

**Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup
Minutes of Meeting
September 19th, 2001
9:30 am
Alameda County Public Works Agency
951 Turner Court
Hayward, CA**

Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Bill Bennett	DWR
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Erika Cleugh	CDF&G
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Jeff Hagar	Hagar Environmental Science
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Mary Lim	Zone 7 Water
Jeff Miller	ACA
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Stuart Moock	PG&E
Peggy Olofson	RWQCB
Steve Rothert	American Rivers
Carla Schulteis	ACFCWCD
Aileen Theile	EBRPD
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD

Agenda Item

Progress Updates

Calaveras Releases and SFPUC Dam Removal Josh Milstein announced that the SFPUC will be conducting studies between 10/4 and 10/9 to test the Calaveras dam release valve at low flows (10-50 cfs). These tests will lead to releases beginning on 10/15. During the mid-October releases, flow studies will be performed and channel losses will be measured through the Sunol area. In cooperation with the Alameda County Water District's fisheries biologist, these examinations may be extended through to the flood control channel portion of Alameda Creek. Josh and Rick Wetzig agreed to coordinate efforts to assure security of those working downstream and to allow for sampling to be performed to further inform the Flood Control District's sediment transport project.

Josh also announced that the PUC will retain a consulting firm (likely Environmental Science Associates) to perform review of the SFPUC dam removal project. The removal could be performed during next year's dry season assuming an uneventful review process.

§1135 Project. Eric Cartwright reported that Bill De Jager has been working on the Preliminary Restoration Plan related to the Section 1135 process. A decision by staff from the regional office on whether to proceed may be expected by December or January. The project's

total cost is currently estimated at \$7.8 million. As this amount exceeds the amount available under the §1135 program (\$6.67 million cap), the Workgroup should consider options including: seeking additional non-federal grant funding, renaming this as a General Investigations Project or limiting the scope of the project. General Investigations projects are eligible for more funds but require Congressional approval. In addition, Eric indicated that the cost of the ERP (second phase of the Corps planning process), which could be in the range of \$500k, will be considered part of the \$6.67 Million total.

Levee Reconfiguration. Carla Schultheis said that a contract is now in place with URS to conduct the Phase I investigation on the Lower Alameda Creek Levee Reconfiguration project. She distributed a Goals and Objectives statement for related studies and solicited comments from the Workgroup members. Carla announced a meeting to discuss issues related to this project on September 26th. She told the Workgroup that Cargill, the land owner on the north side of the channel, will sell its properties but that the cost may be prohibitive to restoration-oriented buyers. It is possible that monies related to mitigating SF Airport expansion may be used to purchase land in this area.

Swim Dam Removal Ceremony

Pete Alexander updated the group on the swim dam removal ceremony at Sunol. He cited the contractor as being inexpensive, fast and environmentally sensitive and the ceremony as being a success. Pete agreed to provide Andy Gunther with photographs of the event for posting on the Workgroup web site, and Jeff Miller will provide some of the press clippings.

Flows Workshop and Next Steps

Peggy Olofson said that almost 100 people attended last week's flows workshop and that feedback was uniformly positive. Topics suggested for future workshops were water rights and multiple objective management for groundwater storage in the watershed. Pete Alexander will arrange for the Parks District to produce transcripts of the flows workshop.

Steve Rotherth expressed an interest in a further discussion of water management in relation to specific restoration goals. Josh and Eric agreed that revised water management options are best considered in light of specific restoration requirements for water (e.g., how much is needed when?). This would allow the water agencies to consider how specific alterations in their operations could be made to meet the restoration requirements. A discussion followed regarding what process might be followed to generate this information for the water supply agencies. There was general agreement that the work being sponsored by the PUC and ACWD is a valuable first step in this direction, although there is concern that the project is only for one year. Additional years of data collection would make any conclusions drawn much more robust for planning. Josh indicated he can try to obtain additional funding for future years, but he is not sure he will be able to convince the PUC to fund the work without tying the research to a specific project. Andy suggested the possibility of using graduate students to gather some of the data under Tom Taylor's supervision.

Jeff Hagar mentioned that NMFS is beginning a data collection effort in response to these types of needs. CEMAR staff will follow up with Gary Stern regarding the scope of this work.

Restoration Plan Goals and Objectives

Andy Gunther distributed copies of the revised Goals and Objectives for the Workgroup and the Restoration Plan as well as a draft outline of the Restoration Plan. Members are asked to submit comments on either document to CEMAR by September 30th. Initial reactions on the

outline centered on the need to clarify the desired restoration targets. Peggy and Steve offered that the outline needs to show how the projects listed in the plan address key constraints to steelhead restoration. Erika indicated that CDF&G, who is a potential future funder of restoration actions, looks for implementation proposals with a significant amount project detail (planning phase complete). Andy reiterated that at present, with only \$8,000, the Restoration Plan to be developed will likely be lacking that type of detail. Presently there is more grant money available for project implementation than for project planning, which will be a challenge for the Workgroup.

Mary Lim from Zone 7 announced that her agency's policy is to ask for documentation of the historical presence of steelhead in the service district before supporting restoration efforts.

Fisheries Investigations

Jeff Hagar reported that Jennifer Nielsen has all the tissue samples from investigations conducted in the watershed and is analyzing them. Preliminary results could be available at the next Workgroup meeting. Jennifer is performing both genetics and statistical work, the latter to inform future collection efforts regarding appropriate sample size. Andy indicated that Jennifer has agreed to speak at the salmonid restoration symposium being convened by CEMAR at the Oakland Museum. He has suggested that she consider presenting the results of the Alameda Creek sampling as part of her presentation to illustrate her methods and the type of information they can produce.

The group then discussed the issue of fish "rescues" during the coming water year. Pete Alexander updated the group on the status of NMFS permits to handle steelhead and various members speculated on the implications of both trying to move fish this season or not move them. It was agreed that additional discussion is necessary involving Gary Stern, Jerry Smith, Tom Taylor and others involved in the process before issues of "take" and genetic effects can be understood well enough to serve as the basis for a Workgroup policy. Laura agreed to convene a meeting of concerned stakeholders to consider this problem.

Agreements / Action Items

- 1) Work Group members will provide comments to Carla Schulteis on the Alameda Creek Studies Goals and Objectives;
- 2) Work Group members will provide comments to Andy Gunther regarding the revised goals and objectives, and Andy will distribute a revised version of the Restoration Plan outline based on comments received.
- 3) Laura Kilgour will arrange a meeting between parties involved in fish "rescues" to discuss strategy for the coming water year.

Items for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Work Group will be on Wednesday, November 7 at 9:30 am at the ACFCWCD offices in Hayward. Items for the next workshop include discussion of alternatives involved in the Section 1135 process, a CALTRANS update, a fish transport update, Calaveras operations and studies update, and presentation of the goals and objectives and the restoration plan outline.