

**Mid-Pacific Region
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San Joaquin River Restoration Program to Cease Flows One Month Early

Action Will Support Fish and Provide Benefits to Local Water Supplies

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The Bureau of Reclamation will begin reducing San Joaquin River Restoration Program's Restoration Flows Saturday, February 1, one month earlier than called for in the Stipulation of Settlement. The action will support an effort to move juvenile salmon from the upper river reaches to downstream locations, where there is connectivity to the ocean. The unreleased Restoration Flows provided by this action will be about 13,000 acre-feet. This water will be made available by the Bureau of Reclamation, in a manner consistent with the Settlement and the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, to the Friant Division long-term contractors with first priority to meet human health and safety needs due to the current severe drought conditions.

The Settlement reached among the settling parties in 2006 includes six different Restoration Year types, each with different amounts of water to be made available to the Program. Based on current conditions, the Program is scheduled to be in the worst case scenario, the "critical low" year, starting March 1. No water is allocated to the Program in this dry year under the terms of Settlement and unless hydrologic conditions change, the Program will receive no Restoration Flows until March 2015.

In the fall of 2013, more than 360 fall-run adults in the upper San Joaquin River produced nearly 70 redds, from which juveniles have begun to emerge. This early reduction of Restoration Flows will allow the Program in mid-February to begin investigating the ability to successfully trap and move the fall-run juvenile Chinook salmon from the stretches that will be without flows due to the extreme dry year conditions and release them in downstream locations where there is connectivity to the ocean. This effort will also enable the study of juvenile capture and transport methodologies and provide valuable information on implementing similar actions in the future in similar hydrologic conditions.

These actions were supported by the Program's Restoration Administrator in his recommendation submitted on Friday, January 31, and reductions will begin in increments of 50 cubic feet per second starting Saturday, February 1, until the released flow from Friant Dam is about 200 cfs. At that point, the reduction will be incrementally adjusted until all Restoration Flows have stopped and Friant Dam will just be releasing water to satisfy the prior water right holders in the upper section of the river. These actions were also agreed upon by the Friant Water Authority and the Natural Resources Defense Council, in coordination with the federal settling parties.

David Murillo, Regional Director for Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region applauded the effort and stated, "The decision that the Settling Parties have made provides the best scenario for all involved in these very difficult conditions. It is encouraging to see the parties coming together in tough times and finding creative

solutions that both benefit the Program and provide water for communities and farmers. Not only is the action consistent with the Settlement, but it is indicative of how well the parties to the Settlement can work together to find innovative solutions.”

For more information about the SJRRP, please visit www.restoresjr.net.

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Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at <http://www.usbr.gov>.