

March 24, 2006
New Melones RPO, Biological Sciences Workgroup (BSG)
Meeting Summary

Disclaimer: This meeting summary was prepared by Reclamation as a means of documenting the stakeholder involvement process and recording the events of the meeting that Reclamation staff took note of. If an important point is not included or is not correctly described, you may raise the point again at the next meeting or email your concerns to: 2nmrpo@mp.usbr.gov

Meeting Location: USFWS Offices, Lodi, California

Meeting Time: 10 a.m. to noon

The attendance list is posted as Attendance Record.

Brian Deason made a presentation to the group, and the presentation is posted as BSG032406.pdf. Reclamation is proposing to utilize the conceptual model developed for the Plan to Restore Anadromous Fish Habitat in the Lower Stanislaus River as a starting point, and to tailor the products from that effort (tables, diagrams, data) to that needed to identify information needed to develop a fishery flow schedule. For example, the diagrams displaying the relationship between various human-caused and natural processes effects on the requirements for reproductive success of anadromous fish will be modified to focus on human-caused effects to water quality (temperature and dissolved oxygen), physical habitat, food, and passage. Tables would be developed to describe, for each species and life-stage, the suitable conditions for each requirement, the existing condition (where known) for each requirement, and the effect that water management has on the suitable condition. Information gaps would then be identified and prioritized for study.

Comments from stakeholders at the meeting include:

- Concern that filling in the table will be too long and cumbersome of a task
- Focus on the tables for the Restoration Plan and develop studies based upon the level of impact displayed on the restoration tables. Identify factors from the tables that 1) have a perceived impact on population and 2) relate to water management.
- The BSG should not focus solely on the flow and water management
- This effort should focus primarily on flow as the restoration program is focused on all types of activities affecting the anadromous fish

Michelle Light described the need to define the objective of a fishery flow schedule. Various definitions associated with Reclamation's water rights were presented, including: California Fish and Game Code Div 6 Chap 3 Article 2 Section 1537 (keep in good condition any fish that may...exist below a dam); phrases from the 1987 Fish & Game Agreement; and terminology used in SWRCB Decision 1616.

The following issues/ideas were raised during the discussion regarding objectives for a fishery flow schedule:

- Only address the State Water Resources Control Board description for protecting the fishery
- Address the requirements of CVPIA, including doubling the population of anadromous fish
- Focus only on species listed by the State and/or Federal Endangered Species Acts (ESA) as threatened, endangered, or sensitive
- Sturgeon are found in the San Joaquin River and may be in the lower Stanislaus River
- Consider lamprey in addition to salmonids
- Consider non-anadromous native species in addition to those listed under ESA
- Consider all anadromous species but provide rationale for including or excluding species
- Consider all fish and manage according to the most sensitive species
- Focus on steelhead and Chinook salmon while considering the aquatic community
- Stakeholders varied in their opinions of what “good condition” from the Fish and Game codes means:
 - to sustain the population
 - no decline in population
 - evidence of reproduction
 - diverse population structure
 - the population is doubled
 - some portion of the doubling goal
 - doubling goal represents full restoration, not good condition
 - upward population trend
- Too little flow currently in the dry and critical years
- Flows should vary by water year type or groups of water year types

The next meeting is scheduled for April 19, 2006 in Room C-1001 (Conference Room by the cafeteria) at Reclamation’s Regional Office 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

S.P. Cramer has revised and updated the tables for the fall run Chinook conceptual model. The tables will be posted at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccaonmrpo for review in preparation for discussion at the next meeting.