Restoration Administrator Flow Recommendation

To: Don Portz, Chad Moore, David van Rijin, Regina Story

cc: Rain Emerson, Rufino Gonzalez, Gary Bobker, Steve Ottemoeller, Ian Buck-Macleod, TAC, FWC

Date: April 28, 2025

From: Tom Johnson, Restoration Administrator

Subject: Updated Recommendation for 2025 Restoration Flows

The following is a Restoration Flow Recommendation (Recommendation) by the Restoration Administrator (RA) for the 2025 Restoration Year Flows pursuant to the Restoration Flow Guidelines (RFG) Ver. 2.1, as amended, and Exhibit B of the Settlement.

Background

The SJRRP has issued an Updated 2025 Restoration Allocation (Allocation) dated March 17, 2025, which designates 2025 as a **Normal-Dry** Water Year Type with an Unimpaired Inflow hybrid forecast of 1,367 thousand acre-feet (TAF) and provides an allocation of Restoration Flows of 272.182 TAF as measured at Gravelly Ford (GRF) based on the 50% exceedance forecast. The Allocation also specified certain contractual and operational constraints on Restoration Flow releases for 2025.

The March 27, 2025, Recommendation was provisionally approved by Reclamation, and it appears that Millerton Reservoir management strategies will continue to maintain the reservoir in a controlled state (e.g. no Uncontrolled Season required to manage reservoir volume). Therefore, this Recommendation generally matches the March 27, 2025 Recommendation.

I have consulted with the TAC and the FMWG on this Recommendation, and this Recommendation reflects the best use of the Allocation of Restoration Flows for the fisheries resources at this time.

Recommendation for the 2025 Restoration Year

At this time, I am recommending a flow schedule for the 2025 Restoration Year as shown in Table 1, and as follows:

1. Maintain connectivity of the lower San Joaquin River below EBM until at least late May at a flow that will encourage adult spring-run Chinook salmon migration at least as far upstream as EBM. Hopefully, given a wetter water year and successful juvenile releases in 2023, adult spring-run Chinook salmon returns this year will be higher than the past couple of years.
2. Reduce Restoration Flows from the end of May through October to preserve cold-water pool in Millerton Reservoir to support adult spring-run Chinook salmon holding, spawning, and egg incubation.
3. No exchanges or buffer flows are called upon at this time.
4. Additionally, the fall pulse will likely be deployed in November and December to support a river science experiment.

Given the remaining uncertainty as to Restoration Year hydrology, I anticipate additional adjustments to this Recommendation in the coming months. In particular, should runoff or cold-water pool conditions dictate, further reductions in summer flows may be enacted to conserve cold-water pool until the beginning of adult spring-run Chinook salmon spawning and egg incubation season.

No Restoration Flow recapture other than de-minimus amounts are planned in the Restoration Area. All Restoration Flow releases are to flow through the entirety of the Restoration Area. If there are operational or other constraints that preclude Restoration Flows traveling the entire length of the Restoration Area, the Restoration Recommendation will be adjusted to reduce Restoration Flow releases to the level of the controlling operational constraint.

Table 1. Summary of Restoration Flow Recommendations for March 27, 2025, through February 28, 2026.

Restoration Flow Period	Date Range	Objective	Friant Release (est., varies due to Holding Contracts)	Restoration Flows at Gravelly Ford	Total Flow at Gravelly Ford[1]	Target Restoration Flow at Sack Dam (est.)
2025 Spring Flex. Flow Period[3]	April 23 – April 29, 2025	Ramp down to steady-state May flow	Follow ramp down schedule as per Table 2. Program to coordinate with dam operations for daily changes.			
	April 29–May 28, 2025	Steady-state May Spring Run attraction and trapping flow	Estimated 525 cfs	310 cfs	315 cfs	205 cfs
Summer Flow (Enhanced Base Flow)	May 29–September 30, 2025	River connectivity	As necessary, est. 410 cfs	180 cfs	185 cfs	90 cfs
Base Flow	October 1–31, 2025	Spring run spawning and egg incubation	As necessary, est. 400 cfs	190 cfs	195 cfs	100 cfs
Base Flow[2]	November 1–30, 2025	Connected river, spring run egg incubation.	As necessary, est. 420 cfs	230 cfs	235 cfs	135 cfs
	December 1–31, 2025	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 440 cfs	285 cfs	290 cfs	190 cfs
Base Flow	January 1– February 28, 2026	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 400 to 410 cfs	250 cfs	255 cfs	157 cfs

1 Total Flow includes the minimum Holding Contract flows of 5 cfs required at Gravelly Ford
2 Fall Pulse Flow may be added during this period to support a river science experiment at Chowchilla Bifurcation Structure
3 March 1 through May 28 flows are as per Flexible Flow period rules, see RFG 2.1, Sec 4.1.2

Table 2. April Ramp Down, April 28, 2025, through April 29, 2025. Includes Changes at Friant Dam and Assumed Transit Times to GRF and SDP

Draft Spring 2025 Ramp-down Plan (4/28 update)						
Date	**Day**	**Friant Dam Change (cfs)**	**Friant Dam Change Time**	**GRF Flow, with Transit Time (cfs)**	**SJB Flow, with Transit Time (cfs)**	**Sack Dam Flow, with Transit Time (cfs)**
April 28	Monday			315	235	185
April 29	Tuesday			315	235	185
April 30	Wednesday			315	235	185

Additional Elements of this Recommendation

This Recommendation anticipates the release of approximately 212 TAF of Restoration Flows to the river, leaving approximately 56 TAF of Unreleased Restoration Flows (URFs). **No URFs are released at this time. All URFs are retained until the runoff forecast becomes clearer.**

