

MEETING MINUTES | Wednesday, August 26, 2009, 2:00-4:00

Dry Creek Advisory Group

Meeting 4

Action Items

In progress	Staff	Determine date for pipeline workshop with HDR
In progress	Staff	Determine date for next DCAG meeting with Inter-Fluve (January?)

Meeting Overview

- Greg Koonce and Mike Burke from Inter-Fluve shared information about the studies that Inter-Fluve is conducting on Dry Creek.
- The Advisory Group asked questions about the studies and potential future projects and proposed issues for Inter-Fluve to consider.
- SCWA staff announced that several landowners have approached the Agency with interest in participating in habitat enhancement projects.
- Inter-Fluve has spoken with several landowners already and is still available to speak with others. Those interested in connecting with Inter-Fluve should contact Anne Crealock for more info. (707-547-1947)

Welcome & Introductions

Anne Crealock said that she would be facilitating the meeting today since Gina Bartlett is out of town. Agency staff clarified that the potential abandonment of the Water Supply, Transmission, & Reliability Project Draft EIR (featured in a Press Democrat article on August 25, 2009) does not affect the Dry Creek bypass pipeline as described in the Biological Opinion.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss habitat enhancement efforts along Dry Creek and to hear from and provide input to Inter-Fluve. Inter-Fluve would give a presentation and discuss what they've done so far, what they have yet to do, what they've learned so far, and what they expect to learn. Anne encouraged the group to share any information about Dry Creek that would help Inter-Fluve gain a better understanding of the Creek.

The meeting was scheduled to end at 4:00 (if not before) but Inter-Fluve would be available until 4:30 to talk one-on-one with anyone interested. For additional opportunities to connect with Inter-Fluve, people were encouraged to call Anne Crealock (707-547-1947).

Anne gave a summary of the overall schedule for habitat enhancement work and referred people to a handout. The Agency is required to complete one mile of habitat enhancement by 2014 and another two miles by 2017. If those projects are successful, the Agency would complete another three miles of habitat enhancement by 2020 for a total of six miles. Inter-Fluve just started gathering data on the creek on August 25 to look at the creek's overall current condition and will come back to the advisory group in January to present the results of their study. Next year, Inter-Fluve will look more closely at specific locations in the creek for potential habitat enhancement projects.

Discussion with Inter-Fluve

Greg Koonce, principal and fisheries biologist, and Mike Burke, water resources engineer, shared a PowerPoint presentation with the group and discussed their inventory of the creek's current

conditions at 100cfs discharge. They are recording each pool, riffle, glide, etc. and recording the amount of cover in each habitat unit. They're also looking at the areas that will be underwater during high winter flows as well as old side channel scars.

Inter-Fluve has talked to some landowners already but is interested in talking to more landowners.

Thus far, landowner comments have focused on:

- Erosion issues
- Vegetation management (or lack thereof)
- Management / maintenance of a project on private property
- Flooding

Question: If projects are completed on 3 miles of Dry Creek and then flows are diverted to a pipeline, how will this affect the projects that were built for higher flows?

Answer: The projects will be designed to function and provide value at a range of flows.

Field work has confirmed the landowners' concerns. They've seen erosion issues and vegetation management issues. Since flow is now year-round, there is more riparian vegetation resulting in more stabilization of sediment. This exacerbates problems associated with a lack of sediment recruitment in a system with a dam. They also have seen many opportunities for spawning habitat in the upper reach if that is a goal that agencies would like to pursue.

Inter-Fluve spent a lot of time studying aerials but saw many more opportunities once they got on the ground, particularly in terms of older overgrown side channels. These side channels may provide opportunities for coho habitat during low flow conditions and helps convey water during high flow conditions.

Dry Creek is fairly steep and one major challenge will be providing flat backwater areas for coho.

Bill Hearn (NMFS) reminded Inter-Fluve to remember that steelhead should be considered as well.

Bank erosion is recruiting fine materials and upland tree species. These trees enter the creek and either provide habitat or become a flood risk.

Comment: It's important to consider that a solution on one side of the creek could just deflect the problem to the other side.

Answer: This is an important issue and will be taken into consideration during design of any project. It may mean that projects need to be constructed in areas that don't appear to warrant any work.

