



County of Monterey

Item No.3

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Consider recommending a release schedule for Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs for 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Reservoir Operations Advisory Committee:

Recommend that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors Consider Adopting a Release Schedule for Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs for 2024.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Beginning in 2010 the Agency operated the SRDF during four seasons (through 2013) before extended drought conditions resulted in insufficient reservoir levels for operation during the next three years, 2014 through 2016. The Winter of 2016-2017 brought large inflow volumes into the reservoirs allowing resumption of conservation releases and SRDF operation during 2017 and 2018, despite limited inflow during the 2017-2018 winter. A wet 2018-2019 winter provided significant Nacimiento Reservoir inflow and sufficient storage for complete operation seasons in 2019 as well as 2020, the first year of the next drought. That drought would span three years and result in a truncated release season in 2021 and insufficient water in storage to operate at all in 2022. 2023 marked a return to wet conditions providing storage increases of approximately 300,000 acre feet and 200,000 acre-feet at Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs, respectively. Following a full conservation season which provided groundwater recharge and SRDF diversions from May through October, 2023, numerous small to moderate winter storms have re-filled the Nacimiento Conservation Pool and brought San Antonio close to its operational volume limit which is currently based on the 1985 Rule Curve pending re-construction of the San Antonio Dam Spillway. As a result, total combined reservoir storage volume at the end of March exceeds 600,000 acre feet for the first time since 2011.

The attached proposed 2024 release schedule accounts for current reservoir inflow rates but assumes no new inflow events for the remainder of the calendar year. The schedule also reflects an estimation of reservoir releases needed to maintain 300 cfs at the Salinas River near Spreckels USGS Streamflow gage through April 20, in accordance with "block flow" operational specifications stipulated in the Flow Prescription and incorporated into Agency water rights. Temporary release adjustments to accommodate recreation activities over holiday periods are also incorporated into the proposed schedule.

Some uncertainty exists as to the date of SRDF startup, which could occur as early as April 1 but may be delayed in order to complete essential maintenance. The proposed schedule reflects an assumed

April 1 start date and maintains conservation flows to recharge the Salinas Valley groundwater basin and operate the SRDF into mid-October while meeting the operational requirements of State Water Resources Control Board appropriative water rights held by the Agency for the Nacimiento and San Antonio Rivers.

As is the standard procedure each year, the release schedule will be updated monthly based on actual hydrologic conditions, changing SRDF demands, and other reservoir operational considerations as may be necessary subsequent to the development of this initial proposed release schedule.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

FINANCING:

None

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Attachments: Reservoir Release Schedule For 2024