

DRAFT
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Status of 1999 Operations Plan

This is to update you on the 1999 Operations Plan. Last week, the Ops Group reviewed actions being implemented or considered for implementation this fall. These actions are to recover storage in San Luis Reservoir used to offset reduced exports for delta smelt and Central Valley Project Improvement Act implementation. Attached are two tables that show how much water could be recovered for the different actions. These actions include:

- Increasing the allowable export in August and September. Last month, the U.S. Corps of Engineers approved a temporary change in the allowable inflow to Clifton Court Forebay; the inflow has been increased up to 7,180 cfs. This action could result in up to 55,000 acre-feet of water being transferred from storage in Northern California to San Luis Reservoir. Since August 6, when the increase was implemented, the State Water Project has successfully moved 20,500 acre-feet.
- Reducing Delta outflow in November. This will allow up to 30,000 acre-feet of water to be reallocated from outflow to exports without modifying upstream operations. This proposed action is to modify the outflow objective for November from 4,500 cfs to 4,000 cfs. The outflow objective is contained in the Delta Accord, the State Water Resources Control Board 1995 Water Quality Control Plan, and the project descriptions contained in the delta smelt and winter-run chinook biological opinions. In order to modify this objective, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources would coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Fish and Game. This action would be terminated if any of the indicators of spring-run yearling movement were triggered. These indicators are contained in the 1998 CALFED Ops Group Spring-run Protection Plan; this plan will be updated to reflect current conditions.

During the Ops Group meeting last week, several concerns were raised concerning this action.

- The Bay Institute believes that fishery protection measures during November are minimal; therefore, it argues reducing outflow would have additional impacts.

- The Bay Institute also believes the outflow objective is, for all intents and purposes, a standard, not an objective the CVP and SWP are voluntarily operating to meet. The SWRCB is in the process of allocating responsibility for meeting the objectives contained in the 1995 WQCP.
- The Contra Costa Water District is concerned about potential water quality impacts resulting from lower outflow. If CCWD is forced to blend water from its Los Vaqueros reservoir, then it would realize higher blending costs and have potential risks (due to lower reservoir storage) to its future water supplies. By limiting the outflow reduction to 500 cfs, however, DWR and Reclamation believe these risks are minimized.
- Delaying the reduction in releases from Oroville to the Feather River. This proposed action would allow the SWP to transfer up to 58,000 acre-feet of additional project water to San Luis Reservoir. Typically, DWR reduces releases to the Feather River to maintain river flow below 2,500 cfs from mid-October through November. If the flow remains above 2,500 cfs as a result of non-flood releases, then DWR must maintain higher flows until March. This proposed action would delay implementation of the ramp down in river releases and allow the release to remain above 2,500 cfs until November 1.

At the Ops Group meeting last week, DFG expressed concern about potential impacts to rearing juvenile salmon in the Feather River and concluded that it would have to carefully review any proposal to change river release criteria. The Ops Group recommends that DWR coordinate with NMFS, FWS, and DFG to modify the action if needed.

- Using joint point of diversion to fill the CVP share of San Luis Reservoir. Based on current projections, the CVP will not fill its share of San Luis Reservoir by April 2000. Not filling San Luis Reservoir next year could seriously impact operational flexibility. This proposed action would use available SWP pumping capability to export water that is excess to the Delta or from CVP storage. To implement this action, Reclamation will need approval from the SWRCB of either a temporary urgency change petition or a request under Water Right Order 98-9, for the joint point of diversion.

In addition to considering the above actions, the Ops Group will also develop an operations plan for next year. At the request of the Ops Group, the No-name Group will convene to develop a suite of tools that could be implemented to avoid a problem next year with low storage in San Luis Reservoir. This activity will include both agency staff and stakeholders and is expected to begin some time this month.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please call Stephen Kashiwada at (916) 653-7092 or Lowell Ploss at (916) 979-2180.

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Attachment

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