. New Actions
 - a. Liz/Peggy – Notify TriDam of upcoming change orders
 - b. Barb – Add caveat related to flow disconnect to WIF proposal
 - c. JD – Develop a flow proposal for February that shapes the flow required for the Vernalis requirement in a way that accommodates both regulatory and monitoring needs.– share w/ Liz, Peggy, Gretchen, Zarela, Steve, Barb, Spencer
 - d. JD – Check in with FishBio and others regarding operations that might impact flow shaping
 - e. K&W – Add “habitat restoration; temperature management study; and yellow-bellied cuckoo survey” as sub-bullets under the “progress on proposed action elements” agenda item
3. Introductions
 - a. USBR: Zarela Guerrero, Liz Kiteck, Suzanne Manugian
 - b. NMFS: Katrina Poremba, Barb Byrne
 - c. USFWS: JD Wikert
 - d. CDFW: Gretchen Murphy, Crystal Rigby, Steve Tsao
 - e. SWRCB: Yongxuan Gao, Erin Foresman, Chris Carr

- f. SSJID:
 - g. OID:
 - h. Stockton East:
 - i. Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District:
 - j. DWR:
 - k. WAPA:
 - l. FISHBIO:
 - m. Other:
 - n. Kearns & West: Rafael Silberblatt, Mia Schiappi, Karis Johnston
4. Announcements
- a. K&W welcomed new staff members (Mia Schiappi and Karis Johnston) and noted that the meeting is being recorded for training purposes.
5. Operations Update and Forecasts/Hydrology
- a. USBR provided an operations update. See packet for details.
 - b. Despite very dry conditions thus far in January, New Melones is gaining storage with steady inflows of roughly 1000 cfs.
 - c. Tulloch is back to within storage band.
 - d. Goodwin Reservoir releases are 200 cfs
 - e. Questions/Comments: None.
6. Temperature Updates
- a. In Figure 1 of the handout, Goodwin Dam Year-to-Date Flows, the two peaks in late 2021 were a result of Tulloch reservoir management as opposed to stepped release management.
 - b. NMFS provided an overview of Temperature Updates (see Figure 9).
 - c. Temperatures are cool (<55 degrees) throughout the Stanislaus River and on the mainstem San Joaquin River at Vernalis.
7. Flow Planning
- a. Pending decisions
 - i. The group reviewed the decisions still pending that will determine which shaped winter instability flow (WIF) can be implemented for January 2022. Decisions need to be made early next in order to implement the resulting WIF by the end of the month.
 - 1. Ramping rate proposal: It was reported there is not yet official approval for the doubled ramping rates proposal. While approval is expected, it may not be finalized in time for the January WIF.

2. Exceedance forecast used to determine 60-20-20 yeartype
- ii. WIF alternatives, depending on outcome of pending decisions:
 1. Scenario A: **Below normal year type Stepped Release Plan (SRP) water volume & current ramping rates** (to be implemented if 75% exceedance forecast is used to determine San Joaquin year type; approval of the ramping rate proposal would not be relevant because doubled ramping rates are only proposed for Critical and Dry year types).
 2. Scenario B: **Dry year type SRP water volume & current ramping rates** (to be implemented if 90% exceedance forecast is used to determine San Joaquin year type and the ramping rate proposal is either not approved or not approved in time).
 3. Scenario C: **Dry year type SRP water volume & double ramping rates** (to be implemented if 90% exceedance forecast is used to determine San Joaquin year type and the ramping rate proposal is approved).
- b. WIF draft flow schedule – the SWT agreed on the following WIF proposal:
 - i. For January, the goal is to have all decisions and the associated flow schedule determined by 1/25 so that a change order may be issued on 1/26 to begin the WIF on 1/28.
 - ii. For February there will be a regulatory discussion with a subgroup of SWT members to discuss the WIF as well as regulatory requirements for Vernalis that will affect flows in the Stanislaus. USFWS will draft a flow proposal that will incorporate considerations for monitoring needs (e.g. weir operation, steelhead redd surveys) and other regulatory requirements (e.g. the requirement that the 7-day average Vernalis flow not be more than 20% below the target monthly average Vernalis flow requirement). The draft flow proposal will be sent to SWT.
- c. Questions/Comments
 - i. CDFW requested lead time for stranding surveys. NMFS suggested considering running the January WIF using the current ramping rates to avoid the need for last-minute coordination on stranding surveys.
 - ii. USFWS discussed that pulses should be scheduled so that CDFW can conduct steelhead redd surveys on weekdays. Additionally, regardless of the flow schedule chosen, the pulse should peak around 4 or 5 pm at Goodwin so that the bulk of the pulse occurs in darkness to optimize the migratory opportunity for fry sized fish.
 - iii. CDFW requested that high peaks occurring in the early part of the week be minimized because staff will be out surveying the canyon. They have also noted that stranded fry-sized fish have been observed at Honolulu Bar including some that are decomposing (indicating that they have been dead for a while). These fish are being relocated.

