

Fish and Water Operations Group Notes

Water Year 2026 – April 1, 2026

Members Attending

- Reclamation – Randi Field, ~~Levi Johnson~~
- DWR – Tracy Hinojosa, ~~Bryant Giorgi~~
- USFWS – Matt Nobriga, ~~Leif Goude~~
- NMFS – Darren Howe
- CDFW – ~~Kristal Davis-Fadtke~~,
- SWRCB – Matthew Holland, Diane Riddle
- NGO – Ashley Overhouse, Devon Pearse,
- PWA – ~~Deanna Sereno, Scott Petersen~~,
- PWA - ~~Chandra Chilmakuri~~, (Acting: Thaddeus Bettner)

Topics/Actions

Approval of Meeting Notes from last week: Approved

Upcoming Meetings

Delta Action Team (DAT, meets weekly on Tuesdays): 03/31/2026

Drought Response Year (DRY) Team:

American River Group (ARG meets monthly on third Thursday, and as needed):

Clear Creek Technical Team (CCT meets quarterly on third Thursday):

Sacramento River Group (SRG) (meets monthly on the fourth Thursday or more often as needed): met on 03/26/2026

Stanislaus Watershed Team (SWT meets monthly on third Wednesday):

Annual Report Team

Shasta Operations Team (SHOT): 04/13/2026

Relevant Assessments

- 20260330 Combined Salmon and Smelt Assessment
- 20260330 Fish and Water Operations Outlook
- 03312026 DAT Notes

- 03312026 Sacramento River Pulse Plan
- 03312026 Stanislaus Step Release Plan

Operational Updates

- CVP: Lewiston Dam releases at 750 cfs (start of elevated baseflow on 3/19 with multiple peaks through mid April, max peaks up to 1,700 cfs). Whiskeytown Dam releases at 275 cfs (decrease on 4/6 to 250 cfs). Keswick Dam releases at 4,000 (increase on 4/6 to 5,000 cfs). Nimbus Dam releases at 1,100 cfs. Goodwin Dam releases at 1,300 cfs (D1641 controlling). Jones Pumping Plant exporting 3,500 cfs (OMRI -5,000 cfs controlling). Federal share of San Luis Reservoir is 770 TAF. Delta Cross Channel is closed (closed on 10/30/25).
- SWP: Feather River (Oroville-Thermalito Complex) releases decreasing from 1,550 to 1,350 cfs today (4/1) (continue step down to 1,050 cfs on 4/4.) Clifton Court Forebay allotment is 600 cfs (ITP condition of 8.12.1 is controlling);. State share of San Luis Reservoir is 1039 TAF.
- Hydrology Update: End of precipitation today with possible precipitation in the northern half of the state in the middle of next week.

Upcoming Actions, Updates or Discussion Items

- Reclamation:
 - No upcoming actions or updates.
 - D1641 March X2 Port Chicago Requirement
 - Action 5: 2.5 Shasta Operations Framework
 - Action 5: 2.14 CVP Water Service and Repayment Contractor Allocation Reductions
 - Sacramento River Spring Pulse Plan
 - Stanislaus River Stepped Release – Spring Pulse Plan
 - American River Spring Pulse
- DWR:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- USFWS:
 - No upcoming actions or discussion items.
 - Larval Delta Smelt Release
- NMFS:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.

- CDFW:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- SWRCB:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- NGO:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- PWA:
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.
- FAWOG
 - No upcoming actions, updates, or discussion items.

Discussion Items

- D1641 March X2

Reclamation and DWR determined March 2026 required 21 days, where 2 days accounted as carryover, yielding 19 active days. Modeling leading up to the end of the requirement period suggested favorable conditions to satisfy the requirement. The daily EC value came in at 2.7 mS/cm, missing the requirement by 0.06 mS/cm. The Projects looked for opportunities for the remaining days of the month, including potential storm events. No favorable conditions were presented. Significant resources would have been required totaling approximately 100 TAF from upstream and approximately 20 TAF from export curtailments. Per protocol, Reclamation and DWR will notify the SWRCB staff via e-mail and follow with a written letter. DWR concurs with update.

