

**Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup  
Minutes of Meeting  
June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
9:30 am  
Alameda County Public Works Agency  
951 Turner Court  
Hayward, CA**

Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Gordon Becker	ACA
Bill Bennett	DWR
Ann Buell	Coastal Conservancy
Brenda Buxton	Coastal Conservancy
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Manny da Costa	ACFCWCD
Andy Gunther	AMS
Chris Gray	Supervisor Haggerty's Office
Jeff Hagar	Hagar Environmental Science
Craig Hill	ACWD
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Art Lampert	ACWD
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Stuart Moock	PG&E
Mark Mueller	SFPUC
Anna Roche	SFPUC
Steve Rothert	American Rivers
Paul Salop	AMS
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD

## Agenda Item No.

### **1. Announcements**

Andy Gunther's agenda item to discuss the goals and objectives of the watershed restoration plan was moved to the next Workgroup meeting due to an abundance of items on the June meeting agenda and the recent receipt of several member agencies' statements. Bill Bennett requested a few minutes to discuss his ideas for the restoration plan.

### **2. Progress Updates**

***§1135 Project*** Eric Cartwright informed the Workgroup that Bill DeJager of the USACE indicated that the Preliminary Restoration Plan (PRP) phase had been initiated. Bill was estimating a late July or August timeframe for completion of this phase, well ahead of the October beginning of the Federal FY 2002. The next phase of the Program, the Environmental Restoration Report (ERR), could move forward in 2002 if some of the projects ahead of the Alameda Creek project in the §1135 pipeline did not move forward as scheduled and the \$500k needed for the ERR then became available. Eric also indicated that the Corps would require a letter of intent to proceed with the project from either the ACWD or ACFCWCD to accompany the PRP.

Brenda Buxton inquired as to whether a match was needed to accompany the ERR. Eric responded that none was required at this point. Laura Kilgour added that matching funds for the §1135 Program would probably not be required for at least the next year to year and a half.

Andy Gunther asked if there would be an opportunity for Workgroup members to review the results of the PRP prior to proceeding on to the ERR phase. Eric responded that the bottom line is that the Corps will make the decision to proceed themselves. He added, however, that he and Laura are continuing to work closely with the Corps, and will try to get a draft version of the PRP for review. Laura added that Bill DeJager indicated that lobbying is not needed at this point as his immediate supervisors are supportive of the project, but could be helpful at a later time.

***SFPUC Dam Removal*** Josh Milstein informed the Workgroup that the SFPUC has allocated \$1 million as match for removal of Sunol and Niles Dams in its upcoming budget. The budget should be finalized by the end of the month. Earliest possible removal of the dams is anticipated for 2002.

***Proposed Levee Reconfiguration*** Carla Schulteis informed the Workgroup that the Flood Control District is negotiating a contract with URS for Phase I investigations of the levee reconfiguration. They have submitted a draft scope of work for Phase II to the State Board pursuant to their 205 (j). Brenda added that if wetland restoration is included as part of Phase II operations, the Coastal Conservancy may be interested in offering matching funds.

### 3. Stakeholder Process Review

Eric informed the Workgroup of the ACWD's concerns emanating from the May Workgroup meeting. At the meeting, Bill Bennett presented to the Workgroup various ideas for alternatives to the CH2M Hill fish ladder design and for water supply operations and facilities. Eric indicated that the presentation had caught the ACWD somewhat by surprise, and that it seemed to be inconsistent with the collaborative process the Workgroup had followed previously.

Craig Hill expressed his concern that the ACWD had cooperated extensively with AMS in production of the watershed assessment and that this presentation seemed to be revisiting management decisions made previously. He also indicated that the group that investigated restoration of the creek in the late 1980s splintered because of diverging views and was never able to recover and hoped that was not the case now.

Brenda inquired as to how best the Workgroup can formulate and incorporate new ideas without compromising any past work. Bill Bennett indicated that his presentation was in no way intended to put forth any concrete plans or alter the Workgroup processes. He recognized that the DWR had not been involved with the Workgroup since the beginning, but that the DWR saw CH2M Hill following a single track and just wanted to present alternative solutions that the Workgroup may not have considered previously.

