Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

Minutes of Meeting

April 10, 2002
Alameda County Public Works Agency

Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Steve Apperson	SFPUC
Caroline McKnight	CDFG
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Bill Bennett	DWR
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Ray Chen	LLNL
Erika Cleugh	CDFG
Encanta Engleby	CALTRANS
Ted Frink	DWR
Chris Gray	Supervisor Haggerty's Office
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Jeff Hagar	Hagar Environmental Science
Chuck Hanson	Hanson Environmental
Craig Hill	ACWD
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Mara Melandry	CALTRANS
Mary Lim	Zone 7
Jeff Miller	ACA
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Anna Roche	SFPUC
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Jim Salerno	SFPUC
Lily Sanchez	LLNL
Carla Schulteis	ACFCWCD
Gary Stern	NMFS
Tom Taylor	ENTRIX
Michael VanHattem	LLNL
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD

Announcements

Jim Salerno announced that a fishkill was noticed on Sunday downstream of the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant in Alameda Creek. In a 1,000-foot reach, staff estimated 800-1,000 dead fish, mostly Sacramento sucker, pike minnow and roach. A plant discharge is suspected as the cause of the spill, and further investigation is being conducted by DFG Warden Michelle Hubbard.

A truck crash in Niles Canyon earlier in the day and possibly involving spillage into Alameda Creek was also announced.

Updates

§1135Process. Laura Kilgour reported that approval for moving into the next phase of the §1135 process is still being awaited from the Corps.

SFPUC Projects: JoshMilstein reported that the Cultural Resources Study for the Sunol Dam Removal project must be revisited due to the structure's inclusion in an historic water distribution network. The review is not expected to cause significant delay for the project.

Josh said that a substantial amount of study will be necessary to determine the appropriate size for the Calaveras Dam retrofit or replacement project. Planners expect that an additional 24,000 acre-feet of storage in the reservoir will be necessary to allow removal of Alameda Creek Diversion Dam. A consultant is being retained to examine dam size options, and the environmental review scoping process is expected next year.

Levee Reconfiguration: Carla Schulteis distributed a color map prepared by URS that is part of a study of possible levee reconfiguration designs. The study includes modeling flood impacts of the various design alternatives. ACFCWCD will meet with CDFG in May to explore options for coordination between agencies on planning for levee reconfiguration and the use of the Cargill site.

Agenda Items

CALTRANS Bay Bridge Project Mitigation Funds. Mara Melandry of CALTRANS spoke regarding the likely disposition of the $4 million available for steelhead mitigation resulting from impacts during construction of the eastern span of the Bay Bridge. Monitoring during the project will consume $500,000 of the funds, with the remainder to be applied to steelhead restoration in the Central and South Bay. The northern extent of this area will probably be coincident with that defined for the "Goals Project," or about the location of the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge.

NMFS and CALTRANS will develop a work plan to direct funds to projects appropriate for expenditure of the funds. Selection criteria will include: 1) progress to date in restoration work; 2) completion of environmental compliance processes and permits; 3) status of project designs; 4) potential funds leveraged by the CALTRANS money; 5) projects' ability to improve conditions for steelhead; and others. Evaluation will be performed by NMFS, CDFG and CALTRANS, with administration duties unassigned at this date.

Ms. Melandry stated that it is unknown whether smaller or larger projects will be favored, but indicated a probable preference for "joint" projects coordinated within a watershed. Projects should be supported by groups representing environmental perspectives on restoration. Timelines have not been established, but the work plan may be expected during the summer, with project selection in about one year.

ACWD Operations Model. Eric Cartwright described ACWD's efforts to create an operations model for Alameda Creek diversions. CH2MHill has been retained to develop an EXCEL-based model that can be used to evaluate operations scenarios under varying hydrologic conditions and can be used as a module in a watershed-wide model. A workable model of ACWD's operations is expected in two to three months.

ACWD Fisheries Studies. Chuck Hanson gave a presentation of four lines of study his firm undertook in 2001-2002: diel water quality, habitat mapping, fish passage and temperature. These studies were done to inform the restoration process and to identify opportunities and constraints related to steelhead in Alameda Creek. Draft technical reports have been prepared for

the studies that will be available on the Workgroup's web site. A summary of the studies' results follows.

With regard to passage, Hanson Environmental concluded that conditions meeting established hydrologic criteria were present in various Alameda Creek reaches at discharge ranges of 30-80 cfs. The study report states that "there are a few minor dam and obstacles that if modified would make passage available at lower flows."

