

WR-1 WATER QUALITY INTERIM TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**KERN RIVER No. 3 HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
*FERC PROJECT No. 2290***

PREPARED FOR:



October 2023

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

°C	degrees Celsius
DO	dissolved oxygen
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
KR3	Kern River No. 3
mg/L	milligrams per liter
mL	milliliter
MPN	most probable number
NFKR	North Fork Kern River
Project	Kern River No. 3 Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2290)
RL	Laboratory Reporting Limit
SCE	Southern California Edison
SPD	Study Plan Determination
USR	Updated Study Report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This interim Technical Memorandum provides an update on the implementation of the *WR-1 Water Quality Study Plan* in support of Southern California Edison's (SCE's) Kern River No. 3 (KR3) Hydroelectric Project (Project) relicensing, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) project No. 2290. The WR-1 Study Plan was included in SCE's Revised Study Plan filed on July 1, 2022 (SCE, 2022). In the October 12, 2022, Study Plan Determination (SPD) (FERC, 2022), FERC approved the WR-1 Study Plan with modifications. Specifically, FERC stipulated SCE deploy data loggers for 12 months, from June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023, to capture data throughout the year; originally, data loggers were to be deployed only from June 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022. FERC also included additional bacteria monitoring to capture two holiday weekends and an evaluation of potential effects on water quality along the North Fork Kern River (NFKR) during periods of spills along the flowline.

This interim Technical Memorandum includes data collected through August 2023 and is being filed with FERC as part of SCE's Initial Study Report. SCE will complete additional work associated with this study in fall 2023 and into 2024, with study results included as part of the Draft/Final License Application and the Updated Study Report (USR).

2.0 STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study, as outlined in the WR-1 Study Plan (SCE, 2022) and as amended in the SPD (FERC, 2022), include:

- Collect current stream water temperature data to characterize current water temperatures over the year.
- Collect current DO monitoring data to characterize current DO concentrations over the year.
- Collect surface water grab samples to characterize indicator bacteria concentrations.

3.0 STUDY AREA AND STUDY SITES

The study area includes stream reaches along the NFKR and Salmon, Corral, and Cannel Creeks for the purposes of characterization and data collection relevant to understanding potential effects of Project operations and maintenance activities on water quality.

Temperature and DO monitoring occurred at 10 sites: 7 locations within Project-affected reaches and 3 comparison sites upstream of the FERC Project Boundary. Bacterial sampling was conducted at a subset of these sites. Exact locations of the monitoring stations were determined in the field based on sampling suitability (i.e., well mixed and deep enough for representative sampling) and accessibility. Site coordinates of sampling sites were documented with a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) unit. Established station locations were re-occupied during subsequent water quality monitoring efforts. Specifically excluded from the study area were areas where access

was unsafe (i.e., very steep terrain or high streamflow). Specific study sites are described in Table 3-1 and shown in Figure 1.

Table 3-1. Water Quality Sampling Sites

Site #	Site ID	Site Name	Project-Affected Reach (Yes/No)	Monitoring Type	Location ^a	
					Latitude °N	Longitude °E
1	WQ-NFKR-19.0	NFKR upstream of Fairview Diversion impoundment pool	No	Temperature, DO, bacterial	35.947210	118.478025
2	WQ-NFKR-18.5	NFKR immediately downstream of Fairview Dam	Yes	Temperature, DO	35.944487	118.479529
3	WQ-NFKR-10.9	NFKR at Gold Ledge Campground	Yes	Temperature, DO, bacterial	35.870767	118.453950
4	WQ-NFKR-3.2	NFKR immediately upstream of the KR3 Powerhouse	Yes	Temperature, DO, bacterial	35.776250	118.436628
5	WQ-NFKR-3.0	NFKR downstream of the KR3 Powerhouse	Yes	Temperature, DO	35.774770	118.435442
6	WQ-NFKR-1.2	NFKR at the existing Kernville USACE gage	Yes	Temperature, DO	35.755301	118.422665
7	WQ-CC-1.4	Corral Creek upstream of the Project diversion	No	Temperature, DO	35.853067	118.430824
8	WQ-CC-0.4	Corral Creek upstream of NFKR confluence	Yes	Temperature, DO, bacterial	35.850922	118.451506
9	WQ-SC-0.55	Salmon Creek upstream of the Project diversion	No	Temperature, DO	35.899562	118.458797
10	WQ-SC-0.05	Salmon Creek upstream of NFKR confluence	Yes	Temperature, DO, bacterial	35.895918	118.466196

°E = degree east; °N = degree North; KR3 = Kern River No. 3; NFKR = North Fork Kern River; DO = Dissolved oxygen; USACE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Notes:

^a Datum: World Geodetic System 84

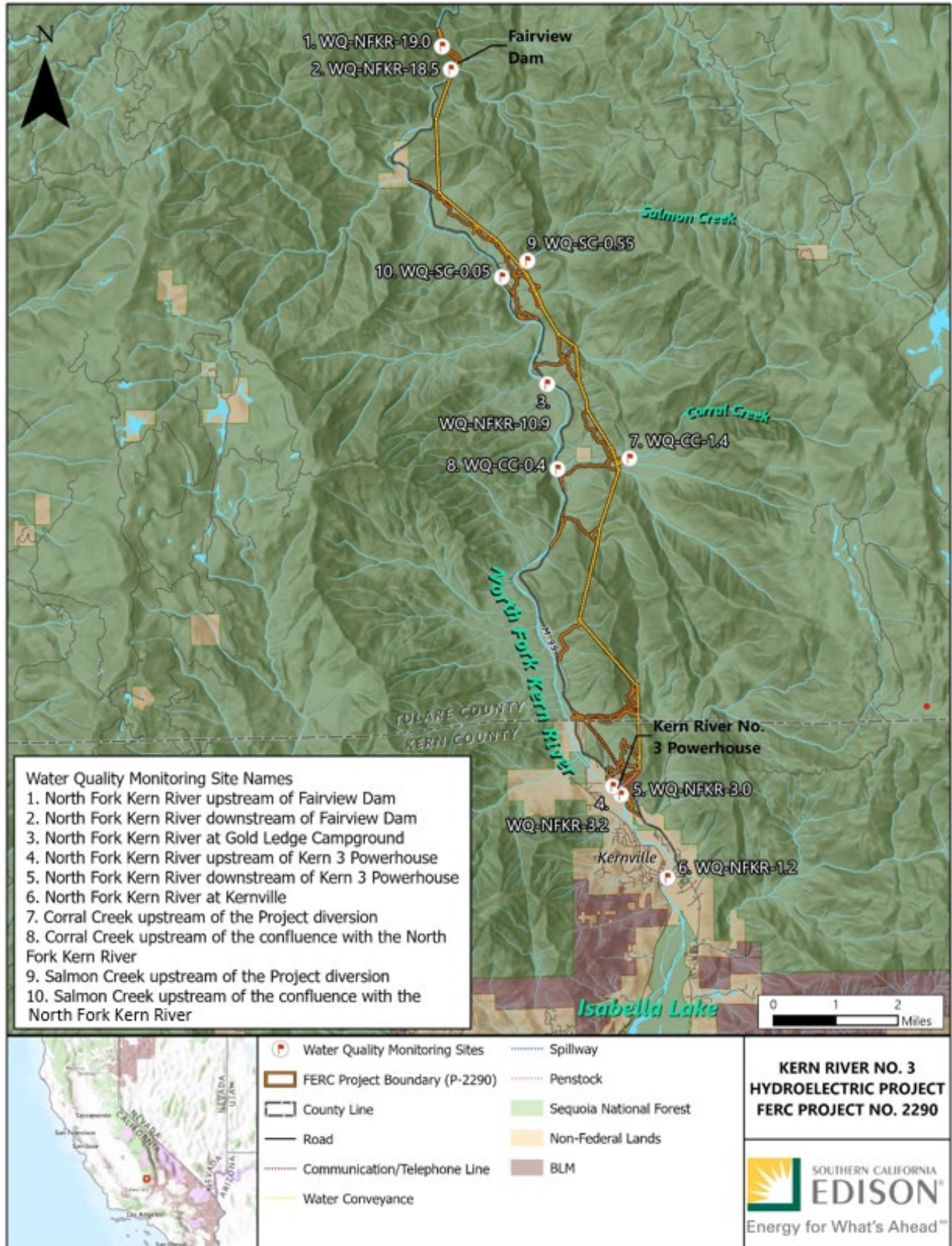


Figure 3-1. Water Quality Monitoring Sites.