Craig replied that CH2M Hill had looked at many of the alternatives that were presented and recommended the current design as the optimal solution. He added that the Corps is now moving forward with the recommended alternative. Bill added that, by law, the Corps will examine alternatives during the §1135 process. Andy inquired as to whether there was written documentation regarding the alternative designs considered by CH2M Hill, as this would be valuable information to provide to the Corps, and that at the last meeting there was general agreement that the §1135 process would be well served by having the Work Group assist the Corps in identifying alternatives. Craig responded that this information is not available in written form, and that he is hesitant to re-hire CH2M Hill to produce this information at this time. Carla added that this documentation would also be valuable as part of the public record to show that all alternatives were investigated and that the project with the best use of public funds was selected. Craig explained his position that the Workgroup should move forward with the Corps project as written until it doesn't pan out. At that point, the Workgroup could then investigate further lower-cost alternatives.

Laura then suggested that the Workgroup should continue investigating alternatives, but that a subgroup would be the best venue for this work. She added that the group shouldn't make the mistake of committing to a single alternative too soon. Josh commented that any subgroup formed should include participation of the water agencies, adding his recognition that water supply agencies will have to commit water for fish, but that one of his goals was to choose an alternative that would minimize that amount of water. Eric added that the water operations workshop being organized by Peggy Olofson in the Fall would be a good starting point for such a subgroup to gain an introduction to the water supply agencies' operations. Richard added that

Peggy is speaking with SFEI about hosting the workshop, currently targeting late August or September.

#### **4. Watershed Restoration Plan**

Bill expressed his opinion on the importance of having the restoration plan outline the restoration goals and specific projects to show potential funding sources. He offered to put together an outline and estimated timeline to use as a base for a restoration plan. Brenda suggested waiting until after the flows workshop to begin production of this. Bill responded that, in the particular case of finding funding for removal of the PUC dams, having this document sooner rather than later may be beneficial.

Eric commented that member agencies had been requested to submit goals and objectives to Andy for use in production of a restoration plan and inquired as to the status of that effort. Andy replied that he had just received the final responses in the past two days and that the CDF&G grant to support this work should be in place in early July. He added that he had already produced an outline similar to what Bill had proposed, and Bill's text could be useful to begin fleshing it out.

Pete commented on the timeliness of the discussion as EBRPD would like to have a document to distribute by the scheduled August 17<sup>th</sup> swim dam removal. Andy and Bill agreed that they could cooperate in putting the "strawman" together using info from the AMS assessment, DWR info on barriers, and objectives of the member agencies in time for the August 17<sup>th</sup> event. Andy added that the next Workgroup meeting should be planned in advance of the event to allow for discussion of the product in order to build a consensus document by the August 17<sup>th</sup> deadline. Pete added that he is not envisioning an all-inclusive document at this time, just a few pages of discussion, list of restoration projects, and a tentative schedule. Laura suggested producing two documents, one for a press packet (less detailed) and one for consideration by the Work Group as the draft plan that could be distributed to funding agencies.

There was consensus with this approach, and July 30<sup>th</sup> was selected for the next Work Group meeting to provide time prior to August 17<sup>th</sup> to create a press packet. Pete indicated that the public relations staff at the District will be available to assist in preparing the press packet.

#### **5. Update on Stonybrook Creek**

Manny da Costa updated the Workgroup on the status of investigations into fish passage issues in Stonybrook Creek. He first recapped the history of the project for those who weren't familiar with it. In the Spring of 1999, three steelhead were captured in the flood control channel below the BART weir, had radio-tracking devices attached to them, and were released above the upper rubber dam. One headed downstream, a second died, and the third headed up Stonybrook Creek until its progress was halted by an impassable barrier in the channel. Subsequent surveys of the area uncovered nine adults and many young-of-year trout below this same barrier. As there are several miles of trout habitat upstream of the barrier, the ACFCWCD then hired

Michael Love and Associates to examine the eight known culverts in the creek as to their potential to serve as barriers to migration. The final report is now available, and includes findings that five of the eight culverts need to be replaced, two can be retrofitted, and one is not a passage barrier. The current estimated cost to perform the work required to remove these barriers could run as high as \$1.8 million.

