

Draft Meeting Summary
Battle Creek Watershed Working Group Sept 29, 2011: 10 am – 2 pm
Conference Room, RBFWO, 10950 Tyler Road, Red Bluff, CA 527-3043

I. Convene/Introductions

Present: Tricia Parker Hamelberg, Scott Ferris, Kerry Burke, Mike Berry, Rich Reiner, Elisabeth Rossi, Bob Null, Gene Geary, Jon Walsh, Mike Strawn, Liv Imset, Ian Caliendo, Andrew Jensen, Angela Wilson, Steve Emershay, Tom McCubbins, Jack Blanke, Mary Marshall, Teresa Connor, Glenn Graham, Jim Smith, Matt Brown, Steve Tussing, Kathy Bishop, Naseem Alston, Trang Nguyen, Aric Lester, Sharon Paquin-Gilmore, Guy Chetelat, Scott Hamelberg, and Kevin Niemela.
Teleconference: Melanie McFarland, Shirley Witalis.

- A. Review July 2011 meeting summary: Approved
- B. Review agenda: Approved

II. Announcements and round-the-table updates (all participants)

Scott Hamelberg: Announced that Jack Blanke, President, of the Coleman National Fish Hatchery Friend's Group, is attending the meeting today. The Friends Group is an invaluable asset at the hatchery as they provide guided tours to thousands of schoolchildren throughout the spawning season. They are also being commended for constructing a nature trail adjoining the hatchery. The Friends Group will receive a HEALTHY SHASTA Action hero award. For a full description of the trail and the award see <http://healthyshasta.org/actionheroes.htm> and <http://anewscafe.com/2011/10/02/2011-healthy-shasta-action-heroes-announced/>

The Salmon Festival at Coleman National Fish Hatchery will be on October 15 – hope to see you there.

Rich Reiner: Following up on TNC's announcement at the July BCWG meeting, I wanted to share that we are no longer in a Stewardship Council role. We will be working with the Tehama County Resource Conservation District to set up conservation easements.

Jim Smith: As an informal update on the Hatchery Scientific Review panel process, The timeline has been modified. Instead of the final product being completed in December 2011, we should expect to see it in February 2012.

III. Updates

P. G. & E. (Liv Imset): We have some staffing changes. Gene Geary is now our lead biologist, he is backed by Jon Walsh. ~~Janet Walther's role is now filled by Elisabeth Rossi/Ian Caliendo.~~ [Ian Caliendo replaced Janet Walther. Elisabeth Rossi is taking on my role on license compliance. I will be retaining my role as project manager for the Restoration Project.](#)

A. USFWS (Tricia Parker Hamelberg): see FWS Status Handout

Q/A: Tussing: Is there any action to resolve all the ad-clipped fish showing up in Battle Creek? FWS Smith/Brown: The adipose fin clipped fish are strays that result from trucking Feather River Hatchery fish. The clipped fish found in upper Battle Creek were all Spring Chinook Salmon from the Feather River Fish Hatchery.

Berry: DFG's Regional Hatchery Coordinator is Linda Radford. I am trying to elevate this issue to DFG management. Witalis (NOAA Fisheries): The Feather River Fish Hatchery has produced a Hatchery Genetic Management Plan which shows that trucking of their spring Chinook salmon juveniles will not be occurring in the future.

B. Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy (Sharon Paquin-Gilmore)

Our focus is currently on community workshops to inform the public about invasive weeds, especially "scotch broom". Soon, the BCWC will take a field trip to Baldwin Creek to talk about identification and eradication of invasive weeds. We will also be seeking funding for eradication. On October 15, we will be joining many of the rest of you at the Salmon Festival at Coleman National Fish Hatchery.

C. Issue-Tracking- Document: top issues (Kathy Bishop)

The new updates are:

Issue 8.2 Coleman NFH Biological Opinion has not been completed. Naseem Alston and Jim Smith are the contacts. Status as of Sept 16, 2011 - FWS completed the updated 2011 Coleman National Fish Hatchery Complex Biological Assessment (BA) and submitted to the NMFS on July 27, 2011. The 2011 BA and the 2001 BA are posted at http://www.fws.gov/redbluff/he_reports.aspx The FWS also provided a draft Biological Opinion to NMFS. NMFS is currently reviewing both documents.

Issue 7: Outreach. Contact: Tricia Parker Hamelberg and Sharon Paquin-Gilmore. Status as of Sept 2011: The bimonthly meetings of the Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group are open to the public and provide a venue for information sharing. Status updates are given on most of the activities underway (e.g. the USFWS distributes written updates on all their Battle Creek activities, USBR gives an update on their activities and local stakeholders give updates).

Issue 9 ii: Angela Wilson: We (myself and Guy from the Regional Board) will provide updates to this issue on an every-other-month basis. Although, CALFIRE is the lead agency for approval of Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) on private land, the Regional Board can give updates on the Board's role and provide an update on the erosion study that is coming out soon. The erosion study was initiated based on the concerns that were brought to the Board's attention recently. An interagency working group visited the upper watershed, collected data and is now writing a report. We are anticipating that the group will soon be making presentations to the public (dates to-be-determined). The Task Force consists of representatives from DFG, Cal Fire, and the Regional Board.

*** Future agenda: presentation to the BCWG by the Interagency Task Force to assess private timber harvest impacts in the upper Battle Creek watershed.

D. Restoration Project (Mary Marshall, USBR)

Mary introduced her new co-worker: Trang Nguyen.