The diel water quality monitoring conducted by Hanson Environmental indicated that dissolved oxygen concentrations were "mostly suitable" with some Alameda Creek reaches potentially resulting in "stressful or unsuitable habitat conditions" for juvenile steelhead. The study report noted the short-term nature of the monitoring, and stated that the results "may or may not be representative of instream habitat conditions affecting steelhead over a wider range of condition."

Temperature monitoring resulted in a conclusion that "instream habitat conditions would be stressful and/or unsuitable for juvenile steelhead rearing during the late spring and summer months" in reaches "throughout Alameda Creek downstream of the confluence with Calaveras Creek." Stonybrook Creek water temperatures were found to be low, but the creek dried in August of the year monitoring was conducted. Temperature conditions were best at the most upstream monitoring location.

Finally, habitat typing was conducted in Alameda Creek reaches downstream of Sunol Regional Park. Overall, habitat was found to be "fair to good," with low spawning gravel availability comprising a "key constraint." The majority of habitat was characterized as pool type, and the subject reaches were said to "reflect the relatively low habitat diversity within Alameda Creek…" The study noted a low pool:riffle ratio in the study reaches relative to the ratio "identified as providing good habitat conditions."

SFPUC Study. Tom Taylor described the results of three lines of investigation conducted by ENTRIX and Trihey & Associates for the SFPUC: flows necessary to achieve surface flow in Alameda Creek below Sunol Valley during fall, stream invertebrates and fish trapping. Results of these studies are detailed in materials available on the Workgroup's web site, and are summarized in the following.

The channel "surcharge" required to produce surface flows in Alameda Creek was estimated by releasing 30 cfs from Calaveras Dam in the last two weeks of October and measuring stage at various downstream locations. The study found that continuous releases for "a couple of days" were necessary before surface flow was noted in Alameda Creek at Highway 680, and flows at the Water Temple were measured at 5.5 cfs. Channel losses were noted at gravel mining sites and in the "Livermore gravels."

Using Rapid Bioassessment Protocols, invertebrates were surveyed in several Alameda Creek reaches upstream of the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant. The creek was found to have "consistent" species richness, and Tom stated that overall "the creek's in pretty good shape." Invertebrate density information was not produced.

Fish trapping efforts revealed that in the San Antonio system, adult *O. mykiss* migrate largely on the day following peak storm flows. Many adult female fish were found to be "green" at the trapping site, indicating that internal unfertilized egg maturation is occurring in streams prior to spawning. Juvenile *O. mykiss* were found to move downstream largely on peak flows. Migration timing information was more difficult to obtain in the Arroyo Hondo system. Tom noted that fry movement had started in the week prior to the meeting.

SFPUC trapping will be repeated next year, and Andy Gunther suggested applying for grant funding to support the volunteer component of the monitoring.

Arroyo Mocho Road Crossing. Michael VanHattem from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory showed pictures of the road crossing on Arroyo Mocho and provided an update on planning for its improvement. The sites was visited by LLNL staff with George Heise of DFG, who recommended the barriers' removal. While the type of structure to be installed at the site has not been determined, it is possible that a bridge will be constructed allowing vehicle access to the pump station throughout the year.

The site is owned by the SFPUC, with LLNL operating under an "Easement by Implication." Michael stated that LLNL's next step is to retain a consultant to develop a conceptual design for a bridge or other structure at the site, and that he hopes demolition of the road crossing could occur next year.

Restoration Action Plan. Gordon Becker reported that CEMAR had received comments from Zone 7 on the *Draft Restoration Action Plan*, and that it was likely that Workgroup discussions would be necessary to arrive at *Plan* revisions representing a consensus opinion and acceptable for public release. Workgroup members agreed to devote the majority of the next meeting's agenda to consideration of comments on the *Plan*. Members will submit comments to CEMAR by May 1st that will be used to prepare a talking points document for the next meeting. Andy Gunther requested that comments focus on issues related to the *Plan* rather than materials previously considered by the Workgroup.

Steelhead Festival. The Steelhead Festival will be May 11th. Workgroup members whose agencies would like to sponsor the event should contact Jeff Miller.

Next Workgroup Meeting. The next meeting date was set for Thursday, June 6th at 9:30 a.m. at ACFCWCD. The first several hours of the meeting will be devoted to discussion of *Restoration Action Plan* issues, with updates and other agenda items discussed afterward. An agenda and a memo describing *Plan*-related issues will be circulated prior to the next meeting.