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**Sonoma County Salmon Coalition  
June 25, 2008  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control**

**Item 1. Introductions**

Adina Merenlender, Al Cadd, Al Levine, Al Nelson, Bill Cox, Bob Anderson, Bob Klamt, Brian Johnson, Carolyn Wasem, Charlette Epifanio, Charlie Carson, Chris DeGabrielle, Claire Anderson, Colleen Fernald, Darcy Aston, David Fanucchi, David Keller, David Manning, David Smith, Denny Murphy, Duff Beville, Glen Wright. Jeff Quackenbush. Julie Collins, Kara Heckert. Marc Kelley, Mary Ann King. Matt O'Connor, Mike Dillabough, Peter Kiel, Philip Wasem, Richard Rued, Scott Gurgis, Susan Gorin, Dick Butler, Tom Roth

**Item 2. Conservation Projects in Dry Creek**

Using Dr. Horton's report and information from Department of Fish & Game, several restoration and enhancement projects have been identified on Grape Creek. Landowner access has been granted and initial site visits have resulted in a partial design for instream restoration features on Grape creek. In addition, a fish passage barrier removal is under consideration in Mill Creek. However, this not a stream considered in Dr. Horton's report. All projects are awaiting Water Agency visit. At that time the Corps of Engineers will be contacted for input and consultation.

Al Levine expressed some confusion re: the project selection and the system for prioritization.

Kara Heckert of the Sotoyome RCD explained that these projects were prioritized based on work provided by NMFS and DFG. The funding to conclude these restoration and enhancement projects will be provided by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

In addition to all the hard work put forth by the RCD, NMFS and DFG, NRCS deserves recognition for their contributions. NRCS have contributed expertise, funding, time and energy.

**Item 3. Federal Dollars AWEP**

There are new dollars in the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill. A substantial number of those dollars are for multiple agriculture producers who collaborate and coordinate with one another. Specific to storm water capture and storage, funds are available for those efforts as well.

The Salmon Coalition needs to sit down with Dry Creek and Alexander Valley agriculture producers to determine appropriate siting for reservoirs. The Salmon Coalition will rely on Dr. Merenlender and Dr. Deitch's model for these purposes.

Dr. Deitch briefly explained the water demand and allocation model. He and Dr. Merenlender assembled a GIS to determine where water is needed in a watershed and where water could be stored for future use. If agriculture producers have the ability to store water in the winter, there exists a real potential to offset demand at certain times of the year when fish may need the water in the stream. Beyond making general statements, the model needs to be better informed to make accurate assessments. Ground-truthing the generalizations and assumptions will be helpful in creating a “watershed approach” that the State water Board will embrace.

We are at the limit with the generalizations. We need to better understand where people might be interested in trading summer water rights for winter storage rights. We need to start talking with landowners and grape growers. We also need to think about flow recovery planning. This region does not have a flow recovery plan, even on a gross scale. The State Water Board believes that a flow recovery program would be valuable on a state wide basis as well as a regional basis.

As we are working on this we have begun to understand that others need to assess cumulative flows. What flows work historically? Where might changes in water management assist in recovery?

#### **Item 4: Recovery Plan**

Dick Butler of NMFS said that they are currently working on recovery plans and hope that the work is compatible. Flows are more difficult to get a handle on.

Dr. Merenlender suggested that flow and pool monitoring and collection of flow data would allow them to extrapolate and apply across a broad scale.

Bill Cox of DFG wanted to understand what was meant by “watershed level”. Are we considering all possible definitions, small watersheds and total watershed: similar to what the water agency would like to see? Are we considering a point of diversion and everything in that watershed?

Dr. Merenlender responded that she is referring to a sub-basin scale. The smaller scale the more accurate the data. This data is obviously nested in a larger scale area. We select an area that needs attention and work with the people to secure the information. We are trying to understand biological priority and community capacity.

Brian Johnson from TU stated that the model is useful for looking at a part of a stream to identify areas that are storage short. To get to a point where you can optimize supply and water delivery for farmers and fish we do it with real data. You can't do that with a model. The concept for the watershed approach – is a combination of stream flow, habitat mapping and cooperation from landowners that provides baseline data and habitat mapping of summer rearing and winter spawning to understand habitat potential. Many times talking to an owner of the property you can understand who wants to cooperate and who wants to participate in modeling.

To meet with ultimate success, the Salmon Coalition, working with the Water Agency, the RCD and others needs to arrange meetings to secure the additional information.

#### **Item 5. Flow and Temperature**

Discussions around the State Water Board policy ensued. Dr. Deitch indicated that the State Board allows us to adapt our data.

Dave Fanucchi, an agriculture producer, stated that in some tributaries identified by the Agencies, it will be difficult to meet flow requirements. A lot of these streams are 12 feet wide and they want 2 feet. We need to adapt to reality.

