



TODAY'S ACTION

Consider recommendation from July 2, 2015
Reservoir Operations Committee meeting;
and, provide direction to Staff on Reservoir
Releases





Prior BOD Action

- BOD discussed reducing releasing from Nacimiento Reservoir on the following occasions:
 - March 5, 2014
 - March 31, 2014
 - April 28, 2014
- BOD approved reduction of Nacimiento releases to 25 cubic-feet/second (cfs) at their June 2, 2014 meeting per Drought Condition provisions of the Flow Prescription
- BOD approved increase of Nacimiento releases to 60 cfs at their May 26, 2015 Special Meeting



Committee Action

- Res Ops Committee provided input and advice through last year's discussions
- Res Ops Committee discussed BOD's May 26 action and alternatives at their June 5, 2015 meeting
- Res Ops Committee recommendation from their July 2, 2015 meeting is:
 - To keep Nacimiento releases at 60 cfs



Financial Impact

- Unknown

- BOD action:

- No financial impact
 - May cause litigation
 - Could result in increased hydroelectric revenues in the short term



Discussion

- At June 5 Res Ops meeting, Committee asked:
 - Forecasted Impacts from Nacimiento releases of 25, 40, and 60 cfs based on different winter scenarios
 - Clarification if releases above minimum fish flows are conservation releases
- At June 22 BOD meeting, staff and counsel were directed to investigate:
 - 2 cfs minimum flow to the lagoon
 - Releases of up to 300 cfs
 - Confer with NMFS regarding the above

Summary of Release Options Impacts of Dry Year Inflow Forecast

Release Options	25 cfs	40 cfs	60 cfs	300 cfs
Releases Made Above Minimum Pool July-October (AF)	6,100	9,800	14,600	60,000
Approximate Date Reaching Minimum Pool	> April 2016			October 2015
Labor Day 2015 Nacimiento Elevation (ft)	726	725	724	709
Estimated Downstream River Mile (Summer 2015)	88	87	85	60
Estimated Groundwater Recharge from Releases (AF)	2,857	6,315	10,789	51,670
Storage Trigger Met For U/S Adult Migration Releases?	No			
Storage Trigger Met For D/S Smolt Migration Releases?	Not Applicable (Dry Year)			
Potential For 2016 SRDF Operation?	No			



Summary of Release Options Impacts of Normal Year Inflow Forecast

Release Options	25 cfs	40 cfs	60 cfs	300 cfs
Releases Made Above Minimum Pool July-October (AF)	6,100	9,800	14,600	60,000
Approximate Date Reaching Minimum Pool	> April 2016			October 2015
Labor Day 2015 Nacimiento Elevation (ft)	726	725	724	709
Estimated Downstream River Mile (Summer 2015)	88	87	85	60
Estimated Groundwater Recharge from Releases (AF)	2,857	6,315	10,789	51,670
Storage Trigger Met For U/S Adult Migration Releases?	Yes			No
Storage Trigger Met For D/S Smolt Migration Releases?	Yes			
Potential For 2016 SRDF Operation?	Yes (2 months of operation)			

Summary of Release Options Impacts of Wet Year Inflow Forecast

Release Options	25 cfs	40 cfs	60 cfs	300 cfs
Releases Made Above Minimum Pool July-October (AF)	6,100	9,800	14,600	60,000
Approximate Date Reaching Minimum Pool	> April 2016			October 2015
Labor Day 2015 Nacimiento Elevation (ft)	726	725	724	709
Estimated Downstream River Mile (Summer 2015)	88	87	85	60
Estimated Groundwater Recharge from Releases (AF)	2,857	6,315	10,789	51,670
Storage Trigger Met For U/S Adult Migration Releases?	Yes			
Storage Trigger Met For D/S Smolt Migration Releases?	Not Applicable (Wet Year)			
Potential For 2016 SRDF Operation?	Yes (Full Season)			





Discussion (cont.)

- References used for releases of up to 300 cfs and flows of at least 2 cfs to the lagoon:
 - US Fish & Wildlife Biological Opinion
 - Salinas Valley Water Project Flow Prescription for Steelhead Trout in the Salinas River
 - NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion
 - Water Rights Permits



Discussion (cont.)

- Reservoir releases above 60 cfs and up to 300 cfs are defined as conservation releases

From water rights:

A “Conservation Release” is a release of water from Naciminto and/or San Antonio Reservoirs for the purpose of recharging the groundwater basin.

