

COSUMNES RIVER TASK FORCE

Oversight Committee
February 12, 2002
USDA Service Center
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Minutes: Tina Lunt, Cosumnes River Task Force

1. Welcome and Introduction: Don Nottoli, Supervisor 5th District, opened the meeting at 7:00. Self introductions were made by Bill Mosher (Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District) Craig Crouch (Sac Co. Department of Water Resources), Tina Lunt (Cosumnes River Task Force), Floyd Summers (Bureau of Reclamation), Bill Cunningham (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Chuck Mitchell (Eldorado National Forest) Surjit S. Toor (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Bob Nozuka (State Department of Water Resources) and Keith Whitener (The Nature Conservancy).

2. Action Items From Last Month

- Tina sent Frank Jerauld a copy of the Phase II proposal.
- Keith supplied a new fish list for Phase I of the Resources Inventory to Tina.
- Tina added the plan for Phase III to Phase I of the Resources Inventory.
- Surjit S. Toor spoke with Mike Wackman regarding the lack of progress on the Army Corps Project. Mr. Wackman asked that the CRTF send a letter regarding the status of the project to him.

3. Project Progress Update

- Stream Gauges – Craig Crouch & Bob Nozuka
Bob Nozuka is with the State Department of Water Resources. Bob explained the problem with the state budget cuts and how that could potentially effect the operation and maintenance of the gages. He needs to make sure he will have enough man power to actually operate the gages. Instrumentation, materials and labor will be approximately \$29,500 (one time cost) and operation and maintenance will be approximately \$14,000 yearly. This will include eight site visits per year. The task force decided that it would be best to get the gages installed even though it will produce year round data. The task force will continue to look for the additional funding over the next few months to see if we can come up with enough money to make it year round data.
- Army Corps Project
It seems that the Army Corps Project is still at a standstill waiting for contract negotiations. Craig was asked to compose a letter, to be signed by Bill Mosher, for Secretary for Resources Mary Nichols, with a copy to Sacramento District Engineer Colonel Michael J. Conrad, Jr. (and to Congressmen Ose, Tauscher, and Pombo), formally requesting an update on the status of the Mokelumne/Cosumnes River feasibility study.
- Resources Inventory – Tina Lunt
The Draft Resources Inventory is complete. It has been sent to the State Water Resource Conservation Board for their review. Edits will be made, as required, and re-submitted. At that time the Final Draft will be ready for distribution.

At the last meeting we were waiting on soils maps. Those have been completed and included in the Draft Resources Inventory.

- **CALFED Grant – Resources Inventory Phase II**
Approximately two weeks ago the Department of Water Resources (contracting agent) requested a resolution from the Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District before the final contract could be completed. That was submitted and now we are waiting for the final contract to be delivered.
- **Activities in and around the watershed (Other workgroup activities, funding, tours, etc.)**
Point Pleasant Flood Control Project – Craig Crouch
The contract should be signed this week then the floodplain will be photographed. The photographs will be aerials with topographic lines. Construction should start this time next year.

4. Presentation - Fishes of the Cosumnes River

Keith Whitener, The Nature Conservancy

In the last three years 65 sites have been sampled of which 15 sites have been repeated. Sampling methods include backpack electrofishing and snorkeling. The Cosumnes River watershed can be broken into 6 drainage zones typified by land use and type. Geologic formation plays a strategic role in assemblage structure. The 6 zones include (1) Tidal Zone, (2) Native Fish Zone, (3) Summer Dry Zone, (4) Trout Zone, (5) Redeye Bass Zone and (6) Alpine Meadow Zone.

When sampled the following was found:

Tidal Zone - 32 species were found – 31% natives,

Native Fish Zone - 6 Species, 50% Native, 50% Alien Natives 97% by numbers, mostly California roach.

Summer Dry Zone - 20 Species, 25% Native, 75% Alien Natives 55% by numbers, mostly young of the year (YOY) pikeminnows and suckers.

Trout Zone - 2 Species 50% Native, 50% Alien Natives 95% by numbers, all rainbow trout

Redeye Bass Zone - 15 Species, 27% Native, 73% Alien Natives 31% by numbers, mostly pikeminnow, 79% of aliens by numbers were redeye bass.

Alpine Meadow Zone - 3 Species, 33 % Native, 67% Alien Natives < 5% by numbers, N.F. 85 % brook trout, M.F. 100% brown trout.

Seasonal vs. Perennial Habitat

Overtime non-natives have started to out-compete native species in perennial habitats. Therefore, seasonal habitats are critical to native species.

Cosumnes River Floodplain

In the early 1980's an accidental breach was cut resulting in the "Accidental" Forest. Due to they extremely large amount of sand the property owner decided not to farm this particular area in the first year. By the second year the trees were 5-10 feet tall and he decided to just leave the area as it was. The Accidental forest is now 30-40ft tall. In 1993, The Nature Conservancy

came in and decided to plan a breach. The Army Corp cut a second breach in 1997. Approximately, 1,000 acres were added to the floodplain

Fish on the Cosumnes River Floodplain, 1998

4,131 fish were collected

17 species – 12 alien and 7 native (check number - doesn't add up to 17)

Fish on the Cosumnes River Floodplain, 1999

1,664 fish were collected

19 species – 12 Alien and 7 native

Fish on the Cosumnes River Floodplain, 2000

20,441 fish were collected

19 species – 12 Alien and 7 Native

The higher the number of days with floodplain connectivity the higher the number of native species found.

Floodplain Conclusion

- Excellent spawning and rearing habitat for natives under certain conditions
- Late spring flooding favors alien species
- February – May important for native fishes
- May is a critical month for passage off the floodplain
- Perennial habitats (ponds) harbor alien species
- Inundation does not equate to connectivity

Red-Eye Bass

Red-Eye Bass are often referred to as “Brook Trout of the South”. They are similar in appearance to Smallmouth Bass. They are a very dominant species. DFG planted red-eyes in the Stanislaus River, which is probably how they ended up in the Cosumnes River.

Anadromous fish

There are three types of Anadromous Fish in the Cosumnes, Fall-run Chinook salmon (native), Pacific Lamprey (native) and American Shad. Latrobe Falls is the extent of the Fall-run Chinook salmon and the American Shad but the lamprey use suction to move up rocks and beyond the falls.

The Cosumnes River can hold about 1,000 salmon. In 2001 the fish count was only about 100.

Restoration of Cosumnes Salmon

TNC is looking into fall water acquisition. TNC will continue to monitor fish barriers (Blodgett Dam, Rancho Murietta Ladders, Summer Dams, Oneto Crossing). One of the major problems for Salmon is the amount of fine sediments in the Cosumnes, the source needs to be found and eliminated. TNC will continue downstream rearing (floodplain) restoration.

5. Adjourn - Next Meeting: March 12, 2002