



August 4, 2025

Erik Ekdahl
Chief Deputy Director
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor Sacramento, CA 94814
Erik.Ekdahl@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: 2025 Shasta River Instream Flow Pilot Study

Dear Chief Deputy Director Ekdahl:

On January 27, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Shasta and Scott River Watersheds Drought Emergency Regulations (Emergency Regulations) were approved by the Office of Administrative Law. The Emergency Regulations authorize the curtailment of diversions in both watersheds when flows are insufficient to protect fish. The Emergency Regulations set drought emergency minimum flows for the Scott and Shasta Rivers. The flows for the Shasta River are measured at the United States Geological Survey gage 11517500 located near Yreka, California and shown below in table 1.

Table 1. Shasta instream flow requirements by month.

Jan	Feb	Mar 1-24	Mar 25-31	May	June	June	July	Aug	Sept 1-15	Sept 16-30	Oct	Nov	Dec
125	125	125	105	70	50	50	50	50	50	75	105	125	125

Included in the Emergency Regulations is the ability for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to propose flows that deviate from the emergency minimum flows. Section (c)(2)(D) of the Emergency regulations states:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, after coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service, may propose that the Deputy Director implement, for a limited

amount of time, alternative flows at the Yreka gage to gather temperature and other information to evaluate whether such alternative flows can provide equal or better protection for the pertinent species' relevant life stages. If such alternative flows are higher than the flows described in subsection (c)(2)(A), the proposal requires agreement from affected water right holders.

Pursuant to Emergency Regulation Section (c)(2)(D) CDFW is proposing that the Deputy Director implement alternative flows for the Shasta River in the month of August for approximately 15 days. During this period flows will be below the 50 cfs threshold for approximately 7 days before going above 50 cfs for the remaining period. The exact dates of the proposed flow have not been finalized but are expected to occur in the second half of the month. Significant weather events or temperatures will factor into the final schedule. When the dates are finalized CDFW will inform the SWRCB. The proposed alternative flows are shown in table 2. Small changes to the ramping rates may occur during implementation.

Table 2. Proposed alternative flows for the Shasta River.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
45 cfs/40 cfs	40 cfs	40 cfs	40 cfs	40 cfs	45 cfs/50 cfs	50 cfs/55 cfs	55 cfs/60 cfs	60 cfs	60 cfs	60 cfs	60 cfs	60 cfs	55 cfs/50 cfs

During this period CDFW will monitor salmonids and other fish noting condition, habitat use, and species composition. In the case that fish experience mortality or other affects from the reduced flows, CDFW will immediately request flows return to 50 cfs and end the proposed alternative flows.

CDFW has identified pools in the Shasta Canyon that are most likely to be stratifying and will conduct focused salmonid surveys for species detection and habitat use before, after and throughout the hottest period of the day during the proposed alternative flows when salmonids are seeking refuge habitat from ambient river conditions. Throughout the baseflow period, as flows fluctuate, CDFW will continue to monitor key habitat features identified in previous surveys (for example seeps and side channels) to assess fish accessibility.

In addition to CDFW fisheries monitoring, Applied River Sciences has received funding to complete further data collection and analysis in the Shasta Canyon. Their specific work includes evaluating drift feeding of juveniles to evaluate how stream flows influence the quantity of rearing habitat and juvenile growth potential in the lower Shasta River, completing temperature modeling with existing and data collected in Summer 2025, and empirical monitoring of vertical water temperatures, oxygen and turbidity levels in deep pools, numerical analysis of pool stratification potential in locations identified by CDFW in previous Shasta Canyon surveys. The proposed alternative flows will add additional data collection for the study effort.

CDFW is working with the Shasta Scott Watermaster District and Siskiyou County Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) on the proposed alternative flows. The Farm Bureau will work with the community to reduce fluctuations in the flow seen in previous years to ensure that when the flow is at 40 cfs or 60 cfs they remain as stable as possible. The Watermaster has also confirmed that during the alternative flows water will be delivered in the system pursuant to the Shasta River Judgement and Decree (no. 7035).

One issue of concern is that water quality conditions in the Shasta Canyon this year have been challenging with reduced visibility that has prevented surveys from being completed during certain periods and severely limited our ability to detect fish when completed. Conditions are improving and CDFW will continue monitoring the Canyon but decreases in visibility may impact our ability to detect fish and implement the proposed flows.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed alternative flows for the Shasta River in 2025 please contact Michael Harris, Environmental Program Manager at (530) 410-5334 or Michael.r.Harris@wildlife.ca.gov.

Thank you,

Tina Bartlett

Regional Manager, Region 1

cc: State Water Resources Control Board
Erin Ragazzi, Assistant Deputy Director Division of Water Rights
erin.ragazzi@waterboards.ca.gov

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Tina Bartlett, Northern Region Manager
Michael Harris, Environmental Program Manager
Klamathwatershed@wildlife.ca.gov

Kathleen Miller, Attorney
Crystal Robinson, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor

National Marine Fisheries Service

Dan Wilson, Branch Supervisor

dan.wilson@noaa.gov

Jeff Abrams, Fisheries Biologist

Jeff Abrams - NOAA Federal [<jeff.abrams@noaa.gov>](mailto:jeff.abrams@noaa.gov)

Siskiyou County Farm Bureau

siskiyoufarm@gmail.com

Shasta Scott Watermaster District

Leah Grassman, Deputy Watermaster

deputy@sswatermaster.org