

American River Group

Thursday, September 19th, 2019

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Room 302 at the Joint Operations Center

3310 El Camino Ave, Sacramento, CA 95815

Conference Line: 1 (866) 718-0082; Passcode 2620147#

Notes

1) Participants

USBR: Levi Johnson, Spencer Marshall, Peggy Manza, Liz Kiteck, John Hannon, Zarela Guerrero (on the phone)

NMFS: Barb Byrne

CDFW: Mike Healey, Duane Linander

cbec: Chris Hammersmark

Water Forum: Rod Hall (on the phone)

SWRCB: Juliana Spector

SMUD: Arthur Starkovich

PCWA: Ben Barker

PSMFC: Eric Bradbury

East Bay MUD: I-Pei Hsiu

SARA: Felix Smith (on the phone)

Sac State Aquatic Center: DeDe Birch

2) Presentation

Biology of Salmonids in the Lower American River – John Hannon, Fisheries Biologist, USBR Bay-Delta Office

3) Fisheries Update

a) Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Genetic results, which are needed in order to produce the annual Chinook salmon passage estimate, will be completed soon.

b) CDFW

Carcass surveys will begin on or around October 14.

4) Operations Forecast

a) SMUD

Precipitation through September 18 is less than 1". This is about 50% of the

September average of 1.02'.

Combined reservoir storage for Loon Lake, Union Valley and Ice House Reservoirs is 274,760 acre-feet (AF), which is 72% capacity. The storage decreased 2% since last week.

Last year today, storage was at 68% (256,302 AF).

Total capacity of all storage reservoirs is 379,174 AF.

b) PCWA

Storage at French Meadows is 84,000 AF and storage at Hell Hole is 120,000 AF.

Recent storms increased inflow to reservoirs.

Three quarters of the dam raise has been completed. October 15 is the cut off date for the dam raise work.

Recreation out of Oxbow will be provided through September 29.

Routine outage for Oxbow will be from September 30 to November 15.

There will be an outage from October 1 through the October 31 for main stem power generation stations.

c) Central Valley Operations

Fish pickets were installed on September 9. Flows were back up by 1:00 P.M. following a reduction in flow due to weir picket installation.

On September 21 Unit 3 temperature shutters will be placed in configuration 3 (lifted to upper position). Unit 1 will be down for annual maintenance for a few weeks, returning October 11.

Projected end of month storage for September is 700,000 AF.

Temperature excursion in September occurred over a 5-day period beginning on August 12 due to a short heat wave and not enough cold water being released at Folsom Dam.

Currently, there is fairly uniform temperature stratification of Folsom Reservoir. As of September 16, there is approximately 114,000 AF of cold water volume at less than 58 degrees Fahrenheit (F).

90% Exceedance Outlook

Under the 90% exceedance outlook, releases at Folsom Dam for

September and October average 2,800 CFS and about 2,500 CFS respectively. Releases for November and December decrease to about 2,000 CFS.

Under both the 90% and 50% exceedance forecasts, MRR are 1,750 CFS for September, 1,500 CFS for October, and 2,000 CFS for both November and December.

50% Exceedance Outlook

Under the 50% exceedance outlook, releases at Folsom Dam for September average 2,700 CFS. Releases at Folsom Dam for both October and November average about 2,500 CFS, while average releases in December decrease to 2,000 CFS.

5) Temperature Management

a) Central Valley Operations

The latest Automated Temperature Selection Procedure (ATSP) modeling results selected Schedule 19 for September, which calls for 62 degrees F in October for pre-spawning and 58 degrees F in November for spawning.

6) Discussion

a) Reduced November Releases:

Barb Byrne (NMFS) expressed an interest in reducing November releases under the 50% exceedance outlook to about 2,250 CFS to reduce the potential for stranding of fall-run Chinook salmon. Central Valley Operations (CVO) will consider adjusting operations to reduce this risk.

b) American River Operations and Chinook Pre-Spawn Mortality:

CVO was asked if it is feasible to achieve a temperature of 56 degrees F in the fall for spawning Chinook salmon. A decision cannot be made at this time due to uncertainties of coldwater pool (CWP) availability during the timeframe when Chinook typically spawn in the Lower American River. This issue was recommended to be discussed again at the October ARG meeting when temperature profile and modeling results during that timeframe will provide greater certainty of available CWP.

Felix Smith, representing the Save the American River Association (SARA), stated pre-spawn mortality of fall-run Chinook salmon occurs when these fish are holding in or around the Nimbus Basin below Nimbus Dam. This concern was also referenced in Mr. Smith's August 21, 2019 letter to CCAO. He also stated that if they can spawn earlier, pre-spawn mortality may be reduced. Mr. Smith would like to see river temperatures reach 60 degrees F by October 15.

Mike Healey (CDFW) stated that he would like to see river temperatures around October 15 reach 61 degrees F for holding Chinook salmon and 55 degrees F for spawning beginning November 1 and maintained throughout the spawning season given the current volume of CWP in Folsom Reservoir. The intended purpose of reducing water temperatures earlier is to reduce adult female Chinook salmon pre-spawn mortality and improve spawning and egg incubation conditions in river. Mike Healey stated achieving lower river temperatures earlier during the adult holding period may reduce pre-spawn mortality in female Chinook salmon.

Mike Healey asked CVO if power bypass could be executed this year as a tool to maintain temperatures at 55 degrees F in the event that the lowest outlets were to exceed 55 degrees F. CVO stated that the use of power bypass is still in consideration

- c) Chris Hammersmark will be presenting on modeling specific to the Lower American River at the October ARG meeting.

7) Next Meeting: Thursday, October 17, 2019 from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

8) Adjourn