

California Environmental Flows Workgroup –

August 11, 2020 Meeting Notes

Action items from previous meeting:

- Dan to send conservation flyer to working group
- Dan and Julie to schedule meeting with TNC

CEFF Guidance Document

- No substantial content changes; restructuring changes to simplify document
- 3 sections; single, continuous process used as a guideline for developing environmental flows; 12-step process
- New introductory section
- Reorganized steps to be more intuitive; includes hypothetical example from the north coast
- Includes many appendices that provide additional details and case studies
- Guidance and roadmaps for developing implementation monitoring and adaptive management
- Online tools included
- Section 1: ecological flow criteria using natural functional flows; statewide model
- Section 2: develop ecological flow criteria for specific functional flow component where there are specific ecological considerations such as specific species' need
- Section 3: non-ecological management concerns to develop ecological flow conditions

California Natural Flows Database

- 5 key functional flow components: fall pulse flow, wet season base flow, wet season peak flow, stream flow recession and dry season base flow
- Predicted flow metrics with flow characteristics; under natural conditions; predicted median values for each metrics as well as 80% prediction interval, 10th percentile 90th percentile in median all available in web tool
- Previously predicted monthly
- Falls under Section 1 of CEFF Guidance Document
- <https://rivers.codefornature.org/>

Drought Preparedness

- Working with CDFA and National Marine Fisheries Service in north coast and Russian River areas; developing outreach materials that encourages water conservation for groundwater or surface water users.
- Extremely dry year; some areas are drier than during 2015 drought
- Gathering data and developing outreach materials in anticipation for another dry year; specifically, in the Russian River area

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San Juan Project Update

- Case study implementing CEFF in an Orange County urban watershed and answer specific questions raised; attempting to meet very specific management objectives and regulatory requirements;
- An example of implementing the broad framework in a location where we have different data/models and different management needs
- Background: South Orange County has stormwater permit that requires the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) on how to address the highest priority water quality conditions; 3 high priorities: human pathogen health risks, stream erosion, and unnatural water balance (highest)
- Preliminary findings focused on Aliso Creek watershed; urban watershed where alteration is pervasive across the regions
- Main objective: identify areas where flow management actions will have most benefits in restoring or maintain the local ecology
 - Identify high priority areas
 - Develop flow targets or ecological flow criteria needed to support specific focal species of management concern