

CALFED Ops Group Meeting Notes
Meeting Date: 2/20/08

Announcements

None to report.

State Water Resources Control Board Activities (Isabel Baer)

Mark Gowdy and Greg Wilson will be the new SWRCB contacts for CALFED Ops replacing Isabel Baer, who has accepted a new assignment. Mark reported that there were no specific conclusions reached at the recent SWRCB Pelagic Organism Decline (POD) workshop, that its focus was just to disseminate the latest POD info to the SWRCB and the public. Also, the SWRCB has tentatively scheduled a workshop for the review of San Joaquin River flow and water quality objectives for July 2008.

Ongoing Activities Related to Ops Group

None to report.

Fishery Status

Chinook (Winter Run) – Total loss at export facilities to date is 404. Likely to be one more month of potentially high take, but well under take limits so far.

Chinook (Spring Run) – Very few fish seen at export facilities so far, way less than 1% take limit. This is consistent with the low escapement typically seen in dry years, salvage usually is also low. There were 6,214 carcasses counted in Butte Creek compared to about 16,000 in 2005.

Chinook (Fall Run) – All runs are seeing low escapement levels, this is across the board for all Central Valley species.

Steelhead – Total loss at export facilities to date is 309, well under take limits so far.

Green Sturgeon – Only 1 (at Jones PP) has been taken so far this year.

Delta smelt – Last week, a spent female was caught at Jones P.P.. This triggers protection for the general population by regulating Old and Middle River flows between the range from -5000 cfs to -750 cfs.. Next week, formal recommendation will be made to the project agencies at the WOMT meeting. For now, particle tracking runs are being made and analyzed to support the forthcoming recommendation.

Longfin smelt – The DFG Commission has accepted the recommendation to list the longfin smelt under CESA and it will be classified as a “candidate” species. Formal protection measures are expected out by the end of next week. Restrictions similar to those in the Wanger decision (on OMR flow limits) are expected to be proposed. The protections will be different in season because of the differences in life-cycle from Delta smelt. Whatever OMR limit (between Delta smelt and longfin smelt) is more restrictive will be the controlling limit for water project operations.

Action Items: the February 7, 2008 Roose-Milligan letter on sharing export restrictions to meet OMR targets and the February 13, 2008 letter from Milligan to DFG citing Reclamation’s cooperation on meeting longfin smelt protections will be posted on the CALFED Ops homepage.

Work Group Updates

DAT Update (E. Chappell) – DAT has been meeting weekly, there have been no recommendations to WOMT for 2008 made to date. DAT has been following the low winter-run counts. A releases of 72,000 winter-run from Redding was made on January 31, 2008. Fred Feyrer of DWR will take over Erin Chappel’s DAT responsibilities starting next week.

WOMT Update –.(R. Milligan) – It has been relatively quiet with no recommendations for operational changes so far in 2008, beyond the present limits of OMR flow at greater than or equal to -5,000 cfs, which started at the end of January.

Operations Status

SWP: San Luis (State share) at approximately 850 TAF, Clifton Court diversions currently at 3,500 cfs and Oroville releases at 1,250 cfs.

CVP: San Luis (Federal share) at approximately 850 TAF, Keswick releases at 3,250 cfs, Nimbus releases at 1,000 cfs, Goodwin releases at 375 cfs, Jones PP (4 units) at 3,300 cfs. New Melones is releasing some b(2) water beyond the Interim Plan of Operations (IPO) release to meet Vernalis flow. A letter has gone out indicating that the Shasta criteria was not triggered this year (2008), therefore Shasta allocations are 100%. Overall CVP water allocations should be announced next week.

Delta Criteria: Currently at .35 E/I ratio, X2 targets at Port Chicago probably won’t trigger for this month, X2 at Chipps is in force, X-channel gates are closed, Vernalis monthly flow target is 2,280 cfs, South Delta objectives are 1.0 EC at all three stations, OMR ceiling for smelt protection currently at -5000 cfs .

Water Accounting Updates

B(2) – Nothing to report.

EWA – Andy Chu reported that there will be about 50 TAF of 2007 EWA debt carried into 2008, 45 TAF for the SWP and 5 TAF for the CVP.