1. Despite steady releases at Goodwin recently, the side channel was connected last week but is now disconnected. Much of the gravel in the riffle in the main channel has been mobilized and connection of the side channel may be improved if that riffle were replenished with gravel to increase water surface elevation and adjust the flow split.
 - iv. USFWS suggested and USBR agreed to start the pulse flow on 1/28 which will allow stranding surveys to begin on 2/1. USBR stated that they will plan to send a change order out on 1/26 effective 1/28.
 1. USBR raised the issue that under the Bay-Delta flow requirements at Vernalis in February, based on the below normal designation and the January forecast indicating that all the days in February will be Chipps Island days, the required flow at Vernalis will be 2,280 cfs and most of that will be coming from the Stanislaus River. If precipitation occurs in February flows from the Stanislaus will be scaled back. However, there will likely be elevated flows in the Stanislaus making the prior WIF discussion (for February) moot.
 2. A decision was made to have an initial offline conversation about February flow shaping, specifically to first discuss regulatory issues and a second conversation to discuss technical support with a broader subgroup of people including some not participating on the SWT. The decisions from these discussions will be communicated to the SWT.
8. Stanislaus River Forum (SRF) Call Review
- a. The Stanislaus River Forum call was held via MS Teams on January 18, 2022. Barbara Byrne and Katrina Poremba (NMFS); Logan Day, Cory Starr, and Austin Galinat (PSMFC); Zarela Guerrero, Brad Hubbard, Liz Kiteck, and Spencer Marshall (USBR); Chrissy Sonke (FishBio); Jeanne Zolezzi (for SEWD); Gretchen Murphy, and Steve Tsao (CDFW); and J.D. Wikert (USFWS) were in attendance. Updates on operations, temperature, and fish monitoring were presented.
9. Fish Monitoring and Studies
- a. See handout for details.
 - b. CDFW noted that both the Tuolumne River and Merced River escapement surveys ended the last week of December, and the Stanislaus Chinook escapement survey will conclude next week. Redd surveys on the Stanislaus are planned to continue for steelhead through April.
 - c. CDFW reported that the Mossdale trawl started the first week of January and will be surveying 3 days per week. Last Friday a juvenile *O. mykiss* was caught at this sampling location.
 - d. NMFS reported that data from the weir tracking upstream migration indicates the net upstream passage of just over 6,000 fall-run Chinook – of which

roughly ¼ were ad-clipped. The weir is intended to stay in place until the spring pulse flow.

- e. USFWS stated that there was no pit tag detection on the ad clipped *O. mykiss*. They checked with the Mokelumne hatchery and determined that there are 60,000 in the hatchery raceways and it will be a couple of years before those are expected to be encountered at the weir.
- f. NMFS reported that there have been 23 *O. mykiss* observed passing upstream at the weir which is a slightly higher total than average. Most (21 of 23) were over 16 inches in length. 15 observed were ad-clipped and thus from the hatchery and 8 were wild.
- g. Rotary Screw Traps
 - i. Rotary screw traps are (or will soon be) in place at Oakdale and Caswell for monitoring out-migrating juvenile salmonids. For the 2020/2021 outmigration season, sampling began at Caswell on January 5, 2022, and will begin at Oakdale on January 24, 2022.
 - ii. Catch at the Caswell sampling location as of January 12, 2022, includes 0 salmonids and 1 pacific lamprey. More detailed information can be found at the new Caswell RST CalFish webpage, which includes catch spreadsheets, annual reports, and other project information:
<https://www.calfish.org/ProgramsData/ConservationandManagement/CentralValleyMonitoring/SacramentoValleyTributaryMonitoring/StanislausRiver-RSTMonitoring.aspx>
- h. Questions/Comments:

10. Restoration Project Updates

11. Progress Update on Proposed Action Elements

- a. Questions/Comments:
 - i. USFWS expressed interest in further exploring opportunities to maximize value from USBR's upcoming temperature management study.

12. Other Discussion Items

- a. Curtailments
 - i. No updates.
- b. Annual reporting check-in
 - i. USBR distributed a draft and is requesting comments by COB 1/20/22.
- c. Review/revise Ops Outlook table section
 - i. The SWT reviewed and revised the fish conditions table for the Operations Outlook.
- d. Items to elevate to WOMT

i. None

13. Next Meeting

a. Wednesday, Feb 16, 2022 (10am-12pm)