



Water Operations Management Team Notes

Ad Hoc Meeting March 29, 2024

Members Attending

- Reclamation: Elizabeth Kiteck, Levi Johnson, Dave Mooney
- USFWS: Matt Nobriga, Jana Affonso
- CDFW: Kristal Davis-Fadtke, Josh Grover
- NMFS: Howard Brown, Garwin Yip
- DWR: Molly White, Lenny Grimaldo, Mike Ford
- SWRCB: Matthew Holland

Topics/Actions

- IOP 2024 issued from the Court on 3/28/2024

Upcoming Actions, Updates, and Discussion Items

- Reclamation:
 - Operations under IOP 2024 (See Reclamations Proposed Operations)
 - Usage of Length at Date versus Genetics to evaluate winter-run single year loss threshold.
- FWS:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- CDFW:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- NMFS:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.
- DWR:
 - Operations under IOP 2024

- Spring Delta outflow offramp
 - Recommendation for operations for April 1-3
- SWRCB:
 - No actions, updates, or discussion items.

Discussion Items

- High spring delta outflow offramp is likely to be in effect starting 4/1
- Reclamation proposes updating the Length-At-Date (LAD) identification of winter-run to genetic identification using the GT-seq methodology. This would include adjusting the single-year loss threshold. The genetic-based loss would replace the LAD method for deciding on OMR requirements.
- DWR: Proposes to operate targeting a -2500 cfs OMRI starting 4/1/24 ending 4/3/24, assuming the high flow offramp is met. This will be revisited starting with the SaMT meeting on 4/2/24.
- USFWS: Because the winter-run threshold has already been exceeded, there is no objective justification for SaMT to recommend anything other than the most positive OMR scenario they are asked to consider.
- NMFS: population level effects may not be relevant for the regulatory standards as they are implemented, what we are currently doing is minimizing loss at the facilities and bumping up against the incidental take limit in the 2019 biological opinion (biop). We would not support a proposal that would increase the amount of loss. Need to be thoughtful about changing thresholds from LAD to GT-seq to something other than what is in the biop. The genetic run confirmations may be useful to support decisions but WOMT cannot change the requirement without amendments to biops and ITP.
- CDFW: We need to tease apart the two topics being presented 1) proposal for operations 2) how to evaluate operational scenarios. The proposal is to operate to a threshold not in the Incidental Take Permit (ITP). Reiterated considering genetic run confirmations is okay, but to change loss threshold would require an amendment to the ITP and that cannot be done quickly.
- Reclamation: We are required to seek technical assistance (TA) from NMFS. Reclamation's proposal is to use genetic run identification to recalculate the loss threshold in place of LAD.
- CDFW: ITP has a daily loss threshold. (Reclamation agrees that the 2024 IOP daily loss thresholds apply and clarifies that the concern is the assessment for ITP Condition of Approval (COA) 8.6.1).
- DWR: -2500 cfs OMRI is in consideration of genetic information and continued limit of the footprint (zone of entrainment)
- SWRCB: the ITP analysis to adjust the daily loss threshold to a genetic method involved a rigorous statistical analysis that may not be (re)scalable to an annual time scale.

- CDFW is concerned that we have genetics under rapid assessment only for older juveniles, but not for all Chinook salmon and it is only current through February.
- DWR clarified that genetic information is provided to the SaMT weekly. Coordination with CDFW geneticist indicates fish identified as spring-run are Feather River fall run. DWR to coordinate to ensure information goes to SaMT. Genetic testing is done for all winter-run sized Chinook salmon.
- CDFW: Noted that the items identified for consideration are already incorporated into the CDFW risk assessment.
- CDFW: Our winter-run machine learning salvage prediction tool indicates a high probability of salvage [at OMRI -2500 cfs] that would be inconsistent with minimizing loss.
- DWR noted the tool is based on LAD.
- NMFS supports genetic information for an operations plan but does not support an update to the Incidental Take Level until those thresholds are recalculated using the historical database.
- Reclamation modifies/clarifies the ask to consideration of genetics for single-year loss and for ITP COA 8.6.1.
- NMFS wants to be sure to specify what genetic methods are being used. The method used for analysis in the biological opinion is GT-seq; Reclamation agreed that method is fine with them.

Elevation Items

- Immediate use of genetic run identification information to inform real-time operations under the 2019 100% single-year loss threshold for winter-run and ITP COA 8.6.1 (which is not currently based on genetic identification).
- DWR proposed targeting a -2,500 cfs OMRI for 3 days (April 1-3), citing the high flow offramp. WOMT will reconvene and revisit next Wednesday. Absent the high flow offramp, operations will comply with the 2024 IOP spring outflow and potentially the daily loss threshold (which allows for genetic identification to offramp).

Action Items

- No action items.

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, April 3, 1-1:50pm