

Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

Minutes of Meeting

April 29, 2004

Alameda County Public Works Agency

Attendees

Deirdre Appel	SFPUC
Krissie Atkinson	DFG
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Brenda Buxton	State Coastal Conservancy
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Erika Cleugh	DFG
Laurel Collins	Watershed Sciences
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Jane Lavelle	SFPUC
Jeff Miller	ACA
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Stuart Moock	PG&E
Andy Otsuka	Alameda County Land Development
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Diana Sokolove	SF Planning Department
Gary Stern	NOAA Fisheries
Saskia VanGendt	CEMAR

Announcements

Jeff Miller announced that the Spawning Run and Festival had been cancelled for this year. He expects the events to be held next year.

Updates

Alvarado sewer crossing. Gary Stern reported that he has been working with the Union City Sanitation District and Alameda County to examine the Alameda Creek sewer crossing proposal. The district has proposed installing a roughened cap over the pipeline as mitigation for possible impacts from future scouring. Gary said that the presence of a hydrologic control in the channel should allow sufficient water depth for fish passage in the future.

Gary suggested ways for Andrew Otsuka of the county land development group to obtain design information for review. Although a proposal report may not yet be available, Han-bin Liang of WRECO, Inc., the engineer on the project, is expected to produce such a report that can be reviewed by interested parties.

Sunol Valley pipeline. Jeff Miller told the Workgroup that he investigated the Chevron jet fuel pipeline project, and the pipeline will not cross Alameda Creek. Josh Milstein noted the

importance of keeping the pipeline out of the San Antonio Reservoir watershed, and was supported by other members of the Workgroup.

Zone 7 diversions. Gordon Becker read a summary of Zone 7's proposed artificial recharge operations provided by Dave Houts. Prior to the completion of a permanent diversion structure, Zone 7 intends to place a rubber-liner covered gravel dam in Arroyo Mocho to capture South Bay aqueduct releases.

According to Gary Stern, the dam will not be operated if there is a hydrologic connection suitable for fish passage. The dam will have a screened diversion, but may prevent downstream passage of juvenile fish. As mitigation, the dam will be lowered every 30 days to provide bypass flows of up to 50 cfs.

SFPUC activities. Jane Lavelle told the Workgroup that a public notice has been released regarding the joint federal permitting office to be established for CIP related environmental work. Comments may be submitted through May 16. Gary Stern anticipates that the office will house two NOAA biologists and a fish passage engineer, as well as staff from USFWS and EPA. Jane also said that a contract has been let for the programmatic EIR for the CIP.

Groundwater monitoring will be performed in conjunction with the Niles and Sunol dams removal project. Also, geotechnical information is being compiled to inform the Calaveras Dam rebuilding project.

Brian Sak described the ENTRIX flows study of downstream juvenile steelhead passage between the Alameda Creek diversion dam and the Arroyo de la Laguna confluence. The study identified seven critical passage sites, mostly in the Sunol Valley, to use as monitoring points for fish passage. At these locations, pressure transducers were installed to measure water depth and velocity during experimental releases of 15 and 100 cfs from Calaveras Dam. Preliminary results from the study indicate that passage conditions meeting minimum criteria would occur at six sites at 35 cfs. The remaining location, between the pump station and the PG&E gasline crossing, required 100 cfs to meet passage criteria. A data report will be issued upon completion that will be available for review.

Gary Stern reported further on the Niles and Sunol dams removal project. He reminded the Workgroup that in October, a group assembled to submit comments about the project to the SFPUC. The proposed design for the Sunol project is to notch the dam at two locations. In response to a request from Gary for additional information regarding sediment transport and geomorphology (in relation to the proposed depth of excavation), the SFPUC retained a consultant to produce a study. Comments on the scope have been requested, but reviewers will be requesting an extension of the comment period. Diana Sokolove indicated she would distribute a draft report issued in February to reviewers to aid in their review of the scope. At the Niles dam site, Gary remains concerned that the project would benefit by expanding the portion of the dam to be removed.

