



SRG, Fall Flow Reduction Coordination Meeting Summary

Tuesday, August 18, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Participants

- California Sportfishing Protection Alliance: Thomas Cannon
- CDFW: Crystal Rigby, Matt Johnson, Jamie Ebenal, Erica Meyers, Tracy Grimes
- DWR: John Ford
- NMFS: Darren Howe
- Reclamation: Lisa Elliott, Tom Patton, Derek Rupert, Andrea Hamilton, Katherine (Mandy) Migura, Timothy Warner, Mechele Pacheco, Emily Brenton, Janice Pinero
- SRSC: Thaddeus Bettner, Mike Deas (Watercourse Engineering), Yuen Lenh (MBK), Catherine Morales-Sandoval (MBK), Lee Bergfeld (MBK)
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland, Craig Williams, Jeff Laird
- SWFSC: Miles Daniels
- USFWS: Bill Poytress, Robert Null
- Westlands Water District (WWD): Alan Rosenthal, Bradley Cavallo
- Reclamation District 108: Lewis Bair
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC): Darin Olsen
- Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA): George Bradshaw
- Friends of the River: Devon Pearse
- Nor-Cal Guides & Sportsmen's Association (NCGASA): James Stone
- Sunzi Consulting: Yung-Hsin Sun
- Kearns & West: Terra Alpaugh, Colin Baker

Action Items

- **Catherine Morales-Sandoval (MBK Engineering)** to share overview of fall flows planning tool that MBK Engineering developed.
- **All participants** to review the Flow Scheduling Interests Constraints Timeline and share comments on any items that should be added, removed, and/or amended with Kearns & West.
- **All participants** to share input on other data that should be tracked on the SacPAS webpage.

Topics

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Kearns & West welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2026 fall flow season and reviewed the purpose of the Fall Flow Reduction Coordination Meetings.

Process Refresher

The first meeting was intended to review the SRG's roles and responsibilities with the fall flow scheduling process. Kearns & West provided the following in advance of the meeting and walked through each item:

- [LTO Operation Plan](#): Kearns & West reviewed text of the LTO Operation Plan relevant to the fall flow planning efforts, highlighting that these meetings are intended to provide technical information and expertise to inform Reclamation's decisions but that the meetings are not intended to seek consensus and no decisions will be made during these meetings.
- [Flow Scheduling Interests Constraints Timeline](#): SRG participants collectively created and refined this timeline over the last few years. It shows the interests they consider as part of fall flows planning; each year, adjustments are made to the timing and priority of considerations. Please feel free to share comments where key items are missing or timing needs to be adjusted with Kearns & West.

Comments and questions from participants included:

- CDFW clarified that just because fall flows planning is described in Action 5 (LTO), participation in these meetings is not implying that participants agree with or signing on to that document. Kearns & West confirmed that participation does not signify endorsement of any document.
- CDFW noted that the NMFS BiOp describes a governance structure that is structured to seek consensus, with elevation and decision-making processes in place when consensus cannot be reached and wondered whether that conflicted with the Operation Plan governance language just reviewed.

- Reclamation responded that the current LTO operations includes the NMFS BiOp, and that, as part of the governance structure, NMFS will participate in fall flows meetings. NMFS is welcome to share input or raise concerns as it sees fit during these meetings.
- NMFS agreed and noted that the fall flows meetings are intended for Reclamation to receive updates on topics being considered and commented on.

Fishery Monitoring Update

CDFW shared an update on shallow redds and anticipated spawning timing, including:

- The latest redd data is available on [Upper Sacramento River Basin Salmonid Monitoring webpage](#).
- Spawning timing is similar to last year with almost the exact same peak spawn week. The peak was the week of July 12 with a smaller subsequent peak the week of July 26, with spawning currently on the decline though not necessarily over yet.
- Historical shallow redd locations have shifted this year. There are currently 103 redds in gravel, and not much spawning is occurring in gravel areas.
- The unexpanded redd count is 4,096, with an expansion factor of approximately 1.6 (subject to change). Based on that expansion factor, CDFW projects 6,700 females will have spawned, 1% of which would be 67, so CDFW is counting on 41 females to be conservative. Thirty percent of shallow redds are currently in the Market Street gravel area, which is only a quarter-mile stretch of river and below the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District (ACID), which does make it easier to estimate their dewatering flows. The latest emergence date is anticipated to be November 7, and CDFW is being conservative with water temperatures so it could move up to November 3.

