

Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

Minutes of Meeting

February 14, 2002

Alameda County Public Works Agency

Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Brenda Buxton	California Coastal Conservancy
Annie Campagna	EBRPD
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Erika Cleugh	CDFG
Stuart Cook	Alameda County Community Development Agency
Bill DeJager	Corps of Engineers
Ted Frink	DWR
Chris Gray	Supervisor Haggerty's Office
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Darryl Hayes	CH2MHill
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Josh Milstein	S.F. City Attorney's Office
Jeff Miller	ACA
Anna Roche	SFPUC
Steve Rothert	American Rivers
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Jim Salerno	SFPUC
Tom Taylor	ENTRIX
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD
Vince Wong	Zone 7

SFPUC Study. Tom Taylor described the current San Francisco Water Department assessment of spawning in Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoir tributaries. The study is analyzing stock and potential juvenile recruitment of rainbow trout during winter and spring of 2002. Information generated by the study will be useful in characterizing the likely natural history characteristics of Alameda Creek *Oncorhynchus mykiss* as well as informing possible use of the resident population for future steelhead run "jump start" purposes. Trapping is being performed on upstream adult migrants and downstream juvenile migrants in Arroyo Hondo and San Antonio Creek from early February to mid-May, corresponding with the spawning and outmigration period. Trap efficiency is being evaluated as well as numbers of fish sampled.

The study trapping method requires traps to be checked daily during the period they are installed. To help with staffing this effort, the SFPUC is working with volunteers, particularly those arranged in cooperation with the Alameda Creek Alliance. Interested parties should contact Mike Ferry of the Alameda Creek Alliance at (415) 495-9038.

Alameda Creek Tour. A tour of Alameda Creek sites will be conducted on February 28th. Workgroup members agreed to expand the size of the group rather than establish a second tour date in order to allow a mixing of interest groups.

Arroyo Mocho Road Crossing. Jeff Miller reported on conversations with Lawrence Livermore National Lab biologist Michael van Hattem, who is interested in making the Lab road crossing at the pumping station on Arroyo Mocho "fish friendly." The *Restoration Action Plan* includes providing passage at this site and will describe likely modifications necessary and the potential cost and sponsor of such a project.

Steelhead Issues. Jeff Miller followed up on a request to ACWD that staff be trained regarding proper procedures to prevent steelhead stranding from operations of inflatable dams. Pete Alexander reported that a single steelhead was captured and fin clipped on January 20th. The fish was approximately 6 pounds and 25 inches in length. Andy Gunther stated that Jennifer Nielsen's analysis of Alameda Creek steelhead genetic information should be available around late March.

Steelhead Festival. The Steelhead Festival will be May 11th. Jeff Miller expressed an interest in Workgroup member sponsorship and participation. The next planning meeting for the festival will be February 27th at 1:30 p.m. at the City of Fremont Environmental Services office.

CALTRANS Funding Opportunities. Laura Kilgour led a discussion of CALTRANS interest in funding restoration in the Alameda Creek watershed, and mentioned that the Workgroup had been petitioned for a "wish list" of projects to be considered for support. Workgroup members were encouraged to submit potential projects to Laura for incorporation into the list.

§1135 Process. Bill DeJager provided an update on the Corps discussions with ACFCWCD and ACWD regarding the Flood Control Channel projects. The Corps is awaiting a revised letter of intent from ACFCWCD, which is in turn expecting a revised letter of intent from ACWD. Both letters are expected to be delivered shortly, and the PRP process is likely to result in approval to begin the Detailed Project Report (DPR) phase. The DPR will identify the projects that will be supported by Corps funding and may lead to a lowering of initial cost estimates due to exclusion of some original elements. The DPR will include analysis of fisheries, cultural resources and other project aspects. The DPR phase, which may take about two years, should lead to a cost sharing agreement between ACFCWCD and the Corps in late 2004.

SFPUC Update. Josh Milstein told the Workgroup that SFPUC studies regarding the condition of Calaveras Dam should be completed by the end of May. The studies will likely lead to presentation of several options for a "fix" to the dam, including increasing the dam size and removing the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam. The reservoir capacity could be increased as much as 200-600 acre-feet, with Hetch Hetchy water delivery provided.

Due to the size of the project and the implications for SFPUC water management processes, at least five years of studies and planning are anticipated including a program level environmental impact report. Increasing the dam size would require Corps' and NMFS permits, suggesting that a "fish solution" would be part of the project. The alternatives will be brought before the Workgroup for consideration after further development.

Josh also reported that the environmental review process for the Niles and Sunol Dam Removal project is underway, with the contract being awarded to Environmental Science Associates (ESA). The Fisheries Enhancement Facility (or "Recapture Facility") project is a "question mark" with concerns outstanding related to flow passage, lost yield and fishery benefits. Finally, a two-year lease extension is planned for the Lonestar gravel mining operation. The lease extension will include a hydrologic study to address pit inflow and other issues influencing the hydrology of the Creek in the Sunol Valley area.

Restoration Action Plan. Gordon Becker discussed progress on the *Plan*, saying the document is nearly complete with the exception of some planning details regarding the necessary restoration

actions. He requested some clarifications regarding project descriptions, and cost and timing estimates, from the project sponsors. Gordon also mentioned that the *Plan* will include a summary of the information developed by the Alternatives Sub-group. Among other things, this includes identifying the need to further examine the feasibility of re-grading the channel (and removing the BART weir) as an alternative to constructing a fishway. The cost of such a feasibility study would be approximately \$40,000-50,000, assuming a great degree of cooperation with Workgroup members in providing information to the consultant.

Workgroup members cited the potential of the *Plan* to attract funding to Alameda Creek projects. Ted Frink and Erika Cleugh expressed the need for a short, prioritized list of projects that could be easily interpreted by potential funding sources to direct restoration resources. Andy Gunther indicated that the draft *Plan* requires input from project sponsors in order to develop a draft schedule. Some of this information has been difficult to obtain, and there was consensus among Workgroup members that CEMAR should produce a draft for review with the best schedule information available. CEMAR will provide a draft of the *Plan* for review by the Workgroup in advance of the next meeting.

Next Workgroup Meeting. The next meeting date was set for Wednesday, April 10th at 9:30 a.m. at ACFCWCD. Topics to be discussed include an update from the Corps regarding the §1135 process, the "wish list" for CALTRANS and the draft *Restoration Action Plan*. Also, fisheries consultants to ACWD and SFPUC may be ready to present results of their on-going studies.