

California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Bill Jennings



State Water Resources Control Board Drought Workshop

18, 19 February 2014

Fish Suffer in Drought

- Population crashes and regime shifts tend to occur during serious drought
 - ESA listings for Delta smelt and Winter-run salmon followed the 1987 – 1992 drought.
 - Asian clam and other invasive species secured a toehold and expanded their range following the 1987 – 1992 drought
 - Drought effects on fish ripple forward for decades
- SWP and CVP mismanagement has exacerbated drought impacts on fish.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Percent Decline in Delta Fish Population Abundance Indices

Fall Midwater Trawls

Species	1967 v. 2013	Five Year Average 67-71 v. 09-13
Striped Bass	- 99.6%	- 98.8%
Delta Smelt	- 95.6%	- 89.8%
Longfin Smelt	- 99.8%	- 99.4%
American Shad	- 90.9%	- 99.4%
Splittail	- 98.5%	- 87.7%
Threadfin Shad	- 97.8%	- 98.1%

Summer Townet Survey

Species	1967 v. 2013	Five Year Average 67-71 v. 09-13
Striped Bass	- 98.2%	- 98.1%
Delta Smelt	- 94.2%	- 93.8%

Population abundances of many native anadromous species and lower trophic orders reflect similar magnitude declines.

Dry Year Sequences are Frequent

- According to DWR, there have been 10 multi-year droughts of large-scale extent in the last 100 years, spanning 40 years.

1918-1920 1923-1926 1928-1935 1947-1950 1959-1962
1976-1977 1987-1992 2000-2002 2007-2009 2012-2014

Drought in California, 2012, Department of Water Resources

- **How can we be surprised and unprepared for something that occurs 40% of the time?**

SWP & CVP Operate As If There Is No Tomorrow

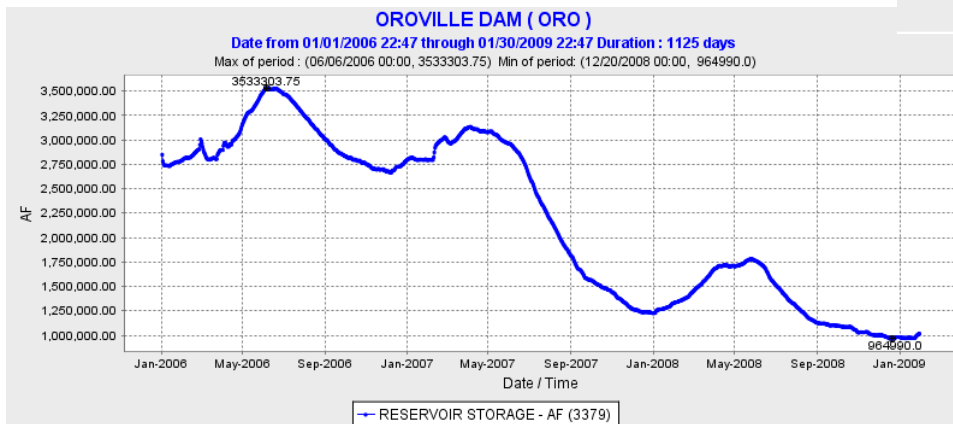
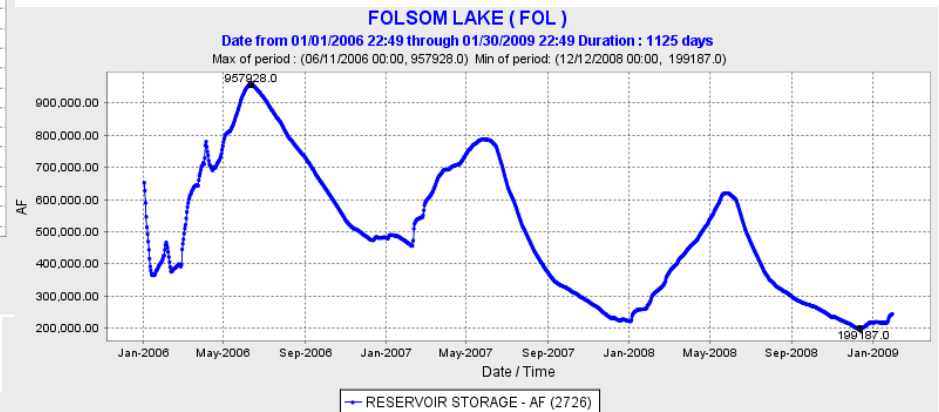
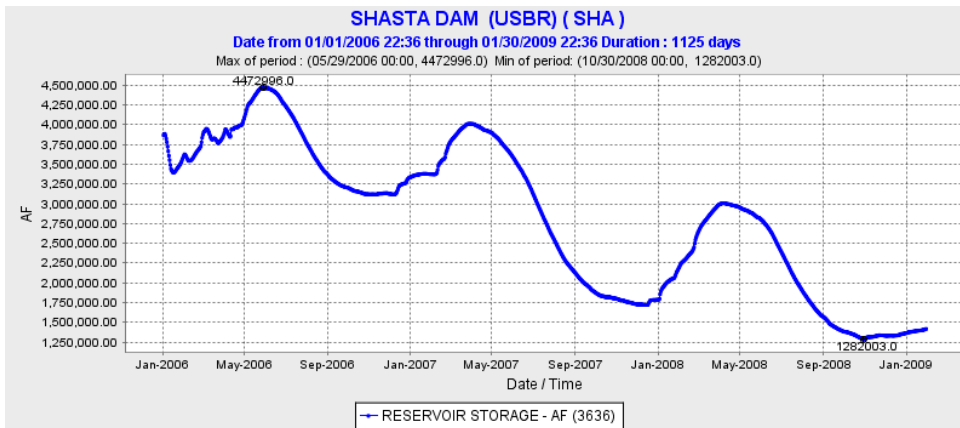
“The usual strategy described in discussions with Central Valley surface water project operators who are experiencing a below-normal supply is to serve all the water possible on demand of the users, carrying little or no water over to guard against a dry 1977...”

