

Sacramento River Temperature Task Group Call
Thursday, June 11, 2015 | 1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

- Craig Anderson, FWS
- Matt Brown, FWS
- Eric Danner, NMFS
- Ken Emanuel, SWRCB
- Tim Hayden, Yurok Tribe
- Bob Hughes, CDFW
- Dan Kratville, CDFW
- Ken Kundargi, CDFW
- Duane Linander, CDFW
- Tom Patton, WAPA
- Joe Pisciotto, CDFW
- Diane Riddle, SWRCB
- Jason Roberts, CDFW
- John Rueth, FWS
- Rich Satkowski, SWRCB
- Jim Smith, FWS
- Stacey Smith, USBR
- Thuy Washburn, USBR
- Garwin Yip, NMFS

Note-taking:

- Michael Larsen, Kearns & West

Key Points

- All observed redds and most observed carcasses are upstream of the Highway 44 Bridge.
- Coleman National Fish Hatchery is commencing a drought-induced early release of half the hatchery's late fall-run Chinook juveniles (all tagged) into the Sacramento River.
- The average daily temperature at the Clear Creek temperature compliance point (TCP) has been hovering around 57 °F for the last five days.
- Receiving no objections from participants, Reclamation will begin a 1,500 acre-foot Clear Creek pulse on June 15th.
- In the interim before forthcoming management decisions about operations, if it appears daily average water temperatures will exceed 58 °F at the Clear Creek TCP, an emergency meeting will be called prior to making operational changes.

Action Items

1. Thuy will issue change order for Clear Creek pulse after this meeting to begin the pulse on June 15th.
2. Thuy will email members of the weekend operations group to request their weekend contact information.
3. Thuy will distribute the meeting notes that Reclamation has, including incorporating one set of edits received.
4. Thuy will distribute the latest temperature profile to the Sacramento River Temperature Task Group (SRTTG).

Key Discussion Topics with Summary of Outcomes and Agreements:

Fisheries Update

Adult winter-run carcass surveys have found 74 carcasses, approximately 68% of which were found above Highway 44, but carcasses float downstream, so is not an accurate indication of the location of spawning. All observed redds are upstream of the Highway 44 Bridge.

Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery has spawned 27 females and 30 males to date, and has another 53 females and 54 males on-hand. Pre-spawn mortalities at the Hatchery have been higher than normal despite water being cooler than last year, likely due to handling from earlier in the season.

Coleman National Fish Hatchery is commencing a drought-induced early release of late fall-run Chinook juveniles into the Sacramento River. A release of late fall-run Chinook this time of year is unprecedented and is in response to unusually high water temperatures and low flows in Battle Creek, with an expectation of worsening conditions. On June 11th and June 12th the hatchery will release 434,000 fish, approximately half the Hatchery population. All fish to be released early have been tagged. These released juveniles are not yet smolts, so they are not expected to go far downstream. The remaining fish in the hatchery will be tagged and released this fall.

Hydrology & Operations Update

Keswick is currently releasing 7,200 cfs. Wilkins Slough is running at 3,800 cfs and dropping.

The water temperature at the Clear Creek TCP is 57.3 °F and has been hovering around 57 °F for the last five days.

Delta pumping at the CVP is at one day on; one day off. Delta outflow is 4,000 cfs and Delta water quality is OK.

John Rueth reminded Reclamation that Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery had requested a small flow of water (100 cfs) through the penstock to maintain water movement and avoid stagnant water.

On June 9th Reclamation experimented with changing unit prioritization for Shasta generators and penstocks, and the TCD weighted average reduced by 1 °F. More time with this prioritization will clarify how much of that cooling is attributable to the change in unit prioritization.

Proposed Clear Creek Pulse Flow

Reclamation plans on a Clear Creek pulse on June 15th but has not yet sent the change order. Reclamation queried the group to learn if any participants had concerns about the pulse.

The purpose of the pulse is to draw spring-run from the Sacramento River to Clear Creek, which is especially valuable given the low flows in other tributaries such as Mill Creek and Deer Creek. This assumes that the fish are better off in Clear Creek than the Sacramento River. Last year this was the case, as Clear Creek temperatures were about 3 °F lower than Sacramento River temperatures during spawning. Clear Creek is 2 °F warmer this year than last, potentially dampening the benefits of the pulse. It is possible that conditions in Clear Creek could become worse. The benefit also greatly depends on how the Sacramento River will be managed, which is pending forthcoming management decisions.

As proposed, the pulse will be about 1,500 acre-feet. The larger pulse in May seemed to be successful in bringing fish out of the Sacramento and into Clear Creek, based on snorkel observations and video monitoring, though these estimates have a high margin of error due to the small number of fish. In the previous two years, pulse flows in June have shown greater benefits than pulse flows performed earlier in the year.

No participants expressed concerns about the proposed pulse flow to begin June 15th. **Action:** They will issue the change order after this meeting to begin the pulse on June 15th.

Compliance Point at Clear Creek

While waiting for forthcoming management decisions about operations, Reclamation understands their direction from NMFS is to not exceed a daily average water temperature of 58 °F at Clear Creek TCP. To accomplish this, Reclamation is maintaining Keswick flows at 7,200 cfs with no shutter changes to conserve cold water.

Other participants shared differing views of how they interpret the direction to Reclamation, some of whom do not understand the direction to define a specific temperature. Participants agreed that if it appears temperatures will exceed a daily average of 58 °F, an emergency meeting will be called prior to making operational changes. Participants clarified that this is not the Sacramento River Temperature Task Group's decision or recommendation, but it is their understanding of previous direction to Reclamation.

There is a subgroup of individuals previously identified to convene by phone if an emergency meeting is called over the weekend.

Action: They will email members of that group to request their weekend contact information.

Other Topics and Future Meetings

SWRCB will likely convene a workshop on June 24th to discuss Sacramento River Temperature Management. Many agencies represented on this call will likely be involved.

SWRCB is exploring providing more public communications about Sacramento River temperature management decisions, such as capturing notes from more meetings (including sub-groups), creating a website, and posting notes to the website.

Action: In response to a request, They will distribute the meeting notes that Reclamation has, including incorporating one set of edits received.

Action: In response to a request, They will distribute the latest temperature profile to the SRTTG.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRTTG is scheduled for June 18th at 1:00 p.m.

Sacramento River Temperature Task Group Meeting

June 11, 2015

1:00 pm

Conference Line: 877-718-6527

Pass code: 1954134

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Fishery update
3. Operation update
4. Clear Creek June 15th Pulse
5. Compliance Point at Clear Creek not to exceed 58 degree (June 5, 2015 email from Maria Rea)
6. Next meeting