

# SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM



## Program Update

July 2010

*The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) is a comprehensive long-term effort to restore flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River and restore a self-sustaining Chinook salmon fishery in the river while reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts from restoration flows.*

### Salmon Reintroduction Plan

Paragraph 14 of the Settlement requires the reintroduction of spring run and fall run Chinook salmon to the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam and the confluence of the Merced River by December 31, 2012. The USFWS is working diligently to complete a permit application by September 30, 2010, for the reintroduction of spring-run Chinook salmon. Consistent with the Settlement, NMFS shall issue a decision on the permit application no later than April 30, 2012. Information on this process is available at <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/sjrrestorationprogram/salmonreintroduction.htm>.

### Interim Flow Releases from Friant Dam Continue

The experimental Interim Flows that began October 1, 2009, will continue through September for Water Year (WY) 2010. The Interim Flow releases from Friant Dam are currently at 350 cubic feet per second to meet targets at Gravelly Ford. The flows have been monitored very closely this year, and a tremendous amount of coordination is taking place with landowners near the river that could be affected by potential seepage of groundwater from these flows. The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) has placed approximately 90 groundwater monitoring wells in strategic locations to track the movement

of the groundwater and is working with specific landowners to determine safe groundwater levels for crop root zones and making sure the groundwater is staying below those levels. Reclamation has critical data available on the Interim Flows at [www.restoresjr.net](http://www.restoresjr.net).

This includes real-time and daily flow data, weekly groundwater data, and periodic

water quality data. The experimental flows are scheduled for several years until full Restoration Flows begin.



*Water releases from Friant Dam switch from one large valve to two smaller valves as Interim Flows decrease from 800 cubic feet per second to 350 cfs on June 8, 2010*

As described in the Stipulation of Settlement (Settlement) in *NRDC, et al. v. Kirk Rodgers, et al.*, the purpose of the Interim Flows is to collect relevant data concerning flows, temperatures, fish needs, seepage losses, recirculation, and recapture and reuse. The SJRRP Implementing Agencies include Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), California Department of Water Resources, and California Department of Fish and Game. Agencies will continue to conduct monitoring and analyses activities during WY 2011. The activities planned for Spring 2011 and later, along with a synthesis of data collected, will be described in the Annual Technical Report that will be available to the public in Fall 2010.

## Draft Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report to be Released

The Draft Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIS/R) is anticipated to be released this summer. Once released, the draft document will be available for a 60-day public comment period and public hearings will be held in various locations within the Program area. Stay tuned to the website for hearing dates and locations. (See the April 2010 Program Update for detailed information regarding the Draft PEIS/R.)

## Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Channel Improvements Project Update

An Initial Options Technical Memorandum was released in April 2010, along with a Technical Memorandum on Existing Environmental Conditions: Data Needs and Survey Approach. Work will continue on this project with a target release date of mid 2011 for a Draft EIS/R and the final document in early 2012 followed shortly after with the Record of Decision and Notice of Determination. Construction is estimated to start in 2013 and be completed in 2015.

**Invasive Riparian Plant Species Data Now Available on the California Department of Fish and Game's BIOS website at <http://bios.dfg.ca.gov>.**

## Water Year 2011 Interim Flows Draft Supplemental Environmental Document Available

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Proposed Finding of No New Significant Impact (Draft Supplemental EA/Proposed FONNSI) for the SJRRP's Water Year (WY) 2011 Interim Flows Project was released for a 30-day public review from June 11 through July 9, 2010. The comment period has been extended to July 23, 2010.

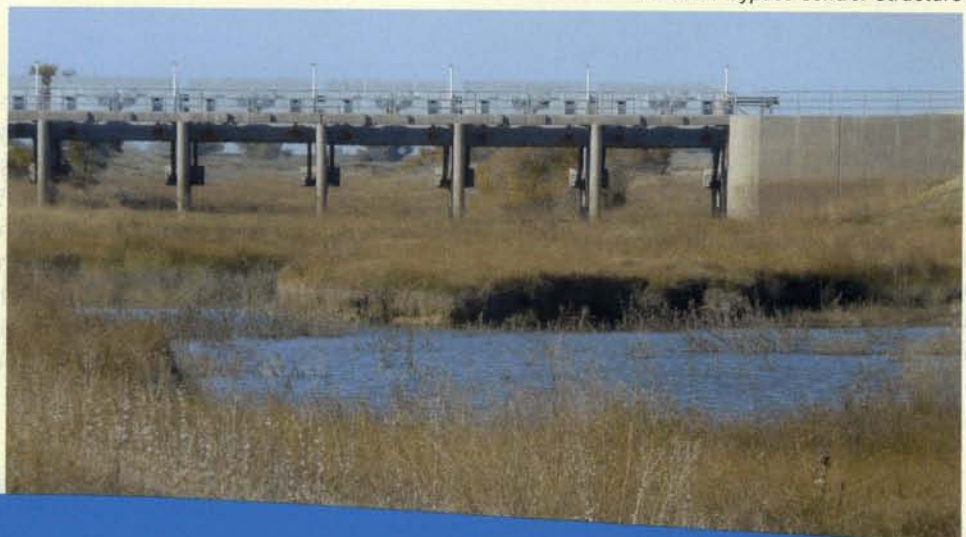
The Draft Supplemental EA/Proposed FONNSI describes the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the WY 2011 Interim Flows Project (Proposed Action) and the No-Action Alternative.

