



Stanislaus Watershed Team

November 16, 2022

Members Attending

- USBR: Liz Kiteck, Zarela Guerrero, Peggy Manza, Claire Hsu, Spencer Marshall, Melissa Vignau
- USFWS: JD Wikert
- CDFW: Gretchen Murphey, Crystal Rigby, Steve Tsao
- NMFS: Barb Byrne
- DWR:
- SWRCB: Chris Carr, Yongxuan Gao, Erin Foresman
- Stockton East: Justin Hopkins
- Kearns & West: Rafael Silberblatt, Mia Schiappi

Announcements

Operations Update and Forecasts/ Hydrology

New Melones

- There was 1.98 inches of accumulated precipitation at New Melones last month. Most of the precipitation flowed into higher reservoirs or fell as snow that will eventually reach New Melones.
- There is plenty of flood control space at New Melones so flood control is not a concern in the near future.
- Storage is 585 TAF which is 14 % of the 15-year average. Generally, New Melones has a low historic average because it is a large reservoir and a small watershed.
- During the fall pulse flow, New Melones decreased releases because Tulloch was in the middle of its drawn-down cycle.
- Accumulated inflow for WY 2023 is 26 TAF.

Goodwin

- As of 11/14/22, releases from Goodwin Dam are at 200 cfs.
- The joint and south main canals have stopped diverting water because the agriculture season is over.

- Tulloch is fully drawn down for flood control and continues to be operated between 500 ft and 501.5 ft.
- Goodwin Dam is at minimum releases.

Comments/Questions:

- USBR shared that a new forecast is being developed but it is not anticipated to be different from the October Forecast. The 90% exceedance forecast estimates that End of September (EOS) storage at New Melones will be approximately 400 TAF. The 50% exceedance forecast estimates EOS at 750 TAF.
- If this year is also classified as a dry year, then New Melones will be further drawn down.

Water Temperature Updates

- Temperatures are generally average for this time of year. The fall pulse flow and cooler air temperatures have led to a decrease in temperatures at Ripon.

Flow Planning

- Flow planning updates will be discussed in January regarding winter instability flows which will occur in late January.

Stanislaus River Forum (SRF) Call Review

- No updates.

Fish Monitoring

- Adult salmon carcass surveys on the Tuolumne River started in late September.
 - As of 11/7/22, carcass numbers are increasing.
- Adult salmon carcass surveys on the Stanislaus River and the Merced River began the first week of October.
 - As of 11/7/22, Stanislaus River instream live fish and redd numbers are increasing. CDFW will likely begin tagging fish this week and start seeing recoveries.
 - The Merced River is also seeing an increase in carcass numbers, but not as large as the Tuolumne River and the Stanislaus River.
 - The Merced hatchery spawned for the first time this season on 11/14/22. This is two weeks later than the normal schedule for spawning.
- Steelhead surveys will begin in early January 2023 and will likely overlap with the end of the carcass survey. The methodology for both surveys are the same so there should not be any issues caused by the overlap.
- The FISHBIO weir has been installed and is monitoring fish.

- Fish passage increased during the last peak of the pulse flow and has been decreasing since then. Cumulative fish passage is currently similar to 2019 and 2020.
- On 11/3/22, a Green Sturgeon was captured and tagged with both acoustic and pit tags (half-duplex tag). Biological metrics were also taken. It is not possible to verify whether this fish was the same found in 2018 by Cramer Fish Science because they used eDNA to verify that fish. Since eDNA can only give information on presence and absence, crews were not able to match this green sturgeon with the one that was found by Cramer Fish Sciences. A genetic clipping of the green sturgeon was taken so if it is captured again in the future genetics can be used to determine when it was captured last and what study it is part of.

Restoration Project Updates

- The USFWS collaborated with Caswell State Park on submitting an application to the CVPIA NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity). It looks like it will be a 100% match with the State Park funds for the work.

Progress Update on Propose Action Elements

- No update.

Other Discussion Items

Curtailments

- San Joaquin River - Post and pre-1914 appropriative water rights are currently curtailed
- Stanislaus Watershed – Fresh water areas outside of the delta with a priority date of 1923 or later are curtailed.
- Chowchilla River – Post-1959 water rights are currently curtailed.
- A Water Unavailability Workshop was held on 11/9/22 that included a presentation on updated methodology. A recording and PowerPoint slides can be found on the SWRCB Drought page.
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/delta/docs/2022/111522_workshop_ppt.pdf

Annual Reporting

- Reclamation will send the SWT Annual Report for a second and final review sometime between 11/16/22 – 11/25/22.

Items to elevate to WOMT

- No items for WOMT.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 21, 10:00 am –12:00 pm.