

UNCONTESTED NPDES PERMIT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME NIMBUS SALMON AND STEELHEAD HATCHERY AND AMERICAN RIVER TROUT HATCHERY, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

The State of California, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) operates the Nimbus Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery (NFH) and American River Trout Hatchery (ARTH) on land owned by DFG and the United States Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento County. The Hatchery is on the south bank of the American River immediately downstream from Lake Natoma and Nimbus dam. The NFH produces juvenile Chinook salmon and steelhead to mitigate for the loss of anadromous fisheries resources due to the operation of Folsom and Nimbus dams. The ARTH obtains fish eggs or fingerling fish from other hatcheries, or collects fish eggs at remote sites. The eggs are incubated and hatched, and fish are reared to various sizes to accommodate various management strategies. Fish are transferred from the hatcheries to several California water bodies for release. Total yearly harvestable weights produced by the hatcheries are approximately 600,000 lbs of trout, 70,000 lbs of salmon, and 130,000 lbs of steelhead. The hatcheries receive water from Lake Natoma for use in hatchery operations, and the water is routed through settling ponds when the raceways are cleaned. Up to 90 million gallons per day (mgd) of flow-through process wastewater is subsequently discharged back to the American River via four Outfalls. This proposed Order retains technology based effluent limitations for total suspended solids and settleable solids, and includes new water quality based effluent limitations for copper and formaldehyde. This proposed Order requires the Discharger to conduct a study of mercury in the receiving water and effluent. Also, various aquaculture drugs and chemicals may be used periodically to ensure the health and productivity of the confined fish population. Since limited toxicity information is available regarding these drugs and chemicals, this proposed Order requires additional toxicity testing, and, based upon results of this testing, may be reopened to include water quality based effluent limitations for these drugs and chemicals if necessary. (JME)