

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE KINGS RIVER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

- Call To Order** Executive Policy Committee Member and Kings River Water Association (KRWA) Watermaster, Steven Haugen, called the meeting to order on September 28, 2022, at 3:05 p.m., via teleconference.
- Roll Call** Members Present: Steven Haugen (KRWA), David Merritt (Kings River Conservation District - KRCD), and Gerald Hatler (California Department of Fish and Wildlife - CDFW)
- Others Present: Brian Beal, Binu Brar, Bailey DeGraw, Debra Dunn, Souza Lee, Matthew Meadows, and Lori Werner
- Committee Member
Comment Period** Haugen provided an overview of the Kings River Fisheries Management Program (KRFMP) hydrologic and climatic summary report dated September 1, 2022. He highlighted the hot climatic conditions have provided some challenges with reservoir conditions in Pine Flat and the temperatures we are experiencing downstream. Many efforts have been made to manage flows between the various outlet ports on Pine Flat to avoid any significant temperature excursions by going up or down with gate changes. Haugen believes they were able to maintain most instantaneous changes at less than 2°C when they had to make gage changes such as when the Powerhouse went off. Additionally, Haugen mentioned low point Pine Flat was about 132,000-acre feet which was hit in early September 2022. The reservoir has been coming up with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) releases from Courtright and Wishon making their way down into Pine Flat. KRWA anticipates a continued rise over the next several months as PG&E continues to release water downstream.
- Public Comment
Period** No public comments were provided.
- Minutes Approval** Minutes taken from the May 31, 2022 Executive Policy Committee Meeting of the KRFMP were considered. KRCD General Manager, David Merritt, noted a correction in the minutes under “Incubator Operations Update” on page four. The fiscal year should read 2021-2022. Upon the motion of David Merritt, seconded by Steven Haugen, and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the minutes were approved as corrected.
- Executive Officer
Report** Mr. Haugen did not have any items to report on.

**Public Advisory
Group Report**

No report was provided.

Financial Report

The financial report dated April 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022 was presented to the committee by Binu Brar with KRCD. Upon the motion of David Merritt, seconded by Gerald Hatler, and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the financial report was approved as circulated.

**Technical Steering
Committee Reports****California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Stocking Update:**

Brian Beal with CDFW reported on the Department's stockings that took place between July 1, 2022 and September 27, 2022. In general, CDFW has been stocking light, which has turned out to be a good thing due to the drought and other environmental factors. In July there was only one stocking event of catchables, two in August, and two in September. To date, CDFW has stocked 2,200 pounds with 3,410 fish. They intend to begin stocking heavier in December 2022. They recently had to send much of their fish inventory to the east side due to the Lactococcus situation, which has caused the San Joaquin Hatchery's inventory to be low for catchables; however, they have fish currently in "grow out mode" which will grow to be catchable size over the next two to three months. CDFW believes they should not have a problem fulfilling their 18,000-pound allotment for this year. Beal noted that it does not look like CDFW will have any trophy or supercatchables available at this time. They did stock Brown Trout Fingerlings, which will be great for recreation.

Supplemental Stocking Program/Incubator Stocking Status Report: Soua Lee with KRCD reminded the group that due to Calaveras Trout Farm temporarily closing their doors for the upcoming season, KRCD contacted and executed a contract with Desert Springs Trout Farm based in Summer Lake, Oregon in June 2022. They will be stocking the Kings River starting in November 2022 through March 2023. Beal commented that CDFW also has a large contract with Desert Springs Trout Farm.

Clean-Up Days Update: Lee reported that the Kings River Cleanup Days continue to be successful. On average, they have 10 to 20 volunteers per event. This past month, the group joined forces with the United States Army Core of Engineers on September 24, 2022 for National Public Lands Day. For the month of October, the group will meet in Reedley where the Kings River crosses underneath Manning Avenue. The city recently purchased a parcel of ag land in the area that they are wanting to develop. By doing so, the existing community trail will need to be moved. The Kings River Conservancy will be working with Reedley College's Forestry Program to build a new path for the public to access the river.

"Map of Kings River Fishing Zones" Brochure: Lee provided a brief overview of the "Map of Kings River Fishing Zones" brochure to the Executive Policy Committee. If anyone is interested in handing them out, they can pick up brochures from the KRCD office.

Enhancement Project Planning Update: Lee informed the Committee that Cramer Fish Sciences submitted their 30 percent design for the Thorburn Channel and Gravel Augmentation Site projects, as well as a technical memo to the Technical Steering Committee (TSC). Yesterday, September 27, 2022, the TSC accepted the updated memo.

Lee asked the Committee members to accept the 30 percent design and technical memo provided by Cramer Fish Sciences as presented. Upon the motion of David Merritt, seconded by Steven Haugen, and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the documents were approved as circulated.

Lee and Merritt added that KRCD will be applying for grants to fund the 30 percent design and beyond. Because these grants require a public agency to apply, KRCD will submit the applications on behalf of KRWA and CDFW.

2022-2023 Planned Incubator Operations: Lee reported for the 2022-2023 season, they will only be doing two rounds of trout incubator eggs, with 120,000 per round. The first batch of eggs will go into the incubator building in late December and will spend six weeks there. The release date for the first round is early February, the second round will be in mid-February, and their release will be in early April. Additionally, Lee noted this year's trout incubator eggs will be funded through a \$10,000 grant provided by the Kings River Conservancy.

Other

KRWA Assistant Watermaster, Matthew Meadows, reported the TSC has decided to hold the annual E-Fishing between November 29 and December 9, 2022. They are looking at doing three days in each week.

Lastly, Merritt wanted to make Gerald Hatler and Brian Beal aware of the 25-year easement that KRCD currently holds on the Thorburn property to access the river, which is set to expire in 2024. The Thorburn family wants to gift this property to the Kings River Conservancy sometime in 2023. KRCD has been working with the Conservancy to prepare for this change.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Next Meeting

Bailey DeGraw with KRWA will contact Committee members in the next few days regarding their availability in late January 2023 to host the third meeting of fiscal year 2021-2022.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bailey DeGraw
Kings River Water Association
Executive Administrative Assistant