Restoration Administrator Flow Recommendation

To: Don Portz, Chad Moore, Regina Bricka
CC: Rain Emerson, Rufino Gonzalez, Gary Bobker, Steve Ottemoeller, Ian Buck-Macleod, TAC, FWC
Date: June 1, 2026
From: Tom Johnson, Restoration Administrator
Subject: Revised Flow Recommendation for 2026 Restoration Flows

The following is a revised Restoration Flow Recommendation (Recommendation) by the Restoration Administrator (RA) for the 2026 Restoration Year Flows pursuant to the Restoration Flow Guidelines (RFG) Ver. 2.1, as amended, and Exhibit B of the Settlement. This Recommendation is issued in response to the Allocation dated May 15, 2026.

Background

The SJRRP has issued an Updated 2026 Restoration Allocation (Allocation) dated May 15, 2026, which designates 2026 as a **Normal-Dry** Water Year Type with an Unimpaired Inflow hybrid forecast of 1,438 thousand acre-feet (TAF) and provides an allocation of Restoration Flows of 281.739 TAF as measured at Gravelly Ford (GRF) based on the blended 50% exceedance forecast. The Allocation also specified certain contractual and operational constraints on Restoration Flow releases for 2026.

From October 2025 to present, the Upper San Joaquin watershed has experienced near average precipitation. However, the distribution of the precipitation and runoff (both observed and expected) has been atypical due to two primary factors: 1) most of the precipitation so far this year has fallen during warm storms with high freezing elevations, and 2) March 2026 was among the driest and warmest on record. The result is that while precipitation is near-normal, runoff has been above normal and snowpack has been below normal.

In addition to hydrology, several operational constraints in Reach 3 have required flow adjustments. A heavy concentration of water hyacinth needed to be moved from the lower end of Reach 3 to allow flows to pass Sack Dam at the recommended levels, and additional construction operations will need to be accommodated in mid-May. Finally, in consultation with Implementing Agency biologists, it was determined to hold flows through Reach 4A at specific levels to balance adult spring-run Chinook Salmon attraction flows with the ability to observe and capture returning adults.

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

Recommendation for the balance of the 2026 Restoration Year

At this time, I am recommending a flow schedule for the balance of the 2026 Restoration Year as shown in Table 1, and as follows:

1. Starting in June, maintain flows below Sack Dam pursuant to Exhibit B.
2. No exchanges or buffer flows are called upon at this time.
3. 21.559 TAF Gross, 20.481 TAF Net URF's have been released as of the May 15 Allocation.
4. 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 June 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

Restoration Flow Period	***Date Range***	***Objective***	***Friant Release (est., varies due to Holding Contracts)***	***Restoration Flows at Gravelly Ford***	***Total Flow at Gravelly Ford[1]***	***Target Restoration Flow at Sack Dam (est.)***
Ramp Down	As soon as possible after June 1	Ramp down to summer base flow	Varies while ramping down	160 cfs	165 cfs	70 cfs
Summer Base Flow	Early June – June 30, 2026	Summer base flow	As necessary, est. 410 cfs	160 cfs	165 cfs	70 cfs
	July 1 – August 31, 2026	Summer base flow	As necessary, est. 420 cfs	120 cfs	125 cfs	25 cfs
	September 1 – September 30, 2026	Summer base flow	As necessary, est. 410 cfs	140 cfs	145 cfs	45 cfs
	Reduce flows to Exhibit B flows at GRF by early June. Hold Exhibit B flows at GRF through September.					
Base Flow	October 1 – October 31, 2026	Reconnect Reach 4 & 5, spring run spawning and egg incubation	As necessary, est. 400 cfs	190 cfs	195 cfs	100 cfs
	November 1 – November 30, 2026	Connected river, spring run egg incubation,	As necessary, est. 420 cfs	230 cfs	235 cfs	135 cfs
Fall Pulse	December 1 – December 31, 2026	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 440 cfs	320 cfs	325 cfs	220 cfs
Base Flows	January 1 – February 28, 2027	Connected river, juvenile rearing	As necessary, est. 400 – 410 cfs	250 cfs	255 cfs	160 cfs

[1]Total 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 approximately 205 TAF of Restoration Flows to the river.

