

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

**San Luis Obispo New County Government Center  
1055 Monterey Street. Room 361  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**Thursday, July 27, 2006  
1:30 to 3:30 PM**

**Minutes**

**Participants**

Russ Baggerly, Casitas Municipal Water District  
Chuck Cesena, Caltrans  
Scott Lewis, Casitas Municipal Water District  
Theresa Lubin, Ventura County Parks  
Freddy Otte, City of San Luis Obispo  
Jeff Peters, Questa Engineering Corp  
Lew Riffle, Santa Barbara Flyfishers  
Tim Robinson, Cachuma Conservation and Release Board  
Joanne Schellhase, Ventura County Planning  
Nancy Settle, Ventura County Planning  
Stephnie Wald, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement  
Eric Wier, San Luis Obispo County Public Works  
Helena Wiley, Santa Barbara County Water Agency

**Item 1: Welcome and Introductions**

**Item 2: Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties – Board Action on TCFT Work Plan and Contract**

Nancy Settle reported that the contractual agreement between Santa Barbara County and Ventura County transferring duties for grant (#0013) implementation has been fully executed. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved the action on July 25, 2006. On that same day, Joanne Schellhase was brought on board as the new Local Coordinator.

All funding for the 06-07 grant (#0013) will remain with the original grantee, Santa Barbara County. All invoices incurred by Ventura County will be processed through Santa Barbara County for reimbursement from CA DFG.

**Item 3: Update on Work Plan Progress – TCFT Consultant, Jeff Peters, Questa**  
Jeff Peters discussed the progress thus far on each of the TCFT tasks listed below:

**a) Building and Applying the Fish Passage Database for Prioritization**

This database prioritizes both streams and barriers in the tri-county area. The purpose of the database is to identify streams/barriers that the TCFT should apply for restoration funding jointly, rather than stepping on each other.

While the PAD was the basis for the TCFT database, Questa has expanded it with detailed field information specific to the tri-county area. Field data on the Santa Clara River has recently been added. Much of the detailed field data was gathered by Matt Stoecker. This database will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. Russ Baggerly noted that mining operations caused a recent rock slide near Hwy 33 on the north fork of the Matilija. Mary Larson (CA DFG) may have already contacted the land owner to remove the debris in the next few weeks. Joanne Schellhase will contact Mary Larson to determine if this new barrier needs to be added to the TCFT database.

The CA DFG manual was used as the basis for the ranking methodology. Questa then contacted the original data sources (non-profits, state agencies) to fill in some information gaps from the manual. Matt Stoecker was also instrumental in developing the final ranking methodology. Jeff Peters will send a copy of the prioritization data and methodology to Scott Lewis for review.

Finalizing and uploading the TCFT database to the state database has been delayed due to field data collection and incorporation of comments from CA DFG. Completing this task will be an immediate priority in the 06-07 work plan.

**b) BMPs**

The TCFT BMPs originated with Entrix in 2003. Questa is following the same format and adding to them as requested. CA DFG is concerned that the TCFT BMPs are not a copycat of other manuals. Though most TCFT BMPs stem from the previous work of other agencies, they have been expanded to implement issues specific to the tri-county area. There was consensus among the group that the previously completed livestock grazing/fencing BMP needs to be revised. Questa will take a look at it. Questa has also completed a draft of the three (3) new BMPs required in the 06-07 work plan:

**1) retention basin/overflow channel repair, 2) channel construction/modification, 3) grading/excavation/filling.**

When completed, the BMPs can be used for project planning, design and implementation. Russ Baggerly suggested the need to implement the BMPs as policy for county and city permitting. Helena Wiley noted that if the 3 BMPs listed above are the last to be added, a finalized BMP report could then be submitted for policy implementation. Joanne Schellhase will contact Mary Larson to determine if the development of more BMPs will be requested in the future.

### **c) Permit Streamlining**

Jeff Peters identified two potential sources of permit streamlining for fish passage restoration/barrier removal projects.

#### Regional General Permit

San Francisco ACOE has a Regional General Permit (RGP) for stream restoration and barrier removal projects that are **funded by CA DFG**. Jeff Peters noted that Bruce Henderson (ACOE) will be implementing a similar RGP for the Los Angeles district to be in effect for 2007. Bruce has indicated to Jeff that he can expedite current projects whose funding will expire prior to 2007 if necessary.

