

## Delta Smelt Working Group Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2005

Participating: Mike Chotkowski (USBR), Gonzalo Castillo (USFWS), Bruce Herbold (USEPA), Matt Nobriga (CDWR), Kevin Fleming (CDFG), Ryan Olah (USFWS), Victoria Poage (USFWS)

Guests: Tracy Hinojosa and Kevin Sun from DWR presented the results of the particle tracking modeling

### Agenda:

1. Review initial PTM runs and discuss potential spring fish actions
2. Discuss BJ Miller's e-mailed material on this year's smelt situation
3. Other items?

Background: As a result of the March 10 meeting, the DSWG requested Particle Tracking Modeling to inform a recommendation to WOMT for potential spring fish actions (a pre-VAMP shoulder, VAMP both with and without a HORB, post-VAMP shoulder). Insertion points were chosen based upon 20-mm Survey sampling.

### Recommendation for WOMT:

The Group did not make a recommendation for spring actions at this time; however, we discussed needs for additional particle tracking modeling, to be done ASAP to inform potential actions should the 20-mm survey detect substantial numbers of larvae in the South Delta.

1. Review of initial PTM runs: Tracy Hinojosa and Kevin Sun joined the DSWG and provided the results of the initial PTM runs. Eighty-three percent of particles released at Cache Slough were entrained into agricultural diversions within 24 hours in both the base case and at 1500 cfs, with 84% entrained by May 20. Ninety-five percent of particles released at Rio Vista passed Chipps Island in the base case, compared with 100% passing at 1500 cfs. In criteria set by the DWSG at the March 10 meeting, it was determined that differences in the fate of particles in the base case versus exports held to a combined 1500 cfs would need to be in excess of 30% in order for the group to recommend an early action (April 1-14). Thus no early action was recommended. Modeling of the "gates open continuous" versus standard CCF operations has not yet been completed.

It important to note that, despite the lack of a recommended action, the consensus of the DWSG was that concern for delta smelt remained high. In addition to the record low FMWT index, the Spring Kodiak Trawl has collected very small numbers of fish compared to past years (comparing Survey #3, in 2002 n=238, 2003 n=373, 2004 n=196, 2005 n=27). This, combined with Delta water temperatures, may be indicative of an early cessation of spawning. Young delta smelt have not yet been seen at the SWP and

CVP, but at this time they would be too small to be readily detected if they were retained in the sample. The second week of 20-mm sampling began today.

Because of the changed situation with the VAMP, the PTM that the DSWG originally requested was not performed (see notes, 10 March 2005). Flows on the San Joaquin River in April are expected to be in excess of the 5000 cfs that CDWR considers safe for construction of the barrier, making it unlikely that the HORB could be installed. However, the VAMP biologists intend to release and recapture marked fish, and have pushed the start date back to May 1, hoping that flows on the SJR tributaries will be more stable by then. The DSWG asked for additional PTM, as follows:

- Add release points on the San Joaquin River
  1. SJR at Twitchell Island
  2. Old River at Holland Tract
  3. Turner Cut
- Re-run Cache Slough and Rio Vista release points

Each release point will be evaluated at the export base case versus 1500 cfs combined. DWR modelers will update the hydrology to reflect the latest information, and will use May-minimum agricultural diversions. The DSWG will discuss the PTM outcomes via e-mail.

2. Bruce Herbold requested that the DSWG formulate an expectation with regard to the Summer Tow Net Survey, based on a number of factors, including the 2004 FMWT, the 20-mm Survey, the apparent number of spawning days, the number of days of X2, and the spawner/recruit relationship. Gonzalo Castillo and Matt Nobriga will independently make estimates for the group to review at its next meeting. The DSWG will also review BJ Miller's material for discussion at the next meeting.

Action Items:

1. USFWS staff will bring the results of today's discussion to the DAT and the WOMT.
2. Matt and Gonzalo will work on expectations for the STN.
3. All will review BJ Miller's data.

Next meeting time and place: TBA

Submitted,  
VLP