4.0 METHODS

Study implementation followed the methods described in SCE's Revised Study Plan (SCE, 2022), as amended by FERC in its SPD (FERC, 2022), with the exceptions noted below.

Study Plan Variances

- Water temperature and dissolved oxygen (DO) data loggers
 - Variance
 - There are data gaps in water temperature and/or DO at some sampling locations due to equipment issues (i.e., siltation of the DO membrane), and some loggers were lost during peak spring run-off.
 - Modification to ongoing study
 - SCE is proposing to modify the Study Plan and replace and/or redeploy water temperature and DO loggers at the same locations in an attempt to collect another year of data through summer 2024.
- Bacterial sampling
 - Variance
 - Collected additional spot bacterial sampling in fall 2022.
 - The bacterial sampling event over the summer recreation season, (including the July 4, 2023, holiday) was postponed due to high flows and potentially unsafe access conditions. The bacterial sampling is scheduled to occur in 2024 and will include the July 4 holiday weekend.

4.1. WATER TEMPERATURE AND DISSOLVED OXYGEN MONITORING

Factory-calibrated water-temperature data loggers (i.e., Onset HOB0) and pre-calibrated DO data loggers (i.e., Precision Measurement Engineering, Inc.; miniDOT) were placed inside protective housings and were then installed in each stream segment near thalweg locations representative of the main channel (see Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1 for site locations).

Water temperature and DO readings were recorded at 15-minute intervals. Water temperature loggers were installed at each site from May 11, 2021, through October 18, 2021, and from May 1, 2022, through May 11, 2023, with some exceptions due to equipment malfunctions or stream access conditions. DO loggers were deployed from May 10, 2021, through October 18, 2021, and from May 26, 2022, through November 10, 2022, with some exceptions due to equipment malfunctions or stream access conditions. Some loggers were unable to be retrieved and downloaded prior to October 2023 due to

high flows, some loggers were lost during peak spring run-off conditions, and data from some loggers were lost due to equipment issues. Subsequently, all water temperature and DO loggers will be re-deployed in October 2023 and will be removed in September 2024. Data from the 2023 through 2024 monitoring, as well as from loggers currently in the field (i.e., unable to be downloaded for this Technical Memorandum), will be included in the USR.

Upon return to the laboratory and prior to analysis of data collected from water temperature and DO loggers, data were downloaded into Microsoft Excel. Data quality reviews included identification of (1) periods when the units were in water, (2) data that were unexpectedly higher or lower than previous data, and (3) additional anomalies related to sensor fouling or other issues. Quality assurance/quality control reviews and data exclusions are discussed below.

The primary data exclusion was applied to periods when the data loggers were not physically deployed in the NFKR or tributary streams within the study area. These records can be roughly determined by comparing the deployment/retrieval times with the data record. Exclusions were also made based upon erroneous sensor readings in the raw data record (e.g., 0, -999). For water temperatures, large shifts in the daily minimum to maximum range were used to indicate periods when the data loggers were sampling air versus water temperatures.

Evidence of sediment accumulation and fouling was recorded on DO loggers deployed at several sites. Data exclusions for these conditions were made based on extreme fluctuations from ambient conditions to zero, or low DO between subsequent readings were used to identify sensor fouling or signal-processing errors requiring exclusions. Excluded data periods are identified as data gaps in the figures provided in this report (Appendix A).

Following data review, validated water temperature and DO data were used to calculate daily mean values based on the average of all 15-minute readings for a given day, and daily maxima or minima was the maximum or minimum temperature reading for a given day.

4.2. BACTERIAL SAMPLING

Preliminary surface water samples were collected in September 2022 at a subset of sites along the NFKR and its tributaries (see Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1 for site locations). Samples were collected in sterilized bottles supplied by a certified Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program analytical laboratory. Immediately after collection, samples were placed on ice at 4 degrees Celsius for transport to the analytical laboratory within an 8-hour hold time. Water samples were analyzed for fecal and total coliform and reported as the most probable number (MPN) of bacterial cells per 100 milliliters (mL).

5.0 DATA SUMMARY

5.1. WATER TEMPERATURE AND DISSOLVED OXYGEN

Table 5.1-1 and Figures A-1 through A-10 in Appendix A present water temperatures across the Fairview Dam Bypass Reach¹ (Sites 2 through 4) together with comparison sites along the NFKR (Sites 1, 5, and 6), sites within Corral Creek (Sites 7 and 8), and sites within Salmon Creek (Sites 9 and 10). As expected, there is a general trend of lower water temperatures in upstream reaches and higher temperatures in downstream reaches. Also as expected, temperatures exhibited general seasonal variations with cooler temperatures observed in the winter and higher temperatures observed in the summer.

Table 5.1-2 and Figures A-11 through A-18 in Appendix A present DO monitoring data across the NFKR sites discussed above (Sites 1 through 6), sites at Corral Creek (Sites 7 and 8), and sites at Salmon Creek (Sites 9 and 10). Due to siltation, portions of the 2023 DO data are unusable. Where data are available, a summary of DO conditions in the study reaches is presented below.

5.1.1. NORTH FORK KERN RIVER (SITES 1 THROUGH 6)

Water temperatures were generally similar across sampling sites in the NFKR and exhibited some seasonal and spatial variation (see Table 5.1-1 and Figures A-1 through A-6 in Appendix A). Water temperatures were coldest during the winter and warmest during the summer. Site 1, the comparison site located upstream of Fairview Dam, had similar temperatures to Site 2, located just downstream of the dam. Both Sites 1 and 2 had slightly cooler temperatures than downstream sites.

There were few observable differences in DO concentrations across sampling sites in the NFKR; however, siltation of the DO data loggers limited some data. In months where data are available, DO concentrations were below the 8 milligrams per liter (mg/L) water quality objective from the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin* (CRWQCB, 2018) at some sites during summer, but were generally similar across Project-affected reaches and comparison sites (see Table 5.1-2 and Figures A-11 through A-15 in Appendix A). As expected, due to gas solubility relationships with water temperature, DO concentrations in the NFKR were generally higher in the spring and lower in the summer and fall.

5.1.2. CORRAL CREEK (SITES 7 AND 8)

Water temperatures in Corral Creek exhibited some seasonal variation with the lowest temperatures during the winter and the highest during the summer (see Table 5.1-1 and Figures A-7 and A-8 in Appendix A). Site 7 upstream of the Project diversion showed

¹ The Fairview Dam Bypass Reach is defined as the approximately 16-mile bypass reach of the NFKR between Fairview Dam and the KR3 Powerhouse tailrace.

slightly lower temperatures than Site 8 downstream of the Project diversion and before the confluence with the NFKR.

Although there is limited 2022 DO concentration data for Site 8 downstream of the Project diversion in Corral Creek, DO was lower than 8 mg/L for all months sampled and generally lower at the upstream Site 7 (see Table 5.1-2 and Figures A-16 and A-17 in Appendix A). Similar to the NFKR sites, DO was generally higher in the spring than summer.

5.1.3. SALMON CREEK (SITES 9 AND 10)

Water temperature in Salmon Creek exhibited some seasonal variation with the lowest temperatures during the winter and the highest temperatures during the summer (see Table 5.1-1 and Figures A-9 and A-10 in Appendix A). Site 9 upstream of the Project diversion showed slightly lower temperatures during the summer than Site 10 downstream the Project diversion; however, data at Sites 9 and 10 were limited.

DO concentrations were generally higher at Site 9 in the fall/winter and were lower than the 8 mg/L water quality objective (CRWQCB, 2018) in the summer (Table 5.1-2 and Figure A-18 in Appendix A). There is currently no usable data for Site 10 due to issues following high winter and spring flows in 2023.