#### Resource Conservation District Permit Coordination Programs

These tend to be geared to Resource Conservation District (RCD) clientele, which are mostly rural and agricultural projects. These projects are not limited to fish passage barrier removal, but are related to general conservation efforts. The project must have **federal funding** and utilize RCD Practice Standards, which are similar to the TCFT BMPs. The Practice Standards utilize a national engineering handbook that is not necessarily specific to the southern CA coast.

There is an ongoing attempt to include county, city and coastal zone permits in the RCD Permit Coordination Programs. However, the Ventura County RCD is apparently not pursuing Permit Coordination Programs at this time. It was suggested that non-profit organizations could be covered fairly easily by the RCD Permit Coordination Program.

There was a recommendation to be on the lookout for opportunities to slip the BMPs into county and city policy. For example, have the county and city adopt the TCFT BMPs at the time of exemptions. Sonoma County was mentioned as an example.

### **d) Technical Training**

Two workshops are planned for the 06-07 work plan:

#### Oct 06 - Bridge/Low Water Crossing Construction and Maintenance

Jeff Peters indicated Questa could put together the materials to conduct this workshop.

#### Mar 07 – Site Clearing and Livestock Grazing

Tim Robinson again noted that this workshop could dovetail with technical workshops being developed by the Cachuma Resource Conservation District. Jeff Peters suggested hiring professors and/or agricultural experts to conduct this workshop since Questa lacks expertise in this area. Eric Wier recommended contacting George Work, a rancher who may be interested in participating. Stephnie Wald suggested contacting Royce Larson. Vail and Vicker Ranching in Sacramento was also mentioned for potential input as ranchers with many restoration successes. Additional funding may be available from the Southern San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties Agricultural Watershed Coalition in the form of Ag waivers. Kay Mercer will be contacted for details.

**e) Signage**

As part of the 06-07 work plan, a total of 30 signs (10 per county) will be installed at road crossings. The signs will provide information that the creek is habitat to endangered or threatened steelhead trout. An example of a relevant sign from Northern California was passed around. Questa and Helena Wiley noted they could send a copy of the digital photo to Joanne Schellhase. When available, it will be posted to the TCFT website. This may serve as a basis for TCFT sign design. Lew Riffle mentioned that fly fishing club members have been putting up their own signs in Santa Barbara County with some success. He offered that volunteers from the club may be available to install the TCFT signage.

**Item 4: CA DFG Fish Passage Forum – Mount Shasta – July 19th**

None of the meeting participants attended this conference.

**Item 5: Participant Updates**

Helena Wiley mentioned that Santa Barbara County has 6-7 fish barrier removal projects on San Ysidro creek funded by the Coastal Conservancy. These barriers will be removed from the TCFT database.

Tim Robinson commented that after 2 years of good flow, 215 fish were observed in Carpinteria Creek. CA DFG captured and relocated the fish above the barrier. He also reported that a barrier was removed on Hilton Creek below Hwy 154, doubling the fish count there to about 3,000. Tim felt the barrier removal at Hwy 154 was awaiting Caltrans approval. However, Chuck Cesena indicated Caltrans has approved fixing this barrier and perhaps the delay was at the federal level.

Eric Wier reported that with key Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County involvement, the barrier removal project on Santa Rosa Creek at the Ferrasci Road crossing appears to be moving forward. This is the highest priority barrier in San Luis Obispo County.

Chuck Cesena discussed several Caltrans fish barrier removal projects along Hwy 101. At Rincon creek the steep approach will most likely be fixed. They are also working on a database to evaluate the extent of fish passage problems at select crossings, sub-contracting with Ross Taylor.

Freddy Otte described his non-profit group's work to remove pike minnow in Chorro Creek. It is hoped that in the longer term these efforts will open up barrier removal opportunities on Hwy 1 for steelhead trout.

Stephnie Wald indicated an MOU has been drafted for the Arroyo Grande Creek watershed in southern SLO County. Managing entities will be asked to sign on. This agreement is currently being spearheaded by the City of Arroyo Grande.

**Item 6: Future Meetings**

The next meeting will be held in Santa Barbara County; Thursday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> 1:30-3:30.