URF's released to date total 21.559 TAF gross, leaving approximately 54.425 TAF gross to release. ***With this Recommendation, remaining URF's are released for disposition by Reclamation.***

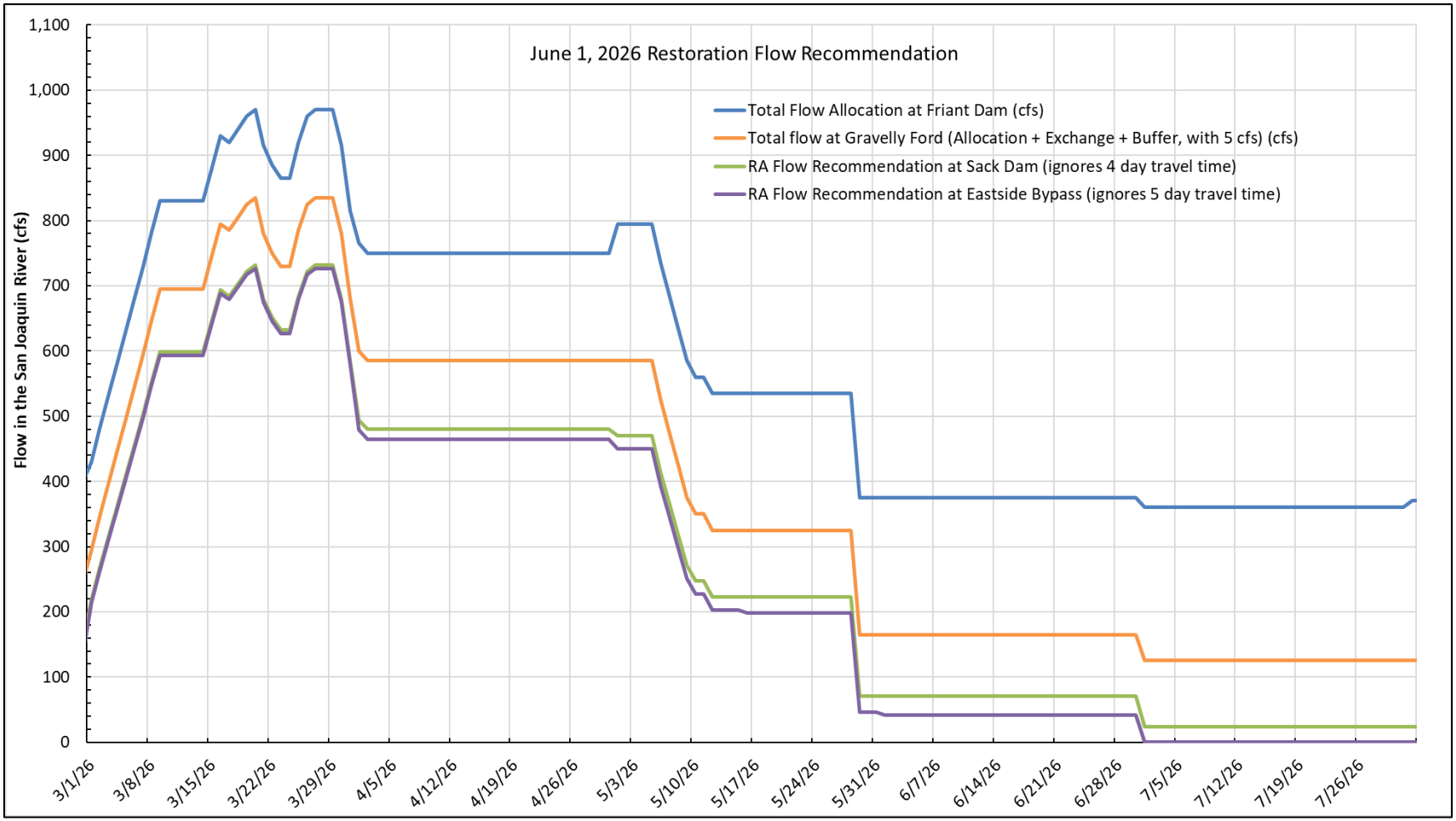
Depending on changing hydrologic conditions, I will adjust or revise this recommendation as necessary.

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.

Table 2. Estimate of Released Restoration Flows

Summary Volumes				
GRAVELLY FORD FLOWS AVAILABLE VERSUS RA RECOMMENDATION				
		Available	**Used**	**Balance**
Total GRF River Flow Target without 5 cfs (March 1, 2025 - Feb 28, 2026):		281.739 TAF	205.755 TAF	75.984 TAF
Restoration Allocation Flow		**281.739 TAF**	**205.755 TAF**	**75.984 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		**5/11/2026**	21.559
Use Buffer Flows? no			**Net Alloc Remainder**	**54.425 TAF**


June 1, 2026 Restoration Flow Recommendation
Total Flow Allocation at Friant Dam (cfs)
Total flow at Gravelly Ford (Allocation + Exchange + Buffer, with 5 cfs) (cfs)
RA Flow Recommendation at Sack Dam (ignores 4 day travel time)
RA Flow Recommendation at Eastside Bypass (ignores 5 day travel time)
Flow in the San Joaquin River (cfs)
1,100
1,000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
3/1/26
3/8/26
3/15/26
3/22/26
3/29/26
4/5/26
4/12/26
4/19/26
4/26/26
5/3/26
5/10/26
5/17/26
5/24/26
5/31/26
6/7/26
6/14/26
6/21/26
6/28/26
7/5/26
7/12/26
7/19/26
7/26/26