

**USBR Water
Accusation Request**

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E-005883



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 130
Sacramento, California 95821-6340

JUN 01 1999

May 28, 1999

Mr. Lester A. Snow
Program Manager
CALFED/Bay-Delta Program
Bay Delta Advisory Council
1416 9th Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Proposed Acquisition of 50,000 Acre-Feet of Water to Meet Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Objectives

Dear Mr. Snow:

After reviewing the 1999 operations plan offered by the CALFED Operations Group, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hereby proposes that CALFED acquire 50,000 acre-feet of water from parties on the Stanislaus River to assist meeting salmon and steelhead habitat objectives. As you know, Interior has decided to implement Delta Actions 1 and 5 immediately. To carry out these fish restoration measures, Interior needs the cooperation of the State Water Project (SWP). We believe that any impact to SWP water supplies from implementing Delta Actions 1 and 5 needs to be made up. We further believe that we can purchase water on the Stanislaus River for make up that also has beneficial independent fishery utility.

Specifically, we propose using approximately \$3 million of the \$14.5 million of Federal CALFED Bay-Delta funding currently set aside for environmental water acquisitions. Oakdale Irrigation District and South San Joaquin Irrigation District have offered 50,000 acre-feet of water to be made available during the 1999 irrigation season at New Melones Reservoir.

The water would be released from New Melones in the summer and fall months during periods particularly beneficial to fish and wildlife resources in the Stanislaus River. To the extent possible, the releases will be coordinated with reoperation of upstream project reservoirs and export operations to take the released water south into storage. The export and storage of this water in San Luis Reservoir will provide for SWP makeup for assisting in the implementation of (b)(2) actions and additional operational flexibility, allowing, for example, reduced export levels in the winter.

The costs related to this water is \$60 per acre-foot. Neither the Central Valley Project nor the State Water Project will charge for storage costs south of the Delta. This water, however, will have a low storage priority in San Luis Reservoir, meaning that it will be the first to spill if San Luis fills next year.

Purchasing this water will provide potential benefits to fall-run chinook salmon and steelhead in the Stanislaus River. These potential benefits include: (1) improving emigration flows in May and June, 1999 for juvenile chinook salmon; (2) helping to meet water temperature objectives in

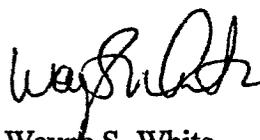
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July through September, 1999 for rearing juvenile steelhead; (3) augmenting fall attraction flows in October, 1999 for adult fall-run chinook salmon; and (4) if the water is not released during the summer or fall, 1999 it will be banked in New Melones Reservoir to be used for fishery purposes next year, in the event 2000 is a dry year. Furthermore, as mentioned above the release and export of this water in the July through October period will likely result in reduced Delta exports in January 2000 during the out-migration of Federally endangered winter-run chinook salmon, State threatened and Federally proposed spring-run chinook, and Federally threatened steelhead trout.

We, in cooperation with the CALFED Ops Group, intend to present this proposal to the Integration Panel and the Ecosystem Roundtable for their concurrence and then will request the Policy Group's approval. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Spear at 979-2034 or Wayne White at (916)979-2129.

Sincerely,



Wayne S. White
Field Supervisor