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Table 5.1-1. Average Water Temperature Monthly Averages, 2021–2023

Average Monthly Water Temperature (°C) 2021–2023																				
Site #	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023
1	14.3	19.2	22.1	20.4	17.2	12.5	13.3	17.6	20.9	21.6 ^a	18.5	12.8	4.9	2.9	3.0	3.2	10.2	17.2	18.6	N/A
2	14.4	19.2	22.1	20.4	17.3	12.5	13.4	17.7	21.0	21.7 ^a	20.7	N/A	5.0	3.0	3.1	3.4	10.4	17.3	18.5	N/A
3	16.6	20.9	23.7	21.9	18.8	13.5	15.3	19.4	22.3	22.8 ^a	19.6	14.1	6.3	4.6	3.8	4.3	10.6	17.4	18.5	N/A
4	18.5	22.6	25.0	22.9	20.1	14.9	17.2	21.1	23.9	23.0	21.0	15.4	7.6	6.0	4.8	5.4	11.0	17.3	18.6	N/A
5	17.1	21.9	24.8	22.7	20.8 ^a	NA	15.3	19.0	23.4	23.1	21.2	15.5	6.8	3.7	3.9	3.7	10.5	17.1	18.7	N/A
6	16.0	21.4	24.8	22.9	20.0	15.0	14.9	19.4	24.5	23.4	21.5	15.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	14.3	17.2	19.5	18.4	16.5	12.9	13.7	16.6	18.9	19.3	17.5	14.0	8.8	7.6	4.8	4.1	3.3 ^a	NA	11.1	13.4
8	15.6	17.7 ^a	26.0	25.5	25.5	23.4	14.8	17.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.7 ^a	9.6	7.0	6.0	5.4	5.5 ^a	NA	12.2	15.8
9	13.4	16.7	22.2	20.5	17.4	11.1	12.6	17.3	21.1	21.1	18.5	12.9	5.0	3.6	3.1	2.0	10.4	17.5	21.2	24.3
10	14.3	19.7	25.0	23.9	18.9	12.2	13.5	18.2	21.6	22.2	19.7	14.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

°C = degrees Celsius; NA = data not available

Notes:

No data were collected from November 2021 through April 2022.

^a Denotes months with fewer than 10 usable data points for monthly average.

Table 5.1-2. Dissolved Oxygen Monthly Averages, 2021–2022

Average Monthly Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) 2021–2022													
Site #	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022
1	9.1	8.6	N/A	7.0	6.9	7.6	8.3 ^a	7.8	7.1	N/A	7.3	N/A	9.9 ^a
2	8.8	7.6	7.1	7.3	7.4	N/A	8.6 ^a	8.1	7.5	N/A	8.2	8.9	10.3
3	8.7	7.7	7.2	7.9	7.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.4 ^a	7.3	7.7	8.7	10.2
4	N/A	N/A	7.0	7.5	6.9	7.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.5
5	7.8	6.8 ^a	N/A	N/A	8.3	9.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	7.0	4.4	3.4	3.5	4.9	7.1	7.0 ^a	6.6	6.0	6.3	6.9	7.9	N/A
8	6.1	6.8	7.3	7.6	7.6	7.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	9.2	7.9	7.0	7.2	8.0	9.6	8.3 ^a	7.8	6.9	6.9	7.4	8.6	10.1
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

mg/L = milligram per liter; N/A= data not available

Notes:

No data was collected from November 2021 through April 2022.

^a Denotes months with fewer than 10 data points for monthly average.

5.2. BACTERIOLOGICAL MONITORING RESULTS

Due to the lotic (i.e., flowing) conditions at riverine sites and low hydraulic retention of Fairview Dam and other diversion dams, all sites monitored showed generally low levels of fecal coliform during the sampling period between September 6 through 26, 2022 (Table 5.2-1). Fecal coliform values increased at all sites during the September 12 sampling period likely due to a run-off event following heavy rain on September 10, 2022.

Table 5.2-1. Fecal Coliform Sampling Results, 2022

Parameter	Fecal Coliform (MPN / 100 mL)			
	9/6/2022	9/12/2022	9/19/2022	9/26/2022
Site #				
Site 1	2.2	> 23	3.6	2.2
Site 3	5.1	> 23	9.2	2.2
Site 4	16	> 23	6.9	3.6
Site 8	> 23	> 23	1.1	2.2
Site 10	9.2	> 23	9.2	1.1
RL	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8

MPN = most probable number; mL = milliliter; RL = Laboratory Reporting Limit

Notes:

Values >23 were not analyzed in the fecal coliform standard range and cannot be used to evaluate state objectives. Additional samples will be collected in 2023 and 2024.

6.0 STUDY SPECIFIC CONSULTATION

No study-specific consultation was conducted for WR-1 Study.

7.0 OUTSTANDING STUDY PLAN ELEMENTS

The anticipated schedule to complete the remaining tasks are identified in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1. Schedule

Date	Activity
August 2023 through September 2024	Collect additional bacterial samples including the 2023 Labor Day and 2024 July 4 holidays. Conduct additional water temperature and DO monitoring.
Summer–Fall 2024	Compile outstanding 2023 temperature and DO data.
October 2024	Complete updated Technical Memorandum for USR.

DO = dissolved oxygen; USR = Updated Study Report

8.0 REFERENCES

CRWQCB (California Regional Water Quality Control Board). 2018. *Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin*. Third Edition. May.

FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission). 2022. *Study Plan Determination for the Kern River No. 3 Hydroelectric Project*. Accession No. 20221012-3024. October 12.

SCE (Southern California Edison). 2022. *Kern River No. 3 Hydroelectric Project, Revised Study Plan*. Filed with FERC on July 1. Accessed: August 2023. Retrieved from: sce.com/sites/default/files/custom-files/Web/files/Revised_Study_Plan_KR3_20220701.pdf

APPENDIX A
WATER QUALITY FIGURES

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Water Temperature

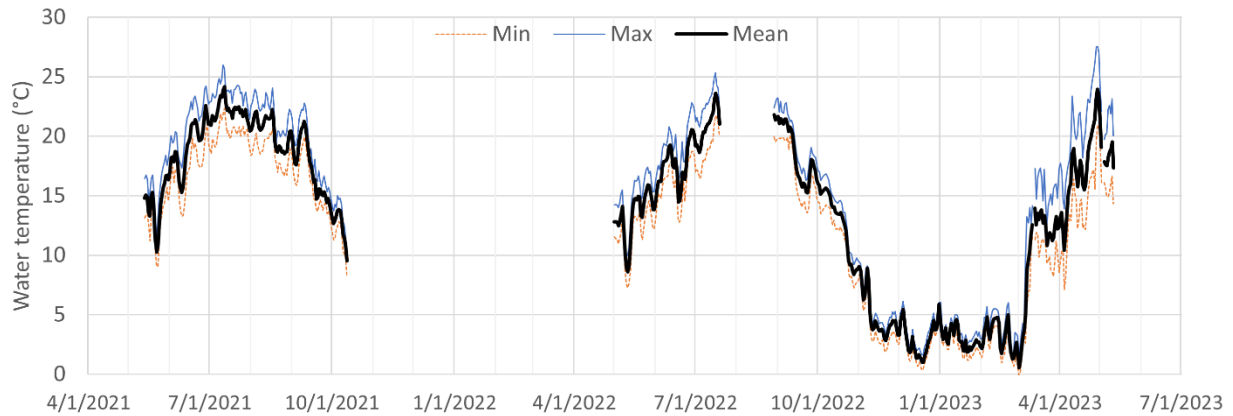


Figure A-1. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 1, North Fork Kern River Upstream of the Fairview Dam Impoundment Pool, 2021–2023.

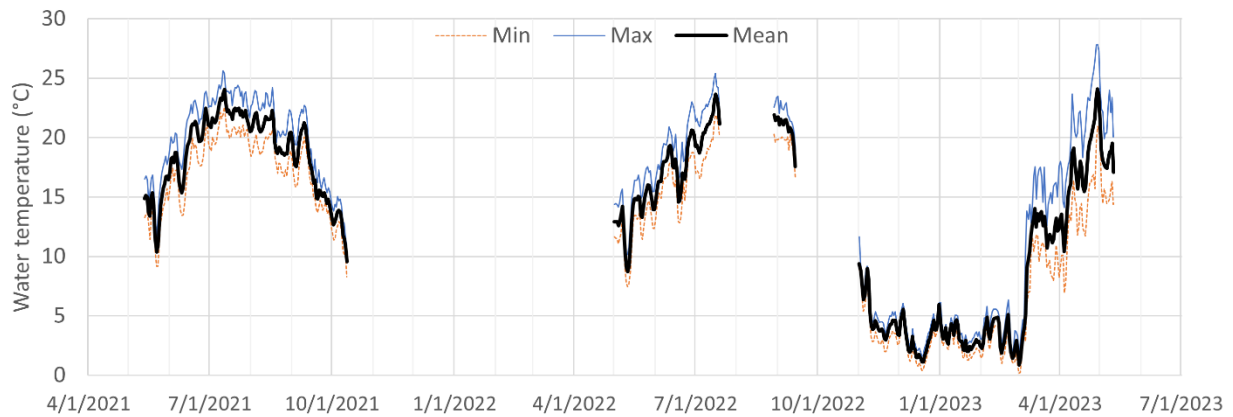


Figure A-2. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 2, North Fork Kern River Immediately Downstream of the Fairview Dam, 2021–2023.

