

**Mid-Pacific Region
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San Joaquin River Restoration Program Releases the Final Environmental Document for Water Year 2012 Interim Flows

The Bureau of Reclamation today released the Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) to continue Interim Flows for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) for Water Year (WY) 2012. The document was prepared in accordance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and describes the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental effects of the WY 2012 Interim Flows Project and the No-Action Alternative.

WY 2012 marks the third year of implementing the Interim Flows Project. The document extends the project originally described in the WY 2010 Final Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) for an additional year. The Supplemental EA includes a review of the WY 2010 Final EA/IS, the Draft and Final Supplemental EA for WY 2011, synthesizes discussions and results where conditions have not changed and evaluates potential impacts due to implementation of WY 2012 Interim Flows in consideration of changed conditions or new information since approval of the WY 2010 Final EA/IS.

The continuation of this action will temporarily change Friant Dam operations from October 1, 2011, through September 30, 2012, to release Interim Flows as specified in the Stipulation of Settlement (Settlement) in *NRDC, et al. v. Kirk Rodgers, et al.* 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).

WY 2012 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 2012 Interim Flow releases are Mendota Pool, Arroyo Canal, the Lone Tree Unit of the Merced National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the 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.

As described in the Settlement, 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, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Water Resources and California Department of Fish and Game. The agencies will conduct a variety of monitoring and study actions for the WY 2012 Interim Flow release period.

The Supplemental EA/FONSI is available for viewing Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Reclamation's SJRRP Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1727, Sacramento, and at Reclamation's South-Central California Area Office, 1243 N Street, Fresno. The document may be viewed on Reclamation's website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?project_ID=3612 or on the SJRRP website at www.restoresjr.net.

For questions regarding the document, please contact Michelle Banonis, Natural Resources Specialist, at 916-978-5457 or interimflows@restoresjr.net. To request a compact disk containing the document, please contact Margaret Gidding at 916-978-5461 or mgidding@usbr.gov. To learn more about the SJRRP, please visit www.restoresjr.net.

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