

California State University, Fresno
Department of Biology presents

Restoration of Chinook Salmon in the San Joaquin River: Challenges in Times of Drought



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A goal of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program is to restore self-sustaining populations of the southern-most fall and spring runs of Chinook salmon in North America. One of the main criteria for success is the availability of suitable rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids, including seasonal floodplains. Historically, juvenile Chinook salmon life stages coincided with storm and snowmelt-driven flood pulses, which inundated thousands of Central Valley floodplain acres. But now water supply and pulses are largely managed for human uses. This talk will address our collaborative approach to this important local issue of how apparently conflicting water demands can be ameliorated.

For example, some project goals have been modified in response to the recent drought in a rather opportunistic way. This year we monitored juvenile salmon ecology in the absence of floodplain habitats due to the drought. This will allow us to address the conventional wisdom that juvenile Chinook require these floodplain habitats as a necessary component of their early life history. It will also allow us to estimate how little water is needed to support the Chinook salmon reintroduction, which is very important in a region where water access and rights are highly contentious.

For further information: www.csufresno.edu/biology or phone 278-2001

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