The majority of the fish ladder and screen construction has been completed at Eagle Canyon and North Battle Creek Feeder dams. Miscellaneous construction work is planned to occur at these project sites into 2012. In regard to the Wildcat project site, some road erosion issues will be corrected in Fall 2011. For the Asbury/Baldwin Creek site, design specifications are under development and a contract is planned to be awarded around mid-2012. The goal is to complete all Phase 1A construction by the end of 2012.

Under Phase 1B of the project, construction of the Inskip powerhouse tailrace connector and bypass is proceeding and currently planned to be completed by late 2012.

Under Phase 2 of the project, agreements (to receive State funding) are underway and are planned to be completed by the end of 2011. Construction is currently planned to occur under two contracts. One construction contract would involve the installation of a fish screen and ladder at Inskip diversion dam, installation of a tailrace tunnel connector from South Powerhouse to Inskip Canal, and removal of Lower Ripley Creek Feeder and Coleman diversion dams. Another construction contract would involve the removal of Soap Creek Feeder diversion and the removal of South diversion dam and appurtenant conveyance system, including the removal of South Canal. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2013 and be completed in 2015.

Monthly construction updates (including photos) are posted on the Battle Creek Restoration Project Reclamation website (www.usbr.gov/mp/battlecreek/status).

A contract associated with the facilitation and development of a Coleman National Fish Hatchery Adaptive Management Plan is planned to be awarded by late October/early November 2011.

Q/A: Scott Ferris: What is the total estimated cost of the Battle Creek Salmon & Steelhead Restoration Project? It was originally estimated to cost \$28 million in 1999. The current cost estimate is \$128 million (includes PG&E's \$20 million).

*** Action: An update on the budget for the Restoration Project will be given at the January 24, 2012 meeting.

IV. Subcommittee report: Outreach (Sharon, Liv, Tricia, Mary, Rich, BCWA)

At the July meeting, the Battle Creek Watershed Alliance representative (Virginia Phelps, alternate) brought up the discussion topic of the need for an outreach event on the many values within the Battle Creek Watershed (fish, hydro, communities, etc). This idea is initially being carried out by updating the 2004 one-page document into something that could be handed out at events e.g. the Salmon Festival on October 15. The 2004 document is in the process of being revised and edited by subcommittee members.

*** Sharon will send the current version to the subcommittee. The goal is to finalize this document prior to October 10th so that it can be printed and handed out asap.

V. Presentation:

The 2011 Biological Assessment of Coleman National Fish Hatchery Complex
(Bob Null, Senior Biologist with the Hatchery Evaluation & Monitoring Program, USFWS)

(see attached powerpoint presentation)

Bob described the Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation process to the group. He began by describing the need for federal agencies (i.e. USFWS' Coleman National Fish Hatchery) to write a Biological Assessment that reviews the literature, analyzes the effects, considers the views of experts, etc. to analyze the impacts of their actions on ESA listed species (e.g. Chinook and steelhead). The regulatory agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, then completes a Biological Opinion. The Biological Opinion encapsulates additional pertinent information including the Conclusion of whether the federal action "will or will not jeopardize the species" and an Incidental Take Statement.

Main points of the 2011 Biological Assessment:

The biologists who work for the USFWS Hatchery Evaluation & Monitoring Program calculated the projected levels and types of incidental take of listed salmonids that could result from the artificial propagation programs at Coleman National Fish Hatchery Complex. The types of take included a) entrainment, b) capture, handling and tissue sampling, c) mark-tag, hold, release, d) unintentional lethal take, e) intentional lethal take. The total for adult and juvenile fish is 581 (Table 2-3). These 2011 estimates of projected "take" are significantly lower than the 2001 estimates due to the screening of Intakes 1 and 3.

Following the guidance in the Endangered Species Act, the conclusion of the 2011 Biological Assessment is that FWS believes that operations of Coleman NFH will result in a "non-jeopardy" finding. We await a decision from the National Marine Fisheries Service in their Biological Opinion.

Tussing/BCWC: This is a very well done presentation on the Biological Assessment.

~~Tussing/BCWC: This Biological Assessment is a very well done document.~~

Q/A: For more detail about the findings of the 2011 Biological Assessment, see Table 2-4 in http://www.fws.gov/redbluff/he_reports.aspx . Section Three of the Biological Assessment describes the relationship of Coleman NFH operations to other management objectives (e.g. the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project). The CNFH barrier weir/fish ladders project (completed in 2008) and the CNFH water intake projects (completed in 2009) were implemented to integrate Coleman NFH with the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project.

Q/A:

The Section 10 process would need to be initiated when/if the natural origin populations of steelhead increase to the point that the hatchery could incorporate them into broodstock propagation again.

VI. Public Comment

Scott Ferris: Information about this significant restoration effort is not getting out into the media and the general public in the local area. Now that the Red Bluff Diversion Dam gates are out, people need to hear what other projects are underway in Shasta and Tehama counties to help the salmon and steelhead populations. The Tehama County Fish & Game Commission would like to hear an update on the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project.

*** Action: Mary Marshall will present information to the Tehama Co Fish & Game Commission on October 11.

*** Action: The concern that the general public doesn't know about this restoration project will be considered by the Outreach Subcommittee and added to the Issue Tracking Document under "7. Outreach" (Sharon Paquin-Gilmore).

VII. Closure

Identification of agenda topics and future potential presentations:

January 24: USBR budget for the Battle Creek Salmon & Steelhead Restoration Project (Mary Marshall), Issue Tracking Document prioritization (lead; tba);

March 20: Jim Smith Hatchery Scientific Review panel process update and/or Angela Wilson: Interagency Task Force presentation (tbd).

VIII. Adjourn