

Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee

Don Pedro Project – FERC License 2299

Modesto Irrigation District
Turlock Irrigation District
City & County of San Francisco
California Department of Fish & Wildlife
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

10 DECEMBER 2020 AT 9:30 AM

VIA ZOOM

SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Participants made self-introductions

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

- Review/revise agenda – No changes.
- Approved notes from September 2020 meeting
- Items since last meeting –
 - Patrick – Gretchen had asked at the last meeting about the incidental observations of the striped bass outside of the survey area. There is a fly fishing guide on the Tuolumne 2-3 days a week all year. Those routine incidental observations by a professional would be invaluable to the group. I will invite him to attend future meetings.
 - Allison – Bobcat Flatt III, plan on breaking ground hopefully in June and some flood plain fence removal this winter.
 - J.D. – hopes to get his permits for Bobcat Flat III out of the way before his vacation.
 - Patrick – Working on flow schedule, we do have some carry over interpolation water that we had scheduled for some time in February. It needs to be timed and shaped appropriately by the flow group.
 - Patrick – Turlock Lake State Recreation Area Campground is no longer managed by American Leisure, TID has taken over temporarily. The gates are locked to the campground and the lake is still accessible. Consultants and Agencies still have access.

3. MONITORING/REPORTS:

- Jason Guignard – Fall run - power point
- J.D. – Mokelumne River has been down as well. Any thoughts of the November fish coming into the Tuolumne.
- Noah – the typical peak is the first week of November.
- J.D. – spawning is typically the 2nd week of November.
- Gretchen – yes, typically Veteran's Day week for spawning
- Jason – Typically we have a 2nd wave of fish, might be a little bit more obvious this year because there were so few fish early on in the season. It may also be the weather, temps were in the 80's and we didn't really have those cooler overnight temps into November. There was a similar pattern on the Stanislaus and numbers have been down across the basin. It sounds like Merced won't even have fish available for studies this year.
- Gretchen – Merced #'s are low and in the Sacramento as well. Lowest precipitation to date in Modesto.

- J.D. requested that temps be added to the middle and lower river data on Jason's graphs.
- Jason – have looked at it, temps at the weir have been consistent with previous years. It has been a lot warmer than a typical November.
- Patrick – When the 1st fish were recorded on the Tuolumne weir, the Modesto gauge read 75 degrees.
- Wayne to forward the article regarding car tires and mortality as far as spawning to the group
- Patrick – car tires might have a great influence on pre-spawn mortality throughout the central valley. This could lead to fewer eggs in the system and fewer returns. Additionally they have found that the fry and alevins are not up and feeding due to vitamin B deficiencies and they have been experimenting on ways to mitigate for that during fertilization in the hatcheries.
- Roger – Twenty years ago, a Dr. who worked for the Bay Institute was doing studies on higher pollution in the bay. Steel belted radial tires leave a residue on the roads which then gets flushed into the bay causing a lot of problems, not a new issue.
- J.D. – They have been working on this for about 20 years and the reason that it has hit the radar again now is that they have pinpointed the actual chemical and apparently it is something from the tire, that in the environment, changes composition to become more deadly. Most of the work has been done in the Seattle area on Coho. We don't have a good handle on what's going on down here yet.
- Roger – When he was studying at the Bay Institute, the Dr. that lead the seminar said that whatever is in the steel belted radials that deposits out when the tires wear down on the roads, gets flushed out and they were studying the impact of that on organisms in the bay.
- J.D. – There is a preservative that has been put on tires that is the culprit. About 10 years ago they did a study where they took the 1st flush water, put fish in it and they all died. Then they took the 1st flush water and ran it through a sand filter and there was no problem for the fish at all. One of the things that would be helpful for us to do is to slow it and sink it. Anytime we can put the runoff into a retention basin and make it flow through the ground and then back into the river channel that will clean up a lot of those potential problems.
- Roger – years ago on the west side of the San Joaquin, the sedimentation basins that some farmers put in to keep the pesticides from getting into the river were the same principal.
- Chris Guptill – There are several places that he would describe as unabated runoff directly into the river. One of them is along the Cal Trans property on the east side of 99 as it approaches Zeff Rd. It is a giant culvert full of refrigerators, tires, encampments, garbage, etc., and there is nothing to stop it. Once it goes under the pipe under Zeff Rd, it just spills out into the flood plain area above the river. It will always eventually, with either storms or high flows, go into the river. The other area is on both sides of the 9th Street Bridge. The culverts that wash out from the south side of the river, directly purge into the river with nothing to abate them at all. When they did the dam work they reconfigured the south bank a bit with a uniform look. With the first rains, a gorge was eaten into that, especially on the east side of the Bridge where it is always full of trash. Another issue is Dry Creek itself. At all points of the creek there are all kinds of debris and garbage that will spill out with the first rain and will go directly into the river with nothing to stop it. They have cleaned up a lot of tires but there are currently tires in the river in various places. It is hard to get "in" the river work done because they have been dealing with the banks so much.
- Patrick – Would like to help get that mapped out properly
- Chris Diviney – he sees a lot of tires floating over, coming down the river. There aren't a lot of major inputs into the river on the sections he is doing
- Gretchen – Ron Zanker is habitually removing tires.
- J.D. – previously on the Stanislaus in the winter when the fall run were out and a rain event was going on, the water was coming off of Hwy 120 in a milky gray color. He took a D.O. probe over and the D.O. was zero. He thinks we have potential issues with road runoff and impact not just from tire chemicals but also low D.O., nutrient input or possible pesticide residue from urban areas. It might be worthy of us thinking more about when we get into the restoration piece of things. Maybe giving a harder look at some of the water quality data. Maybe Chris Carr could touch base with Steve Louie and his shop who have done a lot of contamination work and might be able to dredge up the available information for the Tuolumne.

