

The state water board put out a press release late yesterday along with the water and fish agencies that warns we're short on cold water and could see the loss of a second generation of winter run. You can read the press release here:

<http://mavensnotebook.com/2015/06/16/this-just-in-drought-conditions-force-difficult-management-decisions-for-sacramento-river-temperatures/>

Here's a response from GGSA executive director John McManus:

"Federal officials admit their actions killed a generation of winter run salmon last year but so far have said little to nothing about the generation of commercially valuable fall run salmon that also died last year. Nor does their current announcement address the likelihood of a second catastrophic year of fall run salmon loss this year. Fall run salmon supply the sport and commercial salmon fishery off both California and most of Oregon. The loss of the 2014 salmon, and the likelihood of a second year of massive salmon death, is obviously a major threat to the salmon industry. Hatchery fish can fill the gap until natural stocks rebound and fishermen shouldn't have to shoulder all the cost of federal and state mistakes that wiped out one, and maybe two generations of naturally spawning salmon.

Contrary to what the State Water Board press release suggests about a broken thermometer being to blame, GGSA was told by the Bureau of Reclamation that it measured high water temperatures in Lake Shasta as far back as April but simply didn't believe them because they were inconsistent with what the Bureau's models suggested the temperatures should be. A Bureau official told GGSA the higher temperatures were later confirmed when equipment was brought in from Lake Folsom to provide a second measurement. In addition, the temperature model relied on by the Bureau of Reclamation was demonstrated to be two to four degrees off in 2014 so why was it still being used to establish a water plan for salmon this year?

This is the second year in a row where salmon fishermen are being told by water officials, sorry, we miscalculated. Throughout the Spring the Golden Gate Salmon Association asked water officials to conserve a small amount of extra cold water to avoid a second year of massive salmon kill and only now are the water officials responding and telling us it may be too late.

Fertilized fall run salmon eggs can be grown in refrigerated facilities and later placed in river gravel to hatch in November when the rivers naturally cool. Egg injection would save salmon genetics that we'll probably otherwise lose. Egg injection programs have worked elsewhere and under the current dire circumstances, warrant trying here. This could provide the needed salmon population boost we'll otherwise likely lose.