PAC activities/steelhead restoration planning strategy/Master Plan. Eric Cartwright told the group that PAC met with Coastal Conservancy staff to discuss maintaining progress toward

completing projects in the flood control channel. According to Brenda Buxton, approximately \$200,000 of support from the Coastal Conservancy may be available to aid in design and environmental review for a passage project at the BART weir. An estimated \$880,000 is still needed, and she proposed that about \$500,000 or more be developed by ACWD and \$300,000 or more come from ACFCWCD. PAC members are considering her proposal. Brenda also announced commitment of about \$150,000 from the Conservancy to advance a Master Plan for the steelhead restoration program. This plan is expected to be useful in attracting funding. URS is refining the scope of work for the Master Plan, and may need the results of a stakeholder audit to produce a meaningful product. The PAC is discussing possible consultants to perform this audit.

Brenda also noted an important “missing” component of the restoration program, possible construction of a low-flow channel within the flood control channel. She pointed out that based on previous experience with the Corps, Workgroup products may be adopted by the Corps should it resume its §1135 project on Alameda Creek, and expenditures occurring during periods of §1135 inactivity may nevertheless count toward matching funds. Eric said that ACWD and ACFCWCD are planning to discuss cost-sharing, and are looking for financial help for “new” costs created by the Corps’ work stoppage.

Agenda Items

Funding Strategy. Gordon Becker provided Workgroup members with a draft letter to the Corps concerning the follow-up to cessation of the §1135 project. The letter will be signed by ACWD and ACFCWCD, with support letters requested from other Workgroup members. Gordon also said that the Bay Bridge mitigation funds RFP may be released soon. Gary Stern told the group that the amount of money available may increase based on negotiations for Benicia Bridge and Richmond/San Rafael Bridge mitigation.

Gordon also reported that Jay Kinberger mentioned that the Workgroup could attempt placing the Alameda Creek project in language contained in House and Senate subcommittee reports regarding the §1135 and §206 processes. Jeff Miller and Brenda Buxton agreed to pursue this strategy with appropriate local representatives.

Andy Gunther reported that the Workgroup was recently awarded two grants: one for supplementary work on Stonybrook Creek and one for creating Web cams to monitor in-migrants at the BART weir. American Rivers/NOAA gave \$10,000 for the road crossing conceptual design and the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission approved \$7,500 for the Web cam project, which will be matched by \$2,500 from Alameda County.

Stonybrook Creek improvements conceptual design project. Gordon said that sub-consultants had retained a surveyor for the project. Based on conversations with local landowners, it may be important to implement passage projects in an upstream direction, beginning with the Caltrans re-design of the Niles Canyon crossing. Although Gary Stern was unable to attend the last regularly scheduled meeting with Caltrans about this project, he will continue to stress NOAA Fisheries’ interest in a design that produces maximum fish passage efficiency.

Gordon also informed the Workgroup that Michael Love examined the USGS weir in Niles Canyon and expressed his opinion that the structure needs a passage facility. Gordon referred Norm Ploss to Michael to advance the evaluation and mitigation design process.

Re-graded channel alternative study. Gordon Becker said that the “ramp” approach was being evaluated by the project modelers for flood carrying capacity and fish passage impacts. Early results indicate that the design may be feasible without removal of the middle inflatable dam, important for ACWD water supply reliability. CEMAR and ACWD are working together to analyze water supply impacts of a possible regraded channel alternative. Gordon expects the study to be complete within the next several months.

Supplementation planning. Gordon told the Workgroup that Jeff Hagar’s supplementation alternatives report has been posted on the Web site. A subgroup meeting was scheduled for May 17th at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the report and other aspects of the in-migrant study and supplementation programs. The Workgroup discussed genetics concerns associated with these planning efforts, and agreed to include Dr. Jerry Smith in future deliberations.

Next Workgroup meeting. The next Workgroup meeting will be held on June 10th at 9:30 a.m. at ACFCWCD. In addition to the normal updates, the Workgroup requested that the SFPUC be prepared to discuss its HCP process.