

Restoration Administrator Flow Recommendation

To: Don Portz, Chad Moore, David van Rijin, Regina Story
CC: Michael Jackson, Rufino Gonzalez, Gary Bobker, Steve Ottemoeller, Ian Buck-Macleod, TAC, FWC
Date: January 31, 2025
From: Tom Johnson, Restoration Administrator
Subject: Initial Recommendation for 2025 Restoration Flows

The following is a Restoration Flow Recommendation (Recommendation) by the Restoration Administrator (RA) for the 2025 Restoration Year Flows pursuant to the Restoration Flow Guidelines (RFG) Ver. 2.1, as amended, and Exhibit B of the Settlement.

Background

The SJRRP has issued an Initial 2025 Restoration Allocation (Allocation) dated January 22, 2025, which designates 2025 as a **Dry** Water Year Type with an Unimpaired Inflow hybrid forecast of 727 thousand acre-feet (TAF) and provides an allocation of Restoration Flows of 168.055 TAF as measured at Gravelly Ford (GRF) based on the 75% exceedance forecast. The Allocation also specified certain contractual and operational constraints on Restoration Flow releases for 2025.

January has been very dry in the San Joaquin River (SJR) watershed, one of the driest January's of record. In the absence of substantial additional precipitation, it is possible that the next Allocation may drop to Critical High.

I have consulted with the TAC and the FMWG on this Recommendation, and this Recommendation reflects the best use of the limited allocation of Restoration Flows for the aquatic resources at this time.

Recommendation for the 2025 Restoration Year

At this time, I am recommending a flow schedule for the 2025 Restoration Year as shown in Table 1, and as follows:

1. Provide a fairly high flow bench in March to facilitate the release and subsequent escape of juvenile salmon from the Restoration Area. Tagged juvenile salmon releases from the iSCARF and SCARF into Reach 5 are scheduled for March.
2. Maintain connectivity of the lower SJR below EBM until at least late May at a flow that will encourage Spring Run Chinook returns at least as far upstream as EBM. Hopefully, given a wetter water year and successful releases in 2023, adult spring run chinook salmon returns this year will be higher than the past couple of years.
3. Reduce Restoration Flows from mid-June through October to preserve cold-water pool in Millerton Reservoir.
4. Resume Restoration Flows in October to Exhibit B flows to reconnect the river.
5. No exchanges or buffer flows are called upon at this time.

6. Additionally, the fall pulse will likely be deployed in two parts in November and December to support a river science experiment.

This Recommendation is intended to a) release the maximum possible volume of Restoration Flows down the river, as limited by seepage and cold-water pool considerations. However, given the early season uncertainty as to Restoration Year hydrology, I anticipate additional adjustments to this Recommendation in the coming months.

No Restoration Flow recapture other than de-minimus amounts are planned in the Restoration Area. All Restoration Flow releases are to flow through the entirety of the Restoration Area. If there are operational or other constraints that preclude Restoration Flows traveling the entire length of the Restoration Area, the Restoration Recommendation will be adjusted to reduce Restoration Flow releases to the level of the controlling operational constraint.

Table 1. Summary of Restoration Flow Recommendations for March 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025.

Restoration Flow Period	Date Range	Objective	Friant Release (est., varies due to Holding Contracts)	Restoration Flows at Gravelly Ford	Total Flow at Gravelly Ford¹	Target Restoration Flow at Sack Dam (est.)²
Restoration Year 2024	To February 28, 2025		560 cfs	400 cfs	405 cfs	280 cfs
2025 Spring Flex. Flow Period ³	March 1 – March 5, 2025	Ramp up flows	As necessary, est. 590 - 700 cfs	Ramp up to 560 cfs	380 cfs	265 cfs
	March 5 – April 2, 2025	Juvenile release pulse	As necessary, est. 740 cfs	600 cfs	605 cfs	470 cfs
	April 3 – May 6, 2025	Ramp down from Juvenile pulse, 30 cfs RF's every three days at Friant Dam	Estimated 700 to 415 cfs	As occurs until 200 cfs, then hold at 200 cfs	As occurs until 205 cfs, then hold at 205 cfs	As occurs until 110 cfs
	May 6 – May 23, 2025	SR adult attraction at EBM	As necessary, est. 415 cfs	200 cfs	205 cfs	110 cfs
	May 24 – June 20, 2025	End of SR adult migration and trapping, preserve cold-water pool	As necessary, est. 375 cfs	160 cfs	165 cfs	70 cfs
Base Flow	June 21 – Sept 30, 2025	Preserve cold-water pool, RF's only through Reach 2A & 2B	As necessary, est. 295 – 325 cfs	80 cfs	85 cfs	0 cfs
Base Flow	October 1 – October 31, 2025	Reconnect Reach 4 & 5, spring run	As necessary, est. 400 cfs	190 cfs	195 cfs	100 cfs

<i>Restoration Flow Period</i>	<i>Date Range</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Friant Release (est., varies due to Holding Contracts)</i>	<i>Restoration Flows at Gravelly Ford</i>	<i>Total Flow at Gravelly Ford¹</i>	<i>Target Restoration Flow at Sack Dam (est.)²</i>
		spawning and egg incubation				
	November 1 – November 30, 2025	Connected river, spring run egg incubation,	As necessary, est. 420 cfs	230 cfs	235 cfs	135 cfs
Fall Pulse	December 1 – December 31, 2025	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 440 cfs	285 cfs	290 cfs	190 cfs
Base Flows	January 1 – February 28, 2026	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 400 – 410 cfs	250 cfs	255 cfs	157 cfs

¹Total Flow includes the minimum Holding Contract flows of 5 cfs required at Gravelly Ford

Additional Elements of this Recommendation

This Recommendation anticipates the release of 168.055 TAF of Restoration Flows to the river, with no residual Unreleased Restoration Flows (URF's)

Depending on changing hydrologic conditions, I will adjust or revise this recommendation as necessary.

Additional Consultation

I will continue to coordinate with the TAC, Program Office, and Implementing Agencies to monitor hydrologic conditions, fish population conditions, uncontrolled season releases, operational conditions, and other factors, and will update the Restoration Flow Recommendation as conditions change.

Summary Volumes				
GRAVELLY FORD FLOWS AVAILABLE VERSUS RA RECOMMENDATION				
		Available	Used	Balance
Total GRF River Flow Target without 5 cfs (March 1, 2024 - Feb 28, 2025):		168.055 TAF	167.117 TAF	0.937 TAF
Restoration Allocation Flow		168.055 TAF	168.010 TAF	0.045 TAF
Exchange Flow		0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF
Buffer Flows		0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF	0.000 TAF
		URF's Disposed of as of 1/15/2025		0.000
Use Buffer Flows? no			Net Alloc Remainder	0.045 TAF

