

Delta Smelt Working Group Meeting/Conference Call Minutes

April 24, 2006

Participating: Gonzalo Castillo (USFWS), Mike Chotkowski (USBR), Bruce Herbold (USEPA), Tracy Hinojosa (CDWR), Peter Johnsen (USFWS), John Leahigh (CDWR, guest), Ann Lubas-Williams (USBR), Ted Sommer (CDWR), Jim White (CDFG) and Victoria Poage (USFWS, convener and scribe)

For Discussion:

1. Current conditions and monitoring
2. Potential implications of Project operations resulting from current conditions for next years' Project operations

Recommendation for WOMT:

The Working Group did not have a recommendation for WOMT for this week. The Working Group will continue to monitor in-Delta conditions and delta smelt distribution.

1. Survey 3 of the 20-mm Survey and survey 4 of the Spring Kodiak Trawl survey have been completed are now posted to DFG's web site. No delta smelt larvae were collected in the 20-mm survey. No surveys are scheduled for this week.
2. Some members of the Working Group asked for information on how current hydrologic conditions may affect the Projects' long-term operations, particularly with regard to expected export pumping next winter. Winter exports in 2007 could be problematic for pre-spawning adult delta smelt. John Leahigh explained that a 100% allocation means that of the 4.1 million acre-feet of SWP Table A contract amounts, almost all is available to water contractors south of the Delta. Demand may be somewhat depressed because of the wet hydrology, meaning that large amounts of the Table A may be held over into 2007. This may affect San Luis Reservoir operations in a number of ways. If demand increases, with the allocation at 100%, contractors may not require delivery of 6-700 TAF of their Table A until 2007. The more likely scenario is that demand will be affected by this years wet conditions causing suppressed demand and resulting in the SWP filling its share of SLR by late fall as was the case this past year. In the "worst case" (high demand), the contractors would take their Table A as scheduled; even so, State share of SLR would still be fairly full in the fall.

CVP operations would be substantially different from the SWP, in that they have contractors north of the Delta as well as south. Contractors south of the Delta may have some carryover in SLR, but not a lot. The CVP expects its SLR low point to occur in August, but would not expect to fill until spring of 2007. CVP contractors have a limited ability to reschedule 2006 deliveries for 2007 and are discouraged from doing so as it cuts into their subsequent allocation.

At higher allocations, both Projects are essentially demand-driven. Over the next week or so, the SWP expects to pump at a rate ranging from 3500 to 4500 cfs, and expects to

remain within the 5:1 Vernalis flow-to-exports limit recommended for the pre-VAMP period^{1,2} to protect emigrating San Joaquin fall-run chinook. The CVP expects to go to two units tomorrow and hold its exports at about 1650 cfs. Both Projects are presently meeting demands without utilizing San Luis Reservoir. The “extra” pumping at the SWP seen over the weekend has gone to restoring Silverwood Reservoir to its scheduled rate of fill. The 2-day spike in SWP exports over the weekend was due to low pumping at the CVP and to favorable energy prices. Long-range weather trends indicate above-normal temperatures, with very low precipitation in the forecast.

WY 2006 will not likely represent a maximum of Delta exports, because of wet conditions causing delayed and/or reduced irrigation demand and availability of other sources of water suppressing demand for SWP supply. A maximum delivery year would most likely occur in an average year following a wet year. The reason being that Project supply would be good with average year hydrology and high carry over storage coming off of the wet year allowing for a large allocation. In average year types demand for SWP supplies would be maximized because of the lack of alternative supplies that are ordinarily available in very wet years. This year is shaping up to look more like 1998, with more water in the San Joaquin Valley than can be used or stored.

In the long run, it is unlikely that contractors’ carryover water would affect Project exports. However, over the next couple of months, SWP contractors are more likely to be concerned with having too much water. SWP demand could remain stable if the weather stays relatively cool and the melt is slow; demand could also increase if the weather turns hot, although if temperatures are too warm causing a rapid snow melt this could result in problems with too much water thereby reducing overall SWP demand. The CVP would prefer to have an agreement in place with the SWP prior to any opportunities for surcharging into the other’s share of San Luis Reservoir.

Exports during the VAMP period were expected to be determined at tomorrow’s WOMT meeting.

Action Items:

None.

Next Scheduled Conference Call: As needed; the regular Monday call time remains reserved.

Submitted,
VLP

¹ San Joaquin River Agreement Appendix A, March 20, 1998 guidance for SJR flows exceeding 15,000 cfs (page 6)

² Anadromous Fish Restoration Program Draft Justification of 1997 Delta Flow and Habitat Objectives using CVPIA Tools [Section 3406(b)(1)(B), (b)(2), (b)(3)], October 25, 1996, prioritizes a 5:1 flow-to-export ratio for the pulse flow period in wet years (page 1)