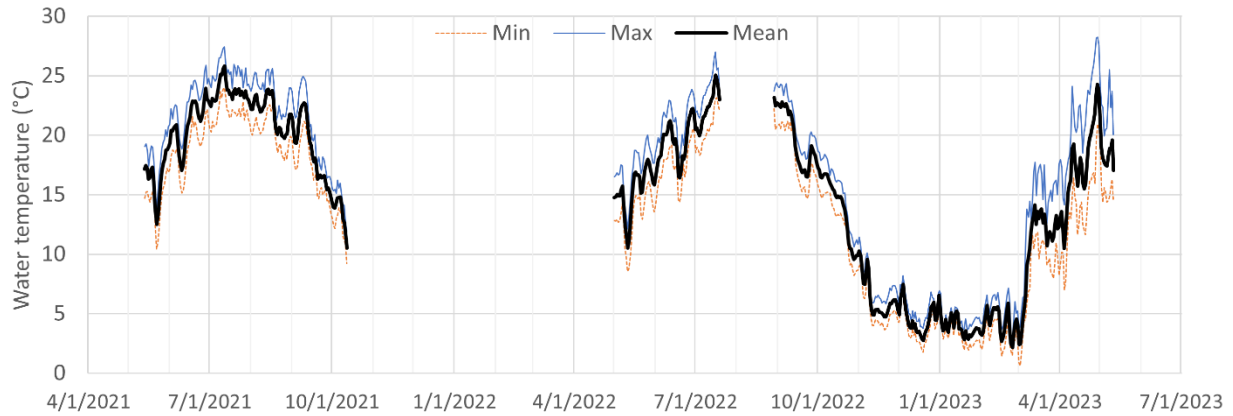


Figure A-3. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 3, North Fork Kern River at Gold Ledge Campground, 2021–2023.

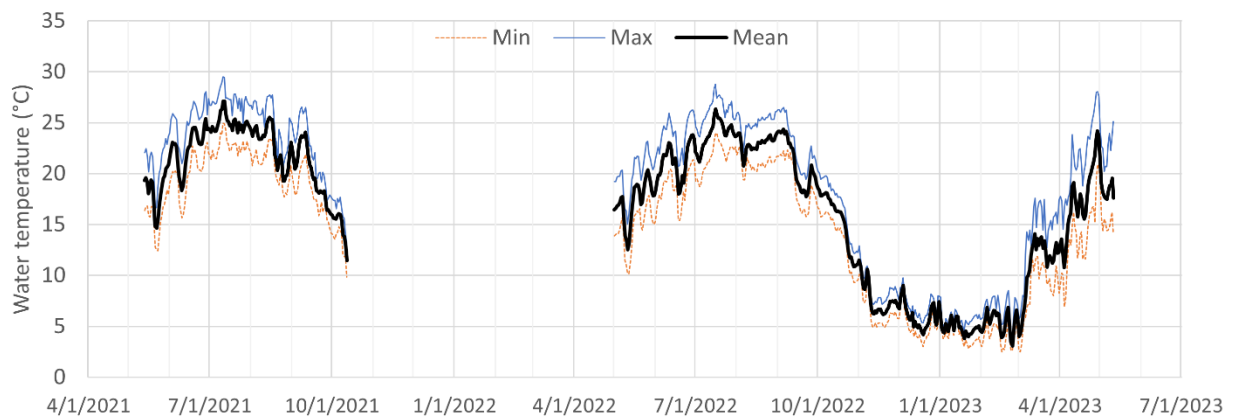


Figure A-4. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 4, North Fork Kern River Immediately Upstream of the Kern River No. 3 Powerhouse, 2021–2023.

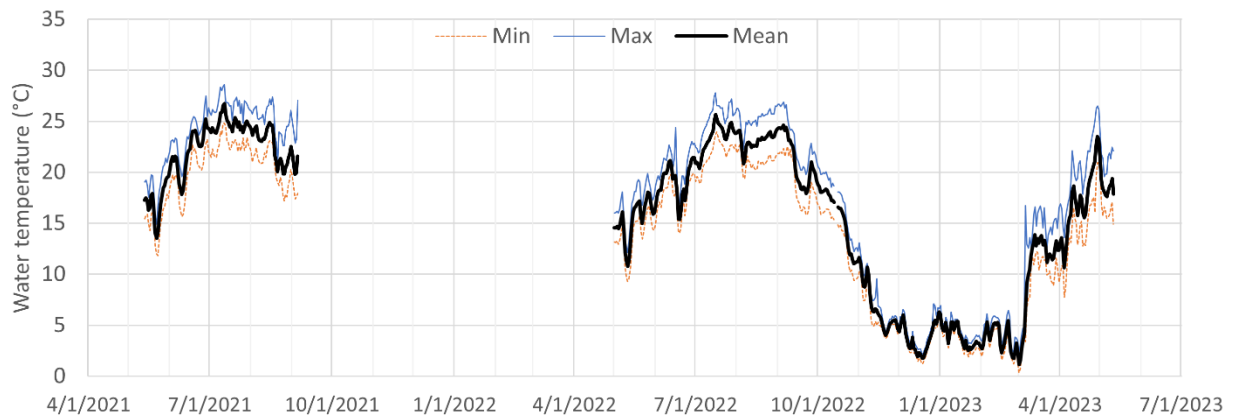


Figure A-5. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 5, North Fork Kern River downstream of the Kern River No. 3 Powerhouse, 2021–2023.

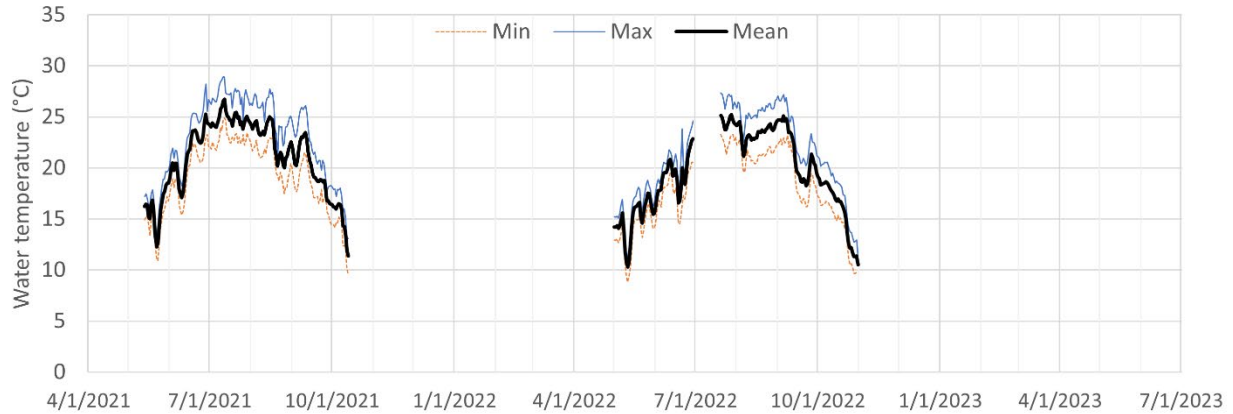


Figure A-6. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 6, North Fork Kern River at the Existing Kernville U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gage, 2021–2023.