Other release types:

- Minimum Fish Flow release
- Flood Control release
- SRDF Operational release



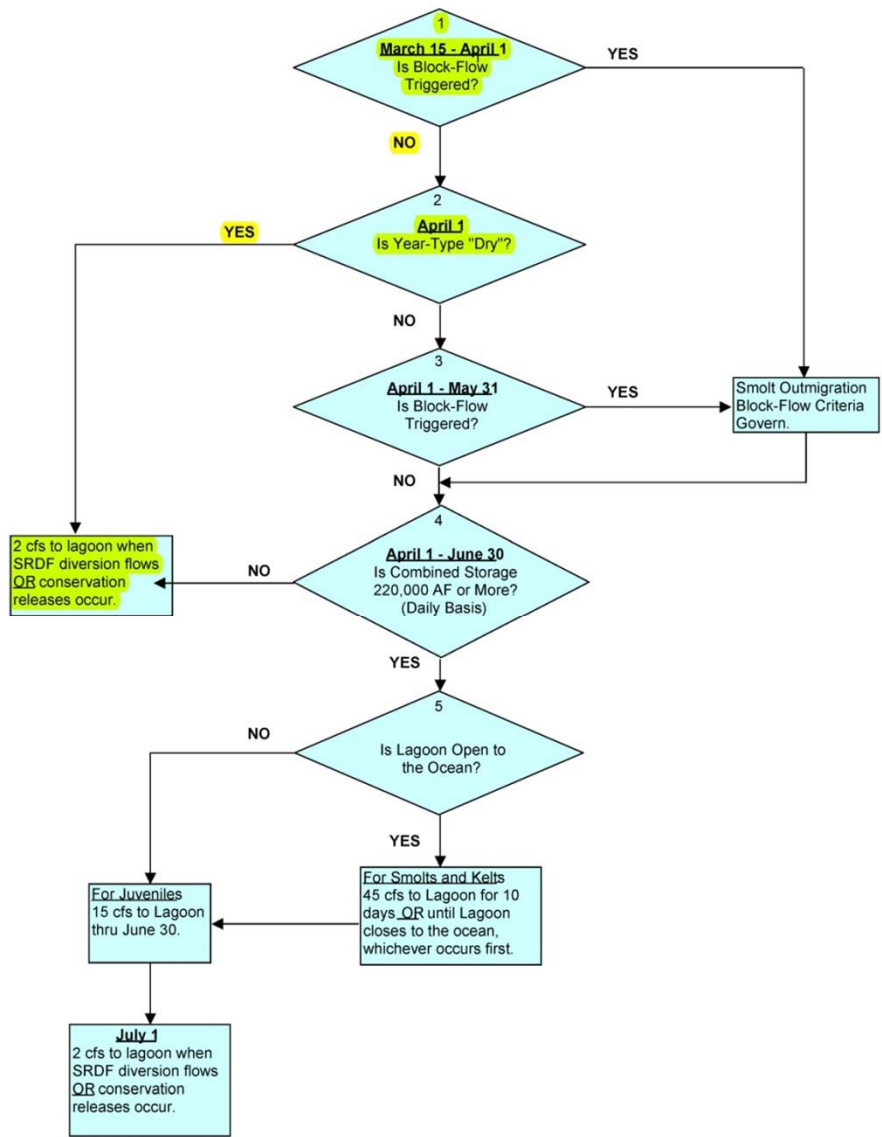
Discussion (cont.)

- 2 cfs to the Salinas River Lagoon
 - Will be maintained:
 - When SRDF Irrigation Diversions are occurring or
 - When Conservation Releases from Nacimiento and/or San Antonio Reservoirs are being made to the Salinas River
 - Benefits:
 - Contiguous flow from reservoirs maintains an uninterrupted Migration Corridor for Rearing Juveniles
 - Prevents Fish Stranding
 - Supports Steelhead Survival in Lagoon



Discussion (cont.)