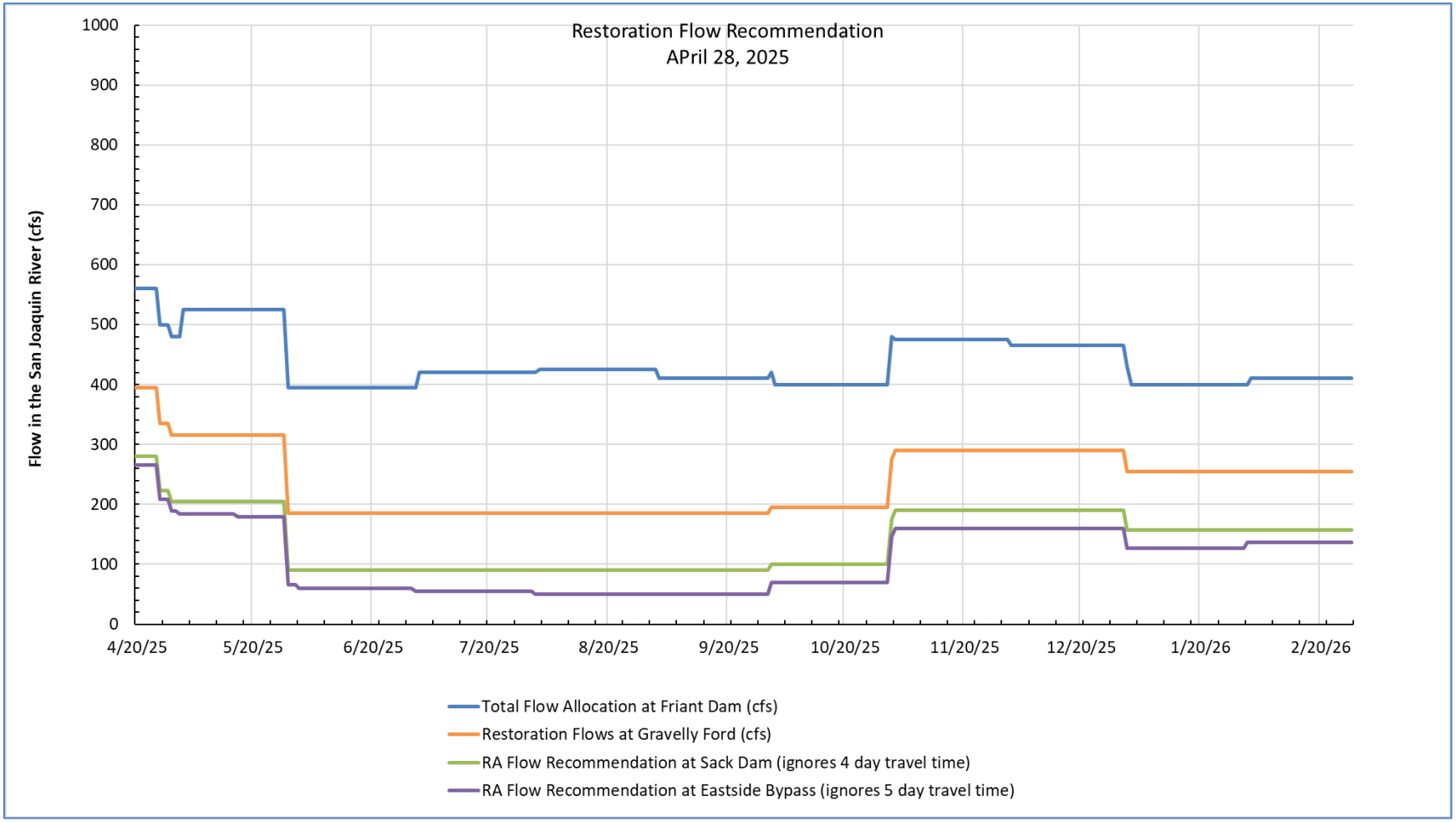
Depending on changing hydrologic and operations conditions, I will adjust or revise this Recommendation as necessary.

Additional Consultation

I will continue to coordinate with the TAC, Program Office, and Implementing Agencies to monitor hydrologic conditions, fish population conditions, uncontrolled season releases, operational conditions, and other factors, and will update the Restoration Flow Recommendation as conditions change.

Table 3. Summary Volumes

Gravelly Ford Flows Available Versus RA Recommendation	**Available**	**Used**	**Balance**
Total GRF River Flow Target without 5 cfs (March 1, 2024–February 28, 2025):	272.182 TAF	215.496 TAF	56.686 TAF
Restoration Allocation Flow	**272.182 TAF**	**216.468 TAF**	**55.714 TAF**
Exchange Flow	0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF	**0.000 TAF**
Buffer Flows	0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF	**0.000 TAF**
	URFs Disposed of as of	**1/15/2025**	**0.000**
Use Buffer Flows? no		**Net Alloc Remainder**	**55.714 TAF**


Restoration Flow Recommendation
APril 28, 2025
Flow in the San Joaquin River (cfs)
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
4/20/25
5/20/25
6/20/25
7/20/25
8/20/25
9/20/25
10/20/25
11/20/25
12/20/25
1/20/26
2/20/26
Total Flow Allocation at Friant Dam (cfs)
Restoration Flows at Gravelly Ford (cfs)
RA Flow Recommendation at Sack Dam (ignores 4 day travel time)
RA Flow Recommendation at Eastside Bypass (ignores 5 day travel time)