

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP

MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

April 24, 2002

Announcements

Review of March 27 meeting notes

No comments were received.

Handouts

1. Update on Winter-Run Chinook Salmon, Steelhead, Spring-Run Chinook Salmon and Late Fall-Run Chinook Salmon, dated April 24, 2002; Bruce Oppenheim, NMFS.
2. CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing, dated April 24, 2002; Curtis Creel, DWR.

SWRCB Activities

Update on SWRCB activities

- A 30-day period to receive petitions for reconsideration commenced once the SWRCB approved the revised Water Level Response Plan for use of the Joint Point of Diversion. The South Delta Water Agency filed a petition for reconsideration of the SWRCB's approval of the Water Level Response Plan for use of Joint Point of Diversion. The SWRCB will consider a draft order addressing the issues raised in the petition at the May 16 Board meeting.
- An additional day has been added to the hearing on the water right applications filed by the cities of Fairfield, Vacaville and Benicia. The hearing is now scheduled for June 18 and 19. The hearing will address the priorities that the Cities claim under the Watershed Protection Act. A number of parties have expressed interest in this hearing and have filed notices of intent to appear.
- A status conference has been set for June 10 in Sacramento Superior Court on the coordinated cases contesting Decision 1641. The conference will establish procedural guidelines for the trial that is expected to take place in August.
- The SWRCB received the Operations Plan to Protect Fish and Wildlife submitted by the USBR and the DWR. The Plan is required for Stage 2 Joint Point of Diversion approval under Decision 1641. Project and fishery agency staff are working to make the proposed plan consistent with the requirements of D-1641. They will resubmit the proposed plan.
- A hearing on the proposed transfer of water from the Imperial Irrigation District and the San Diego County Water Authority began on April 23 in Sacramento. This transfer is a key element in the settlement of Colorado River issues.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

VAMP

The flow in the San Joaquin River at Vernalis is around 3,200 cfs (includes a pulse flow of 600 cfs). The flows in the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers are scheduled for around 1,500 cfs, then will decrease to about 1,000 cfs, then will increase to 1,300 cfs for the last five days. The flow in the Merced River is scheduled at about 1,300 cfs until the first week of May. At

present, the costs associated with VAMP are between 30 and 60 TAF total for the CVP and SWP.

ESA Commitments

The Project Agencies transmitted a letter dated April 12, 2002 to the Management Agencies regarding 2002 EWA operations. EWA is functional this year and has access to 100 TAF (due to the SWP backstopping that amount) of the 200 TAF stored water. A question regarding a 100 TAF debt arose and how it would be handled. The SWP would operate in a flexible manner at the end of the year and the EWA would pay back the debt either by acquiring variable assets or by purchasing additional water.

The Management Agencies in response submitted a letter dated April 12, 2002 regarding the functionality of the EWA. The Management Agencies have determined that all the elements identified in the ROD are in place and functional and that there are sufficient EWA assets in place to maintain ESA commitments for the remainder of this water year. They believe sufficient EWA assets are available in the 90% hydrology, but possibly not in the 50% hydrology. However, the Management Agencies believe that both the Management and Project Agencies can work together cooperatively in order to accomplish those goals.

The EWA actions scheduled are export reductions occurring during VAMP (between April 15th and May 15th), between May 16th and May 31st (also known as shoulders on VAMP), and for June. The shoulder on VAMP (which is a continuation of the VAMP export reduction) is considered a pro-active approach to habitat improvement. The presence of the Delta smelt will determine the extent of the June export reductions. Due to impacts to (b)(2) accounting from the February 5 court decision, impacts to the CVP Delta operations will be picked up by the EWA.

A question arose regarding the accounting for replacement pumping which will be discussed at the next Ops Group meeting. The replacement pumping shows up as a (b)(2) cost. Yield augmentation should not count as a cost or credit and is under review by DOI.

CALFED has identified major issues that are either on a critical or long-term path for 2003. The 2003 Operations Plan (which is being worked on by both the Project and Management Agencies) must be completed by the end of the year.