“This strategy is based on the belief that a good crop this year is desirable, since next year will probably be a near-normal or better water supply.”

The California Drought – 1976, May 1976, Department of Water Resources

This was written following a dry winter in 1976 and, of course, we know the disaster that occurred in 1977. Little has changed.

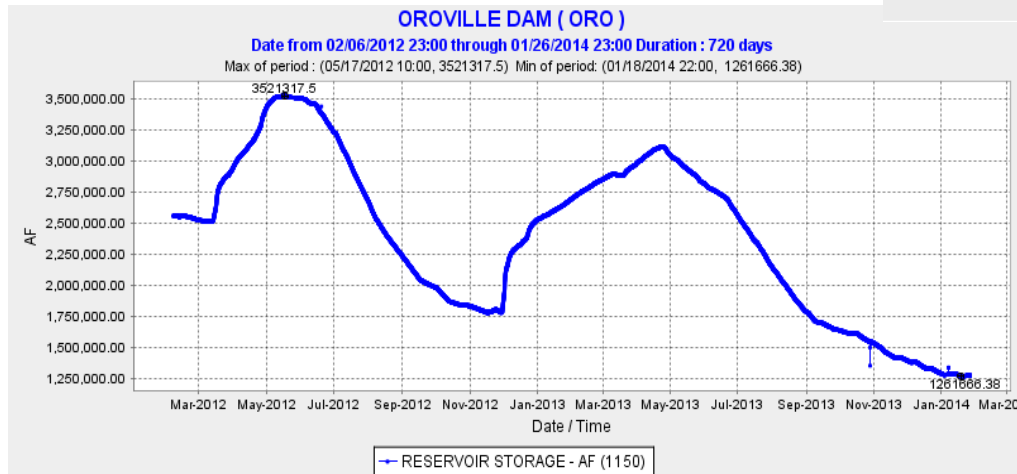
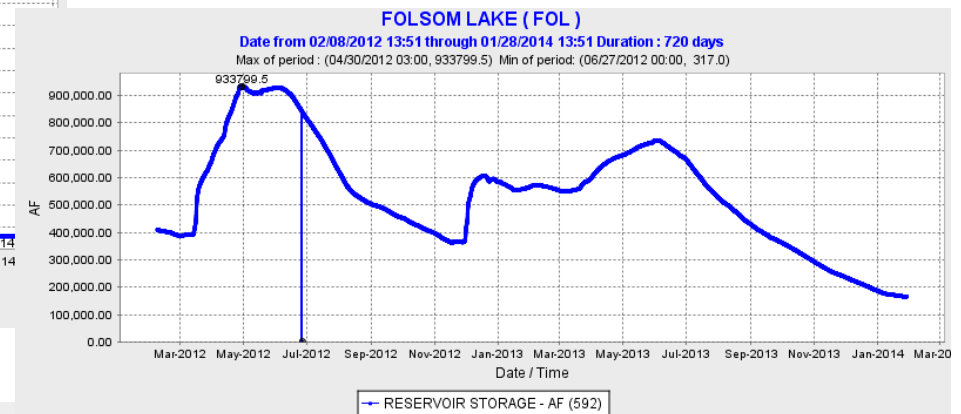
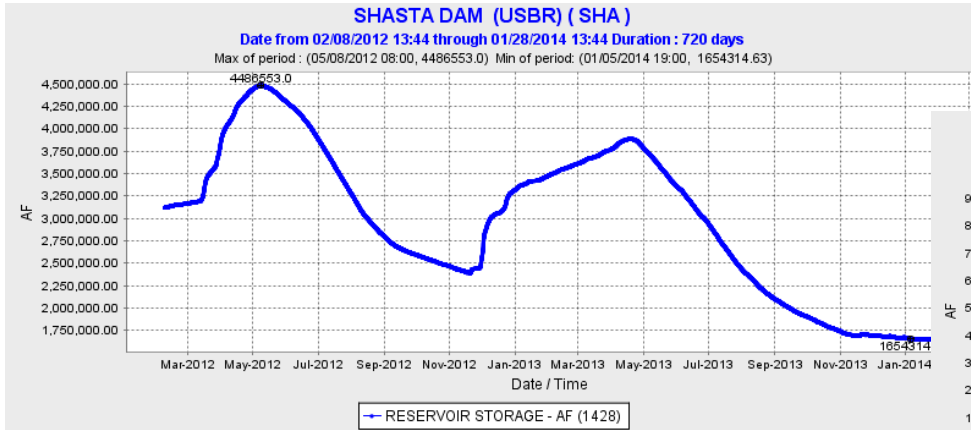
2007 – 2009 Drought



