

Meeting of Alameda Creek Fish Restoration Work Group
Thursday, September 21, 2006
9-12, San Francisco PUC Corp Yard, Sunol

Update on Fish Passage Projects

ACA (Jeff Miller)

Rainbow trout:

Jeff Miller noted that research reviewed PUC study reach showed what he described as a “disturbing downward trend,” and expressed concern we are losing that population. The review did not include 2005, nor did it include Little Yosemite or above.

Winter fish rescue:

Jeff Miller indicated that now that Sunol Dam has been removed, fish moved this winter from the BART weir will likely reach the PG&E gas line. Rather than having to organize and conduct a second rescue, he suggested that once fish are collected at the BART weir they be transported all the way above the gas line.

Next step: It was agreed that this subject should be considered at a subsequent meeting that included resource agency representatives and EBRPD.

Lead: Tim Ramirez (?)

River Parkway grant opportunity:

Jeff also noted a grant opportunity for river parkway funds, and suggested that Alameda Creek could put in a strong proposal combining ecological, flood control, recreational goals.

Next step: Jeff offered to set up meeting on this with EBRPD, Zone 7 and ACFCDD.

ACWD (Eric Cartwright)

Upper and Lower Dam projects

Eric Cartwright noted that CEQA analysis has been completed for the upper dam fish screen project, with the preferred alternative being a rotating drum. Permit acquisition is in progress, and installation is tentatively scheduled for summer 2007.

Prop 50 IRWMP Implementation grants

Due to a revised cost estimate for completing the inter-tie pipeline at the site of the lower dam that is much higher than originally estimates, this project has been shelved for the moment. The lower dam will still be removed, and it is expected that foundation will be notched to improve fish passage at that site.

Eric noted that in most conditions, fish can pass when the dam is deflated, plans are in place to keep it deflated. He went on to say that the District is looking at the cost of giving up the ability to recharge the ponds. For now the project does not include the pipeline to recharge ponds below the flood control channel (PIT T-1 and T-2). They have

learned however that the pits will actually rise naturally during the wet season. With pits rising, provides storage and infiltrates during the summer, helping to protect against saline intrusion. They will keep monitoring this situation.

Prop 50 IRWMP Implementation grants

As part of the Bay Area Integrated Water Resources Management Plan proposal, ACWD has a project to add a fish screen on the diversion to Bunting Pond and an intertie to the existing creek pipeline to replace the diversion at Kaiser Pond. As the proposal requires completed CEQA analysis, they are moving ahead with the analysis and hope that the project will be funded in December.

He noted that any letters of support from the work group would be much appreciated.

Fish passage at middle dam

2001 concept: fish ladder at middle dam, drop structure then fish screens at diversions and ladder at upper dam. 2004 concept: provide fish passage facility just at BART weir, keep middle dam deflated at fish flow times, build new pipeline with intake above upper rubber dam, which would feed into Shin Pond. They are looking at both alternatives. CH2MHil developed cost estimates for both and evaluated pipeline concept. Eric has distributed cost information to some Work Group members, will give to Andy Gunther to post to the website. They are doing an in-house review at the moment. Key concern: what if one of the inflatable dams becomes inoperative, how do they maintain their water diversion capacity.

ACFCD: Laura Kidd

Laura reported that they are looking at two concepts at the BART weir, but undecided. They hired a consultant to look at the two alternatives and outline the pro's and con's. She then introduced Kosmo Ken Bates.

Kosmo Ken Bates report

Kosmo Ken Bates presented his analysis of four different fish passage options for the BART weir, including two vertical slot fishways (one for the weir and one for the weir and the inflatable dam), the roughened channel (also known as "the regraded channel"), and a pool and chute design. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Mr. Bates used a decision analysis matrix that identified several criteria, weighted each, and then scored the four designs for each criterion to rank the proposals.

Work Group members questioned Mr. Bates regarding the draft report, and it was noted that passage at the weir must be considered in context with passage throughout the channel. Specifically, Eric Cartwright noted that there needs to be compatibility between this project and the upper dam facility. He also noted that NOAA wanted to see their design at the lower dam, and to look at flow of 20 cfs.

Jeff Miller asked that they look at what stream flow in the channel would be at different SC flows.

