



MCWRA Briefing Report: Status Report on Salinas Valley Water Project Operations

April 30, 2013

Subject: Salinas Valley Water Project (SVWP) Operations Status Report

Current Status:

Salinas Valley Water Project operations consist of water releases from San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs, Federal and State mandated fishery monitoring at various locations on the Salinas River, Arroyo Seco River and Nacimiento River, and operation of the Salinas River Diversion Facility (SRDF) to divert river water for irrigation to a service area near Castroville.

The SRDF, by permit requirement, may operate seasonally from April 1 through October 31. Releases of water from San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs in preparation of SRDF operation began in mid-March 2013. SRDF operation began April 8, 2013. Combined water releases from Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs for SRDF diversion range from approximately 350 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the spring to approximately 600 cfs during the summer peak irrigation demand period. The SRDF is fully operational and has delivered 461 acre-feet of river water for irrigation for the period April 8-29, 2013.

As of April 30, San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs are at 46 percent capacity. Sufficient water is in storage to provide necessary flow to the SRDF this season. However, as a result of two consecutive dry winters, both reservoirs are projected to be near minimum pool by late-fall 2013.

Steelhead trout in the Salinas River basin are protected by Federal and State law, and various required fishery monitoring activities are included within SVWP operations. Steelhead trout adult upstream migration is monitored from December through March. Steelhead smolt outmigration to the ocean is monitored by rotary screw traps deployed in the Nacimiento River, Arroyo Seco River, and Salinas River upstream of the Nacimiento River. Due to dry winter lack of flow, only one trap could be deployed in 2013, in the Nacimiento River. Seining will be used to capture and estimate steelhead abundance in the Arroyo Seco River. Lack of flow in the Salinas River upstream of the Nacimiento River prevents smolt outmigration monitoring this season. Water quality monitoring is ongoing at locations in the Salinas, Arroyo Seco and Nacimiento rivers. A general steelhead population survey is conducted in late-summer. Fishery monitoring reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012 are available on the MCWRA website at <http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/>.