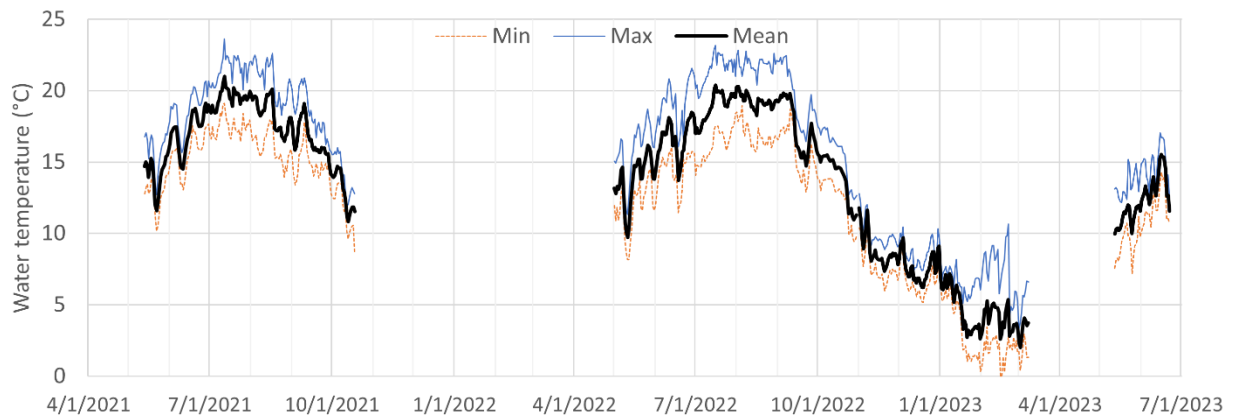


Figure A-7. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 7, Corral Creek Upstream of the Project Diversion, 2021–2023.

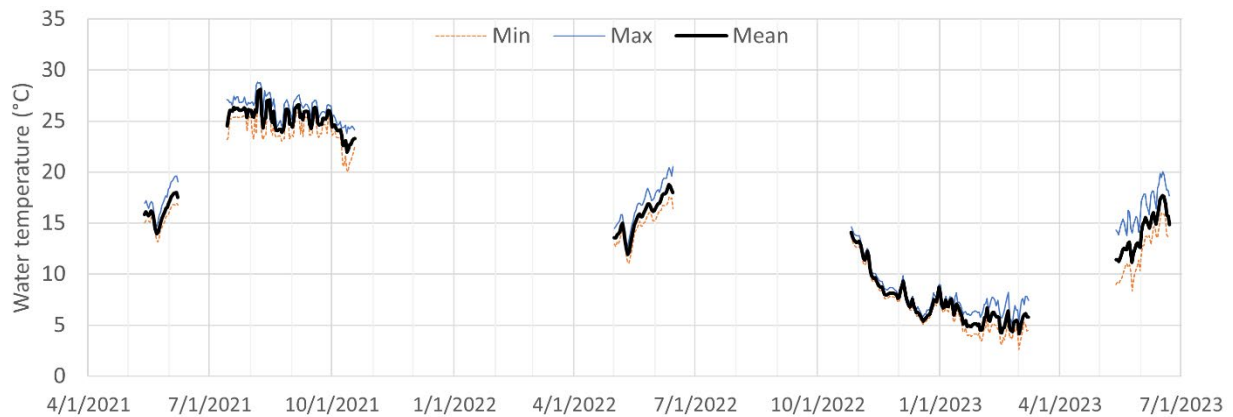


Figure A-8. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 8, Corral Creek Upstream of its Confluence with the North Fork of the Kern River, 2021–2023.

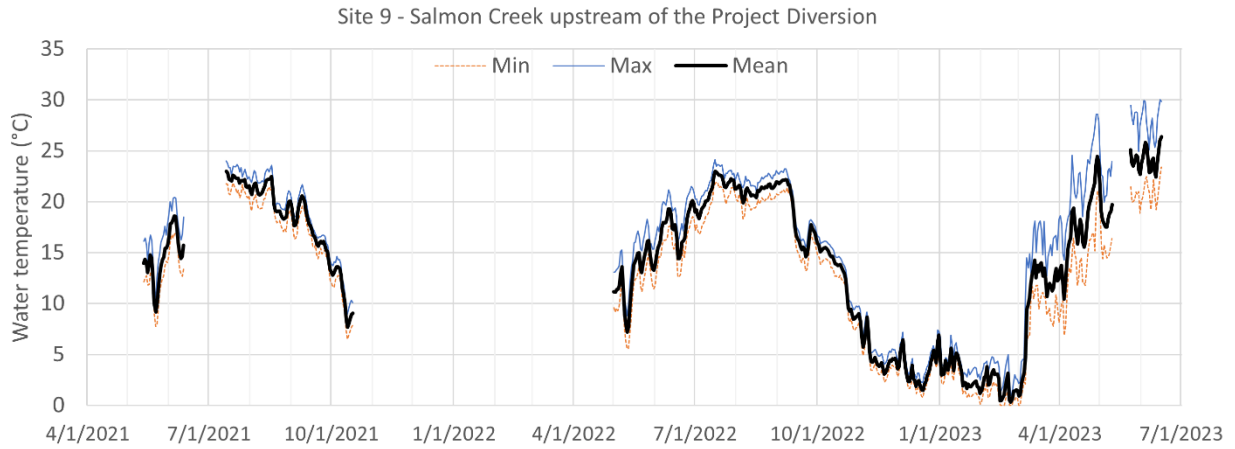


Figure A-9. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 9, Salmon Creek Upstream of the Project Diversion, 2021–2023.

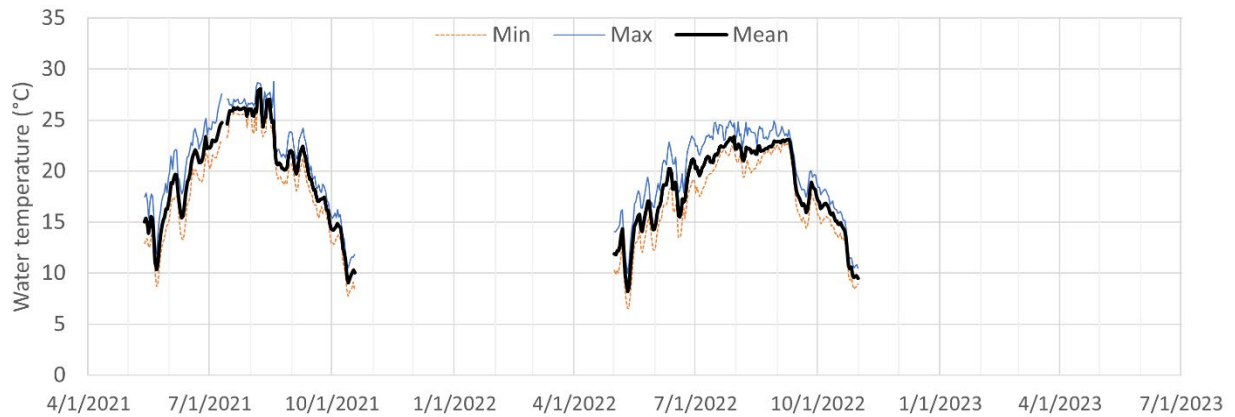


Figure A-10. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Water Temperature (°C) at Site 10, Salmon Creek Upstream of the Confluence with the North Fork Kern River, 2021–2023.

