

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP

MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

April 2, 2003

Announcements

Review of February 19th meeting notes

A discussion was had regarding the CALFED notification process. Parties will be notified of any changes through an OFF call.

Handouts

- 1) DRAFT (b)(2) Accounting - Water Year 2003; Paul Fujitani, USBR.
- 2) CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing Package, dated April 2, 2003; Curtis Creel, DWR.

SWRCB Activities

Update on SWRCB activities

- The Bureau of Reclamation did not meet the Vernalis flow objective during February 2003. They are required to meet the objectives from February through the first half of April, and from the second half of May through the month of June. Reclamation sent a letter to the SWRCB stating that an amount of water equivalent to that which would have been released from New Melones to meet the objective will be provided as a discretionary B2 release. The Management Agencies need to be in agreement. Two concerns were mentioned: the dissolved oxygen level in Stockton's Deep Water Ship Channel and how to account for this release.
- Judge Roland Candee of the Sacramento Superior Court issued a Proposed Statement of Decision, February 27, 2003, regarding the consolidated cases in opposition to D-1641. The decision may be viewed on the Internet at:
http://www.saccourt.com/coordcases/swrcb/swrcb_orders.asp
Though the decision dealt with many issues, the one of particular relevance to the OPS Group concerns the San Joaquin River Agreement. The Court found that the SWRCB erred in adopting the San Joaquin River Agreement because by doing so, it failed to fully implement the Vernalis flow objectives. The Court held that by relying on the SJRA for implementation, the SWRCB had in effect changed the objective in an administrative proceeding that was not noticed for that purpose. Legal challenge to the proposed decision is likely. To change the standards, the SWRCB must either hold a triennial review or go through water right procedures (which includes an administrative hearing). The triennial procedures include scoping workshops (with the SWRCB getting feedback on issues), the SWRCB complying with CEQA (writing an EIR), and holding a hearing.
- The SWRCB is considering whether to initiate a periodic review of the objectives in the 1995 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The SWRCB will keep the OPS Group informed on this matter.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

Status of Response Plans

Water Quality Response Plan - The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) and the Project Agencies (PA's) are reviewing the draft of the Water Quality Response Plan and hope to send it this month to the SWRCB so that JPOD could be used. CCWD would like estimates of water costs and of salinity.

Water Level Response Plan – Any concerns with SDWA will be followed up.

Fish Protection Plan - The Project Agencies are working with the Management Agencies. The Management Agencies hope to be completed by next week. The SWRCB is looking for monitoring plans, triggers and response plans to triggers. This is subject to continuous review. The evidence at the hearing did not allow the fact if there was knowledge about any impact.

These Plans are to identify and prevent significant impacts.

The SWRCB's web server provides the following information: notices regarding Bay Delta issues, water right applications, petitions, hearings and transfers.

Status of DOI's (B)(2) Policy

The USFWS and Reclamation are working on responses to the comments (36 letters) they received and hope to complete by April. The (B)(2) policy rules were heard in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeal originated from the Environmental Coalition.

Status of (B)(2) Accounting

The handout is identical to what is posted on the CVP website. The accounting for March is being worked on at the (B)(2) IT meetings. The stakeholders want the 280 TAF parsed out into the three metrics. The February costs were lower than was estimated in the range (about 150 TAF). A discussion of COA accounting followed.

A discussion regarding the baseline of American River releases ensued. The issue was that the current baseline is lower than in the 1980's, given the same storage.

Between July and September, JPOD is used for wheeling water to CVP users through Banks. A question arose whether it is considered a (B)(2) cost when the same water is accounted for under the base and actual cases. JPOD may be viewed by some as being similar to the Decision 1485 replacement pumping, and therefore, the use of JPOD may reduce (B)(2) costs. The CVP users see JPOD as a tool to boost water supply and not equivalent to D-1485 replacement pumping.

There will be a (B)(2) accounting presentation at the next CALFED Ops meeting. Further discussion on JPOD effects on (B)(2) accounting can be done at this workshop.

Temporary Barriers

The barriers will be installed this week. The installation began April 1st, 2003. By April 15th, the channel will be closed. The middle flap gates at Grant Line Canal will be tied open; however, if water level problems occur, they will be closed. Rock Slough, while not yet on-line, should be ready by April 7th.

