

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
April 23, 1998 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of March 26 meeting notes

No revisions were made to the March 26, CALFED OPS meeting notes.

Announcements

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. List of Exhibits, SWRCB Bay-Delta Workshop, Nick Wilcox.
2. Spring Pulse Releases, 1998, San Joaquin Rv. at Vernalis, John Burke.
3. Letter to Dan Nelson, SLDMWA, regarding the Operations Plan for the ... 1998 Pulse Flow, John Burke.
4. Operation Plan to Implement the AFRP Delta Actions, Bob Potter.
5. SWP Operations Package, Larry Gage.
6. 1998 Temporary Barrier Project status, 4/23/98, Simon Kwan.
5. 1998 Delta Smelt 20 mm Survey # 1, Dale Sweetnam.

SWRCB

The SWRCB conducted a workshop on April 21-22, 1998, to receive comments on the organization of the upcoming Bay-Delta water rights hearing and to present and receive comments on negotiated agreements. Twenty-two written exhibits were received, copies of which can be obtained from the exhibiting parties. SWRCB will accept comments on the issues addressed in the workshop until 5:00 p.m. May 4. The following four agreements were presented in detail:

1. San Joaquin River Agreement (including the VAMP).
2. East Bay Municipal Utility District Agreement with export interests on Mokelumne River flows.
3. Yuba County Water Agency Agreement for sale of water to export interests.
4. Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement, Amendment III

Other agreements under negotiation include the Lower Sacramento River Agreement, Glenn Colusa Irrigation District Agreement, and agreements between DWR and interests in the North Delta, South Delta, Putah Creek, and Cache Creek.

The SWRCB extended the deadline to submit a Notice of Intent to Appear for the Bay-Delta Water Rights Hearing until May 7, 1998. Many of the comments received on the draft EIR will be posted on the SWRCB web site (www.swrcb.ca.gov).

On March 18, 1998, the SWRCB issued a notice for a request by DWR to again defer the implementation of the western Suisun Marsh EC compliance standards at Ibis Cut (S97) and Goodyear Slough (S35). The deferment is for 180 days, which is through the remainder of the control season. SWRCB received no comments to the notice during the comment period and will therefore issue an order approving the temporary change before the end of April.

CVPIA-AFRP

Vernalis Adaptive Management Program: The San Joaquin River peaked on April 17th at 24,700 cfs. It is projected to steadily decline to 14,000 cfs by mid-May. This flow forecast is based on the mid-April water supply forecast at the 50% probability of exceedence. No coordination of flows other than snowmelt runoff regulation is anticipated.

Joint Point of Diversion: The NNG convened on April 13 and 23, 1998, to discuss concerns with the use of JPD. The NNG will gather more information and try to reach consensus among parties with respect to the SWRCB JPD alternatives. Stated concerns involve direct impact to water levels in the southern Delta, the entrainment or delayed migration of listed fish species, and the justification for the use of JPD.

1998 Spring Objectives: USBR plans to export about 1800 cfs through May 15, up to half of which may be for the SWP. USBR is evaluating the "ramping" regime to follow the "pulse flow" period. San Joaquin River flow is predicted to gradually decline through May but is expected to remain high enough during the second half of May to effectively meet the ramping objectives. If demands on the CVP/SWP exceed about 1800 cfs prior to May 15, water will be supplied by releases from San Luis Reservoir.

CVPIA Operations Plan: DWR sent USBR a plan that, if implemented, would include DWR participation in implementing the AFRP Delta Actions. DWR analysis suggests that about 15% of time the hydrology provides enough water to implement the eight AFRP Delta actions without serious impacts to the SWP and CVP deliveries. The analysis also indicates that no serious impacts would occur 65% of the time if unrestricted use of JPD is utilized. The remaining 35% of the time other tools would be needed to avoid water supply impacts. The plan summarizes the risk assessment, a schedule, and tools necessary to address these impacts.

Operations

CVP/SWP Operations Status: DWR expects to resume SWP Delta operations by May 15. Until then SWP demands will be met through inflows to the Project south of the Delta, SWP pumping at the Tracy Pumping Plant, and storage from San Luis Reservoir as necessary. All reservoirs will fill or nearly fill from expected runoff.

NMFS/USBR have established a temperature control target of 56 °F in the Sacramento River at Bend Bridge for the entire control season (mid-April through October). The colder water provides better spawning conditions for winter-run salmon. Warmer tributary flows make it hard to regulate temperature at Bend Bridge. The control target will be re-evaluated as the year progresses and the cold water storage in Shasta diminishes. The Shasta Temperature Control Device is fully repaired and operational.

