

ACTION ITEM

Approval of a Contract Amendment with the United States Geological Survey (Chinook Salmon Study)

Summary: Council staff requests an amendment to a contract with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) for a no-cost extension of time. The contract end date would extend from April 30, 2021 to February 1, 2022 with no change to the contract budget of \$510,974. This amendment allows for the project's adjustment to account for changes resulting from the COVID-19 emergency and will enable researchers to finish the project as initially funded by the Council. The study performed under this contract was selected for an award from the 2018-2019 multi-agency Delta science proposal solicitation.

REQUESTED ACTION

Council staff recommends that the Council approve a contract amendment with USGS for a no-cost extension of time from April 30, 2021 to February 1, 2022.

The Executive Officer has delegated authority up to \$500,000 to enter into contracts on the Council's behalf. This contract amount is in excess of the Executive Officer's delegated authority and requires Council approval. The Council approved the original contract on April 25, 2019. Consequently, this amendment also requires Council approval.

BACKGROUND

The project, entitled "Quantifying the contribution of tidal flow variation to the survival of juvenile Chinook salmon," is in collaboration with USGS and Resource Management Associates (RMA). The study addresses critical knowledge gaps in juvenile Chinook salmon survival and is an outgrowth of work funded by the inaugural 2010 Delta Science Program proposal solicitation.

The 2010 project developed new statistical models for quantifying the effect of tidally averaged river flows on survival, travel time, and migration routing through the Delta (Perry et al. 2018¹). Natural resource managers are now using these models to predict real-time survival through the Delta; the online tool shows how water management actions can potentially influence salmon survival².

Furthermore, the 2010 research project identified considerable variation in juvenile Chinook salmon survival that was unexplained by net tidally averaged river flows.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2017-0310>

² <https://oceanview.pfeg.noaa.gov/shiny/FED/CalFishTrack/>

This finding led to the 2018 proposal, which is based on a hypothesis that this unexplained variation in survival could be caused by tidal forcing (e.g., the spring-neap cycle) in which the total distance that juvenile salmon travel changes. To find out the answer, biologists from the USGS Western Fisheries Research Center partnered with hydrodynamic modelers from the USGS California Water Science Center and RMA to develop metrics of tidal river flow that could help explain variation in survival. Findings from this study will help resource managers better understand how factors that influence tidal forcing in the Delta (e.g., wetland restoration, sea-level rise, etc.) affect juvenile Chinook salmon's survival.

JUSTIFICATION

The purpose of this amendment is to extend the contract end date from April 30, 2021 to February 1, 2022 to reflect significant delays in the research due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all USGS field and analysis-based research projects. Employees and cooperators shifted to teleworking schedules and adjusted to a new mode of working.

FISCAL INFORMATION

No additional funds are being requested. The total budget of \$510,974 remains the same, with the contract end date being extended from April 30, 2021 to February 1, 2022.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

None.

CONTACT

Dylan Stern
Senior Environmental Scientist
Phone: (916) 322-6545