Fishery Status

Status of Sacramento River Monitoring

Upstream monitoring is leveling off. The yearlings are apparently out of the system.

Steelhead, Winter-Run and Spring-Run Chinook Salmon

The winter-run Chinook salmon numbers are low. At the fish facilities, the numbers of winter-run Chinook are low as of late February/early March. The combined loss was 6,600 for March. The combined loss for the warning level is 21,000 and for reconsultation is 42,000. The numbers have increased for spring-run and fall run young-of-the year.

Spawning in Mill and Deer Creeks is high because the water is cold. However, the fish will not be big enough in 6 to 8 months to migrate. The numbers are better upstream.

The numbers have increased of spring-run Chinook (which are bigger than the Fall-run) in the San Joaquin River.

There are very few steelhead in the Delta right now.

Splittail

The number of splittails is low.

Delta Smelt

There have been low numbers of smelt at the fish facilities. The 14-day average is around 3 or 5. The Kodiak Trawl surveys the distribution of adult smelt whether in the Sacramento River, Montezuma Slough and the Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel. The 20-mm surveys are showing larval fish. The smelt have started spawn and may spawn in the spring if the conditions are good). The smelt are in the 5-8 mm range. They are distributed within Clifton Court Forebay and through the southern and western Delta, and are similar to the adult survey.

The survey results are posted on the California Department of Fish and Game website.

Work Group Activities

OFF Update

There is a concern with the Lower American River flow fluctuations. Clarification regarding Folsom's releases (especially in February) was requested. The steelhead redds are located in the side channel and are inundated. Balancing storage, temperature and water level is important and is necessary. The Project Agencies will discuss and make a decision based on real time operations.

DAT Update

The DAT calls have been routine.

Operations Status

CVP/SWP Operations Status

The CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing package was discussed. The Delta has been in excess conditions since March 1st. The E/I ratio will control the exports until April 15th. The flow in the Feather River is still at minimum (about 1,050 cfs). The actual storage in the state's share of San Luis Reservoir is 974 TAF. San Luis Reservoir will fill by April 15th in the base case. The allocation was increased to 50% based upon the late March study. The amount of state gain is unknown. The E/I relaxation was discontinued on March 29th due to the smelt distribution results from the 20-mm survey and the salmon numbers.

Article 21 was made available between March 28th and April 2nd. The following are ramifications if the storage in the state's share of San Luis Reservoir in the base case does not fill: (1) Allocations may be hindered; (2) A drier year will increase the demand for Article 21; (3) A wetter year will decrease the demand for Article 21; (4) There will not be any effect on the EWA, only between Table A and Article 21.

The CVP will drop a unit at Tracy Pumping Plant on April 1st and 3rd, with the federal share of San Luis Reservoir filling. They will also decrease pumping by 2500 cfs. About 10 TAF is available of Section 215 water between April 1st and April 7th which did not affect the rate of demands. The Vernalis water quality standard will change on April 1st. The flow in the Stanislaus River is 600 cfs and will increase by 100 cfs. Unfortunately, this flow has not shown up at Vernalis to help with water quality. It may cause the fish to move downstream before VAMP begins and the installation of the barriers.

Delta Operations Criteria

The April requirement for Chipps Island is 29 days. The VAMP flow target is 3,200 cfs for a combined export rate of 1,500 cfs. Page 4 of the CALFED Ops Group Briefing Package indicates that there is "14 days per Ops Group". Since the USBR is in consultation with the

Management Agencies, the Ops Group can act as a substitute. The DAT/OFF forum may be used and then WOMT.

2003 Operations Plan – ESA Commitment

The final exchange of letters will occur on April 8th. The wetter years will be a challenge. Both the Project and Management Agencies are working towards an agreement. Questions arose regarding the Management Agencies performing a risk analysis on fish placeholders/actions, whether the Management Agencies are using all the available tools, and Tier 3. Given these concerns, The Bay Institute does not think there should be ESA assurance and feels that the Science Panel wants a more stringent risk analysis. The Management Agencies will perform a post-VAMP risk analysis. They can make a call and get the Science community together for a decision.

EWA Operations

At 90%, the SWP does not have much capacity available for the CVP with the new hydrology. A discussion followed regarding EWA operations.

Action Items

- The (B)(2) accounting presentation workshop
- February Reservoir Operations Chronology Handout