

## **Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup**

### **Minutes of Meeting**

**November 5, 2003**

### **Alameda County Public Works Agency**

#### Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Brenda Buxton	State Coastal Conservancy
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Dave Houts	Zone 7 Water Agency
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Jane Lavelle	SFPUC
Jeff Miller	ACA
Josh Milstein	SFPUC
Stuart Moock	PG&E
Diedra Pell	SFPUC
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Gary Stern	NOAA Fisheries
Saskia van Gendt	CEMAR
Robert Young	Caltrans

#### **Announcements**

Brian Sak announced that the Alameda Creek aquatic resource monitoring reports for 2000 and 2001 were finished and brought copies for Workgroup members. The reports also will be available on the Workgroup's Web site. Monitoring was conducted to describe "pre-project" conditions for the PUC's recapture facility project. In the future, the study area will include portions of Alameda Creek upstream to Camp Ohlone. Brian noted that water temperature was found to be a limiting factor to trout production.

Jeff Miller said he had located a Corps study concerning the flood control channel project from 1961. He offered to make the study available to Workgroup members.

Eric Cartwright announced results from Hanson Environmental's temperature studies were available. Chuck Hanson will be asked to discuss the results at the next Workgroup meeting.

Brenda Buxton stated that funding for the Stonybrook Road Crossing Improvements Conceptual Design project would be considered at the next meeting of the Coastal Conservancy board. Brenda expressed her optimism that the board would fund the study.

## Updates

*SFPUC and PAC Activities.* Josh Milstein said that the PAC was considering undertaking a programmatic EIR for fishery activities in the Alameda Creek watershed. He noted that fish flows were the missing part of the restoration program, including determining quantities and timing. He proposed convening a “flows” subgroup, including mainly biologists familiar with the watershed, to work on this issue. Josh foresees a process wherein the recommendations of the flows subgroup would be taken to the PAC agencies to determine how best to provide the necessary water releases, perhaps during a six-month time frame.

In response to a question about the intention of the PUC to conduct IFIM studies for Alameda Creek, Josh said he believed that there was insufficient water available due to the present operating restrictions on Calaveras Reservoir. The Workgroup also discussed the possibility of Alameda County being the lead agency for a Programmatic EIR on Alameda Creek fisheries restoration activities. Brenda Buxton noted that the Conservancy could participate in a programmatic environmental review process for the program described in the *Restoration Action Plan*, either through a lead agency role or through financial support.

Josh cited the desirability of having NOAA Fisheries and DFG involved in the fisheries program. He suggested that it could be the subject of a Section 7 consultation with the signatory organizations to a possible Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for the activities.

Pete Alexander said that upper Alameda Creek was likely to appear as an important area for habitat restoration in the future and asked about the projected implications for the diversion dam (ACDD). Josh responded that laddering the facility was a possibility that would be considering in restoration planning by the water agencies.

Josh stated his intention to bring a schedule and cost estimate for creating a JPA and conducting programmatic environmental review for watershed fisheries activities. The flows subgroup meeting will occur prior to the next Workgroup meeting. The subgroup will review existing information and identify data gaps concerning the relationship of flows and habitat. Gary Stern recommended considering temperature management in the subgroup meeting context.

*Stonybrook Creek.* Robert Young said that conceptual designs for the Highway 84 crossing of Stonybrook Creek would not address fish passage well. He recommended interagency meetings to encourage consideration of more passage friendly designs. He also suggested that additional support might be given by making local legislative representatives aware of the nature of the Highway 84 project. Melissa Barrow of Caltrans is managing this project.

## Agenda Items

*Supplementation subgroup meeting.* Gordon Becker said that the Supplementation subgroup met and came to consensus on an outline for the proposed in-migrant study. A key program element will be installing a smolt trap in lower Stonybrook Creek. This step will expand the scope of the study and allow for a Section 404 permit application that provides a Section 7 “nexus.” The Section 7 consultation will detail “take” provisions in relation to water supply activities in the watershed and will be in effect for two years. Gary Stern recommended working with Gary Muss of the Corps on the 404 permit and attempting to install the trap this winter if possible for baseline information collection.

*Re-graded channel alternative study.* Gordon reported that the study TAC would have its first meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will review the study method and preliminary findings regarding design constraints and opportunities.

*Sunol and Niles dam removals.* Barbara Palacios and Gary Stern updated the Workgroup about progress on the dam removal designs. The PUC is to provide information on the following areas: (1) habitat and groundwater; (2) sediment management; and (3) hydraulic conditions and channel morphology. Gary said that a new approach may be to leave substantial amounts of sediment in place during the project, as the majority of the sediment is large gravel and cobble. This would also have the benefit of decreasing project costs. The total project cost is estimated at \$5.5 million. Gary said that Marcen Whitman of DFG was being consulted as a dam removal specialist.

*Stonybrook Creek improvements conceptual design project.* Gordon noted that CEMAR had applied to American Rivers for additional funding for this project, and that the project would likely begin this winter. CEMAR is coordinating with the Alameda County roads department regarding the project so that a smooth transition occurs between the design and implementation phases.

*Restoration project funding.* Andy Gunther said that Patagonia has yet to indicate when funding decisions would be made on the proposal to fund a Web cam at the BART weir. CEMAR will be reworking the proposal and will submit it to the Alameda County Fish and Wildlife Commission. Other funding activities include CEMAR’s application to American Rivers for Stonybrook road improvements, ACWD’s Prop 13 grant application, and a possible request to the Department of Conservation by the Resource Conservation District for a watershed coordinator. Andy indicated that American Rivers is accepting letters of support, and any interested Workgroup member should contact him to obtain the information for preparing and submitting a letter.

*Restoration Action Plan revisions.* Gordon distributed a list of proposed revisions to the *Plan* that will bring it up to date and expand its usefulness as context for restoration activity funding applications. Gordon requested comments on the list be submitted to CEMAR as soon as possible.

*Next Workgroup meeting.* The next meeting of the Workgroup is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 a.m. in Room B-C at ACFCWCD. Workgroup members are invited to submit additional agenda topics to CEMAR for inclusion in the agenda, which will be circulated prior to the meeting.