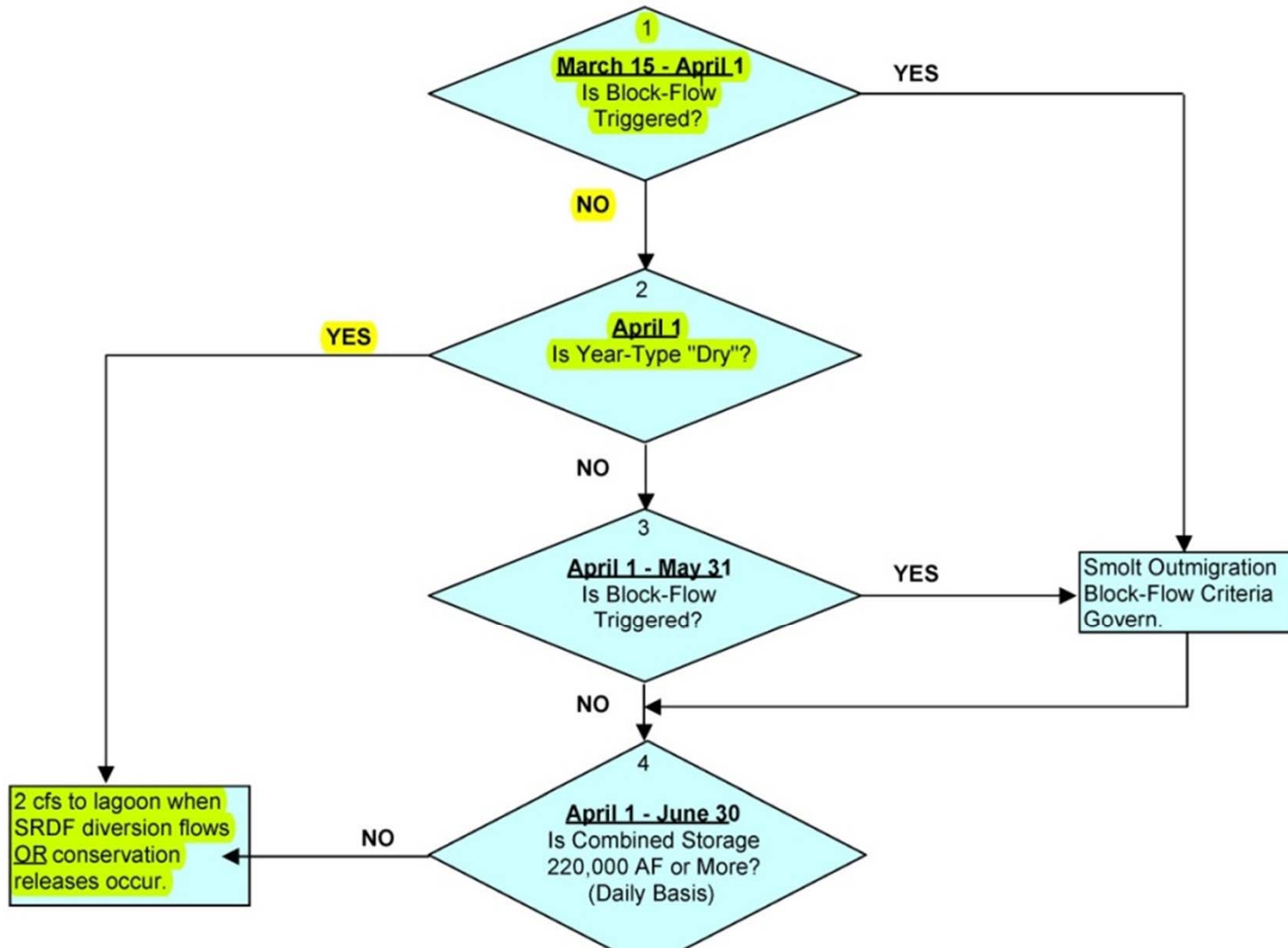
- US Fish & Wildlife Biological Opinion (1-8-06-F-54)
 - “A flow of 2 cfs would be maintained to the lagoon as long as SRDF irrigation diversions are occurring or **conservation releases** from Nacimiento and/or San Antonio Reservoirs are being made to the Salinas River. This 2 cfs flow to the lagoon is tied only to SRDF irrigation diversions and **conservation releases**, and is thus independent of combined reservoir storage volume.”



Extracted From page 16, NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion

Figure 3. Proposed flow release schedule to enhance downstream migration conditions for juvenile steelhead and kelts.