Question: Can the issue of reduced sediment supply be addressed?

Answer: Yes, there may be opportunities for sediment enrichment, particularly below the dam spillway. Small gravel could be placed in such a way that high flows would move it downstream and replenish the gravel. The engineering, however, is tricky. It's also possible to reconstruct and replenish riffles. Size, timing, and mobility would all need to be considered along with flow.

Bill Hearn commented that there are some Chinook in the system (Dave Manning (SCWA) said that 20,000 juveniles were counted this year). Overwintering habitat is important.

Question: Are you looking at tributaries?

Answer: Only near the mouth of the tributaries but there is a lot of available information about the tributaries from CDFG and landowners. It was clarified that the BO focuses on coho juvenile rearing habitat and habitat for steelhead.

Dave Manning added that the Agency also has 5 tributary habitat enhancement projects in progress in the Dry Creek watershed.

Question: What about high flow conditions, especially in relation to tributaries?

Answer: There is a lot of hydrological data available for the tributaries. Inter-Fluve will use that data to help model the timing of cresting on Dry Creek and the tribs. They'll plan for safety (ie worst case scenarios). DFG has also collected a lot of habitat data on the tributaries.

Greg and Mike pulled up a very recent interactive LIDAR image which has been made interactive and will eventually include the data collected during their inventory of Dry Creek.

Question: Can LIDAR data be released to the public?

Answer: This LIDAR data is very recent and is still being ground-truthed. Eventually it will be available, without all of the specific information about Dry Creek parcels that Inter-Fluve is gathering in this study.

Inter-Fluve has access to old aerials dating back to the 1940s showing, among other things, how the location of the active channel has changed over time. They're also finding locations of old USACE bank stabilization projects.

Inter-Fluve will label habitat units on their interactive map of Dry Creek (pool, riffle, glide, etc.) and other data such as amount of cover.

Also interesting is the location of the creek channel in relation to lineaments (linear geologic fractures). Because lineaments are highly erodible, Dry Creek tends to follow the path of lineaments down the valley.

Dave Manning announced that a group of landowners has approached the Agency to discuss volunteering their properties to be included in the first mile of habitat enhancement. Richard Rued and Al Nelson are two of those landowners. Richard was present and added that he'd like to see work get done as soon as possible. He also expressed his hope that work can get done without being bogged down by bureaucracy. Greg Koonce said that he hoped that it would showcase early successes and how we handle adaptive management so that other landowners would feel comfortable enough to participate as well.

Bill Hearn added that, although he is supportive of moving forward quickly, there are numeric objectives in the BO and urged all involved to keep them in mind.

Richard Rued expressed concern that government inflexibility could jeopardize the entire deal.

Question: Is the federal government funding this project?

Answer: Dave Manning said that the Water Agency is on the hook for much of the cost but is looking for federal funds to help. The USACE is also part of this BO and will likely be providing some funds as well.

Question: Is the USACE looking at changing how they handle winter releases?

Answer: Matt Brauer (USACE) confirmed that to be the case.

Question: What will happen to the spoils from digging to create backwater pools?

Answer: The landowners own those spoils and may keep them if they choose to do so. Some arrangement may also be arranged if the Agency and Inter-Fluve would like to use them in their work.

Question: Are there mineral rights issues?

Answer: Greg believed that there are mineral rights in the area that would need to be considered.

Comment: The lack of gravel in tribs could be a limiting factor.

Answer: Greg and Bob Coey (NMFS) agreed that some tribs are full of gravel and others are pretty bare.

Wrap Up

The data analyzed for Inter-Fluve's report will provide a cohesive picture of Dry Creek's habitat, hydrology, etc. The report will also include a list of potential project locations and information about each. This report will be presented to the Advisory Group in January.

Members of the group expressed interest in holding an additional meeting to discuss the pipeline. Anne said that she and Gina would schedule a workshop specifically to discuss the pipeline with HDR and would contact the group via email to discuss dates and interest.

Action items:

- Anne to distribute meeting minutes
- Anne and Gina to schedule a pipeline meeting
- Anne and Gina to schedule meeting in January to discuss the results of Inter-Fluve's study