

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 8, 2016

TO: CVPIA Anadromous Fish Program Staff, State and Federal Partners and Stakeholders

FROM: CVPIA Administrators Cesar Blanco -Service (916) 978-6190 & David Mooney - Reclamation (916) 978-5190

SUBJECT: Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) Fiscal Year 2017 Fish Program Priorities and Call for Annual Work Plan (AWP) Charters

BACKGROUND

Enacted in 1992, the CVPIA, Title 34 of Public Law 102-575, added the mitigation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife as authorized purposes of the Central Valley Project, CA. The federal agencies responsible for implementing the CVPIA (the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, “Reclamation,” and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “Service”) began undertaking anadromous fish restoration actions in partnership with the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the State of California represented by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR), collectively an interagency “Core Team” and others. A revised effort based on an Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) process for the fish provisions will seek to prioritize actions with the highest probability of achieving biological objectives for naturally produced populations of native anadromous fish.

A Science Integration Team (SIT) began by working on a Decision Support Model for fall-run Chinook Salmon in October 2015, and provided this first set of science-based priorities to the Core Team on February 18, 2016. The Core Team added priorities from various Central Valley Project Work Teams (PWT) to include winter-run, spring-run, steelhead, and sturgeon to develop the following recommendations to guide the development of CVPIA program AWP Charters. The Fiscal Year 2017 President’s Budget included approximately \$9 million for anadromous fish restoration activities. Actual funding will depend upon appropriations and collections from CVP water and power customers.

PRIORITIES

Based on coordination with the Core Team, Reclamation and the Service are seeking activities that benefit ESA listed species or serve a multi-species benefit that includes listed species. Specific priorities include:

- Winter-run Chinook: Based on the priorities submitted by the Winter-run PWT, the Core Team recommends that reducing water temperatures and flow fluctuations during egg incubation and rearing, reducing pathogens and understanding the factors that influence their impacts, reducing predation, improving juvenile fish emigration, increasing rearing habitat, and reducing adult entrainment into the Colusa Basin drain are all priorities for Winter-run Chinook Salmon in the Sacramento River. Winter-run priorities in the Delta include improving rearing and floodplain habitat and improving water operations to reduce migration delays and reduce predation losses. Winter-run priorities in Battle Creek include: (1) improving fish passage, flow conditions, and water temperatures to provide suitable winter-run habitat in the North Fork; and (2) advancing efforts to reintroduce winter-run to the North Fork.

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- Spring-run Chinook: Based on the priorities identified by spring-run Chinook salmon experts from NMFS and CDFW, the Core Team recommends that improving passage and survival for adults and juveniles on Deer, Mill, and Butte Creeks through increased flows and barrier reductions are all priorities for Spring-run Chinook Salmon. Improving fish passage at Tisdale Weir and Sunset Pumps are identified priorities, along with improving adult fish passage on Battle Creek and improving flows on Clear Creek for juvenile emigration. Improving rearing habitat on the Yuba River and reducing juvenile entrainment in the Upper Sacramento are also Spring-run priorities.
- Green Sturgeon: Based on the priorities identified by the Sturgeon PWT and Sturgeon SAIL, the Core Team agrees that improving spawning and rearing habitat, reducing larval entrainment, and reducing diversions for adult green sturgeon are priorities for Green Sturgeon on the Sacramento, Yuba and Feather Rivers. Improving adult passage is also a priority in the Yolo Bypass (Freemont Weir), Sutter Bypass (Tisdale Weir), Feather River (Sunset Pumps), Sacramento River (ACID Dam & Jefferson Boulevard Locke), and Yuba River (Daguerre Point Dam).
- Steelhead: Based on the priorities identified by the Steelhead PWT, the Core Team agrees that understanding the dynamics between resident and anadromous forms and how hatchery stocks influence wild stocks are priorities for the American, Battle, Feather, Mokelumne, Stanislaus, and Yuba Rivers. Understanding the factors that affect adult escapement in the Sacramento, Merced, Tuolumne and Stanislaus Rivers is a priority. Collecting baseline habitat data in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers and the Delta is also a steelhead priority. Another priority for steelhead is an evaluation of smolt survival in the Sacramento River, Mill Creek and Delta.
- Fall-run Chinook: Based on the priorities identified by the SIT, the Core Team agrees that the following are priorities for fall-run Chinook Salmon:
 - Improve Juvenile Rearing Habitat - Sacramento, Yuba, Feather, American, Calaveras, Mokelumne, Merced, Tuolumne, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Rivers and the Delta;
 - Reduce Diversions and Juvenile Entrainment - Sacramento, Feather, Cosumnes, Calaveras, Mokelumne, Merced and San Joaquin Rivers and the Delta;
 - Reduce Predator Encounters - Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and Delta;
 - Improve Water Temperatures during Juvenile Rearing - Sacramento, Feather, American, Cosumnes, Calaveras, Mokelumne, Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers;
 - Augment Flows during Juvenile Rearing - Sacramento, Yuba, American, Cosumnes, Calaveras, Mokelumne, Merced, Tuolumne, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Rivers and the Delta;
- White Sturgeon: Based on the priorities identified by the Sturgeon PWT and SAIL teams, the Core Team agrees that increasing spawning and rearing habitat in the Sacramento River and improving adult passage in the Yolo Bypass are high priorities for White Sturgeon. Reducing diversions, reducing entrainment and increasing spawning and rearing habitat on the San Joaquin River are also priorities that will benefit White Sturgeon.

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The Core Team will consider the following elements in reviewing AWP Charters

1. Watersheds with Identified Priority Actions
2. Benefits to Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listed Species
3. Benefits to Multiple Species
4. Cost-Share
5. Long-Term Partnerships and Coordination with other Restoration Efforts
6. Project that address DSM modules identified as having high uncertainty.

NEXT STEPS

Reclamation and Service staff will be developing Annual Work Plan Charters in coordination with our partner agencies and organizations. Project proponents should contact Service or Reclamation staff to develop AWP Charters.

For more information or to identify a partnership, please contact Cesar Blanco, (916) 978-6190, cesar_blanco@fws.gov or Rodney Wittler, (916) 978-5232, rjwittler@usbr.gov to identify the appropriate Service or Reclamation Staff to assist in development.

ATTACHMENTS

1. FY 2017 Call for Fish Program Charters