Sonoma Water

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every Day.

Temporary Urgency Change Petitions: Water Supply Conditions

October 28, 2026

Don Seymour, P.E. Deputy Director of Engineering

Jessica Martini-Lamb, Environmental Resources Division Manager

sonomawater.org



Agenda

- Temporary Urgency Change Petitions
- Decision 1610
- Russian River Biological Opinion
- Next steps

What is a Temporary Urgency Change Petition?

A Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) requests that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) temporarily modify certain conditions of a water right permit.

- **If approved:** The State Water Board issues a Temporary Urgency Change Order authorizing the changes for up to 180 days.

Water supply conditions and fisheries requirements in the Russian River

The Lake Mendocino storage thresholds used in the current request were developed in 2023 and have been requested in TUCPs filed in 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026.

Changes to Sonoma Water's minimum instream flow requirements have been requested, as required by the 2008 and 2025 Russian River Biological Opinions.

Changes to Sonoma Water's water rights have been requested and approved in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The State Water Board has issued orders for each of these petitions approving this request.

Russian River Operations Management

- **State Water Resources Control Board's Decision 1610** establishes Normal, Dry, or Critical water supply conditions based on water storage at Lake Pillsbury in the Eel River watershed. The type of water supply condition determines the minimum instream flow requirements in reaches of the Russian River and Dry Creek.

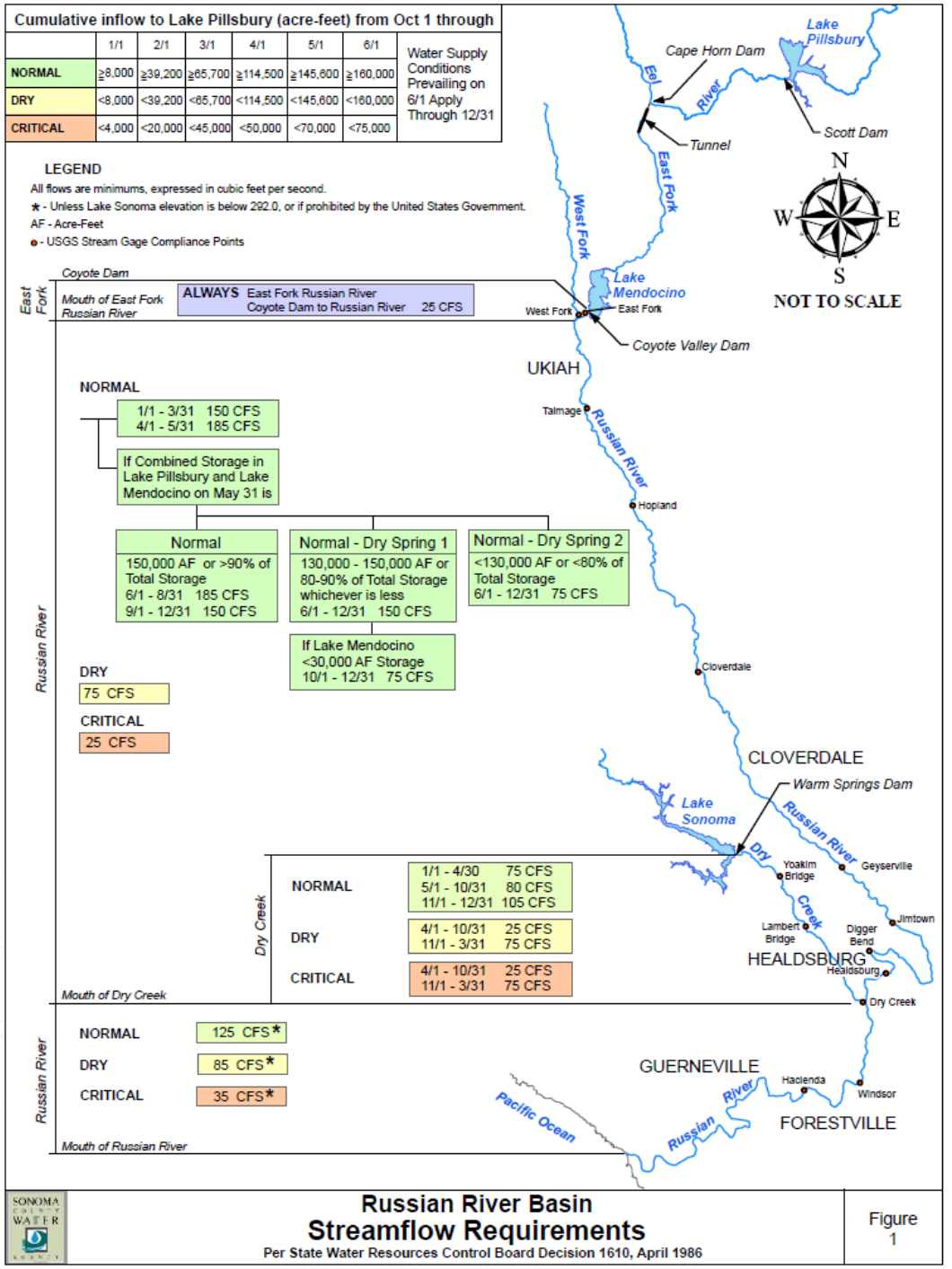
- **2008 and 2025 Russian River Biological Opinions** require Sonoma Water to modify certain operations to protect federally listed salmon and steelhead.