- Chris Guptill – There is an outfall on the north side at the 7th Street Bridge that essentially drains downtown Modesto. Whenever they have a festival with wristbands, the wristbands come out of that drain pipe. It is a large outfall that has a big metal grate. Maybe one of the catch bags to go over the outfall would help a little bit. Also, at the trailer park there is a truck chassis in the river channel that needs to be removed.
- J.D. - do the drains in Modesto have the signage that states that this drains into the river?
- Chris Guptill – they are mainly in residential areas.
- J.D. – would it be worth having someone look into a small grant to purchase more signage?
- Chris Guptill – could possibly partner with waste water and treatment, he will check in with them.
- Jason – wrapped up Redd surveys with 10 or fewer fish a day and saw a drop off in active spawning on the river. Ended the Redd surveys the 1st week of December. They captured the peak of spawning but with the current COVID numbers it is difficult to get crews to the site. They are now going to focus on continuing the weir and prepping for installing and operating the screw trap. They will continue operating the weir as long as flows allow and get the screw trap deployed early in January. The plan is to begin staining in late January with a 2 man crew taking separate trucks.
- Wayne – Snorkel Survey results slight revision, 2 of the fish at Tuolumne River Resort were split into appropriate size categories.
- Pat – Thermograph downloads on TAC website, daily average min/max. Pat to send to Jason & Chrissy so they can add the data to the master list to post to the website. Two dates still being looked at. Pat put in a request and hasn't received a response yet.
- Gretchen – TAC website the most recent flow schedule is not posted
- Jason - Data Tab is up to 10 years old and they will update it in the next few weeks as well as the flow schedule.
- Pat – The flow schedule will change again soon with a pulse volume held in February.

4. FLOW OPERATIONS:

- Pat – Watershed status, pretty dry, last 90 days not even an inch
- Gretchen – heard driest year to date
- Pat – forecast 22", will schedule the sub-committee to discuss the February interpolation water; it needs to be used by 04/14/21.
- J.D. – looking to borrow some interpolation water to put down in the last 2 weeks of February which is another 6,000 acre feet. With so few adults this year we may not be saturated with juveniles.
- Pat – the numbers are low but he has seen quite a few fish spawning.
- J.D. – might be best to stack the interpolation water up on the front end of the April pulse.
- Gretchen – we have done that before but recommend that we hold off on any final decisions about that until the wet season.
- J.D. – with such little water, I just wanted to get people thinking about it.
- Gretchen – believes Merced has an allocated pulse flow volume for the spring, doesn't recall what it is.
- Pat – would coordinating all three be possible?
- J.D. – the SWT meeting is in February to coordinate and he is always happy to have a discussion.
- Jason– Waterford working the 1st week of January and then Grayson
- Pat – Infiltration Gallery work began November 30th with expectation to be able to use in 2023
- Roger – this is a project that TID began in 1986 and we finally reached an agreement in 2015. He appreciates the continued support for the project from CDFW and UFW and others.
- Pat – there is a lot of concern regarding how much water will come down the river until it reaches the gallery and how much after the gallery. Will keep the group posted.

- Roger – they have the horizontal directional technique that they are pushing for if there is a second gallery constructed.

5. AGENCY/NGO UPDATES:

- Chris – surveys seeing pretty much the same thing as Fishbio, winding down, ending around the last week in December. Wanted to check to see if there were any power outages around Nov. 19th in La Grange, a big pulse of water and about 50 Chinook came through the weir. Have been able to pass the bridge construction @ Hickman.
- Pat will check on any outages
- Jason – they have been stopping at the Waterford Park, just above the bridge construction.

6. ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

7. NEXT MEETING DATE: MARCH 11, 2021

TRTAC Meeting Attendees

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1.	Patrick Maloney	TID
2.	Dana Ortolan	TID
3.	Roger Masuda	TID
4.	Gretchen Murphey	CDFW
5.	Chris Diviney	CDFW
6.	J.D. Wikert	USFWS
7.	Stephanie Millsap	USFWS
8.	Brooke Watkins	DWR
9.	Stacey Smith	NOAA
10.	Allison Boucher	TRC
11.	Dave Boucher	TRC
12.	Peter Drekmeier	TRT
13.	Noah Hume	SWS
14.	Wayne Swaney	SWS
15.	Jason Guignard	Fishbio
16.	Jeff Borum	ESRCD
17.	Gordon Enas	MID
18.	Reyn Akinoa	River Partners
19.	Chris Guphill	9 2 99 Group
20.	Chris Carr	Waterboard
21.	Stacie Fejtek	Waterboard