Brian Johnson from TU and Dr. Deitch agreed that we need more monitoring. We have to get to the point that we are relying on real data.

NMFS suggested that when applying this data we need to factor in climate change. There is not an average year that we can plan around.

Al Levine suggested that we look at the temperature conditions in that assessment document. We need to understand how flow affects temperature, canopy, microclimates, etc.

Dave Fanucchi responded that a running stream does not always equate to lower temperature. Historically having lesser flows have been more beneficial to steelhead populations.

Dr. Deitch indicated that they have not looked very much at temperature thus far. However, the better we can couple flow and temperature together, the better off we are.

Al Nelson suggested that the agriculture producers have worked to inform Dr. Merenlender and Dr. Deitch's model. In the end, is the watershed approach going to be over the whole valley or just applicable to the tributaries? Is the valley floor important?

Dr. Merenlender responded that we need to parameterize demand for the main stem and the valley bottom. With regards to restoring tributary flows – we need to parameterize needs.

#### **Item 6. Letter to Clarify Role of Participants**

The Salmon Coalition is developing its own website. This is a response to the increased interest in our efforts. Case in point: A letter was drafted by the SCWC that raised questions about the roles of individuals in the Coalition. Bob Klamt assisted in clarifying everyone's role in the draft Salmon Coalition background and clarification paper. He suggested that most people understand that because of the evolving nature of the coalition roles were not always clearly defined.

All parties agreed, or expressed no disagreement that the background and clarification draft adequately informed the public as to the roles and intent of the Salmon Coalition. This background information will be posted on the Salmon Coalition Website.

Susan Gorin suggested that in terms of work product, the Coalition needs to develop a process for approval and/or agreement.

#### **Item 7: Charter**

Marc Kelley stated that to take advantage of the watershed approach in the draft Instream Flow Policy, applicants need to create a charter. The charter is not well defined. If the landowners are looking to amend or secure water rights pursuant to the watershed approach recognized in the draft Instream Flow Policy, these individuals would need to enter into a charter with the State Water Board. To proceed on this path will require the identification of objectives and rights. Further, composition and goals of the charter group will need to be identified. A portion of the first draft of the Anderson Creek charter was developed by the State Water Board. The Coalition will talk with folks in Alexander and Dry Creek to look at the goals and what a charter might look like. We have had a great deal of contact with State Water Board Staff. They are looking forward to our proposal.

Tom Roth of Congresswoman Woolsey's office asked about the particular benefits of a charter.

Peter Kiel said that a charter could be utilized by applicants who want to process water rights different than is available under the current process. The regulators involved in the water rights process want to ensure that the project does not have adverse impacts to protected resources. How do we create additional stream flow? Do we want storage? The charter is an acknowledgement that there is a different and potentially better way of getting through the process.

Dr. Merenlender suggested that the State recognizes the benefits of collaboration in addressing cumulative impacts.

Tom Roth wanted further discussion around bundling applications.

Bob Klamt of the Regional Water Board responded that when a single applicant applies there is obviously commitment – when it is a group they need to express that commitment. The charter provides that opportunity.

Brian Johnson indicated that describing the process for environmental review, study plans, etc. is valuable. It assists the State in understanding who they are dealing with and what is wanted on the back end.

Tom Roth wanted to know if this put the Salmon Coalition in competition with Russian River Watershed Council.

Individuals responded that it does not put the two in direct competition.

**Item 8. Future Items**

Marc Kelley said that by the time we meet again, we hope to have something on paper regarding a charter. We would like to start in Dry Creek.

We need to form an Ag water users group in Alexander and Knights Valley. We have had initial conversations with Al Cadd regarding: an Association in Alexander Valley to discuss water demand and allocation. We have the Dry Creek document, of which portions could serve as a template.

The RCD is starting to look for projects in Alexander and Knights Valley. This could augment the efforts to form a group for understanding water demand and allocation in this region. Currently projects such as barriers and restoration as identified in the Horton Report are under consideration. We need to talk with landowners about where they would be interested in participating.

**Item 9. CIG Grant**

The CIG Grant from the NRCS will allow us to do a number of things related to water quality and water quantity issues. NRCS was awarded \$270,000 to the Russian River Property Owners. The use of those dollars will be discussed at later meetings.

**Item 10: Water and Wine**

Wineries and grape growers have entered into a water and wine relationship with TU. Over the next several months they hope to take the campaign to another level. We want to grow the group to 25 by the fall.

**Item 11: Russian River Watershed Council Announcement**

September 13<sup>th</sup> Event – Fisheries, Past and Present. Colleen Fernald asked that people share their stories.

**Item 12 BMPs**

As soon as NMFS is ready to share the draft BMPs, we would like to get some feedback from Nick Frey, Bob Anderson and Dave Lewis. The ultimate goal is to put these into the sustainable code.

**Item 13: Next Meeting**

Wednesday the 23 of July at 10 am.....