

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

**Ventura County Government Center
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura
Atlantic Conference Room, 1st floor
October 28, 2004
1:00 to 4:00**

Minutes

Meeting Participants

Stevie Adams, PSMFC
Darcy Aston, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Mark Capelli, NOAA Fisheries
Richard Handley, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Dennis Harper, Matilija Fly Fishers
Rory Lang, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Mary Larson, DFG
Steve Offerman, Ventura County Supervisor Bennett's Office
Kate Rees, Cachuma Conservation Release Board
Nancy Settle, County of Ventura Planning
Stephanie Wald, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement
Eric Wier, San Luis Obispo County Public Works Department
Michelle Wilson, Santa Barbara Co, Development Review
Darla Wise, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Jim Word, Casitas Municipal Water District

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Lang called the meeting to order and welcomed the group to the meeting. All participants introduced themselves.

Watershed Planning in the Tri-County Area

Stephanie Wald of Central Coast Salmon Enhancement provided an overview of watershed planning activities conducted by Central Coast Salmon Enhancement in San Luis Obispo County. Their planning efforts include the Arroyo Grande Watershed, the Nipomo Watershed and the Pismo Creek Watershed. The three watershed planning efforts are conducted through partnerships with landowners and other local government and non-profit entities like the SLO Land Conservancy. Stephanie emphasized that the success of the planning efforts depend on the relationships within the groups and the willingness of landowners to promote the program goals to their neighbors. All three plans incorporate or will incorporate restoration activities while maintaining a wide range of uses within the creek, with an emphasis on habitat management, flood management and other intended uses such as agriculture. Funding for their programs has come from the Department of Fish and Game, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Guadalupe Oil Spill Settlement. (See handout).

Darcy Aston of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency provided an overview of watershed planning activities in Santa Barbara County conducted by the Water Agency through Project Clean Water. Their planning efforts include San Jose Creek, Rincon Creek and Carpinteria Creek. Other planning efforts that they participate in include the Arroyo Burro Visioning Process, City of Santa Barbara Clean Creeks Program, and the San Antonio Creek Resource Management Plan. Project Clean Water utilizes a community based planning process and has developed partnerships with other government agencies and non-profit groups like the Community Environmental Council. Funding for these efforts has been provided by a number of granting agencies including the California Department of Fish and Game and the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation. The Draft San Jose Creek Watershed Plan was released in July 2004. The Rincon Creek watershed planning effort has just begun and the community is currently identifying areas of concern and reviewing outlines of other watershed planning efforts to find an appropriate model for the Rincon Creek Watershed. The Carpinteria Creek watershed planning effort is much further along with a number of projects already underway. The Draft Carpinteria Creek Watershed Plan was released in October 2004.

Steve Offerman of Supervisor Steve Bennett's office provided an overview of watershed planning efforts in Ventura County. Mr. Offerman discussed projects on the three main watersheds in Ventura County, the Ventura River, the Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek. The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Final Public Draft Report was released in September 2004. The study focuses on ecosystem restoration in the Ventura River Watershed to benefit native fish and wildlife (including the federally listed endangered southern steelhead trout) of the Ventura River and Matilija Creek in the vicinity of Matilija Dam, and improvement to the natural hydrologic and sediment transport regime to support coastal beach sand replenishment from the Ventura River. The development of the Santa Clara River Management Plan was directed by a 26-member Project Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the counties, communities, state and federal agencies, property owners, aggregate producers, water agencies and Friends of the Santa Clara River. AMEC Earth and Environmental, the Plan consultant, completed a draft Plan in January 2004. The Plan can be viewed at sdgis.amec.com/scremp/. The watershed management plan for Calleguas Creek has been developed by a broad stakeholder group and is in its first iteration.

NOAA Fisheries Steelhead Listing Status/TRT Update

Mark Capelli of NOAA Fisheries provided a presentation regarding its proposed hatchery listing policy and ESA listing determinations for West Coast salmon and steelhead following the format of the Public Workshops held in September and October 2004. He provided an overview of the Endangered Species Act and the lawsuits that lead to the current review (which began in 2002) of the listing status of a number of ESUs and a revision of the policy on artificial propagation (hatchery fish). Comments are being taken on the proposed policy revision and listing designations until November 12, 2004.

New proposals for California ESUs include:

Propose to reclassify Sacramento winter run chinook salmon from endangered to threatened and CCC coho salmon from threatened to endangered

The status of all other ESUs is proposed to remain unchanged
Propose to include all California hatchery populations within the listed ESUs except for Feather River hatchery spring chinook and Nimbus and Mokelumne River hatchery steelhead
Propose to include all resident *O. mykiss* of native origin below manmade/natural impassable barriers within the listed *O. mykiss* ESUs
Propose to include above-dam resident *O. mykiss* in Upper Alameda Creek in the listed CCC steelhead ESU
For other steelhead ESUs, resident *O. mykiss* above manmade barriers are not proposed for listing

The endangered Southern California Steelhead ESU is not proposed for reclassification, but the Upper Columbia River Steelhead ESU, where steelhead are also currently listed as endangered, is proposed for reclassification because of benefits from hatcheries. Another issue that may have a local effect is the potential change in listing status of resident *O. mykiss* above recent man-made impassable barriers on Upper Alameda Creek, although resident *O. mykiss* above manmade barriers on other creeks are not proposed for listing, NOAA Fisheries does state that their listing status must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Proposed protective regulations for Threatened ESUs include:

NOAA Fisheries prohibits the take of threatened fish, except under certain circumstances, through a 4(d) rule

NOAA Fisheries proposes to simplify and clarify changes to existing protective regulations by applying the same 4(d) prohibitions and take limits to all threatened ESUs

In the case of hatchery fish, NOAA Fisheries proposes to amend the 4(d) rule so that take will be allowed, if the fish's adipose fin has been clipped

NOAA Fisheries is also proposing to amend the 4(d) rule so that take of rainbow trout is also allowed

TCFT Work Plan Revision and Development

Ms. Lang provided an overview of the TCFT Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP); Department of Fish and Game 2004/2005 and Multi-Year Work Plans. Suggestions from meeting participants regarding tasks that the TCFT could undertake to provide additional assistance to participants were requested for incorporation into an updated Multi-Year Work Plan. Some suggestions were:

Provide a cooperative funding effort for permit streamlining

Provide information sharing for Arundo removal efforts

Link efforts with other entities to provide support with regional permits for DFG.

Provide a model letter for the development of a regional permit similar to LA District of the ACOE

Ms. Lang also recommended that additional suggestions be solicited via the email notification process to the larger group. All suggestions will be recorded and brought to the January meeting for review at that time.

Participant Updates – (Brief 3-5 minute summary)

Jim Word from Casitas Municipal Water District provided an update on the Robles Diversion Dam Fish Passage Project. The fish ladder proposed at the Robles Diversion Dam will provide access to the spawning areas above the dam that have not been accessible for over fifty years. Crews are currently fishing up the last steps in the construction of the fish passage and a dedication ceremony will be held on December 9, 2004 from 10:00 to 1:00. (Site plan handouts are available).

Wrap-Up

The next meeting will be held in San Luis Obispo on January 27, 2005.