

WOMT Summary for May 3, 2011

The WOMT met and discussed the following:

The Smelt Working Group reported no recommendation for delta smelt or longfin smelt at this time and will continue to monitor salvage, survey data and hydrological conditions. The Working Group estimated that the overall risk of entrainment was low given the distributional data from recent surveys and believes that, based upon what is known of Delta conditions and delta smelt distribution, a modification of Project operations to protect delta smelt is not yet warranted.

As of Saturday, April 30, 2011, export pumping has been targeting NMFS' RPA Action IV.2.1 (San Joaquin 4:1 inflow-to-export ratio [I/E]). Combined exports were reduced to 5,000 cfs on Saturday 4/30/11 pursuant to Vernalis flows dropping below the trigger (21,750 cfs). DOSS advises to continue to implementing the NMFS' RPA Action IV.2.1 (4:1 ratio) to protect juvenile steelhead emigrating from the San Joaquin River basin. At a minimum, combined exports should be no more than 25% of Vernalis flows. In addition, where compatible, provide opportunities for experimental fish releases as part of VAMP at lower export rates.

NMFS accepts the advice from DOSS and determines that managing CVP/SWP operations is consistent with the intended implementation of Action IV.2.1 and sufficiently protective of listed species present in the Delta at this time.

The fish agencies (FWS, NMFS and DFG) agreed that from their perspective, because of the high flows at Vernalis this year, there is an opportunity to evaluate three export pumping rates and their respective inflow-to-export ratios, and collect 3 data points, at a relatively stable flow at Vernalis during May 1 - June 15. The VAMP is designed to evaluate one export pumping rate per year. The SWP indicated the importance of replenishing depleted surface and groundwater storages that have occurred over the past series of dry years by maximizing the exports in this wet year while meeting all water rights obligations and Biological Opinion OCAP RPA actions for the protection of listed fish species.

The fish agencies, DWR, and Reclamation are willing to work together regarding the use of CVPIA b(2) water associated with the CVP export reductions to implement the VAMP and the NMFS RPA.