Extracted From page 16, NOAA
Fisheries Biological Opinion

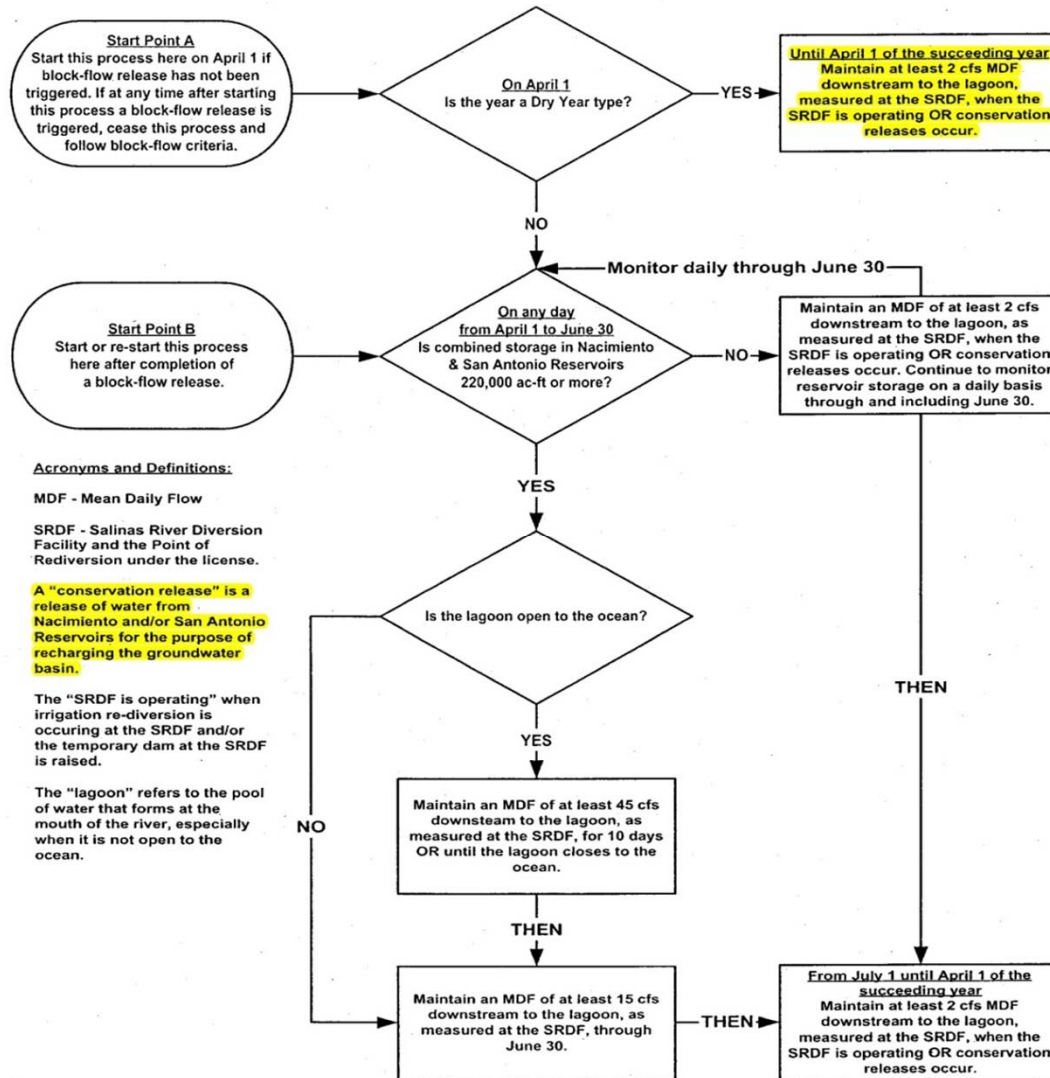
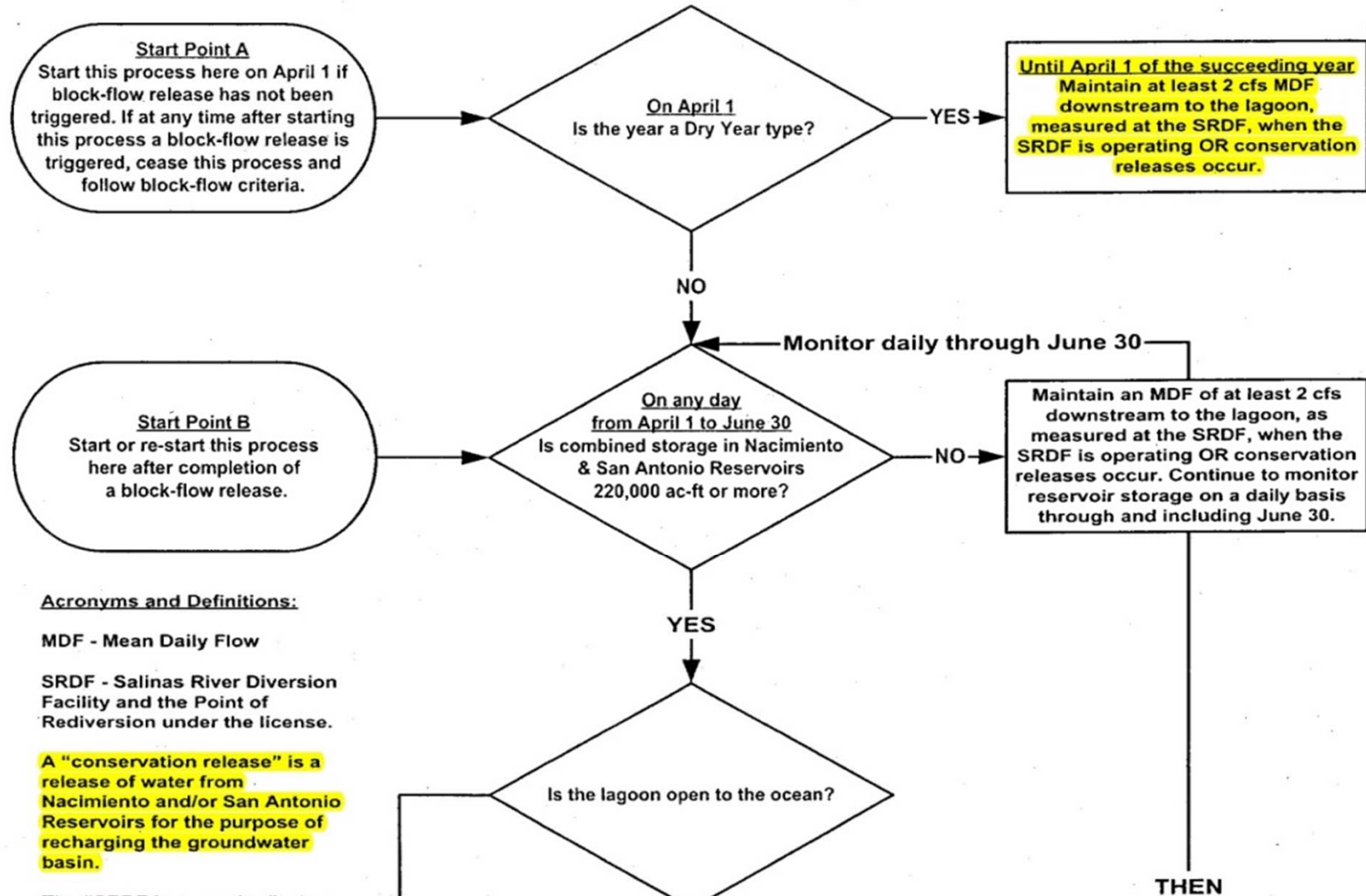


