

# **San Joaquin River Restoration Program**

## **Restoration Administrator**

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### **Memorandum**

Date: November 9, 2012

To: Alicia Forsythe, SJRRP Program Manager cc. Dave Mooney, USBR

From: Rod Meade, Restoration Administration

Subject: Updated RA Recommendation to Release Re-scheduled September Interim Flow Release

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### **Background**

From September 4 through September 24 of this year, scheduled Interim Flow releases from Friant Dam were stopped to enable needed repairs of the gates of the Chowchilla Bifurcation Structure to be completed. Based on calculations provided to me by the TAC, and subject to confirmation by Reclamation, unreleased Interim Flows potentially subject to re-scheduling total about 6,600 acre feet.

The Settling Parties have conducted extensive discussions about whether the Settlement provides for re-scheduling scheduled Interim Flow releases that did not occur in September for release later in the Water Year. To date, the Settling Parties have not been able to agree whether re-scheduling Interim Flows would be consistent with the Settlement. During these Settling Party discussions, and in response to a request from Reclamation, the RA provided a October 11, 2012, "Concept Proposal" that identified potential beneficial uses of re-scheduled Interim Flows *if* Reclamation determined that re-scheduling those Interim Flow releases would be consistent with the Settlement Agreement (see attached Concept Proposal). In the absence of agreement between the non-federal Settling Parties concerning the re-scheduling of the unreleased Interim Flows, Reclamation informed the Settling Parties and the RA that an updated Interim Flow recommendation by the RA would need to be submitted to Reclamation in order for Reclamation to make a decision on whether to re-schedule the Interim Flows that were scheduled but not released during September.

This RA Recommendation follows up on the preceding Settling Party discussions and responds to Reclamation's stated need for the RA to provide a recommendation for Reclamation to determine whether Interim Flow re-scheduling is consistent with the Settlement. Although I believe that Paragraph 14(b) of the Settlement enables re-scheduling of Interim Flow releases later in the same Water Year, I am not an interpreter of the terms of the Settlement. Therefore, my Recommendation is conditioned upon on a finding by Reclamation that re-scheduling of unreleased September Interim Flows would be consistent with the Settlement.

If Reclamation decides to re-schedule and release the subject Interim Flows, my Recommendation provides opportunities to achieve the beneficial uses discussed in my October 11, 2012 "Concept Proposal" (see attachment). However, I believe it is best to defer to the Implementing Agencies to decide how best to take advantage of the re-scheduled Interim Flow releases and implement related flow monitoring and experimental fish activities. I defer to the agencies because they are in a better

position to assess the feasibility of implementing such activities in the context of regulatory considerations, staff availability and workload priority decisions that will need to be made next February.

**RA Interim Flow Recommendation**

If Reclamation determines that re-scheduling the September Interim Flow releases is consistent with the Settlement, I recommend that the most recent Interim Flow Schedule (updated May 21, 2012) be amended to provide for the following schedule of Interim Flow pulse releases from Friant Dam (see Figure 1 Hydrograph).

