

**Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team
(Funding for Improved Salmonid Habitat)**

**San Luis Obispo City/County Library
995 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo
Library Conference Room
Thursday, April 29, 2004
1:00 to 4:00**

Minutes

Attendees:

Meeting Participants

Michael Clarke, City of San Luis Obispo
Bobby Jo Close, Independent Consultant
Scott Engblom, Cachuma Conservation and Release Board
Dennis Harper, Matilija Fly Fishers
Richard Hawley, Greenspace – The Cambria Land Trust
Mark Hutchinson, SLO County Public Works
Rory Lang, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Leo Lentsch, Casitas Municipal Water District
Connie O’Henley, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement
Brian Stark, SLO Land Trust
David Thomas, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Don Villeneuve, Cambria Community Services District

Item 1: Introduction

Ms. Lang welcomed everyone to the meeting at approximately 1:10 pm and began the meeting by introducing herself and having all attendees do the same.

Item 2: CCC FishXing Assessments in San Luis Obispo County

Bobby Jo Close and Rick Hawley provided an update on the FishXing Assessments being conducted by the CCC in San Luis Obispo, with grant funding secured by Greenspace, Cambria Land Trust. Seventy-five culverts are being assessed as part of the project. Ross Taylor trained the crew for the field assessments and Mike Love created a spreadsheet for the project and also trained the crew on the software that will be used to compile the data for the assessments.

Crews of 2 to 3 people conduct assessments of the following: culvert type, material, embeddedness, substrate material, inlet type, outlet configuration, and channel widths, elevations and cross section information. This data is then entered into the spreadsheet so that calculations of hydraulic conditions within culverts and water surface profiles can be obtained. The software then provides tables and graphs

summarizing the water velocities, water depths, outlet conditions, and lists the limiting fish passage conditions for each culvert.

The information collected for this project will be used in the project prioritization effort led by Brian Stark. Central Coast Salmon Enhancement will also incorporate the data into the watershed management plans they are developing.

Once the final report for the project is completed, a presentation will be scheduled for the TCFT. Also, the CCC will provide an example of the letter they sent to landowners to obtain permission to enter their property.

Item 3: City of San Luis Obispo Steelhead Monitoring Project - Results and Relevance to Future Grant Funding

Michael Clarke provided a Power Point presentation about the City of San Luis Obispo's steelhead monitoring project entitled: DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF STEELHEAD IN THE SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK WATERSHED. The purpose of the study was to generate estimates of abundance and describe the distribution of juvenile steelhead rearing during the summer low-flow period throughout the SLO watershed. This information allows an assessment of the relative importance of the lower mainstem for rearing juvenile steelhead in comparison to the upper watershed (including tributaries) to help the City and regulatory agencies to better assess the potential impacts of the Water Reuse Project on the steelhead population in SLO watershed.

All habitat surveys and fish sampling were conducted during the late summer, low-flow period in September and October 2003. Surveys were conducted by biologists from the City, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement, the California Department of Fish and Game and a consultant. Steelhead abundance was sampled using single-pass dive counts in 81 pools in deeper stream reaches and multiple-pass electrofishing was used to sample 59 pools in shallower stream reaches.

The subsample of pool habitats that were included in the survey were estimated to support approximately 10,000 fry and juvenile steelhead. Lower and mid SLO creek, lower Stenner Creek and See Canyon Creek were found to support the greatest numbers of juvenile steelhead as these four stretches supported 75% of all young fish found in the study.

Now that the approximate population of steelhead in SLO Creek and the reaches that provide rearing habitat are known, this information can be used as a baseline with which future populations can be compared and for directing funding for fisheries restoration projects.

Similar monitoring projects will most likely be required in the future due to the efforts of the NOAA Fisheries Technical Recovery Team. More and more grant funding will be allocated to monitoring efforts in the future.