An order in a recent court decision requires an extra 100 TAF of release to the Trinity River from the Trinity Reservoir. However, this Trinity decision is not a part of (b)(2) and will not affect the EWA.

Fishery Status

Status of Sacramento River Monitoring

The numbers for the Winter-run size Chinook and for the smaller salmon (i.e.: young-of-the-year, Spring-run and Fall-run size Chinook) salvaged at both facilities have decreased and increased, respectively. The estimated loss for the year of Winter-run Chinook is 3,700.

The juvenile Fall-run Chinook are migrating downstream. Two releases of Fall-run size Chinook were made from the Coleman Hatchery.

Steelhead, Winter-Run and Spring-Run Chinook Salmon

Four hundred and 0 are the number of steelhead salvaged at both facilities in March and April, respectively.

Splittail

The salvage numbers are low at both facilities.

Delta Smelt

The smelt is distributed in the central and southern Delta. The results of the 20-mm survey are posted on the DFG website.

Work Group Activities

OFF Update

Meetings have not been scheduled since March 27, 2002. A request to review the draft 3/27/02 OFF notes and provide comments was made before the notes are made final. It was requested that the next meeting be scheduled after May 31, 2002. Issues regarding (b)(1) re-operations or (b)(2) banking will be addressed in a future OFF call. The purpose of the OFF group was reiterated.

DAT Update

No big issues have been identified during the weekly calls. The next call is scheduled on April 30, 2002. The summaries are distributed on the DAT reflector.

A discussion followed regarding one of the presentations in the Science Workshop held on April 22 and April 23. Concerns arose regarding the X2 relationship graph and the use of a different data set. The stakeholders want accessibility to the abundance data from the Fall Midwater Trawl for the last eight years. Also, a request to post Wim Kimmerer's graph on the X2 relationship on the website was made. Mr. Kimmerer demonstrated that the relationship of X2 with certain species (except the smelt) was still good.

Operations Status

CVP/SWP Operations Status

Excess conditions in the Delta continue. The combined export for both facilities is 1,500 cfs due to VAMP. Tracy Pumping Plant is exporting 850 cfs. The reason it is higher is due to the

lower unit's (750-cfs capacity) impeller replacement. Releases from Lake Shasta are at 7,500 cfs due to temperature and Wilkins Slough flow requirements. The flow in the American River is at 3,500 cfs. The water level at Folsom Lake no longer encroaches into the flood reservation. Under the court decision, extra flow from Trinity will be used as a pulse flow. Reclamation has the ability to draw the CVP share lower in San Luis Reservoir in order to increase allocations.

The EWA has 15 TAF of water in San Luis Reservoir. Currently, there aren't any water quality concerns.

A discussion about the Delta Cross Channel Gate experiment ensued. The Management Agencies' concurrence is requested for this experiment. Reclamation would like the following agreed to prior to giving approval: (1) the gates are open on the weekends (especially Memorial Day weekend); (2) it retains flexibility in the operation of the gates and that operations coincide with water quality concerns (Jersey Point or Emmanton); and (3) a public outreach program is developed for the public and businesses with a survey distributed along with the operations schedule. Reclamation would like to minimize public impact. The Management Agencies may give up flexibility to call for closure when fish are present.

Delta Operations Criteria

A question arose on when does the SWP and CVP make operational changes. The CVP typically makes export changes at 0700; whereas the SWP makes changes at 0001. A request to post pages 2 and 3 of the briefing package on the SWP OCO website was made. In May, more days may be necessary to fulfill the Chipps Island requirement.

The culverts at the HORB are still open. The flap gates are tied open at Old River near the DMC and are operating tidally at Middle River. Sampling on the downstream side of the HORB is in progress. The debris on the culverts is being cleared on a regular basis.

The NHI model is under review in order to determine its application to the EWA.

Action Items

- DOI's process for defining (b)(1) and the carrying over of (b)(2)
- Accounting of replacement pumping
- Trinity Decision