San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Fishery Management Work Group
Technical Feedback Group Meeting

Tuesday, December 9, 2008
California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, California

Meeting Summary

Attendees

Paul Adelizi	California Department of Fish and Game
Steve Chedester	San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority
Brian Colleran	San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
Matt Cover	California State University, Stanislaus
Ane Deister	SJRRP Restoration Administrator
Ron Forbes	NCCFFF Director
Margarita Gordus	California Department of Fish and Game
Jason Guignard	FISHBIO
Zac Jackson	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Abimael Leon	CA Department of Water Resources
Bill Luce	Friant Water Users Authority
Jason May	U.S. Geological Survey
Jeff McLain	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Steve Ottemoeller	Friant Water Users Authority
Monty Schmitt	Natural Resources Defense Council
Kim Webb	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ali Gasdick	CH2M HILL

Introductions and Meeting Purpose

Ali Gasdick welcomed the meeting attendees and led introductions of those present (see list above). The purpose of today's meeting was three-fold:

1. Update the Technical Feedback Group on the Program status;
2. Discuss approach to fisheries study needs for the Interim Flow period;
3. Begin discussing genetics management, the reintroduction strategy, population goals, and proposed genetic study concepts.

Program Update

Ali Gasdick provided an update on the status of implementation of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP).

Interim Flows Fisheries Study Needs

Jeff McLain provided an overview of the possible fisheries study needs for the Interim Flow period. The Interim Flow release period is intended to provide a forum for the collection of relevant data to guide implementation of the SJRRP. Assuming that the Program-related legislation is enacted, the Interim Flows will begin in October 2009 and continue through

2013. From a fisheries management perspective, Interim Flows can be used to verify components of the conceptual models and gather data on a variety of physical and biological processes that could affect the successful implementation of the Settlement's Restoration Goal.

The following feedback was provided by attendees with regard to the Interim Flows fisheries study needs:

- Data collection during the Interim Flows may be limited by hydrologic conditions and resulting water year type;
- Monitoring water quality in Reach 1 should be considered to verify spawning and incubation condition assumptions;
- Monitoring of fisheries and physical conditions that may affect fisheries downstream of Reach 5 on the mainstem San Joaquin River and the tributaries should also be conducted during the Interim Flow period.

A meeting attendee requested additional information on the hydrologic modeling effort and associated assumptions including the approach to modeling floodplain habitat and potential floodplain impacts. It was noted that a separate, focused modeling meeting is being considered. Based on a question from an attendee, it was noted that the process for translating Interim Flow study needs into study plans is currently being developed.

Genetic Management

Jeff McLain provided an overview of the possible genetics management study components, possible methods for establishing population goals, and the genetics study concepts. The Program's genetic management goals include the protection and promotion of genetic diversity, safe-guarding against negative genetic effects, and the promotion of species abundance, spatial structure and diversity. Genetics management is anticipated to play a role in determining population goals, formulating the reintroduction strategy, and other Program data needs such as artificial propagation methods, evaluating Program performance and determining viable salmon population criteria.

The following feedback was provided by attendees with regard to the genetics management:

- Genetics management should consider salmon runs in the San Joaquin River tributaries, including reducing or avoiding potential impacts on the genetic diversity of these runs. This could include different future uses and management actions at the Hills Ferry Barrier during both Interim and Restoration Flows. It was also noted the current barrier is designed for a limited flow regime and any future changes in flows at the barrier may require the consideration of different or modified barrier designs;
- The presence and effects of non-native predators should also be considered in the genetics management studies. There may be ways to control non-native predators at downstream areas (such as Hills Ferry Barrier) or to make conditions less favorable for these species;
- Stock selection should be considered early in the study needs.

Based on a question from a meeting attendee, it was noted that future genetic management actions do not preclude the use of a fish hatchery.

Next Steps and Future Meetings

Jeff McLain and Ali Gasdick thanked the meeting attendees for their participation and valuable feedback. The next meeting will be on January 16, 2009, at Cal State Stanislaus. A meeting attendee suggested that a future Technical Feedback Meeting address the possible fisheries real-time data needs and decision-making process.

Contact Ali Gasdick at 916.286.0373 or alicia.gasdick@ch2m.com with questions or suggestions for future meeting topics.

The meeting presentation and related project materials will be posted on the project website (www.restoresjr.net).