Item 4: Update on the TCFT BMP Report and California Fish Passage Database Project

TCFT BMP Report

Ms. Lang provided an update on the status of the TCFT BMP Report. The TCFT completed an assessment of the current policies and practices of TCFT participants with potential impacts to steelhead and their habitat in 2003. The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team Activities Assessment Report (available on-line at <http://www.tcft.org/Reports.htm>) identifies and compiles current stream maintenance, land use, and restoration activities conducted by TCFT participants that may have adverse or beneficial impacts on steelhead and/or their habitat. This report was used as a basis for developing a series of BMPs that are presented in the accompanying Regional BMP Report.

The TCFT completed the first installment of Best Management Practices under the Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Restoration Grant in February 2004 in the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team Regional Best Management Practices Report. The BMPs included in this report will serve as a basis for the next phase of activities outlined in the CIAP 2003-2004 Work Plan specifically:

- Meet with representatives from permitting agencies to discuss BMP development and implementation
- Coordinate efforts with permitting agencies and other regional groups.

The TCFT is currently developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a contractor to complete these activities. The RFP will be released in Summer 2004.

The following activities will be completed under the Fisheries Restoration Grant awarded to the TCFT for 2004-2005:

- Develop best management practices (BMPs) for three (3) activities from the list of most common activities conducted by TCFT participants as listed in the 2004 TCFT Activities Assessment Report. These activities are: site clearing, bridge/low water crossing construction and maintenance, and livestock grazing. These BMPs will be created using the template provided in the Regional Best Management Practices Report (2004) to create the 2005 edition of the report.
- Conduct a review of county and city planning policies from the tri-county area to identify ordinances that could protect fish. Such ordinances will be incorporated into the report as examples of policy level BMPs for steelhead along with information on how those ordinances can be enacted at the project level.
- Coordinate with permitting agencies to begin development of a streamline permitting process for projects that utilize the BMPs included in the Regional

Best Management Practices Report (2004) and future editions as a basis for permit streamlining.

- If the permitting agency representatives are willing to begin the process of permit streamlining using the TCFT BMP Report, create a work plan specific to this task and incorporate input from the permitting agencies into the current draft of the BMP Report to ensure that the BMPs will meet agencies' requirements for the streamlining process. Elements from the permit streamlining work plan may or may not be completed utilizing funding from the current contract between the TCFT and DFG.
- Organize and conduct two technical training workshops on implementation of the BMPs outlined in the Regional Best Management Practices Report (2004) for field crews of TCFT participant agencies and other interested parties. One will focus on Vegetation Management and Bank Stabilization and the other will focus on Culvert Repair and Construction.

California Fish Passage Database Project

Ms. Lang reported that the TCFT has submitted a number of comments to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission for inclusion in their database. As of the April 29, 2004 meeting, the updated database was not available. However, the most recent version of the database is attached. Please review the new information and provide additional comments to Ms. Lang. The PAD should be available on the www.calfish.org when the updated version of this site becomes public on July 15th.

Item 5: DFG Fisheries Restoration Grant Proposal Information Exchange

Ms. Lang provided an overview of the DFG Grant workshop that she attended in Camarillo. DFG reported that \$17 million is available through the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program this year. Fifteen, single-sided copies of the proposals are due May 21, 2004 and DFG plans to announce those proposals that will receive funding in December 2004. New items in the PSP include: new score sheets, 1600 fees must be included in the budget in the proposal, volunteer labor must be listed at prevailing wage in the budget, and a summary of project costs, including cost share information for each task, must be included, and on the ground projects must receive approval from DFG and NOAA Fisheries engineers in order to be considered for funding (see score sheet). Also, DFG staff emphasized that a cover sheet should NOT be included.

TCFT participants listed the projects for which they planned to submit proposals and discussed how these new items affected their ability to provide matching funds (especially for non-profits that had previously relied on volunteer time for that purpose) and how they planned to deal with the issue.

Item 6: Participant Updates

Meeting attendees provided brief overviews of current projects underway by their agencies and named projects for which proposals were being prepared for the latest round of DFG funding.

Item 7: Wrap-Up

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 22, 2004 from 1:00 to 4:00 and will be held in the Faulkner Gallery of the City of Santa Barbara Public Library.