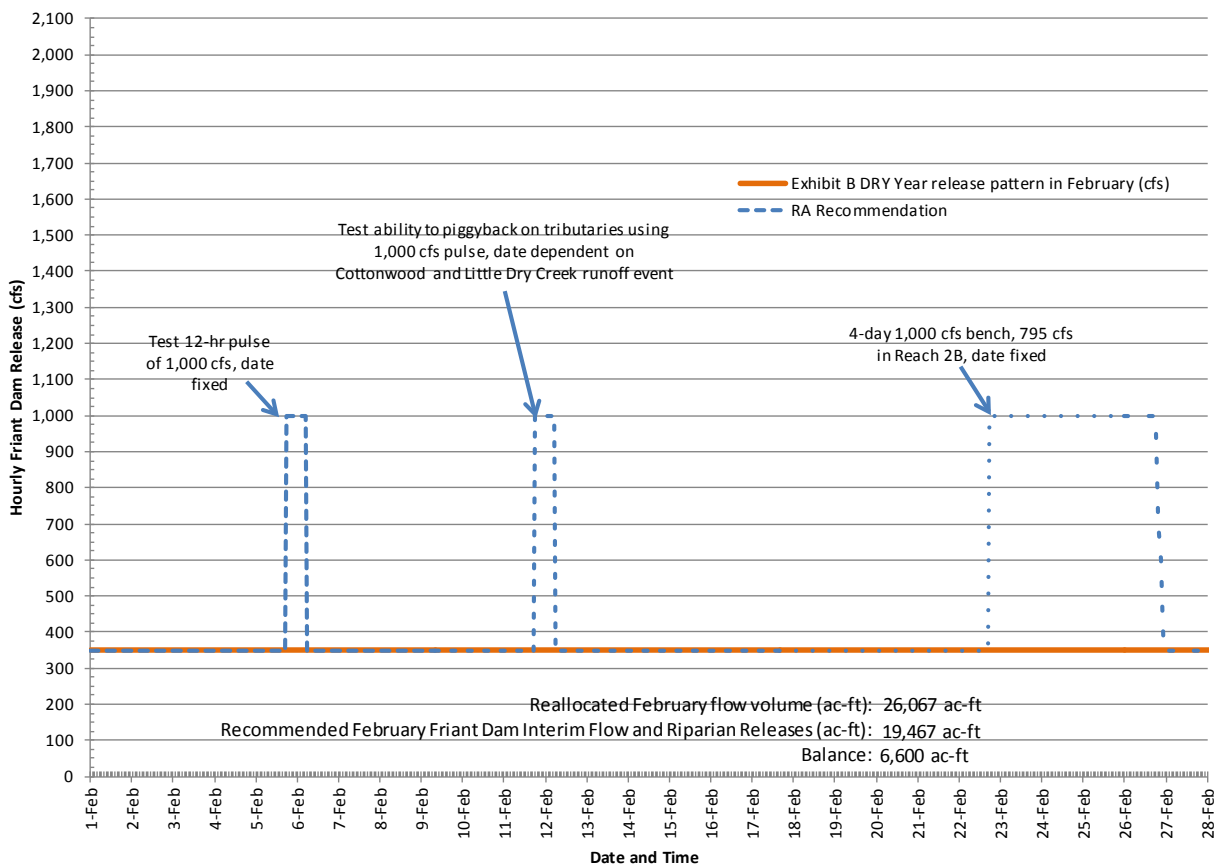
1. Recommended Pulse Flows

Pulse 1: On February 5, 2013, with baseline flows at 350 cfs, initiate a 12-hour, 1,000 cfs pulse starting at 6:00 pm and return to 350 cfs by 6:00 am February 6, 2013;

Pulse 2: Maintain scheduled 350 cfs releases from Friant Dam until the combined flows from Little Dry Creek and Cottonwood Creek are forecasted to exceed 50 cfs but less than 500 cfs, then initiate a 12-hour pulse release of 1,000 cfs beginning at 6:00 pm of the day of the forecasted peak that would return to 350 cfs by 6:00 am the following day;

Pulse 3: Maintain scheduled 350 cfs releases from Friant Dam until 6:00 pm, February 22, 2013, and then initiate a four-day pulse release of 1,000 cfs that would return to 350 cfs by approximately 10:00 pm on February 26, 2013.

Figure 1: Re-scheduled Interim Flow Hydrograph



2. If either Pulse 1 or Pulse 2 are not implemented, I recommend extending the duration of Pulse 3 by 12 hours for each pulse that is not implemented.
3. Reclamation shall determine whether the Interim Flow recommendations can be implemented consistent with conditions encountered during February 2013, including conditions relating to Mendota Pool operations.

I look forward to discussing my updated Interim Flow Recommendations with you in the near future.