NGO representatives have concerns over the Projects missing thresholds.

- Action 5: 2.5 Shasta Operations Framework

Reclamation has determined March as a Bin 2B category, continuing messaging since February. This condition is expected to be updated on a monthly time step with the issue of the CVP Operations Outlooks. Bin B years are intended to increase the priority of storage conservation to address the risk that the ensuing years could be a drought. Given both the 2026 February and March CVP Operations Outlooks, Shasta End of April Storage greater than or equal to 3.0 MAF passes the conditional test for Bin 2, and subcategory B passes the conditional test for End of September storage greater than or equal to 2.0 MAF, for the determination of a Bin 2B. Reclamation is projecting end of April at Shasta at 3.916 MAF and end of September at Shasta at 2.105 MAF.

- Action 5: 2.14 CVP Water Service and Repayment Contractor Allocation Reductions

Reclamation interprets the overall action for the agency to be protective of the end of September Shasta storage. The current year is not an "extremely dry year or multi-year drought" the end of September 2.0 MAF threshold is achieved in the 90% March CVP Operations Outlook. Reclamation interprets this section as at least maintaining a current Bin level if you are under 2B and 3. It is clear, degrading Bin levels would counter the intent of 2.14. There is no expected degradation of Bin levels with the current forecast and there was improvement to the expected end of September Shasta storage volume, therefore, there are no anticipated reductions to allocations. Reclamation is not intending under this section for degradation of Shasta end of September storage/Bin level, due to Spring Pulse actions, to result in reduction of allocations. Rather, Reclamation interprets the intent of the language to prevent storage degradation in the absence of protective actions (e.g., Spring Pulses).

- Sacramento River Spring Pulse

Plan submitted to SRG and FAWOG, Reclamation is seeking feedback from FAWOG membership. Based on feedback from the SRG, pulse start date was adjusted to 4/8.

SRSC understand the need for pulse flows and have supported them in the past. The SRSC have submitted a letter to Reclamation over concerns for the planned spring pulse flow. Shasta is currently in good condition, but inflow has dropped off and potential issues for Winter-run this year. To operate within the criteria of the Biological Opinions, there may be additional pressure for higher releases in the fall, Shasta's storage projection is possible to drop below 2.0 MAF, and SRSC have concerns for that outcome SRSC perspective is a Bin 1 year, looking for 2.4 MAF for end of September storage. If we are not meeting end of September, that would put additional pressure on curtailments for next year. In conjunction with no ongoing discussions for fall operations, the SRSC is going to oppose pulse flows for the spring. SRSC want to avoid repeating 2013 year which saw a reduction in precipitation. SRSC will send out a letter to all agencies and ensure agencies are agreeing on operations of Shasta.

NGO group shares concerns about Shasta storage levels and concerns how discussion of future operations occur in the group. NGO group disagrees on which actions need to be taken and concerned to see SOD allocations increase by 20% with lack of snowpack present. Interesting to see that Reclamation sees a Bin 2 year and might indicate the framework might not work and comply with state law. There is concern about the action that would be triggered and ignored under a Bin 2 and look to agencies to inform this group about this multiagency agreements about voluntary reductions and how that would work overall. Overall worry about the health of the Sacramento River and ramifications for the larger system. Groups are good for informing these decisions. NGO group agrees that a second pulse flow is needed in year like this.

NMFS states their support for this pulse flow and assessing further pulses.

- Stanislaus River Step Release – Spring Pulse Plan

Current proposal at the SWT and FAWOG; requesting feedback from FAWOG membership. Change isn't scheduled until April 11th and feedback would be needed before April 8th.

NMFS states their support for this pulse flow.

- American River Spring Pulse

Plan expected to be submitted later this week; requesting feedback from FAWOG membership by April 7th COB due to power scheduling limitations. This plan and request will come out via email. Any feedback can be provided by email to the group at large.

- Larval Delta Smelt Release

USFWS released ~ 30,000 Delta smelt in the Sacramento River near Sherman Lake. Approximately 3/4 of population was released this morning (4/1). USWFS will follow up next week.

Action Items

- No Action Items.

Elevation Items

- No Elevation Items.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, 2-2:50 p.m.