

April 3, 2019

Mr. Ernest A. Conant, Regional Director  
Mid Pacific Region - Bureau of Reclamation  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: American River Folsom Operations

Dear Mr. Conant:

This year has been a very good water year. As of March 1, the forecast of runoff for the American River Basin is 3,710,000 acre feet. The month of April with additional snow and rain, the runoff for the American River Basin should be greater.

Irrigated agriculture will benefit. Ground water recharge will benefit. Dry land farming should benefit. The water quality of the Delta should improve as high water cleansed the Delta, especially the south Delta. Hydro power will benefit. All reservoirs are nearly full or full to benefit their beneficiaries.

How does the Bureau of Reclamation plan to operate Folsom Reservoir this summer and fall months to improve conditions to benefit Chinook salmon and steelhead of the American River?

As a suggestion, the Bureau should prioritize the protection and propagation of Chinook salmon and steelhead. Lets try to reduce the pre-spawning mortality of the Chinook salmon run. A review of Chinook salmon spawning escapement data for the American River since 2001 shows pre-spawning mortality of 10 percent (2008) to 67 percent in (2001). The lowest per-spawning mortality occurred in 2009 at 4 percent and 6 percent in 2011, years of very modest runs. The Bureau seems to wave off mortalities of 12 to 20 percent as normal. Pre-spawning mortality in the range of more than 5 percent is uncalled for and unacceptable. The heaviest mortality occurs during the early portion of the spawning season and gradually decreases.

Therefore lets make an effort to get 59 to 60 DF by mid October and to remain at or below such temperature. Stream flow should be in the range of 1900 to 2400 cfs. This should reduce the holdover time for adults and encourage spawning to reduce mortality. The earlier the adults spawn the sooner young can move out on winter freshets.

I and the Save the American River Association, the fishing and environmental communities has been waiting for such improvement since the 1992 passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act.

Sincerely

Felix E. Smith  
4720 Talus Way,  
Carmichael, CA 95608  
Save the American River Association, Member of the ARG since 1991

cc: CDFW, USFWS, NOAA, State Water Board, Dan Bacher

SARA Bureau ltr 419.