Dissolved Oxygen

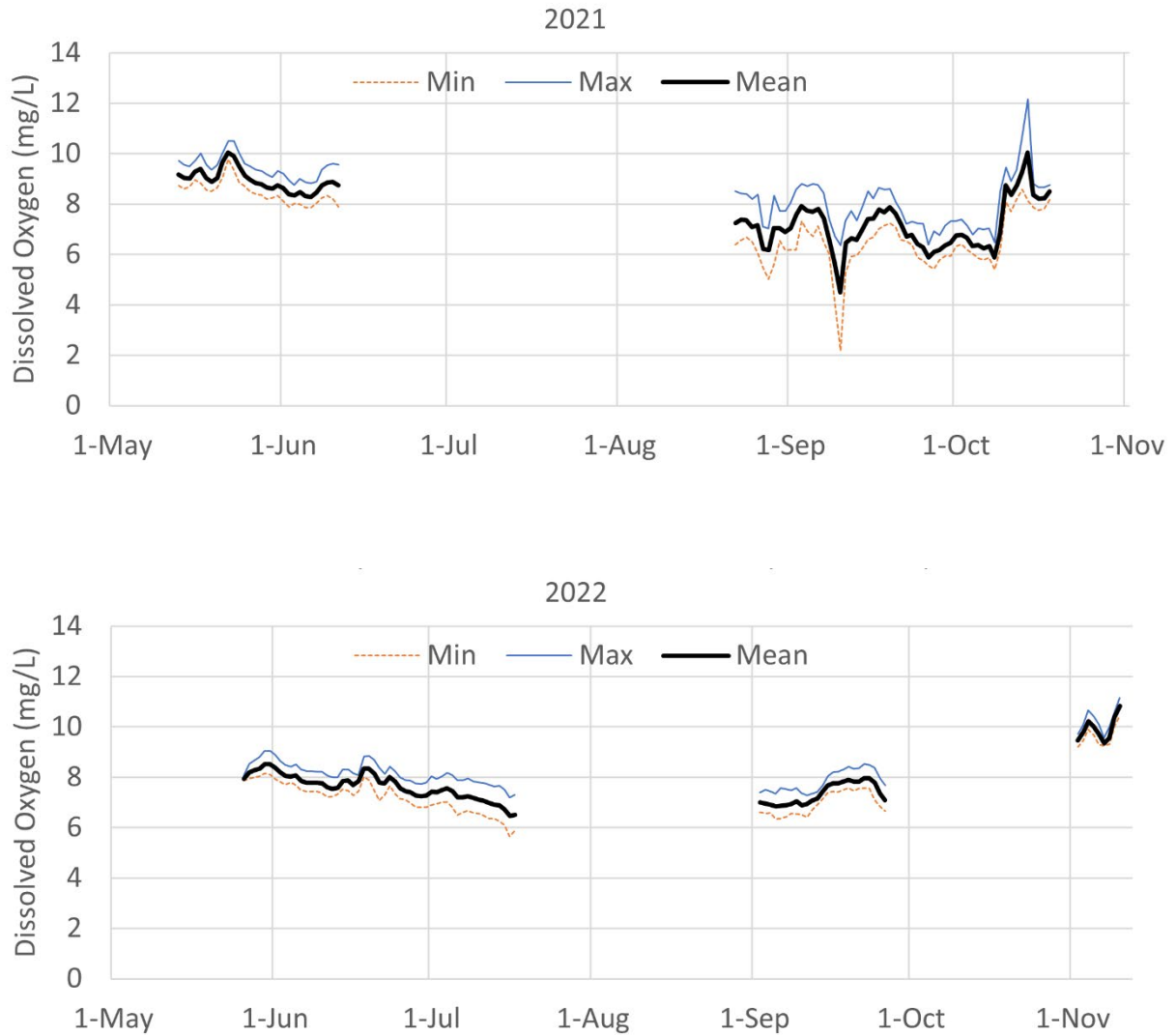


Figure A-11. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 1, North Fork Kern River Upstream of the Fairview Dam Impoundment Pool, 2021–2022.

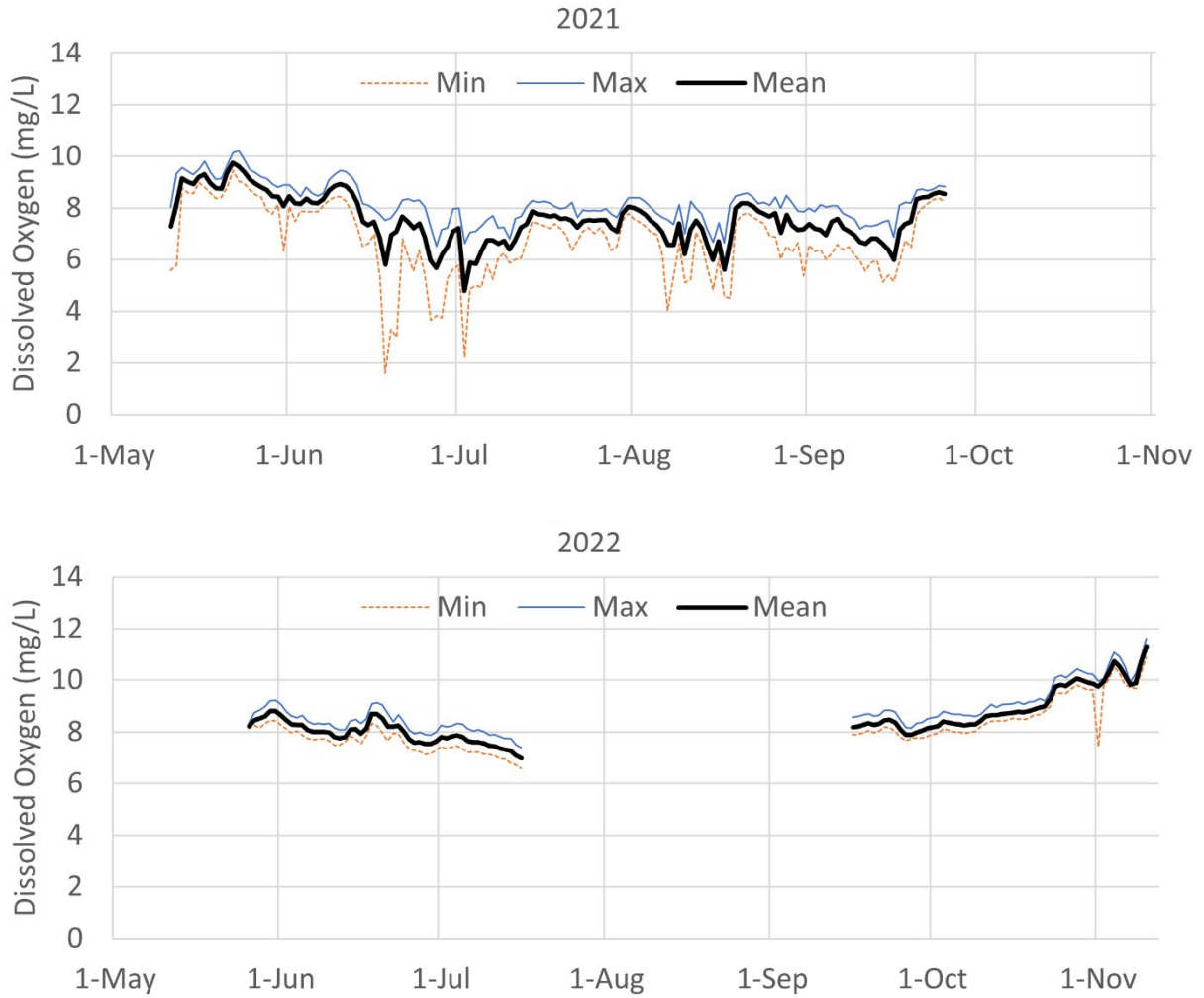


Figure A-12. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 2, North Fork Kern River Downstream of the Fairview Dam, 2021–2022.