The WY 2010 Interim Flows Project, as approved and authorized, is currently under way. The Draft Supplemental EA is intended to describe and analyze the effects of an additional year of Interim Flows for WY2011. This document extends the project originally described in the WY 2010 Final Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) for one additional year, but does not change any other aspect of the project. The Draft Supplemental EA includes a review of the WY 2010 Final EA/IS, synthesizes discussions and results where conditions have not changed, and evaluates potential impacts due to implementation of WY 2011 Interim Flows in consideration of changed conditions or new information since approval of the WY 2010 Final EA/IS.

The continuation of this action would temporarily change Friant Dam operations in WY 2011 (October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011) to release Interim Flows as specified in the Settlement. The Interim Flows would be conveyed down the San Joaquin River channel, and potentially down the Eastside and Mariposa bypasses, to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta). Under the Proposed Action, WY 2011 Interim Flows would be recaptured by existing water diversion facilities along the San Joaquin River and/or in the Delta for agricultural, municipal and industrial, or fish and wildlife uses, to the extent possible. Potential diversion locations for recapturing WY 2011 Interim Flow releases are Mendota Pool, Arroyo Canal, Lone Tree Unit of the Merced National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), East Bear Creek Unit of the San Luis NWR, Banta-Carbona Irrigation District facility, West Stanislaus Irrigation District facility downstream of the Stanislaus River confluence, Patterson Irrigation District facility between the Tuolumne and Merced River confluences, and Central Valley Project and State Water Project Delta export facilities.

The Draft Supplemental EA/Proposed FONNSI is available on the SJRRP web site at [www.restoresjr.net](http://www.restoresjr.net) or Reclamation's web site at [www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa\\_projdetails.cfm?Project\\_ID=3612](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=3612).

*Eastside Bypass Control Structure*



## Water Management Goal Update – Recirculating Water Back to Friant Division Long-term Contractors

For Water Year 2010, Reclamation estimates that up to 60,000 acre-feet of Interim Flows will be recaptured and stored in San Luis Reservoir for recirculation back to the Friant Division contractors. Reclamation sought scenarios for recirculating the water and will complete an environmental analysis on the selected scenarios. For questions on this process, contact Ms. Valerie Curley at 559-487-5041 or [vcurley@usbr.gov](mailto:vcurley@usbr.gov).

Progress continues on the feasibility studies for two additional projects specifically called out in Part III of the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act to help achieve the Water Management Goal. The two projects are: 1) the Friant-Kern and Madera Canals Capacity Correction

Feasibility Study to look at restoring the capacity of the canals to their previous design and construction, and 2) the Friant-Kern Canal Reverse Flow Pumpback Feasibility Study to look at potentially constructing three pumping plants along the Friant-Kern Canal in order to lift water upstream in the canal from the intertie with the Cross Valley Canal (CVC). This reverse-flow operation would reach approximately 40 miles, gaining approximately 20 feet in elevation, to reach upstream water users. This project would facilitate transporting Central Valley Project water via the California Aqueduct and Delta-Mendota Canal, directly from the Banks and Jones Pumping Plants in the Delta, to and

through the CVC in Kern County. Draft Environmental Assessments for both projects are anticipated to be available to the public in late summer.



*Friant-Kern Canal*

### Planning for the Arroyo Canal/Sack Dam Project to Begin Soon



The Settlement requires screening the Arroyo Canal water diversion and providing fish passage at Sack Dam, located near the junction of Reach 3 and Reach 4A.

Prior to implementing the Settlement, most water released downstream from Mendota Dam was diverted at the Arroyo Canal. With the implementation of the Settlement, flows in the river will need to be managed so that diversions can still occur in this section of the river while passing fish in both directions and avoiding fish entrainment at the Arroyo Canal intake.

For the Project-related environmental studies, Reclamation will be serving as the NEPA lead agency and the Henry Miller Reclamation District #2131 (District) will be serving as the CEQA lead agency. Reclamation and the District are working to initiate the planning, environmental compliance, and design efforts for this project. This work is anticipated to begin during the third quarter of 2010.

### Salt and Mud Slough Seasonal Barriers

Reclamation will look at ways to enable deployment of seasonal barriers to prevent adult anadromous fish from entering false migration pathways in the areas of Salt and Mud Sloughs. Reclamation anticipates beginning the planning, environmental documentation and appraisal-level design for this project in late 2010.



*Chinook salmon*



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### Water Education Foundation San Joaquin River Restoration Tour October 13-14, 2010

Join a two-day, one-night tour for a look at dams, canals, levees, farmland, a fish hatchery, and portions of the San Joaquin River that are part of the restoration efforts. Explore the challenges of creating spawning habitat for a Chinook salmon fishery and understand the interests and concerns of landowners, irrigation district, and flood agencies. Tour stops include Friant Dam, the Friant-Kern Canal, the Mendota Pool, diversion structures, farms, the Department of Fish and Game fish hatchery, and the Merced National Wildlife Refuge. This tour highlights the challenges of implementing the Settlement. The tour begins and ends in Fresno and is conducted by the Water Education Foundation. For more information, please visit [www.watereducation.org/tours](http://www.watereducation.org/tours).



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Recorded SJRRP information available on Reclamation's Grapevine at 800-742-9474; select option 2 for a list of projects, and select option 4 for the SJRRP activities and updates.