2006 – 8,964,227 AF
 2009 – 2,446,180 AF
 Draw Down – 6,518,047 AF

**What if we had not had a
 March Miracle to bail us out?**

2013 -2014 Drought



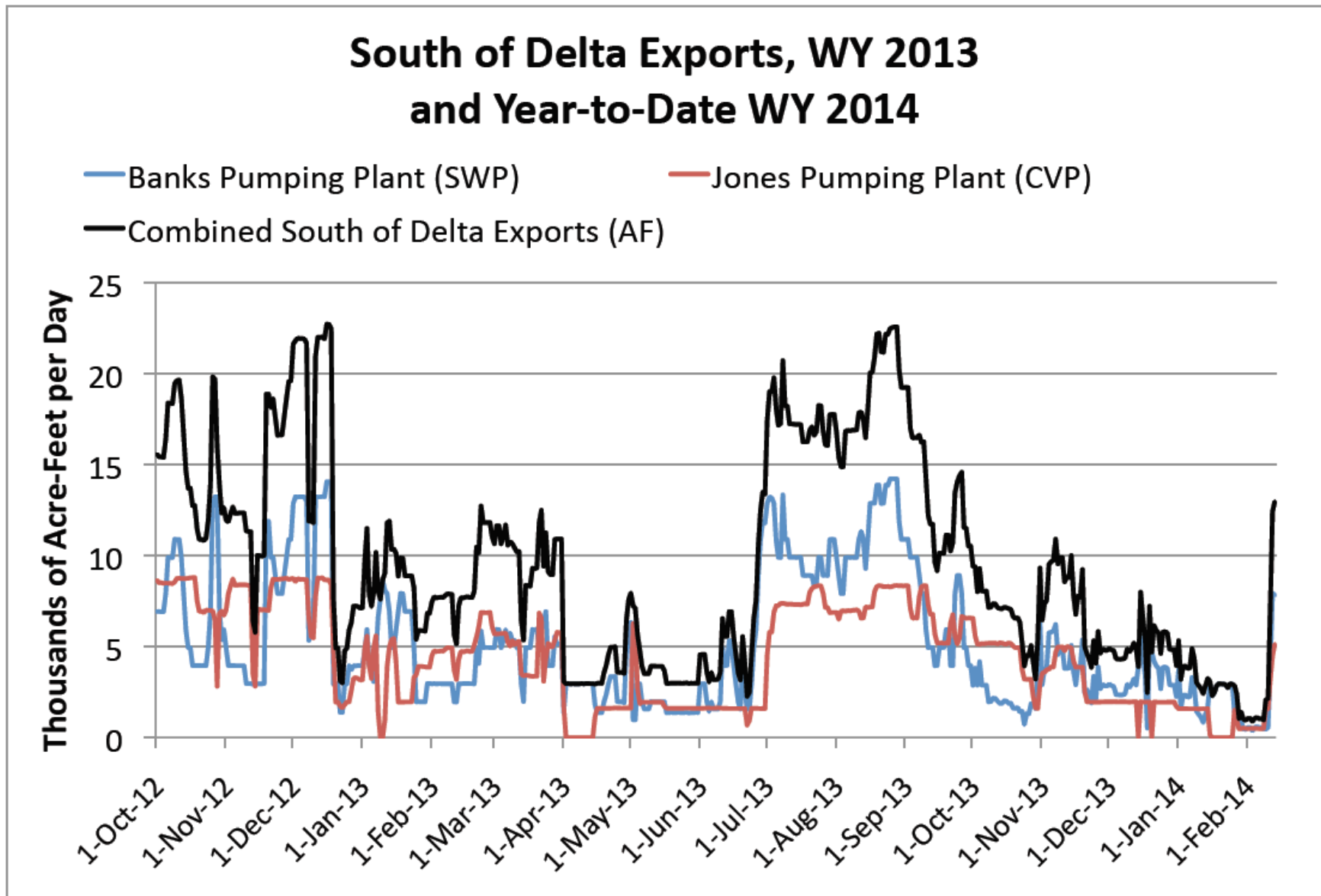
2012 – 8,941,671 AF
 2014 – 2,916,297 AF
 Draw Down – 6,025,374 AF

What if it doesn't rain?

Why Conserve: Rain Will Come

- In water year 2011, the Department of Interior used only 348.8 TAF of the 800 TAF of CVPIA § 3406(b)(2) water. “Interior decided to not bank the unused (b)(2) water from water year 2011.”
- In water year 2013, DWR exported more than 826,000 acre-feet of water beyond what it had informed its contractors it could deliver.
- **Had DWR and Reclamation exercised prudence, almost 1.3 MAF of water would have remained in storage.**

Export Regime Fails To Reflect Water Reality



Gambling With Mother Nature

- With Shasta, Oroville and Folsom storage down almost 2 MAF from previous May, the Projects exported almost 1.7 MAF June to September 2013.
- With no precipitation, SWP & CVP exported another 681 TAF October through December (perhaps 800 TAF, with carriage water).
- Shasta, Oroville and Folsom storage on 31 January 2014 was 3.1 MAF (900,000 AF less than 2013 Delta exports).

SWP & CVP Mismanagement Places California at Risk

- Contract demands far exceed deliveries and reservoir storage is at an historic low.
- The Projects operate on a year-to-year basis with little thought of tomorrow.
- Projects failed to learn from 76-77 and 1987-1992 droughts. They dodged a bullet in 2007-2009 because of a March Miracle.
- California's economy and ecosystems are facing severe disruption if 2014 rainfall is similar to 2013.
- Projects cannot be relied on to self-regulate.