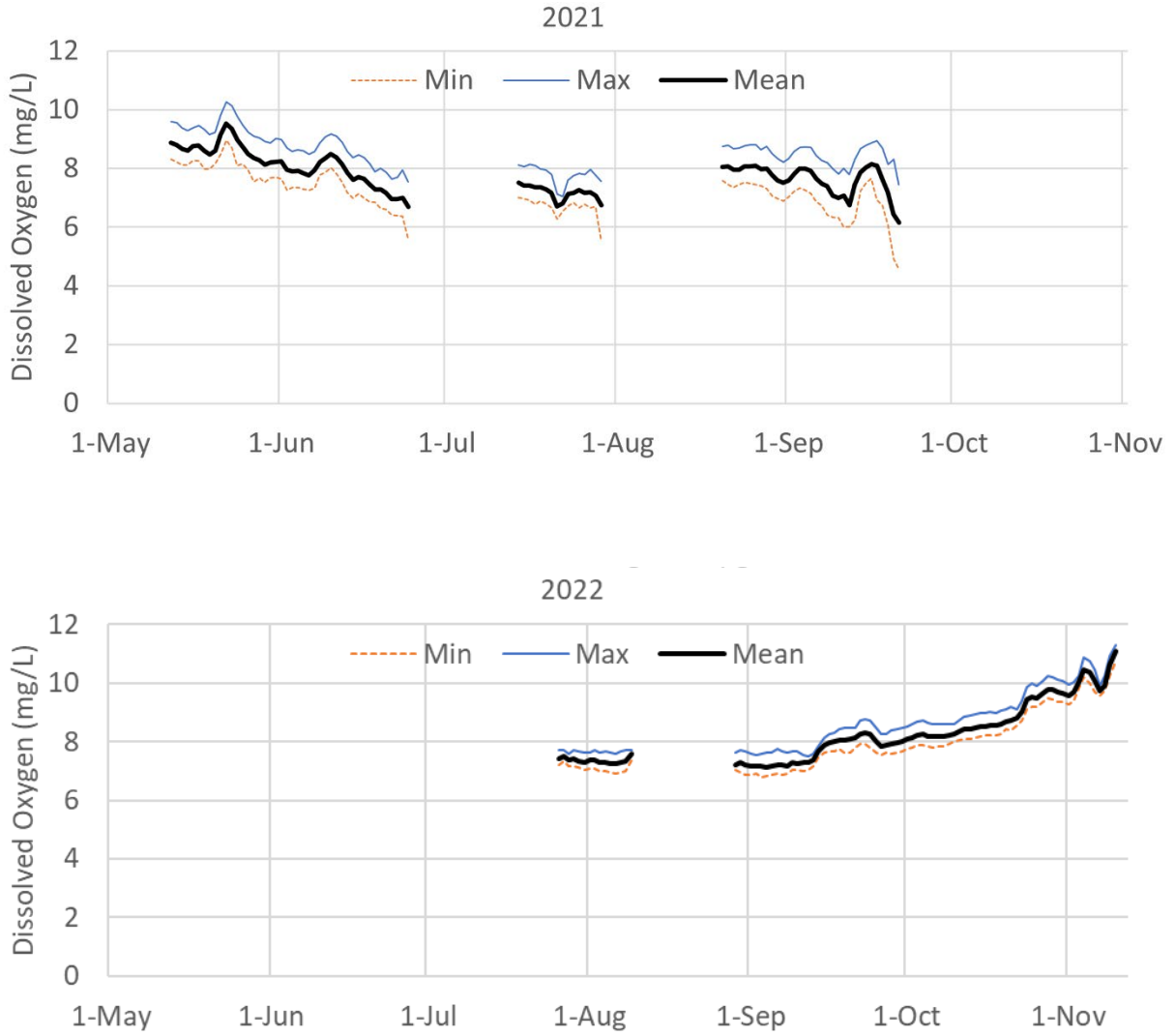


Figure A-13. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 3, North Fork Kern River at Gold Ledge Campground, 2021–2022.

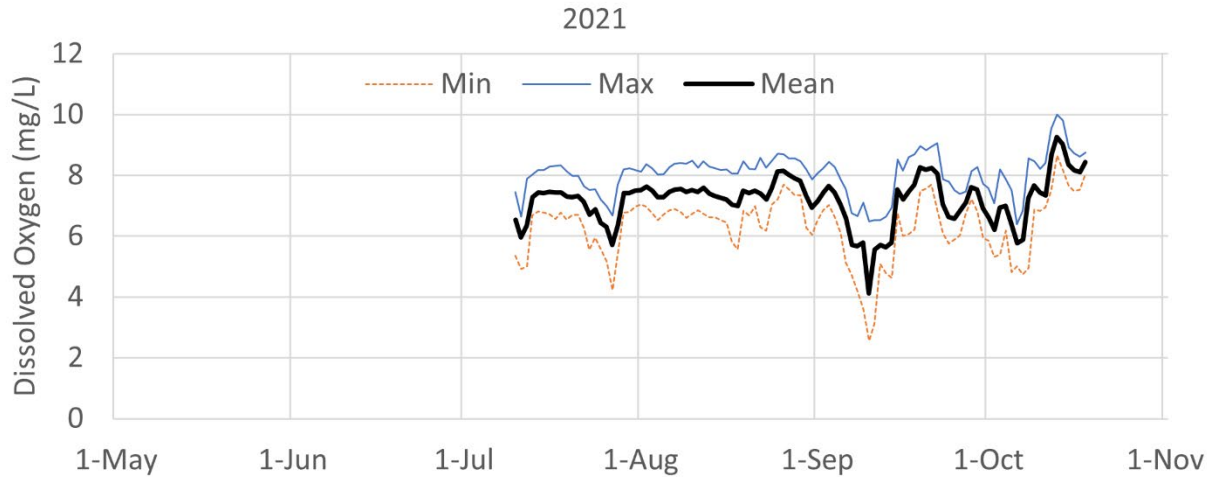


Figure A-14. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 5, North Fork Kern River Upstream of the Kern River No. 3 Powerhouse, 2021.

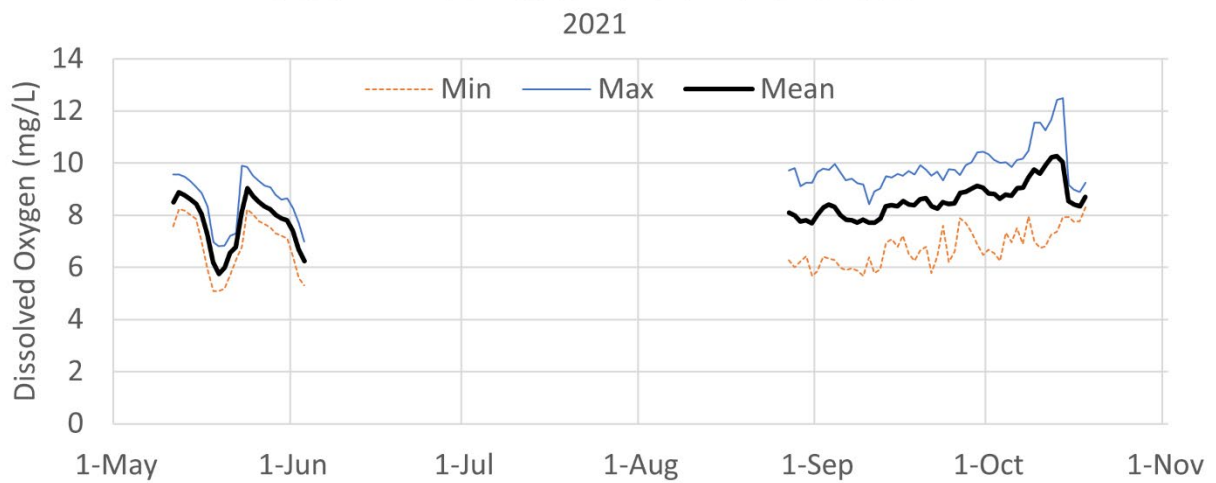


Figure A-15. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 5, North Fork Kern River Downstream of the Kern River No. 3 Powerhouse, 2021.

