

CALFED OPERATIONS MEETING NOTES
Wednesday, February 24, 2010
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Joint Operations Center
3310 El Camino Avenue

Announcements

None

Calculation of Projected Old and Middle River (Reverse) Flows

Andy Chu of DWR gave a brief presentation on the methodology used by water project operators of the CVP and SWP (at the Joint Operations Center) to estimate projected OMR flows with projected exports (current and short-term future – 3 days or so) for the purpose of complying with the OMR limits set by fishery agencies in accordance with the Biological Opinions for Delta and longfin smelt, salmonids and steelhead. The projected tides in the Delta, agricultural diversions, project export rates and Vernalis flows are all among the factors that must be considered when forecasting OMR flows.

SWRCB Activities (P. Fernandez)

1. *Water Transfers* – Three are presently under consideration by SWRCB: a) Delta Wetlands to MWD (Fallowing – 4500 acre-feet total) – Public Notice out by end of this week, b) South Feather to San Diego (Reservoir release – 10 TAF total) and c) Tulare Lake to Westlands (Fallowing – 10 TAF total)
2. There will be a scientific review of VAMP by an independently CALFED Scientific Panel on March 2 and 3 in Sacramento.
3. The SWRCB work on Delta Outflows is continuing per Senate Bill 1 requirements.
4. The SWRCB is developing a proposed scope of modeling work for USBR and DWR per the modified Cease and Desist Order issued by the SWRCB to these two agencies.
5. A workshop will be held by the SWRCB on March 2 and 3 in Sacramento on developing “biological objectives” for instream river flows throughout California.

Fisheries Status

(B. Oppenheim, NMFS)

Salmon and Steelhead – There was a “pulse” flow on the Sacramento River at the end of last month (January) that raised flow levels but quickly dropped off due to a brief storm event. However, daily densities of salvage of salmon/steelhead at project export facilities have dropped off sharply since the pulse flow. To-date there have been 469 winter-run salmon and 497 steelhead (both expanded numbers) salvaged at export facilities this year. There has only been a loss of about half of one-percent of spring-run salmon, well below the authorized take limit.

Sturgeon- None have been taken at the export facilities and no juvenile have been found at the export facilities..

(Victoria Poage, USFWS)

Delta smelt – Smelt Work Group (SWG) met Monday this week and reviewed Delta conditions. SWG advice to FWS is that the risk if entrainment is low so keep OMR greater than or equal to -5000 cfs. Water temperatures in Delta are over 12 degrees (3-station average) as it is likely that we have moved from the spawning stage to the hatchin stage, although haven’t seen spawning or “spent” females yet.

Longfin smelt – The larval surveys are picking up longfin smelt in the Delta, but the majority are west (downstream) of Chipps Island, so the risk of entrainment at export facilities is low.

Work Group Updates

DAT – Nothing to report.

DOSS - Last advice to NMFS was to maintain OMR greater than or equal to -5000 cfs. NMFS and WOMT concurred.

WOMT – Yesterday, WOMT concurred with the simultaneous recommendations of both FWS and NMFS to maintain OMR greater than or equal to -5000 cfs.

VAMP (D. Westcot) –The VAMP Biological Group will meet this Friday to develop a release/monitoring plan and schedule. There is a very lows probability of either a VAMP “double step” or “offramp”. The most likely target at this point is 3200 cfs at Vernalis during the VAMP period. The probable star date for 2010 VAMP is March 22.

CVP/SWP Operations Updates

CVP - Trinity at 300 cfs, Keswick at 3,250 cfs, Nimbus at 1,300 cfs, Goodwin at 1,000 cfs and dropping, Jones PP at 3,400 cfs , San Luis Federal share at 720 TAF.

SWP - Oroville at 1,350 cfs with storage at 1.33 MAF and increasing slightly, Clifton Court at 3,000 cfs, San Luis State share at 670 TAF.