Sonoma Water

Decision 1610

1. Hydrologic Index
   - Lake Pillsbury Cumulative Inflow
   - Combined Storage of Pillsbury and Mendocino
   - Lake Mendocino Storage
2. Minimum instream flow requirements
   - East Fork
   - Upper Russian
   - Dry Creek
   - Lower Russian



Russian River and Dry Creek Stream Gages

Upper Russian River Gages

- West Fork + East Fork
- Talmage
- Hopland
- Cloverdale
- Geyserville
- Jimtown
- Diggers Bend
- Healdsburg

Dry Creek Gages

- Yoakim
- Lambert Bridge
- Dry Creek Mouth

Lower Russian River Gages

- Windsor
- Guerneville (Hacienda Bridge)



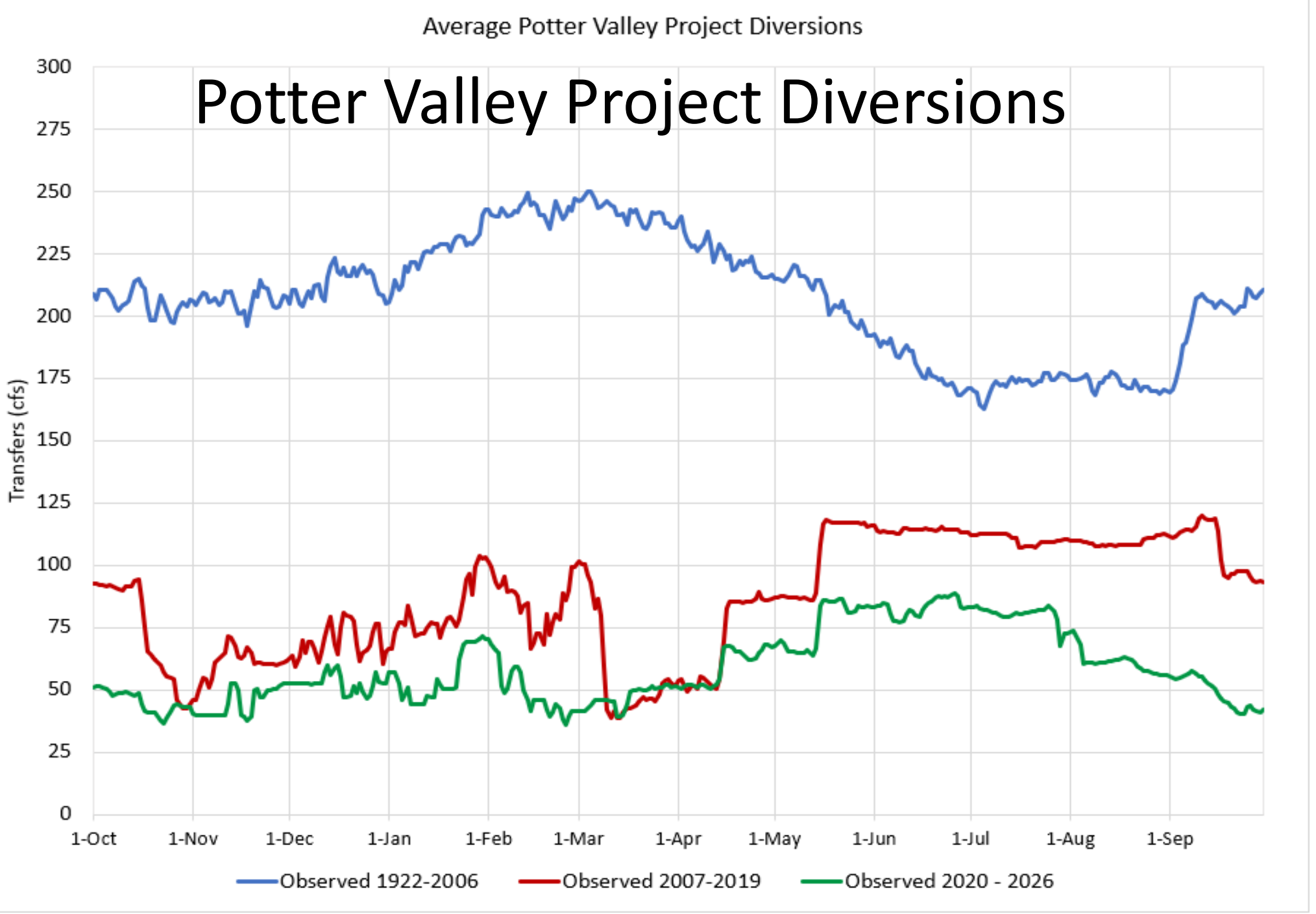
Streamflow Management Considerations

- We monitor all gages for compliance with minimum instream flow requirements.
- We factor in a buffer above the minimum requirements to account for natural variability over the season from upstream to downstream.



Sonoma Water

Potter Valley Project Diversions



Russian River Biological Opinion


Central CA Coast Coho Salmon


Central CA Coast Steelhead


CA Coastal Chinook Salmon

- A Biological Opinion is required by the federal Endangered Species Act when a project activity is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species, or to destroy/adversely modify designated critical habitat.
- On April 29, 2025, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a second, non-jeopardy, Biological Opinion to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Sonoma Water, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District (District).
- 10-year term and covers the USACE and Sonoma Water's operations and maintenance activities, including flood control, water supply, channel maintenance, monitoring, and habitat restoration in the Russian River watershed. District channel maintenance activities included.

Sonoma Water

August 2026 Temporary Urgency Change Petitions

On August 28, 2026, Sonoma Water filed Temporary Urgency Change Petitions (TUCPs) with the State Water Resources Control Board to request temporary changes.

Current TUC Order Expires

November 15, 2026

Next Authorization Period Requested

November 16, 2026 – May 14, 2027



Sonoma Water

August 2026 Temporary Urgency Change Petitions

1. Replace the hydrologic index used to determine watershed water supply and minimum instream flow requirements to reflect operational changes at PG&E's Potter Valley Project and actual conditions in the Russian River watershed.
2. Set minimum instream flow requirements for the Russian River's upper and lower reaches under **Normal** water supply conditions, May 1–Oct. 15, 2027.

Upper Russian River

185 cfs → **125 cfs**

Previous minimum — Requested minimum

Lower Russian River

125 cfs → **70 cfs**

Previous minimum — Requested minimum



Water Supply

Storing water longer in Lake Mendocino can help keep river temperatures cooler and support fish migration later in the year.