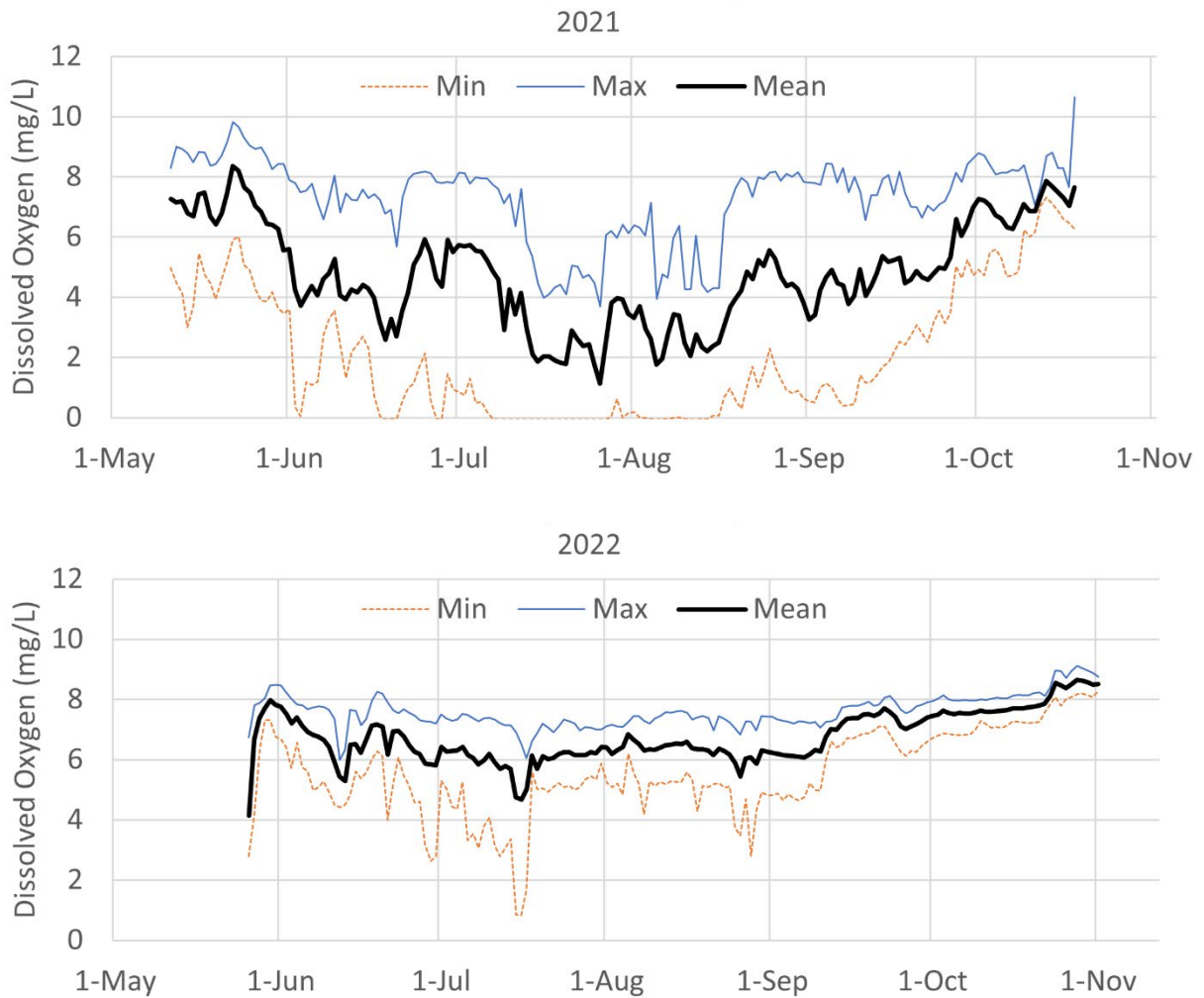


Figure A-16. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 7, Corral Creek Upstream of the Project Diversion, 2021–2022.

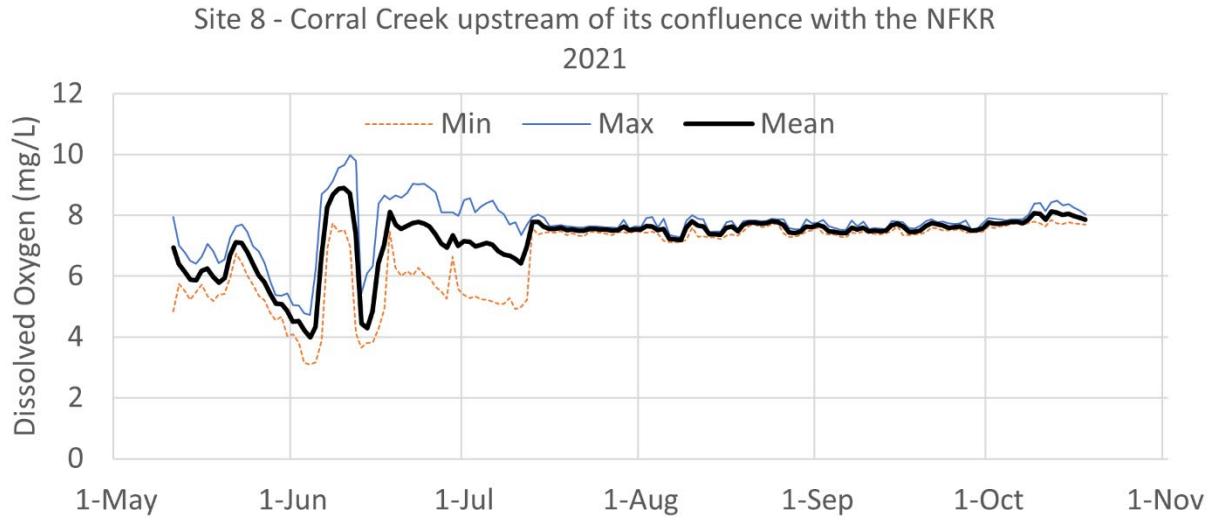


Figure A-17. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 8, Corral Creek Upstream of its Confluence with the North Fork of the Kern River, 2021.

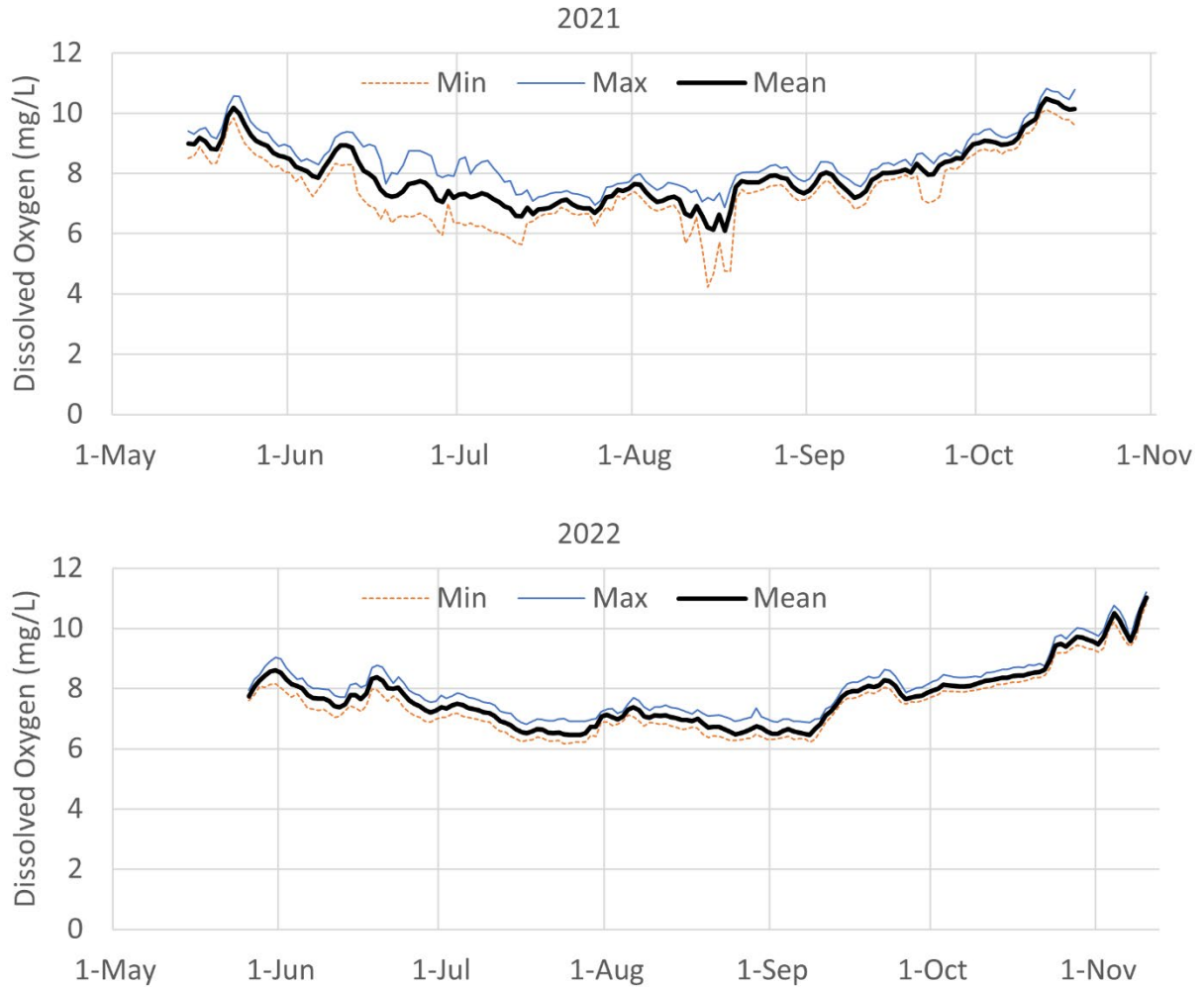


Figure A-18. Daily Mean, Minimum, and Maximum Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) at Site 9, Salmon Creek Upstream of the Project Diversion, 2021–2022.

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