Mid-Pacific Region
Delta Cross Channel

The Delta Cross Channel (DCC), located in Walnut Grove, California, is a feature of the Reclamation's Central Valley Project Delta Division. It is operated by the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority. The DCC is a controlled diversion channel on the left bank of the Sacramento River, about 30 miles downstream of Sacramento. The DCC diverts water from the Sacramento River into a branch of the Mokelumne River.

The Delta Mendota Cross Channel.

Background

On January 12, 1945, Reclamation announced the final location for the DCC on a route that follows the plan chosen by the state of California's Chief Engineer. The channel and its gates were completed in 1951.

The channel is key to maintaining water quality balance with the transfer of controlled releases from northern Central Valley Project storage reservoirs, such as Shasta and Folsom, to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and to the headworks of the Delta-Mendota and Contra Costa canals.

When the gates are open, fresh water is drawn from the Sacramento River to Snodgrass Slough and the Mokelumne River for a distance of 15 miles to the San Joaquin River, then another 35 miles through Old and Middle rivers to the C.W. "Bill" Jones Pumping Plant intake channel. The water is used to combat salt water intrusion in the Delta, dilute local pollution, and improve the quality of irrigation supplies in the Central Valley.

Reclamation closes the control gates of the Delta Cross Channel during high water to prevent flood stages in the San Joaquin section of the Delta. After the flood danger passes, Reclamation opens the gates to allow Sacramento River water through to the Jones Pumping Plant.

The channel is 6,000 feet long, and has a bottom width of 210 feet and a capacity of 3,500 cubic feet per second (cfs). The gates extend about 245 feet across the channel. Two radial gates, each 60 x 30 feet and weighing a total of 243 tons, open to allow water to flow down the channel, or close to prevent endangered fish species from being drawn into the interior Delta.

Operating Criteria

The Delta Cross Channel gates are operated in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1641, and June 2009 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion on the Long-term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, as follows:

U.S. Department of the Interior
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- From October 1 through January 31: The gates are closed for fisheries protection as requested by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and California Department of Fish & Game (DFG).
- From February 1 through May 15: The gates are closed.
- From May 16 through June 15: The gates are closed for a total of 14 days for fisheries protection as requested by the FWS, NOAA, and DFG.

The Cross Channel gates in the raised position.

  Whenever possible, the gates will be open on the weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and on the Memorial Day weekend, but this is not guaranteed.
- From June 16 through September 30: The gates are generally open, but this is not guaranteed due to Fishery experiments that may occur, which would require intermittent closures.
- High flows on the Sacramento River, unforeseen fishery protection actions or water quality compliance in the Delta may necessitate a short - term closure. Reclamation standing operating procedures call for gate closure when flow on the Sacramento River reaches the 20,000 to 25,000 cfs range.

Though there are agreements and schedules that state when the gates will be opened or closed, it is important to verify the status of the gates prior to your trip. Unfortunately, there are a number of situations that could affect the status of the gates. For up-to-date information on the cross channel gates, please visit Reclamation's Central Valley Operations office website at:
http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/dcc_chng.txt

For More Information:
MP Region Public Affairs
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www.usbr.gov/mp

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