News Release

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

Mid-Pacific Region
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Final Environmental Assessment Available for 2014 San Joaquin River Juvenile Salmon Trap and Transport Study

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The Bureau of Reclamation today released the Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact on a proposed trap-and-haul study to move juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon downstream of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program's Restoration Area, where no migration barriers exist.

The effort will evaluate the feasibility of implementing similar rapid response actions in the future, and monitor fish movements in certain areas of the San Joaquin River during a "Critical Low" hydrologic water-year, as defined by the Restoration Settlement, where no flow pulses are available to cue juvenile salmon to downstream migration in already low water conditions.

The action supports the Restoration Settlement by studying the feasibility of taking adaptive management action to respond to unsuitable environmental conditions. In the fall of 2013, more than 360 adult fall-run Chinook salmon were translocated into the upper river and nearly 70 spawning redds (nests where eggs were laid) were documented. The successful outmigration of juvenile salmon is critical for survival to adulthood and to support the goal of the Restoration Program to restore Chinook salmon to the San Joaquin River. Factors determining successful outmigration include suitable water temperatures, adequate and timely flow for downstream movement, and a passable watercourse, none of which are available in some of the reaches of the Restoration Area due to the "Critical Low" hydrologic water year. If successful, similar actions could be used in the future with salmon in critical low hydrologic water years.

To capture fish, temporary fence weirs will be installed in two locations on the San Joaquin River: Within one mile downstream of the Highway 41 Bridge, and Scout Island. The fence weirs will be constructed from bank to bank, using wire mesh panels and supporting metal posts leading to a collection box. In addition, temporary fish collection netting will be installed at Donnie Bridge and a rotary screw trap temporarily installed at Ledger Island Bridge.

Temporary fish collection structures will include flashing lights and flagging to alert boaters. As appropriate, temporary fence weirs will include a removable panel marked with bright paint and signage to direct boaters and allow for motorboat passage. Reclamation will place signage to alert boaters of the temporary fish collection structures upstream and downstream of the temporary fish collection structures, and at Fresno Sportsmen's Club, Fort Washington Campground, Sycamore Island, and Friant Dam Landing.

Juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon trap and haul activities will occur from mid-February through May 2014, depending on hydrologic conditions. Following completion of the study, fish collection structures will be removed.

The Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and are available at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=16361. If you encounter problems accessing the documents, please call 916-978-5100 (TTY 800-877-8339) or email mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov.

For questions regarding the study, please contact Rebecca Victorine at 916-978-4624 or rvictorine@usbr.gov. To request a copy of the Final EA and/or FONSI, please contact Margaret Gidding at 916-978-5461 or mgidding@usbr.gov.

For more information about the SJRRP, please visit www.restoresjr.net.

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