

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

March 22, 2006

Handouts

CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing Package, dated March 22, 2006; John Leahigh, DWR.

2005/2006 EWA Accounting Summary (Based on 50% Hydrology); John Leahigh, DWR.

Draft B2 Accounting spreadsheet, October 2005-February 2006; Peggy Manza, USBR.

Announcements

There were no announcements this month.

SWRCB Activities

The Board has received four petitions (from DWR, USBR, State Water Contractors, and the San Luis-Delta Mendota Water Authority) for reconsideration of Order WR 2006-0006 adopting the Cease and Desist Orders against DWR and USBR. The Board has 90 days from the date the Order was adopted (February 15, 2006) to reconsider.

The draft order for the Yuba River change petition is on the April 5, 2006 agenda.

The Board just mailed out its response to a plan of action for a DMC recirculation study they received at the end of February.

The San Joaquin River Group Authority will be holding a workshop on CalSimII on April 24 at 1:00 p.m. in the Sierra Room of the CalEPA building.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

Joint Point of Diversion – Status of Response Plans

Long-term Water Quality and Water Level Response Plans are in place, but the revised draft Fishery Protection Plan, which has been revised to reflect feedback from Board staff, is still being reviewed by the fish agencies. (The goal is to make this FPP a long-term plan as well.) Stage 2 JPOD is not expected to occur until late summer or fall this year.

Vernalis Flow Outlook

Lowell Ploss distributed a preliminary “2006 VAMP Daily Operation Plan” (dated 3/21/2006). He commented that the 50% forecast hydrology is more likely to occur than the

90% is, and noted that the VAMP period may be delayed by one week (to April 22nd) to coincide with Dave Vogel's release of radio-tagged fish.

Fishery Status

Chinook

Bruce Oppenheim reported that the total combined winter-run cumulative loss is 1900, and nine hatchery winter-run salmon have been salvaged. The spring-run surrogate loss is less than 0.09% (1.0% is the take limit). He commented that we may be past the peak for winter-run.

Steelhead

Total combined steelhead loss is 678. (The take limit contained in the biological opinion is 3,000 juveniles and adults.)

Delta Smelt

Total combined salvage for the season is 324. Delta water temperatures are still pretty low, and smelt maturity is somewhat late this year. No spent adults have been picked up in the Spring Kodiak Trawl surveys. If the weather were to warm up rapidly, we could see a very punctuated spawning season this year.

The Delta Smelt Work Group has no recommendations at this time, but is watching for indications of spawning—an increase in water temperature of 2° Celsius within a week, spent adults in the SKT or other surveys, or larvae in surveys or salvage—as a trigger for a pre-VAMP action.

Tina Swanson (of The Bay Institute) asked where the longfin smelt are, and Victoria Poage replied that they haven't been showing up in salvage or surveys.

Lowell Ploss (of the San Joaquin River Group Authority) asked if the POD workplan is posted on the web. Chuck Armor will be posting it on (the CalFed?) website by the end of the week.

Work Group Activities

DAT Update

The Data Assessment Team continues to meet weekly. Salmon and steelhead salvage is low. The DSWG provides recommendations to DAT. During the last DAT call, the group had a lengthy discussion of recent decisions by the DSWG with respect to the Delta Smelt Risk Assessment Matrix.

OFF Update

Nothing to report.

WOMT Update

The Water Operations Management Team has been meeting weekly, primarily in-person (as opposed to via conference calls). Recent topics of discussion have been VAMP, exports, and EWA. Also, when the concern level (143) for Delta smelt salvage was reached on March 2nd, WOMT concurred with the DSWG that no action was necessary.

Operations Status

The CalFed Ops Group Operations Briefing package was discussed.

CVP - Keswick is currently releasing 25,000 cfs, but is expected to drop to 14,500 by the end of the month. Folsom releases will be 7,500-8,000 cfs for at least the coming week. New Melones releases are 3,000 cfs and holding. The USBR is going down to one unit (approximately 900 cfs) in the Delta today. The federal share of San Luis Reservoir is full, so USBR will only be pumping to meet demands (1-2 units).

SWP – Delta salinity levels are low, and the Delta continues to be in excess conditions. Feather River releases are 12,000 cfs. Storage at Oroville is approximately 2.81 MAF. The State is pumping 3000 cfs in the Delta. The State share of San Luis Reservoir is full (1,062 TAF). Article 21 will be offered through the end of March and possibly into April.

EWA – Andy Chu reviewed the EWA placeholders (based on a 50% hydrology), and commented that the numbers could still increase given current weather patterns. On the other hand, it's possible that the 25 TAF placeholder for March may not be used after all. The placeholder values for April and May assumed that the SWP would be exporting 650 cfs for 45 days (pre-VAMP and VAMP), and approximately 1500 cfs for 15 days during post-VAMP.

B2 – Peggy Manza distributed a preliminary draft of B2 accounting for October 2005 through February 2006. The accounting showed no costs (through Feb 06) at Nimbus, some water quality costs at Keswick due to Delta Cross Channel gate closure, small costs on Clear Creek, no costs in the Delta, and very little cost at New Melones.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The next regular CalFed Ops meeting will be held on April 26, 2006, in Room 1131 of the Resources Building. B2 action planning will likely be discussed.