Figure 2 – Flow prescription to enhance downstream migration for juvenile steelhead when block-flow release has not been triggered.







Discussion (cont.)

- Summary Analysis regarding 2 cfs:
 - A conservation release is an amount of water that is released in excess of minimum fish flow releases to recharge the groundwater basin
 - If Agency is performing conservation (groundwater recharge releases) under current conditions, then contiguous flow must be maintained, culminating with at least 2 cfs flowing into the Salinas River Lagoon
 - Conservation releases that do not result in 2 cfs to the Salinas River Lagoon is a violation of the Salinas Valley Water Project Biological Opinions and Water Rights Permits



Discussion (cont.)

- Summary Analysis Regarding 300 cfs:
 - Under Current Conditions, a 300 cfs Conservation Release will not result in 2 cfs to the Salinas River Lagoon
 - Conservation releases that do not result in 2 cfs to the Salinas River Lagoon is a violation of the Salinas Valley Water Project Biological Opinions and Water Rights Permits



Discussion (cont.)

- NMFS Input (4 page letter) received on July 1, 2015:
 - *“NMFS strongly objects to the proposed increase in flow releases from Nacimiento Reservoir...:*
 - *“NMFS is also alarmed the BOD would propose actions intended to purposefully drain Nacimiento Reservoir to minimum pool by the end of summer at which point releases to the Nacimiento River would cease.”*
 - *“The implementation of actions with the consequences of drying the Nacimiento River (and thus killing steelhead) would be a violation of Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act.”*
 - *“NMFS strongly objects to the proposed flow increases and encourages MCWRA and the BOD to rescind this proposal and maintain releases at 60 cfs, per our BiOp [biological opinion] requirements.”*



Summary

- Staff and Counsel have provided requested analysis regarding :
 - 2 cfs minimum flow to the lagoon
 - Releases of up to 300 cfs
 - And conferred with NMFS
- Releases of 300 cfs will not result in 2 cfs to Lagoon, per Staff analysis



Summary (cont.)

- 2 cfs to Lagoon is required per:
 - SVWP USFW BO
 - SVWP NMFS BO
 - Water Rights Permits
- NMFS strongly objects to increasing releases and encourages maintaining releases at 60 cfs
- Res Ops Committee, staff and counsel's recommendation is to keep releases at 60 cfs (minimum fish flows)



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