



COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS ASSESS FISH PASSAGE

As part of the licensing of the La Grange Hydroelectric Project (La Grange Project), MID and TID were directed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to undertake an assessment of fish passage at both the La Grange and Don Pedro Projects.

Fish passage has become one of the key issues for discussion in the La Grange licensing process. To encourage a collaborative process, MID and TID are hosting a series of public workshops to identify, collect and share information, as well as receive public input on the possibility of fish reintroduction in the Upper Tuolumne River which would require fish passage facilities. Following are brief summaries of the first three workshops:

Workshop #1 – May 20, 2015

At the first fish passage workshop, researchers provided an introduction to fish passage engineering and design, including an overview of what information is needed to design fish passage facilities and examples of fish passage facilities at other projects. Costs was also a topic of discussion and has been a continued theme in all the workshops. The costs of upstream and downstream fish passage at high head dams can exceed \$100 million. These costs would ultimately be paid for by

MID and TID's customers. Therefore, facility cost estimates must be based on solid information. Participants at the workshop agreed that the fish passage study process would benefit from active collaboration among all parties.

Workshop #2 – September 17, 2015

During the second workshop, MID and TID presented a draft reintroduction assessment framework for evaluating whether it's feasible to build and operate fish passage facilities and reintroduce anadromous fish to the upper Tuolumne River. This assessment framework will serve as a mechanism for evaluating the reintroduction of such fish in the upper Tuolumne River in a way that is collaborative and transparent. The framework considers a broad array of issues including ecological feasibility, biological constraints, economics and regulatory implications. Frameworks similar to this one have been used at other projects in California and in the Pacific Northwest. During the second workshop, participants also discussed a number of areas in which more information is needed, such as for which fish species fish passage should be designed. Participants also discussed the importance of establishing reintroduction goals and objectives early in the process in order to evaluate feasibility.

LA GRANGE

January 2016

Modesto Irrigation District | Turlock Irrigation District

*A newsletter
covering the
licensing of the
La Grange Project*

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Workshop #3 – November 19, 2015

The purpose of the third workshop was to get consensus from meeting participants on whether or not to use the reintroduction assessment framework presented in the second workshop. Meeting attendees, including MID and TID customers, expressed their support for a framework process where information about reintroduction and fish passage would be gathered collaboratively.

All workshop notes and materials are available on the La Grange licensing website – www.lagrange-licensing.com.

The next workshop will be held on Wednesday, January 27 at 9 a.m. at MID's downtown office – 1231 11th Street, Modesto. At this next meeting, the reintroduction assessment framework begins with attendees discussing a preliminary list of data gaps and identifying additional studies to collect this data. A general schedule of activities to occur in 2016-2017 to implement the assessment framework will also be established.

MID and TID would like to thank all attendees who have been participating in our workshops thus far and we look forward to working with you as we continue this collaborative process.

COMING UP IN 2016

This year will be a very productive year for the FERC licensing of the La Grange Project. Many environmental studies that began in 2015 will continue into 2016. Researchers will also begin the Cultural Resources Study and the Recreation Access and Safety Study – both of which are required by FERC.

A major milestone of the La Grange Project licensing process will occur on February 2, 2016, when the Initial Study Report (ISR) is issued by MID and TID and filed with FERC. The ISR is a requirement of FERC's Integrated Licensing Process. The ISR will contain reports and technical memoranda describing the results of the Fish Passage Assessment to date, as well as a summary of progress on other studies.

The issuance of the ISR will be followed by a public ISR meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at the DoubleTree Hotel Ballroom – 1150 9th St. Modesto, CA. At this meeting, researchers will summarize the status of the various studies. There will be opportunities for the public to ask questions and provide comments.

KEY DATES

January 27, 2016 - MID and TID to hold fish passage workshop #4 at MID's office - 1231 11th Street

February 2, 2016 - MID and TID will issue an Initial Study Report and file it with FERC.

February 25, 2016 - MID and TID will host a public Initial Study Report meeting at the DoubleTree Hotel Ballroom - 1150 9th Street, Modesto.

February 2017 - MID and TID to file Updated Study Report.

All dates subject to change.

