

**Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup  
Minutes of Meeting  
November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001. 9:30 am  
Alameda County Public Works Agency  
951 Turner Court, Hayward, CA**

Attendees

Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Steve Apperson	SFPUC
Christine Atkinson	CDFG
Rebecca Atkinson	UC Berkeley
Gordon Becker	CEMAR
Bill Bennett	DWR
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Erika Cleugh	CDFG
Bill DeJager	Corps of Engineers
Chris Gray	Supervisor Haggerty's Office
Andy Gunther	CEMAR
Daryrl Hayes	CH2MHill
Craig Hill	ACWD
Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Caroline McKnight	CDFG
Jeff Miller	ACA
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Jim Reynolds	ACWD
Anne Roche	SFPUC
Steve Rothert	American Rivers
Brian Sak	SFPUC
Jim Salerno	SFPUC
Gary Stern	NMFS
Tom Taylor	ENTRIX
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD
Vince Wong	Zone 7
Robert Young	CalTrans

Agenda Item

**Progress Updates**

***Calaveras Operations and Studies.*** Josh Milstein and Tom Taylor discussed the preliminary findings of the Calaveras dam release studies conducted for the SFPUC. The study period began on October 15, 2001, during which time minimal tributary flows were present. Flows were measured at a number of points downstream of the dam every 15 minutes and in groundwater wells, with the assistance from members of the Alameda Creek Alliance. Fish were present immediately downstream of the dam throughout the study, indicating little environmental impact. The purpose of the study was to measure channel losses through the Sunol area.

Tom cited original releases from the dams of 25-29 cubic feet per second (cfs). The most notable findings of the release study were:

- 1) leaky walls in the quarry pits allow for loss from the stream to the pits (up to 10 cfs);
- 2) 400 acre-feet are required to "surcharge" the groundwater system

Josh mentioned that the reservoir is currently at 49% and will be at about 35-40 percent capacity by the end of the year. He believes that data developed during the study will be very useful for advancing whatever project is proposed for Calaveras dam.

Eric Cartwright said that flows were not passed through the flood control channel during the study period, but that ACWD will look at flows in this area during the upcoming winter months.

In response to a question regarding the disposition of winter runoff, Josh said that the Alameda Creek diversion dam will not be used. Greater-than-normal flows are expected through the creek downstream of Calaveras due the need to maintain Calaveras reservoir at or below current levels for the immediate future. Gary Stern then suggested that this period represents an opportunity to examine channel morphology and channel-shaping flows.

**§1135 Project.** Bill DeJager provided an update of the Army Corps process for Alameda Creek restoration. The process involves two phases: (1) the Preliminary Restoration Plan (PRP) and (2) the Detailed Project Report (DPR). The PRP has been drafted and is being reviewed as part of the Army Corps' Quality Control process. The PRP includes a project with four fish screens and two fishways. The Division Office of the Army Corps of Engineers will need to approve this plan to advance the project.

The normal funding limit for projects of this type is \$5 million, while estimates of the cost of the proposed project range from \$6.7-8 million. This discrepancy could pose a problem requiring the sponsors to revisit the plan to identify a less costly alternative. The decision whether to move to the next planning phase is expected in the next two months (i.e., likely January). After this event, typically a draft report would be issued in approximately 18 months, followed by review, revision and project cost-sharing agreements. Bill estimates that a possible timetable for implementation would be fall of 2004 for contracting and spring of 2005 for construction.

Gary Stern indicated that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) had issued a letter of support for the project. Additional letters of support should be directed to the Army Corps Division Office in San Francisco.

### **Alternatives Involved in the §1135 Process**

Eric Cartwright reviewed the process by which the Alameda County Water District (ACWD) created a conceptual design for the screens and fishways project. ACWD retained CH2MHill (represented at the meeting by Darryl Hayes) to develop a design that would incorporate the district's operational needs, which Eric summarized. One notable design consideration is the need to potentially provide fish passage through a channel reach that typically experiences flows ranging from 0 to 52,000 cubic feet per second.

Some project alternatives were discussed. Gary Stern proposed the concept of diverting water using injection wells. It was noted that such an operation would require additional treatment for operational reasons as well as Department of Health Services requirements. The possibility also exists for increased water storage at Calaveras reservoir depending on the findings of on-going SFPUC studies. Andy Gunther suggested that a summary of possible alternatives be prepared for use by a new subgroup focused on this issue. A meeting of this group is scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> and January 9<sup>th</sup>, depending upon the availability of fish passage experts George Heise (DFG) and John Mann (NMFS). Erika Cleugh agreed to determine George Heise's availability and Gary Stern will check with John Mann, and both will report to Laura regarding the date for the meeting.

## **CALTRANS Projects in the Alameda Creek Watershed**

Robert Young of CALTRANS provided a summary of active and planned projects affecting the Alameda Creek watershed. He noted five projects with which he was familiar, warning that others may exist. These projects include: (1) road widening in Fremont; (2) road widening at Stoneybrook Creek; (3) County road bridge replacement; (4) road widening at an upstream location; and (5) seismic retrofit project. Mr. Young cited his expectation that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may require a corridor study for this series of projects. He expects USFWS, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and other agencies to require CALTRANS to provide funds for projects to mitigate unavoidable impacts resulting from these projects. Such monies would be available to support off-site mitigation projects including the Army Corps project or others identified by the Workgroup.

Mr. Young invited the Workgroup to submit a list of restoration projects in the watershed that could qualify for CALTRANS mitigation funds. He requested that the group also identify *restoration goals* and include them in any submittal for his review.

Gary Stern next reviewed the process of planning for replacement of the east span of the Bay Bridge. Based on expected unavoidable adverse impacts to fish from construction of this \$2.6 billion project, the project sponsors have agreed to supply a \$4 million fund administered by NMFS and DFG. Money from this fund will go for restoration of steelhead streams in the south and central Bay and should be available by 2003. \$500,000 of the \$4 million will likely be used to monitor effects on fish during construction, leaving \$3.5 million for restoration.

## **Fish Transport Meeting**

Richard Wetzig and Pete Alexander provided a summary of the October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting concerning fish transport. Richard, Pete, Laura Kilgour (ACFCWCD), Jerry Smith (San Jose St. Univ.), Kevan Urquhart (DFG), Gary Stern (NMFS) and Gordon Becker (CEMAR) participated in the discussion. During the meeting, Professor Smith reminded the group of the likely adverse genetic effects of allowing a very small number of fish to provide the basis for the Alameda Creek steelhead run. By moving fish past barriers, "rescuers" may inadvertently produce unwanted "founder effects" on the Alameda Creek run.

Also at issue with fish transport is the permit process. Although Pete (and others) have applied for a permit from NMFS to conduct steelhead studies, such permission has not been forthcoming. Gary Stern relayed that permits are being issued on an individual basis and that extensive delays are to be expected. In the interim, applicants have been informed that the nature of their work will be taken into consideration if "take" issues arise as a result of handling. Pete expressed his reluctance to undertake any efforts in the absence of a valid permit. Gary and Pete continue to discuss the process by which minimum steelhead handling can occur this winter (i.e., no transport, but possible tissue studies).

### **Agreements / Action Items**

The alternatives subgroup will meet on December 12, 2001, and January 9, 2002, at 9:30 to discuss alternatives for the §1135 program.

### **Items for Next Meeting**

The next Workgroup meeting will be January 15<sup>th</sup>. Items to be discussed will include the draft Restoration Action plan and the results of meetings of the alternatives and ladder design subgroups. An agenda for the meeting will be circulated in the week preceding the meeting.