



Monterey County

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Board Report

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Consider directing staff to engage in communications with National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) to develop a new classification of winter reservoir releases beneficial to the recharge of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors: Directs staff to engage in communications with National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) to develop a new classification of winter reservoir releases beneficial to the recharge of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) and NMFS have met several times since late 2016 to discuss potential winter releases from Nacimiento Reservoir that are outside the *Salinas Valley Water Project Flow Prescription for Steelhead Trout in the Salinas River* (flow prescription), dated October 2005. These releases would be intended to enhance flows in the Salinas River to assist with adult steelhead upstream migration into suitable spawning habitat in the Arroyo Seco River after two consecutive dry winters without suitable flows to allow adult steelhead migration.

The Reservoir Operations Advisory Committee recommended at its January 26, 2018 meeting that Agency Board of Directors directs staff to engage in communications with NMFS staff to develop a new classification of winter releases that would allow benefit ground recharge in years not following a dry winter.

It is anticipated that these winter release strategies will provide the basis for a revision of the flow prescription to incorporate mechanism(s) to allow for winter releases currently outside of the flow prescription.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

National Marine Fisheries Services

FINANCING:

None

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