Andy Gunther asked that Kosmo include in the report the thinking of the original alternatives sub-group (which included NOAA and DFG). The findings of the Alternatives Sub-Group led directly to the development of the roughened channel alternative.

Tim Ramirez also noted that this analysis has to be deal with in the context of the overall flows studies.

Next step: Work group members should deliver written comments to Laura Kidd by September 28.

Update on SFPUC activities: Tim Ramirez and others

At their June 28th meeting, the SFPUC adopted an environmental stewardship policy for the Water Enterprise, a draft of which was reviewed by the Work Group earlier in the year.

The SFPUC and Alameda County Flood Control District settled their dispute regarding the impacts of the removal of Sunol and Niles Dams. The PUC has set aside \$1.2M to Alameda County for sediment transport studies, design and construction of a fish passage solution at the BART Weir, water and/or sediment monitoring in the watershed, watershed planning and/or tidal wetland restoration efforts. The project is permitted and is proceeding.

The PUC is working on an erosion control project on Arroyo de la Laguna with Zone 7, NRCS, and the Alameda County RCD.

In addition, the HCP for the Alameda Creek watershed, which covers aquatic and terrestrial species (except fishes), is expected to be available for public review by the end of 2006. The HCP dos not include anadromous fisheries.

The SFPUC is also building a low-flow valve on the Calaveras Dam. It is almost completed.

Craig Freeman, Dave Olson and David Rogers then discussed details about the Calaveras Dam replacement project. The NEPA lead is the USACE. They are meeting monthly. They also are meeting quarterly with resources agencies, re biological surveys, and doing site visits. They met with EBRPD in June to share data.

The SFPUC is preparing four technical memoranda regarding fisheries issues relative to the Calaveras Dam project. The subject of the studies, and their expected public release dates, are below:

Fish Passage Feasibility at Calaveras Dam	January 2007
Assessment of Natural Fish Migration	February 2007

Barriers	
Fish Passage and Diversion Screens at the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam	February 2007
Migration Flow Studies (Critical Riffle Analysis)	February 2007

1. Fish Passage Feasibility Study

Doing a comprehensive survey of data on fish passage for steelhead. They are evaluating alternative devices and methods for fish passage.

2. Natural Fish Barrier Assessment

Looking at Little Yosemite, Bedrock Fall and the Arroyo Hondo slide.

3. Feasibility for fish passage at Alameda Creek Diversion dam

Consultants have looked at the literature, have done site visit with fisheries agencies and considered options, including fish ladder and trap and haul. Will have final report in February 2007.

4. Migration Flows Study

Purpose of study is to determine which riffle is critical limiting factor in determining passage, identify flows necessary to create passable conditions. Focus is on the Quarry Reach of Alameda Creek in the Sunol Valley.

Hiring of Flows Study Consultants: Brenda Buxton

Brenda Buxton announced that the Flows Subcommittee has recommended that the Conservancy hire Andy Gunther as the Program Manager for the flow studies. Andy noted that recently met with Scott McBain and Bill Trush of McBain & Trush, Inc. They have a lot of relevant experience understanding the hydrology and ecology and how to work with people with diverse goals. They will be hired to develop a scope of work.

Outcome: Consensus from the Work Group to proceed.

Tim Ramirez stressed the importance of having Work Group members who are empowered to make decisions for their organizations. He expressed the importance of the group's becoming more formally organized.

A few parties have yet to sign the MOU, they are in process.

Brenda reviewed the proposed protocols she had drafted and asked all Work Group members for the following:

1. Please designate who from your organization is the member and who the alternate member. This will become the new reflector list.
2. Please send her street addresses for the roster.

The Group also discussed various options for maintaining and improving communications, and storing documents. Brenda suggested an intranet site, which the Conservancy would pay for.

Further discussion on the BART weir alternatives analysis

The group agreed that they needed to assist the ACFCD in choosing an alternative, identified three next steps:

1. cost comparisons of the alternatives (ACFCD)
2. Work Group comments/recommendations on weighting of alternatives in consultant report.
3. Integration of ACWD projects and flows assumptions/water needs.

A timeline was not agreed on for completing these next steps.

Date for next meeting: December 7, 2006.