

**Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup
Minutes of Meeting
May 16, 2001
9:30 am
Alameda County Public Works Agency
951 Turner Court
Hayward, CA**

Attendees

Laura Kilgour	ACFCWCD
Emmanuel da Costa	ACFCWCD
Carla Schultheis	ACFCWCD
Richard Wetzig	ACFCWCD
Eric Cartwright	ACWD
Josh Milstein	SF City Attorney's Office
Chris Gray	Supervisor Haggerty's Office
Jeff Miller	ACA
Brenda Buxton	Coastal Conservancy
Peggy Olofson	RWQCB
Jim Reynolds	ACWD
Anna Roche	SFPUC
Pete Alexander	EBRPD
Andy Gunther	AMS
Gary Stern	NMFS
Aileen Theile	EPRPD
Paul Modrell	ACFCWCD
Bill Bennett	DWR

Agenda Item No.

1. Announcements

Laura Kilgour circulated a resolution from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors declaring the week of 5/12-19/01 as Alameda County Watershed Awareness Week.

Manny da Costa announced that in the San Lorenzo Creek watershed he found adult trout in Crow Creek and San Lorenzo Creek, and young-of-the-year trout downstream of the confluence of Crow and Cull Creeks

Jeff Miller informed the group that there will be a cleanup day on May 19 in Stonybrook Creek. Anybody interested should meet at 9am at the Niles Staging Area.

Peggy Olofson announced that the Prop 13 RFP is soon to be released, and RFPs are available for 319(h) grants and 205(j) grants. She also indicated that the City of Pleasanton is planning a restoration/enhancement project in the small urban drainage that ends in a large drop structure at Arroyo de Laguna.

Finally, Rick Wetzig indicated (and others agreed) that the Steelhead Festival and Watershed Awareness Fair held on May 12, 2001, was a success. There were 109 runners, and about 350 total attendees.

2. Updates

§1135 Application. Eric reported that the Corps staff have not yet started on the Preliminary Restoration Plan, although they expect to commence work soon and complete the document in a few months. One issue they will be considering is the temperature of the water from Niles Canyon to the Bay, as they are concerned that if the water is too warm, smoltification might be interrupted, and controlling the temperature of the water in that stretch would be difficult and expensive. Bill de Jaeger has indicated that he does not have the support necessary to allow him to attend the meetings, although he remains very interested in the process.

SFPUC Dam Removal. Josh Milstein reported that the City will be reapplying in the next Prop 13 round for funding to remove Niles and Sunol Dams. He is hopeful that the PUC budget for next year will include matching funds that can be used to conduct the environmental studies. Peggy noted that the RWQCB gave the PUC's previous proposal the highest ranking, and with a funding match it will be competitive statewide. Josh indicated that given the long time it takes to put State contracts in place, and the need to get CEQA approval and perform the work in the summer, getting the work completed before the winter of 02-03 will be difficult.

Fish sampling for genetics study. Laura reported that the genetics study is underway, thanks to some quick administrative work by Ann Buell to get the funding in place at the Conservancy. Laura was part of the team that captured 31 fish on the Norton property in Arroyo Mocho, and 30 fish were captured between Little Yosemite and the diversion structure on Alameda Creek. Josh reported that Tom Taylor's work is progressing, and that they are taking fin clips from smolt captured in traps in creeks behind San Antonio and Calaveras Dams. Preliminary results from Tom's work suggests that the runs in San Antonio and Calaveras are timed differently, with the fish in Calaveras moving later.

CALFED Funding. Eric reported that the ACWD is continuing its planning to apply to the CALFED Environmental Restoration Program for funding for fish passage facilities that won't be part of the Corps project. Bill Bennett suggested that the Work Group will be more successful obtaining funding from CALFED with a plan that describes all of the required restoration projects and the funding sources for each.

3. Levee Reconfiguration

Carla announced that URS has been selected by Alameda County to conduct the Phase 1 study of levee reconfiguration at the mouth of Alameda Creek. This phase will be a scoping study to develop a list of alternatives, with Phase 2 being a more in depth study (using \$111k of 205(j) funds) that will identify the most feasible alternatives that should receive serious consideration. A meeting will take place in July or August to describe the project, and anybody who wants to receive an announcement of the date should contact Carla.

4. Watershed Restoration Plan

Andy reported that since the last meeting he had received goals and objectives statements from ACWD, SFPUC, ACA, and Zone 7. He has not proceeded to draft a consensus statement for the work group's consideration because he did not feel this was an adequate cross section of stakeholders. Those who had not yet provided their statement of goals and objectives were encouraged to forward statements to Andy.