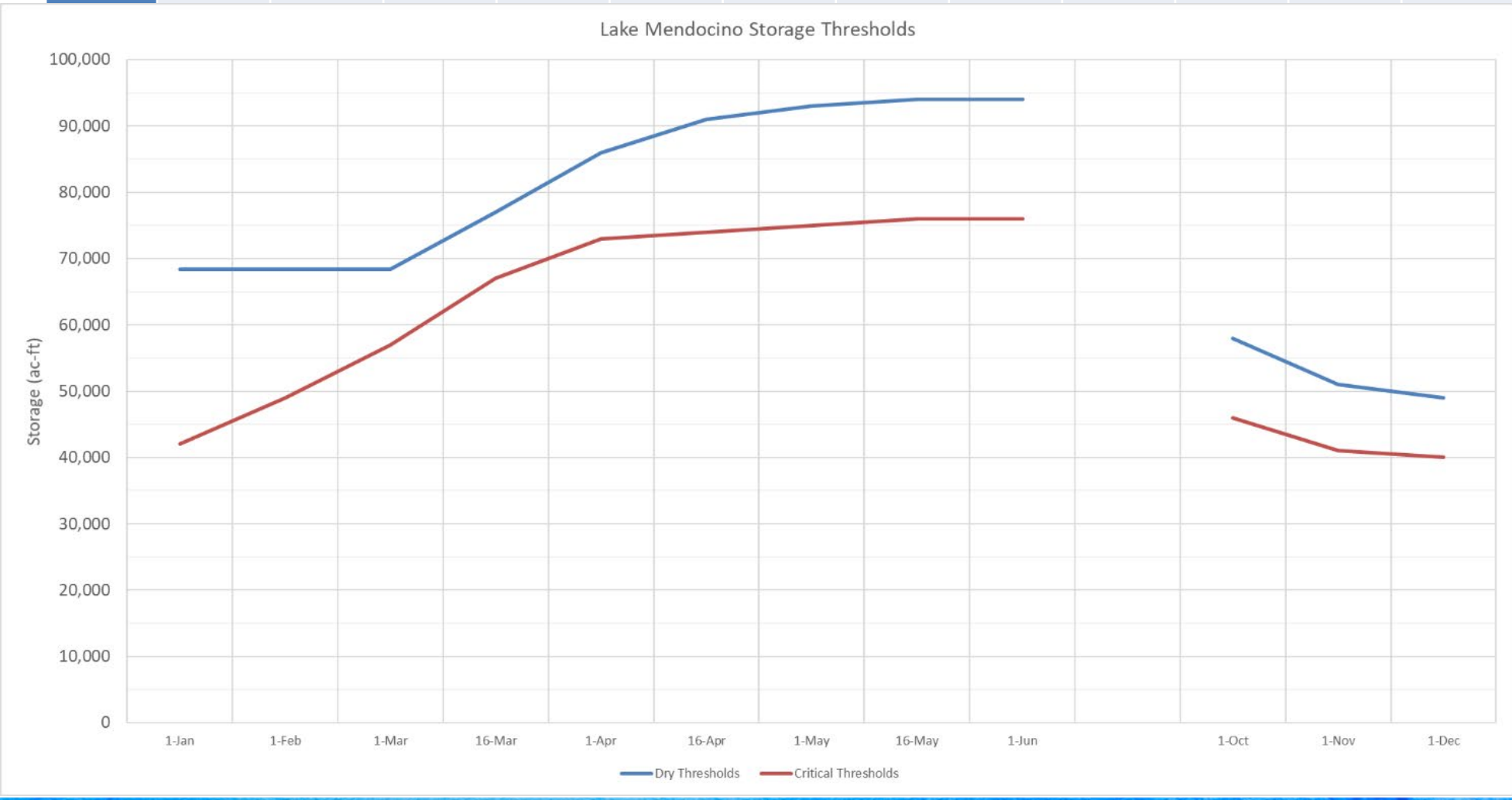
Fish habitat

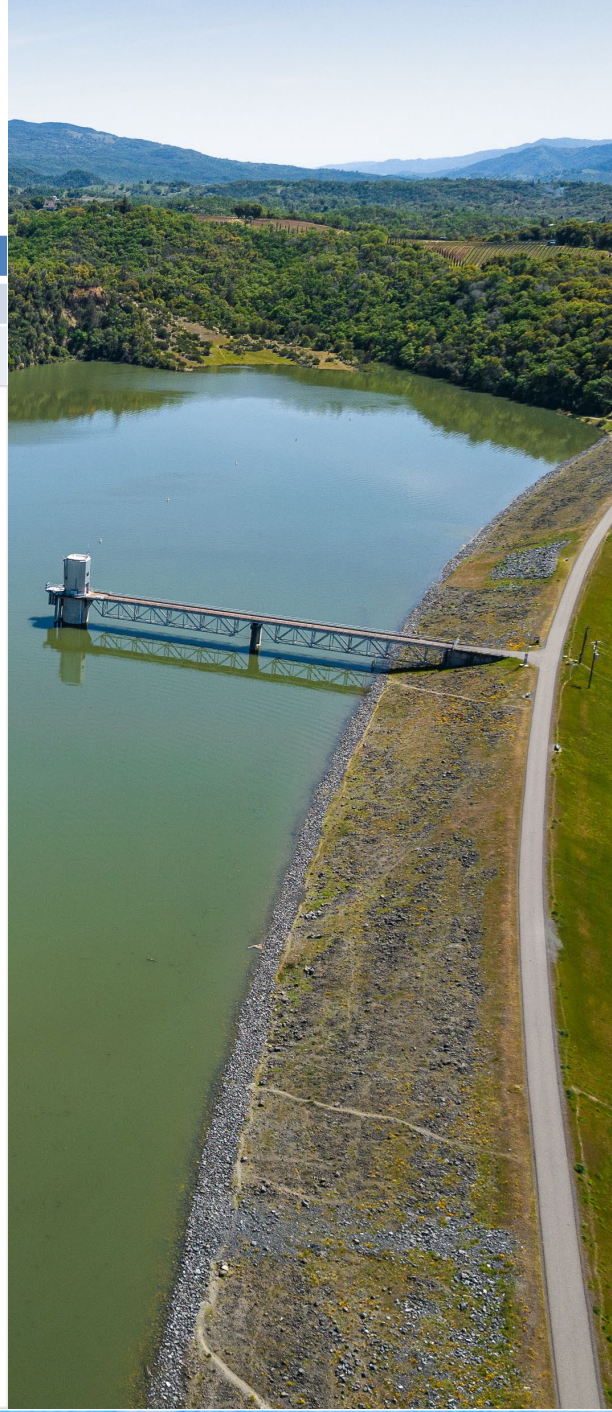
Lower summer flows can create more suitable habitat for young salmon and steelhead.