Delta Operations Criteria: Excess conditions continue in the Delta. Although inflows and the Net Delta Outflow Index continue to decline there are no foreseeable problems meeting any standards. Current hydrologic forecasts suggest 19 X2 days will be needed at Port Chicago for May.

Temporary Barriers: High flows on the San Joaquin River will prevent installation of the HOR barrier this spring. DWR and FWS have reached an agreement for DWR to proceed with installation and operation of the three agricultural barriers as soon as channel flows decrease to around 5,000 cfs at the barrier sites.

Fishery Status

Delta smelt index: Surveys indicate a wide distribution of adult delta smelt from the Napa River to the Sacramento and the Mokelumne River. Spawning will likely occur in the Napa River, Montezuma Slough, lower San Joaquin River, Central Delta area, Mokelumne Rivers, Cache Slough, and the Sacramento River up to Sacramento within the next couple of weeks.

The sampling efforts by the Real-Time Monitoring Program and Midwater Trawl Surveys are similar regardless of location or channel flow. This year's RTM program is less expensive with fewer sampling days but collecting results statistically similar to the previous year programs. The RTM Program has been refined each year and is currently undergoing an evaluation of past and current years.

The DAT continues to evaluate the data from the RTM program and the delta smelt surveys and if necessary makes recommendations to the Project operators. Because salvage levels have been low and operations are very modest, no recommendations have been made recently by the DAT

Spring-run salmon: Sampling continues at Adamsa and Parrott-Phelam dams on Butte Creek with few salmon being caught. About 600-900 fish per day are being sampled in the Sutter Bypass and 800-1000 per week at Knights Landing. Mostly fall-run are being captured with the sampling on the Sacramento River. Of the moderate numbers of salmon salvaged at the Tracy facility, a high proportion are in the spring-run size range. A the current low pumping rate substantial impact on Sacramento origin salmon is not likely. Spring-run size salmon are entering the Delta from the San Joaquin basin.

DFG will submit its candidacy evaluation report on spring-run chinook salmon to the Fish and Game Commission in June. The Commission may decide whether or not to list by August at the earliest.

NMFS listed the spring-run chinook salmon as candidate species under the federal ESA. NMFS will hold public hearings May 5, 6, 7, 1998, in Redding, Sacramento, and Modesto, respectively, to hear comment on its listing proposal. These hearings are also to receive comments on the candidacy listing of fall / late-fall salmon.

Winter-run salmon: No salvage of winter-run size salmon has occurred at the CVP or SWP facilities since March. Current season take is 1542, near the 1 % level. Genetic testing suggests use of the size criteria substantially over estimates the number of actual winter-run salvaged at the facilities. Many of the salvaged fish in the winter-run size range are not winter-run and some winter-run have been found outside of the defined size range. A one week turn around of genetic testing is being tested to aid in interpreting the take estimates.

Half of the winter-run juveniles, 21,000, from the captive brood stock program were released in the upper Sacramento River on April 9. The parents of the brood stock fish were raised in captivity at Bodega Lab and Steinhart Aquarium. These juveniles appear stunted and have not developed as fast as typical wild stock.

Winter-run adults are arriving at Keswick and being collected for the new winter-run hatchery, the Livingston Stone Winter-Run Rearing Facility. Weekly aerial surveys of redds have begun.

UPDATE: NMFS sent DWR and USBR a letter providing the estimated number of winter-run chinook salmon juveniles entering the Delta during the 1997-98 season. This number, 138,316, is used to compute the "red light" take level (2%) of 2,766.

Fall / Late fall-run salmon: NMFS listed the fall/late-fall run chinook salmon as a candidate species under the federal ESA. Public hearings will be held in conjunction with hearings for spring-run and steelhead (see Spring-run salmon). NMFS could not detect enough differences between fall run and late-fall run salmon to assign them to different evolutionary specific units. The runs are therefore considered one sub-species under the ESA listing.

Steelhead: The Central Valley steelhead was listed as threatened under the federal ESA by NMFS on March 18, 1998. USBR and NMFS have initiated consultation to evaluate CVP operations and possible impacts to steelhead, mainly along the American River. NMFS will be investigating other possible concerns for steelhead including Feather River operations. Because steelhead typically migrate out of the rivers at two years of age when they are strong swimmers, winter-run protection actions in the Delta may be adequate to protect steelhead. However, NMFS stated that further study is needed.

Other listings: With the possible exception of sturgeon, NMFS has already listed or proposed to list all the species native to the Central Valley under its jurisdiction. In other states sturgeon has been under the jurisdiction of NMFS or FWS. FWS has proposed to re-open the comment period for the proposed listing of splittail, allowing more recent data for consideration in its decision on whether to list the species.

Agenda Items for the Next Meeting...May 28