



**Pacific Gas and
Electric Company®**



MP-11-165

Media Contacts:

Reclamation: Pete Lucero, 916-978-5100, plucero@usbr.gov

Pacific Gas and Electric Company: Paul Moreno, 530-896-4290, pmmm@pge.com

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Jim Smith, 530-527-3043, jim_smith@fws.gov
and Erica Szlosek, 916-978-6159, erica_szlosek@fws.gov

California Department of Fish and Game: Jordan Traverso, 916-212-7352, jtraverso@dfg.ca.gov

National Marine Fisheries Service: Jim Milbury, 562-980-4006, jim.milbury@noaa.gov

For Release On: November 2, 2011

Fish Returning to Battle Creek

More Chinook Salmon Spawning in Restored Habitat After Wildcat Diversion Dam Removed

The Bureau of Reclamation and its partners in the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project announced today that larger numbers of threatened Chinook salmon have returned to spawn upstream in newly restored habitat on North Fork Battle Creek, near Manton, Calif.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has been performing fish monitoring for many years in Battle Creek. This fall, over four times the number of spring-run Chinook salmon redds (nests built by fish) were seen further upstream in North Fork Battle Creek, above where the Wildcat Diversion Dam once stood, than in previous years. In the past 10 years, on average, only about 7 percent of the redds were upstream of the dam. This year, 33 percent of the redds are located upstream of the former dam site, the FWS reported.

It is the improved passage upstream into the restored area, where stream conditions are better for nesting and survival that is helping the populations. This signifies that the project goal of increasing populations of anadromous fish (fish who begin life in freshwater creeks and live part of their lives in the ocean) is already underway, while project construction continues.

Also, to help protect these salmon eggs when flows began a seasonal decline, the FWS asked Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) if it could modify operations to increase flows in North Fork Battle Creek. PG&E responded by voluntarily diverting less water for hydroelectric generation and has agreed to maintain increased flows throughout the spawning season.

Battle Creek, a tributary to the Sacramento River, is being restored through the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project. The project is a proactive, cooperative effort to increase threatened and endangered Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead trout populations by restoring approximately 42 miles of habitat in Battle Creek and an additional 6 miles of habitat in its tributaries, while maintaining renewable energy production at the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project, owned and operated by PG&E. Restoration is being accomplished primarily through the removal of five diversion dams, placement of screens and ladders on three other diversion dams and increasing instream flows.

Project construction began in 2009, and in August 2010, Wildcat Diversion Dam was removed on North Fork Battle Creek, restoring approximately 15 miles of stream habitat.

Also on the North Fork, substantial fish screen and ladder construction has occurred upstream at North Battle Creek Feeder and Eagle Canyon Diversion Dams and is anticipated to be completed in 2012 or 2013. On South Fork Battle Creek, construction of an Inskip Powerhouse bypass and tailrace connector to Coleman Canal (to prevent mixing of north fork and south fork waters) has been proceeding and is anticipated to be completed late-2012.

The remainder of the project includes the construction of a fish barrier weir on Baldwin Creek, construction of a fish screen and ladder on Inskip Diversion Dam, construction of a tailrace connector from South Powerhouse to Inskip Canal, and the removal of Lower Ripley Creek Feeder, Soap Creek Feeder, and South and Coleman Diversion Dams. This construction is anticipated to begin in 2013 and be completed in 2015.

###

Via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in June 1999, Reclamation, the National Marine Fisheries Service, FWS, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and PG&E initiated work on the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project (project). In addition to the MOU partners, the project has been developed in collaboration with various resource agencies, and in conjunction with valuable participation from the public, stakeholders and landowners, including the Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group and the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy (<http://battle-creek.net/index.htm>). The project is being supported with federal, state and private funding. Funding sources include the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, CALFED, the Iron Mountain Mine Trustee Council, DFG, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, the California Department of Transportation, and the Packard Foundation (via The Nature Conservancy). In addition, PG&E is contributing in the form of foregone energy generation, voluntarily pursuing amendments to the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project's federal energy generation license, and transferring certain water rights to DFG. The public, stakeholders and landowners have received frequent updates and communication regarding this project throughout its development; as a result, they have been actively involved since the start. Please visit the project's website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/battlecreek/index.html> for additional information.