Lake Mendocino Storage Thresholds

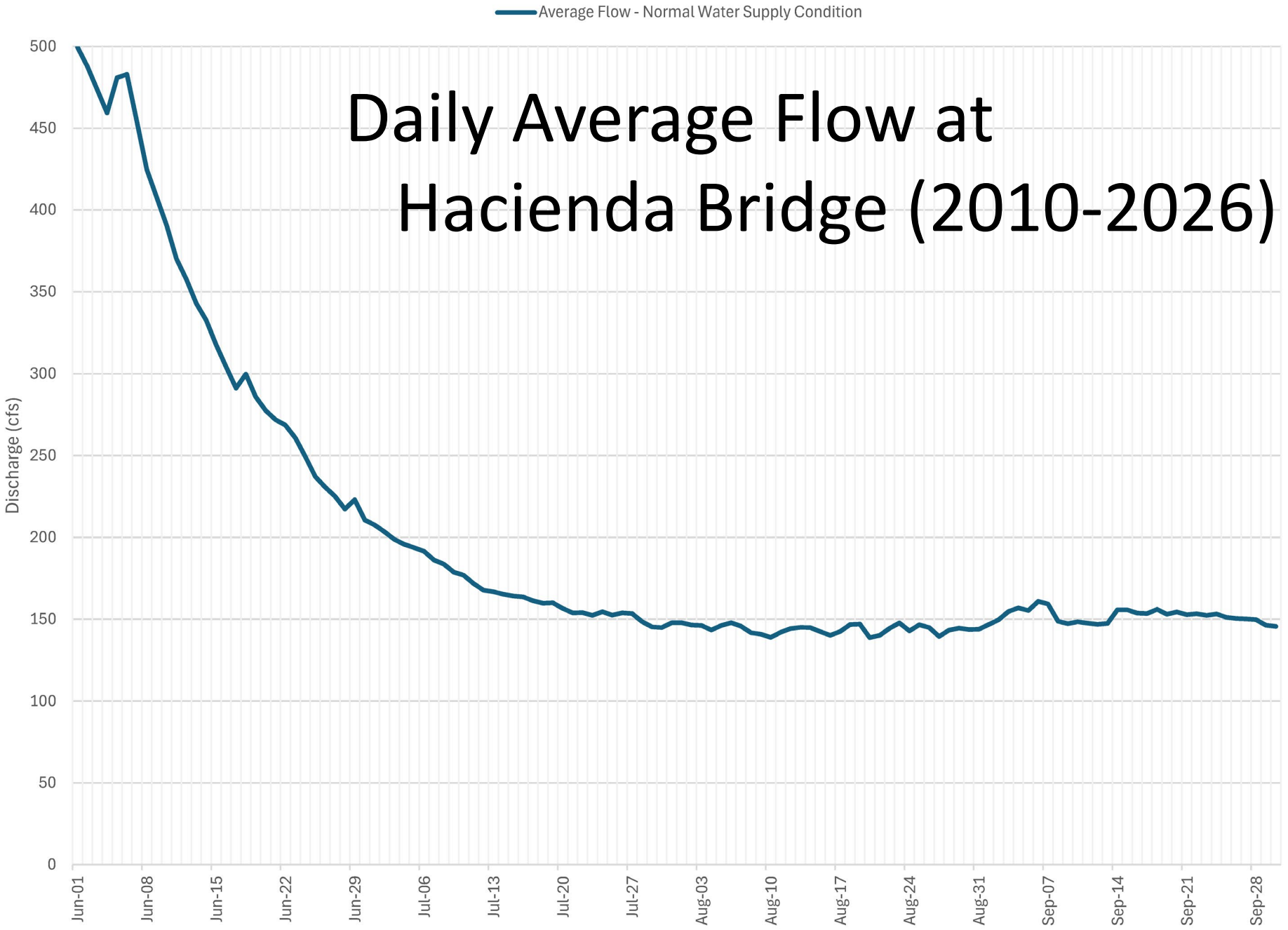
Storage Thresholds and Evaluation Dates for Proposed Hydrologic Index (ac-ft)

	1/1	2/1	3/1	3/16	4/1	4/16	5/1	5/16	6/1	10/1	11/1	12/1
Dry	68,400	68,400	68,400	77,000	86,000	91,000	93,000	94,000	94,000	58,000	51,000	49,000
Critical	42,000	49,000	57,000	67,000	73,000	74,000	75,000	76,000	76,000	46,000	41,000	40,000





Daily Average Flow at Hacienda Bridge (2010-2026)





Next Steps

Pacific Gas & Electric Potter Valley Project Process (timeline TBD)

- PG&E and FERC License Surrender process.
- Eel-Russian Project Authority New Eel-Russian Facility process.



Interim Change Petition

- File petition(s) in 2027 proposing to modify hydrologic index to reflect current conditions in the watershed on an interim basis using same storage thresholds and conservation measures for summer salmonid habitat as the current TUCP and evaluated in 2025 Biological Opinion pending permanent changes.
- State Water Board will issue public notice providing public comment opportunity.

Permanent Changes to Decision 1610 Hydrologic Index and Water Rights

- Once Russian River watershed conditions are more settled, Sonoma Water plans to petition the State Water Board for permanent changes to its water rights.

Sonoma Water

SonomaWater.org/TUCP