Andy also indicated that he has recommended to ACFCWCD staff that the "develop funding proposals" task in the CCSRP grant proposal be revised to focus upon developing the restoration plan. The rationale for this change is that the larger funding proposals to be developed in the coming year will require at a minimum a plan that will allow funding agencies to understand how the Work Group intends to implement the restoration actions identified in the assessment. Bill Bennett indicated that this type of "big picture" plan would be very important to provide to CALFED as part of a funding proposal.

The group discussed how detailed a "watershed restoration plan" would be. Brenda stated that the Coastal Conservancy has developed many such plans, and they often become quite large and take a lot of effort to produce. The group agreed that, at least to start, the "watershed restoration plan" should be focused on providing support for funding proposals. For that purpose, the document need not be detailed, but instead need to clearly identify the essential restoration actions with funding plans and a draft implementation schedule for each. Over time, the document could be revised and expanded to provide a detailed plan for all restoration actions and their relationship with other ongoing activities in the watershed.

Pete Alexander asked if there was funding available to develop the plan. Laura indicated that the \$25,000 provided by the ACFCWCD to AMS for facilitation of the Work Group is almost exhausted (developing the plan was never part of that scope of work), and funds from the CCSRP grant will not be available until after July 1. Jeff Miller asked if the agencies could each provide a small amount of funding for development of the plan, but this did not appear feasible.

5. Update on PG&E Gas Line Crossing

Gary Stern reported that he and George Heise of CDF&G visited the PG&E gas line crossing with Stuart Moock to discuss possible strategies for fish passage. Gary indicated that the issues they discussed included reconfiguring the erosion barrier to create a series of pools, and changing the nature of the crossing (including an elevated pipe). In that region there are a lot of conveyance losses of water, and it might be possible that a larger channel modification could be made that would both improve passage and reduce losses, leading to improved migration flows. In addition, the gas line appears to be providing significant grade control in that location, and removing it could result in significant erosion to bridge piers and other structures upstream.

6. Alternative Concepts for providing fish passage at the BART Weir

Bill Bennett presented some conceptual ideas for alternative methods of providing fish passage at the BART Weir. He started by stating that his ideas were first-cut concepts, but that this type of information will be essential for both the USACE process and other major funding applications. In particular, funding agencies will be interested in verifying that lower cost alternatives are not available. Alternatives he discussed included a ladder excavated into the face of the weir, a ladder built in the flood "shadow" of the bridge piers, building some type of inflatable fish ladders that were operated with the inflatable dams, reducing the size of the dams, or altering the way in which ACWD obtains water that could possibly result in elimination of a dam. Bill stressed these are just preliminary concepts, but he thought that we will need to perform such an analysis formally as part of reviews for funding. In particular, if lower cost alternatives are not considered feasible, this will need to be carefully documented.

Eric pointed out that the preliminary design developed for the Corps was prepared to satisfy a requirement of the §1135 process, and it should not yet be considered the "preferred" alternative. He also indicated that some of the alternatives presented by Bill could be informed by a review of ACWD operations, including the characteristics and estimated life of the different rubber

dams. (Jim Reynolds indicated that while the lower dam will likely need to be replaced soon, the middle dam has 5-10 year expected life and the upper dam a 15-20 year expected life.)

The group was in agreement that some "outside the box" thinking was valuable. There was also agreement that scoping alternatives should be done early, so that the group can deliver preliminary analysis of a variety of alternatives to potential funders rather just the single alternative we have presently. To start this process, Rick Wetzig, Peggy Olofson, and Pete Alexander brought the group back to the concept discussed previously of a workshop at which the waters supply agencies can educate the group about their water supply operations in the Alameda Creek drainage.

A broad ranging discussion ensued regarding how to structure such a meeting, when it could happen, and who to invite. Organizations that might speak include ACWD, DWR, SFPUC, and Zone 7. While it is important to have biologists inform the engineers regarding items such as fish habitat requirements, there was a general agreement that the first priority of the meeting should be to provide a structured session that will allow the water agencies to educate other stakeholders regarding water project operations.

7. Agreements / Action Items

- 1) Those who have not done so already will forward a goal statement for restoration to Andy
- 2) Rick and Peggy will circulate a draft agenda for the water project operations workshop

8. Items for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Workgroup was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 20th at 9:30 am at the ACPWA Turner Court offices. Possible agenda items include (1) an update on the USGS sediment study; (2) a presentation of the history of the Spring Valley Water Company; (3) discussion of goals and objectives for the restoration plan; (4) an update on the fisheries investigations being conducted by Tom Taylor and Chuck Hanson for the SFPUC and ACWD.