

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS
December 18, 2002

Announcements

Review of October 23 meeting notes:

- Any comments are to be sent to Curtis Creel or Tracy Pettit.
- Richard Denton of Contra Costa Water District had comments regarding the October 23rd notes which will be submitted.

Handouts:

- 1) Draft proposal titled "Alternative Proposal to compare survival indices of coded-wire tagged (CWT) late-fall released in the Delta in December, 2002.", dated December 18, 2002; USF&WS.
- 2) Draft Fishery Objectives, dated December 18, 2002; USF&WS
- 3) Update on Winter-Run Chinook Salmon and Spring-Run Chinook, dated December 18, 2002; Bruce Oppenheim, NMFS, and Jim White, CDFG.
- 4) News Release "Public Comment Period Of The Draft-Revised Decision On Implementation Of Section 3406(b)(2) Of The Central Valley Project Improvement Act", U. S. Department of the Interior, dated December 18, 2002; Chet Bowling, USBR
- 5) Draft "Department of the Interior Decision on Implementation of Section 3406(b)(2) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act", dated December 18, 2002; Chet Bowling, USBR
- 6) "Key Dates for Water Year 2003 Operations, dated December 18, 2002; Tracy Pettit, DWR
- 7) WY 2002/2003 EWA Accounting Summary, 90% and 50% Exceedence Hydrology, dated December 18, 2002; Tracy Pettit, DWR
- 8) CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing, dated December 18, 2002; Curtis Creel, DWR

Regular CALFED Ops Group Business

Update on SWRCB activities

- SWRCB has denied the order for reconsideration in approving the Imperial Irrigation District water transfer to San Diego County Water Authority..
- The Hearing for Term 91 has been rescheduled for February 25 and 26, 2003.
- The status hearing regarding the area of origins has been cancelled. A settlement agreement was reached. A status conference is scheduled for March 5, 2003.
- The SWRCB does not need to see the signed short-term agreement regarding Phase 8. It will be dismissed on January 1, 2003.
- The workshop on the Narrative Salmon Doubling is scheduled for February 4, 2003. The agenda will be the same as the last workshop.
- SWRCB will write the order describing the terms and conditions for El Nido to be added to Merced Irrigation District's place of use. The California Department of Fish and Game protested the incorporation of El Nido into MID's place of use. CDFG withdrew their protest and the hearing was dismissed.

Fishery Status

The number of adult winter-run sized Chinook salmon increased from last year. The adult females have increased since 1981. This year had the strongest return of these fish. The carcass survey, compiled by CDFG, and received by the end of the month, will be sent in January. The results will be incorporated in the Juvenile Production Estimate. There were no changes in methodology. The survey is usually performed above Red Bluff Diversion Dam. There was a big pulse of juvenile winter-run sized Chinook salmon by Knights Landing on December 16 2002. The DCC gates were closed due to high flows. Forty-seven winter-run sized Chinook salmon were found in the Sacramento trawl. The CDFG has a report out in 2001 regarding Spring-run sized Chinook salmon and will include a summary of the status of the salmon. The number has increased in Mill and Deer Creeks since the 1990's. This report will be brought to the next CALFED Ops meeting. There have been low salmonid salvage numbers at the export facilities.

Delta Smelt were not found at either the CVP or SWP facilities. There will be a presentation on the status of the recover at the next CALFED Ops meeting.

Operations Status

The CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing handout was distributed and discussed. The changes in water level are due to atmospheric conditions. There is a movement of salt into the Central Delta and Frank's Tract. Delta conditions improved and excess conditions were declared on December 18, 2002. Due to capacity constraints at O'Neill Forebay and the Delta Mendota Canal, Tracy Pumping Plant was pumping 3,000 cfs (about four units). Banks Pumping Plant was at about 7,200 cfs. Releases from Lake Oroville are at 1,750 cfs through the end of December at which point it will be reassessed. Keswick flows will decrease to 4,000 cfs per the Management Agencies' request. The state's share of San Luis Reservoir low point is projected to be at 190 TAF. The SWP though is increasing their share by 10 TAF per day. The projected low point for the federal share of San Luis Reservoir is August. There are (B)(2) costs accruing on the Sacramento River. Curtailments occurred at the CVP facility due to the Delta Cross Channel Gates' experiment. Information regarding water quality can be found on the CDEC website. The median forecast classified the year as a dry year.

Work Group Updates

The OFF group did not have anything to report.

The DAT group reported that there had been low fish activity until now. A discussion followed regarding where and when fish are caught (whether during the day or at night). The DCC gates were closed between December 2 and 10, 2002. Both the Management and Project Agencies agreed to open the DCC gates due to water quality concerns. The cost to (B)(2) for the DCC gate experiment is approximately 17 TAF. There was no cost for the EWA. Flows at Deer and Mill Creeks were 8,000 cfs and 4,500 cfs, respectively. Debris in the river causes the major problems to traps. The traps at GCID were removed due to debris. The Spring Run Yearling traps were blown out of the water due to the storm. There are two DAT calls scheduled on December 25th and 27th, 2002.

Presentation on 2003 Operations Plan

Three presentations were given: (1) introducing and describing the purpose of the 2003 Operations Plan, (2) Fishery Objectives and Actions, and (3) Operational Scenarios in this section. A handout titled "Key Dates for Water Year 2003 Operations" was distributed and discussed.

Fishery Objectives and Proposed Actions

A draft Fishery Objectives handout was distributed and discussed.

DOI (B)(2) Policy

The draft (B)(2) Decision dated December 18, 2002, was distributed and discussed.

There is a 30-day review period. Copies are available either on the USF&WS or /USBR website or the Public Affairs website. The plan is to have the Decision finalized by February 15, 2003 (before the CVP's allocation). Highlights of the proposed new Decision:

- 200 TAF of (B)(2) water available in the Fall.
- The storage metric was removed.
- The accounting methodology will stay the same as in the past year.
- A new section on (B)(1) has been added.
- The shortage criteria were changed.

EWA may be used for those actions that have ESA actions. Concerns arose about the ability to plan and adjust operations to keep (B)(2) costs from exceeding 800 TAF. Decisions would be made as the process moved forward. If re-operation posed a high risk, then it probably would not be considered (B)(1) and a decision would be made whether to use (B)(2) water. Examples will be available for the January 8, 2003 workshop.

Operational Scenarios

A presentation was made regarding Operational Scenarios. These actions are driven by hydrology. Highlights of the presentation are:

- Reset, Offset and the removal of the 450 TAF cap are included in the accounting.
- In wetter cases, the EWA will backstop any action (i.e.: act as an insurance policy), knowing that hydrology will bail out the Projects on water supply.
- The Stanislaus flow chart does not include the Vernalis flow objectives and the acquired water.

Action Items

- A presentation will be given at the next meeting regarding the status of Delta Smelt.
- The status of the Response Plans will be discussed.
- An update on operations will be given at the next meeting.