Comments and questions from participants included:

- SWRCB asked how CDFW's estimated dewatering flows change throughout the season and how these data are helpful to the planning process.
- CDFW confirmed that estimated dewatering flows do change over the season. Redds are tracked and mapped during each field survey to help keep dewatering flows as updated as possible. CDFW has taken three measurements so far this season. The estimated date of emergences is based on water temperatures by river section, which is used to understand how far along the redds are. The expansion factor will change based on the number spawning fresh females counted; CDFW tries to be conservative by using the unexpanded redd count. Expansion factors change based on recapture rates: the expansion will likely be smaller this year compared to previous years because of a high recapture rate due to high visibility (up to 19 inches being reported in the field). If the recapture rate is low, often due to low visibility, then a higher expansion rate is used.

- Reclamation asked how annual dewatering flow is estimated.
- CDFW replied that it uses historical data that shows when specific redds have dewatered in the past. For example, CDFW has recorded that redds by Market Street have shifted lower in depth this year than in years past. The estimates are subject to change, however. For instance, dewatering flow is harder to predict above the ACID after it is pulled out.
- Reclamation asked if CDFW had considered using topographic maps or hydrological models with transects showing estimated redd depth and suggested that CDFW show a map of redd locations at future fall flows meetings so that participants can see redd locations and where they become dewatered.

Operations Update & Alternatives Spreadsheet

Reclamation shared that its goal is to reduce flows as low as possible as quickly as possible to conserve water and support the fall run, while avoiding dewatering of winter run redds. Reclamation is also considering downstream requirements, including rice decomposition, which peaks in October. Reclamation is working with diverters on how to spread out releases and coordinating with ACID on the timing of its dam removal (likely the end of October or early November), which will be critical this year with so many redds above ACID. They provided their current operational outlook, explaining that they have not yet developed specific scheduling scenarios for development.

- Reclamation reported that flows are currently at 11,000 cfs at Keswick and are scheduled to be reduced to 10,500 cfs and then 10,000 cfs on Thursday, August 20. Flows will continue to ramp down throughout August, aiming for average flows of 8,000 cfs in September and in the range of 5,000 to 7,000 cfs for October, depending on diversions. End of September storage is forecasted to be just under 2.4 million cubic feet.
- The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations asked if there is any calculation on how much water has been used for the winter run specifically.
- Reclamation responded that it does not "color-code" water released for specific purposes. Instead, releases from Keswick are considered as a whole. Reclamation does assess the impacts of different scheduling scenarios.

Reclamation walked through the tools they typically use to assess different ramp down scenarios and their tradeoffs:

- Reclamation shared the spreadsheet tool they have used for fall ramp down planning in the past to plot out different scenarios and ensure compliance with ramping rates.
- Reclamation provided a walkthrough of the SacPAS webpage on [Fall Flow Assessment Sacramento River Temperature and Flow Technical Group \(SRG\)](#), which summarizes the status of winter run redd counts and the impacts of different scenarios (pulling from the prior spreadsheet) on water cost and winter and fall run

dewatering estimates. The webpage currently displays data from 2025, but it will be updated with new data when it is available. The webpage shows current redd count; the results of using various expansion factors to calculate the population size; the numbers of shallow redds being monitored, that have emerged, and that remain; and how the various scenarios would compare for fall run redd dewatering under different water years. A visual representation displays all winter run redds (including their status) by the date when they are expected to emerge from the redd and the flow at which they are expected to dewater; potential flow scenarios over the course of the fall are plotted for reference. This helps the group as they try to design scenarios that will minimize the number of winter run redds that will be dewatered. SRG members are encouraged to share input about other data that should be tracked on the webpage.

- MBK Engineering presented a tool similar to the SacPAS webpage that sources data from CDFW, including dewatering flow estimates and redd emergence date estimates. A graph plots forecasted flows based on CVO's Outlook for September, October, and November. The tool can be used to estimate how many redds would be dewatered under different scenarios to inform discussions about the timing and amounts by which to ramp down flows. This tool color codes redds based on their anticipated water temperature exposure. MBK Engineering offered to update the tool if SRG members would find that helpful at future fall flows meetings, and the firm will share an overview of the tool with Kearns & West to disseminate to SRG members.