The report also outlines additional barriers encountered that were not analyzed as part of the scope of work. Manny now proposes to walk the entire creek with the assistance of Paul Modrell and perform a geomorphic / passage analysis of the creek as a whole.

Pete added that the radio-tracked steelhead was able to reach the barrier designated as Stonybrook 2 in the report, indicating that the barriers to that point are passable at least at some flows. There were, however, no trout visible above this barrier even though habitat looks promising.

## **6. Spring Valley Water Company**

Josh next gave a slide presentation on the history and holdings of the Spring Valley Water Company. Josh's presentation included many fascinating historical photographs, including pictures of the Vallejo flume, which was constructed in the 1840s (this is one of the oldest water rights in California). He described how the Spring Valley Water Company's development program in general moved upstream to obtain better water quality, less pumping (more head) and carryover storage. The early diversions were run of the river, leading to supply deficiencies in peak summer months. The Filter Galleries, Pleasanton wells, and ultimately Calaveras Reservoir solved these difficulties.

Josh provided the following chronology of events related to the Alameda Creek watershed:

- 1875: Spring Valley buys Alameda Water County's Calaveras Valley properties
- 1886: Spring Valley buys Vallejo flume right & begins diverting water across the bay in 1887-88.
- 1901: Sunol Dam & Filter Galleries constructed
- 1901-1910: Pleasanton wells developed.
- 1913: ACWD formed.
- 1913-25: Calaveras Dam construction
- 1925-31: Upper Alameda Diversion Dam & Tunnel construction.
- 1965: San Antonio Dam completed.

## **7. Update on Fisheries Investigations**

Josh informed the Workgroup that he had visited Arroyo Hondo at the Calaveras Reservoir with Gary Stern and Tom Taylor, and that smolt trapping in this watershed had captured sixteen fish. There were an additional seventeen to eighteen adult fish found in pools in

a dried out section of the creek. In contrast, approximately 200 fish were captured from the San Antonio Reservoir. Jeff Hagar indicated that fin clips were taken from both the Calaveras and San Antonio fish and will soon be forwarded to Jennifer Nielsen for analysis. Her work is anticipated to take approximately two months, with results expected in the Fall.

## **8. Update on USGS Sedimentation Study**

Richard Wetzig reported that there has not been a great deal of recent progress on the sedimentation study. He is still attempting to get approval from USGS to distribute the data collected in the winter of 1999. Preliminary results show that approximately 33,000 cubic yards of sediment (bed load + suspended) passed through the Niles Canyon monitoring station that winter. Interestingly, a greater amount of sediment was monitored passing the Arroyo de la Laguna station during the same period, suggesting deposition is occurring in the upper reaches of Niles Canyon. Richard added that 1999 is considered just above an average rainfall year for the area, though erosion is often more linked with peak runoff events rather than annual rainfall. He added that the Flood Control District will be hiring a USGS consultant to examine sedimentation issues in Alameda Creek, including analysis of the possible sediment flux from the Bay. He estimated the cost of past and ongoing USGS studies at about \$500k per year.

Richard also informed the Workgroup that the FCD will be performing the last of the four planned de-silting projects in the lower channel this year (expecting approximately 25,000 cubic yards to be removed). At the request of the Regional Board, these projects conducted in a manner that will allow different methods to be characterized with regards to the rate at which vegetation is reestablished. H.T. Harvey & Associates is conducting a monitoring program to document the impacts of different de-silting methods.

## **9. Agreements / Action Items**

- 1) Andy and Bill will cooperate in production of a restoration plan “strawman” for discussion at the July Workgroup meeting, assuming funding is in place to commence this work.
- 2) Manny will forward the Stonybrook passage analysis to Andy for posting on the Work Group's webpage (if the report is not too large).

## **10. Items for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Workgroup was scheduled for Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am at the ACPWA Turner Court offices. Possible agenda items for the meeting include: 1) flows workshop, 2) restoration plan / press document, and 3) PG&E gas line crossing.