

Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

Minutes of Meeting

October 14, 2004

Alameda County Public Works Agency

Attendees

Kristine Atkinson	DFG
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Cynthia Butler	Alameda County Environmental Services
Brenda Buxton	State Coastal Conservancy
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Craig Hill	ACWDt
Jane Lavelle	SFPUC
Jeff Miller	ACA
Stuart Moock	PG&E
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Carla Schulteis	ACFCWCD
Gary Stern	NOAA Fisheries
Jennifer Stoltz	SFPUC
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD

Announcements

Gordon Becker attended a NOAA Fisheries public meeting in Santa Barbara and reported that the proposed inclusion of upper Alameda Creek *Oncorhynchus mykiss* in the Central Coast ESU was noted several times during the event. In particular, participants were interested in the data sufficiency requirements to achieve additional ESU inclusions for populations upstream of dams.

Richard Wetzig presented a draft copy of the Alameda Creek watershed brochure that is being prepared under the direction of the Alameda Creek Watershed Management Steering Committee. The brochure is scheduled to go to print in November and likely will be available in December.

Updates

SFPUC and PAC activities. Carla Schultheis told the Workgroup that the PAC discussed sending a letter to Pete Stark requesting federal funding for the major passage improvement projects in the flood control channel. The PAC also proposed suggestions for conducting the proposed stakeholder audit.

Jane Lavelle said that SFPUC staff attended a meeting with NOAA Fisheries on September 30th that focused on the Sunol and Niles dam removals project. Gary Stern noted that additional analysis revealed a greater amount of stored sediment upstream from the Sunol dam than previously thought. Recent studies also led to changed project design features that NOAA Fisheries staff believes will produce successful passage conditions. When finalized, related

reporting will be provided to CEMAR so that the information can be posted on the Workgroup's Web site. Notes from the September 30th meeting can be obtained by contacting Jane.

Gordon said that a site visit to the BART weir was conducted to advance planning for the Web cam project. He noted that the proposed design can be assembled in the lab and easily installed in the field. The location of the signal receiver has not been finalized, although a candidate home on the south side of the south levee has been identified and its owner has been contacted.

Agenda Items

In-migrant study. Gordon reported on a meeting held earlier in the morning about the proposed in-migrant study. Staff from the SFPUC, ACWD, ACFCWCD, DFG, NOAA Fisheries and CEMAR attended. Gordon said that concerns existed regarding take liability should adult steelhead be moved into the upper watershed. In the meeting, Gary said that an analysis of potential take may reveal a sufficiently low level of risk to allow the study to be conducted using only a research permit. Craig Hill offered to provide NOAA Fisheries with flows and water supply information helpful in producing the analysis. Gary suggested applying for a program for only one year as other upcoming actions in the flood control channel, such as installing fish screens, may trigger Section 7 related protections from take liability. Gary expressed optimism the program could be developed for this winter, particularly if the study could be conducted under the aegis of EBRPD's existing permit application.

Master Plan/Stakeholder audit. Brenda Buxton distributed an amended proposal from the Center for Collaborative Policy to conduct the stakeholder assessment. The amendment was needed to respond to concerns that more meetings would be necessary to identify fully the issues surrounding restoring a viable steelhead run in the Alameda Creek watershed. Brenda is setting up the contract to conduct the assessment, with re-imbursement expected from participating agencies. She requested that Workgroup members approach their managers regarding the logistics of involvement.

Funding opportunities. Andy Gunther announced that he, Craig, and Eric Cartwright would visit NOAA Fisheries to discuss proposals to be submitted under the RFP for Bay Bridge mitigation money on October 15. Andy hoped to clarify how the proposals should look, who would be evaluating them, and other related issues. He said that he planned to work with Workgroup members to assemble appropriate information and letters of support for the proposals.

Carla said that her colleague Ralph Johnson raised the idea of Workgroup projects being included in the planning and funding for the salt ponds restoration project. Carla will request that he attend a Workgroup meeting to discuss this idea further.

The Workgroup also discussed other organizations likely to apply for funding available through Bay Bridge mitigation, and whether there were opportunities for projects representing the entire study area south of the Richmond-San Rafael bridge. Gary said he was aware of a biologist looking to establish a relationship with a local organization for the purpose of studying near-shore fisheries resources in the vicinity of the salt ponds project.

Re-graded channel alternative study. Gordon said that the re-graded channel study team's proposed design appeared to offer the advantage of containing a large range of creek flows. "Hand modeling" applied to proposed design has identified high levels of turbulence likely to be encountered by fish under higher flows, however. Gordon noted that the team is consulting with NOAA Fisheries and DFG engineers on design elements in order to reduce expected turbulence levels. Gordon said that the study is expected to be completed by the end of January.

Next Workgroup meeting. The next Workgroup meeting will be held on December 1st at 9:30 a.m. at ACFCWCD. Workgroup members are invited to contact Gordon with agenda items for the next meeting.