



## Year Four Major Milestones

### Russian River & Dry Creek Flows

**Milestone:** Within four years of filing the petition to change Decision 1610, the Water Agency's Board of Directors must certify a final California Environmental Quality Act/National Environmental Protection Act (CEQA) document. The petition was filed on September 23, 2009.

- ✓ Work is occurring internally on the preparation of the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Fish Habitat Flows and Water Rights Project. The EIR is being prepared by Water Agency staff, with assistance from consultants on some areas of impact analysis. A draft EIR is anticipated to be released in 2013.

**Milestone:** In 2012, the Water Agency must petition the State Water Board for temporary changes in D1610 that will allow minimum flows to be reduced in the summer in the Russian River

- ✓ The State Water Resources Board issued a 2012 Temporary Urgency Change order on May 2, lowering minimum flows from May 2 through October 15. Work is underway to prepare the fisheries, water quality and water use efficiency reports required under the order.

### Estuary Adaptive Management

**Milestone:** The Water Agency, in consultation with NMFS, California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is required to annually prepare a lagoon outlet adaptive management plan by April 1.

- ✓ The lagoon outlet channel adaptive management plan was finalized on May 11. It was prepared by (ESA) consultants.
- ✓ The mouth of the estuary remained open during the lagoon management period (May 14-October 15) so the outlet channel implementation plan was not triggered.
- ✓ Seal (and other pinniped) monitoring at the river mouth and other local haulouts is ongoing.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency must conduct and record monthly surveys of the beach topography and the outlet channel. The Water Agency must also use a time lapse video camera to record the interaction of waves, tides and the river mouth.

- ✓ The Water Agency conducted monthly beach topography surveys. A camera installed in 2009 takes time lapse photos of the river mouth.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency must conduct annual estuary water quality monitoring.

- ✓ The Water Agency installed 12 data sondes at nine water quality stations in the estuary, two tributaries and Monte Rio. The sondes operated from May through November.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency is required to conduct ongoing extensive surveys of estuary invertebrates.

- ✓ The Water Agency worked with University Of Washington on an invertebrate study of the availability of juvenile steelhead prey in the estuary. Researchers found that steelhead are primarily feeding on benthic and epibenthic invertebrates.

**Milestone:** From late spring to early fall (when flows are below 300 cfs at Hacienda Bridge), the Water Agency must conduct monthly surveys of young steelhead in the estuary.

- ✓ The Water Agency conducted seining activities monthly from May to October and installed a fyke net, which was monitored daily. Rotary screw traps were also operated at three lower-river creeks to monitor downstream migrating steelhead and salmon.

**Milestone:** Within nine months of completing the 2011 fish monitoring studies, the Water Agency must submit an annual report.

- ✓ The Water Agency submitted the 2011/12 report on December 18, 2012.

**Milestone:** By December 2012, the Water Agency must complete and submit to NMFS and CDFG a jetty study that evaluates alternatives including jetty removal and partial removal, jetty notching and potential use of the jetty as a tool for maintaining estuary surface water elevations.

- ✓ A study of the jetty is underway. The purpose of the study is to determine if and how it impacts the formation of the sand bar (barrier beach) and lagoon water surface elevation. A draft report will be provided to NMFS and CDFG in December 2012, with a final report in 2013 following completion of field investigations. Field investigations have been delayed while awaiting completion of a permit from the California Coastal Commission.

## Dry Creek

**Milestone:** The engineering design and permitting for the first mile of Dry Creek habitat enhancement must be completed by the end of 2012.

- ✓ Engineering design is at 99% for the demonstration project. Phase One of the project (at Quivira Vineyards and Winery) is complete. Construction plans, right-of-way negotiations and preparation of a construction bid package are underway for the remainder of the one-mile demonstration project.

**Milestone:** Five habitat enhancement or fish passage projects must be built on Russian River tributaries before the end of Year 3. Monitoring of projects is ongoing.

- ✓ The fourth tributary project was constructed in 2012. A series of weirs were built under the Grape Creek bridge on West Dry Creek Road to allow for fish passage. The fifth project – removing a barrier on Mill Creek – has been stalled due to lack of right-of-way from a recalcitrant landowner. A new project is being sought.

## Warm Springs Dam

**Milestone:** The Water Agency must support the coho broodstock program, located at the Don Clausen Visitor's Center & Fish Hatchery.

- ✓ In 2012, the Water Agency provided a Natural Resources Program Assistant to work in the broodstock program.

## Fish Monitoring in Russian River & Dry Creek

**Milestone:** SCWA must annually operate rotary screwtraps at Mirabel and in lower Dry Creek to measure juvenile Chinook, coho and steelhead; conduct an annual juvenile steelhead and coho salmon rearing survey during Warm Springs Dam inspection periods, when water releases are lower.

- ✓ In April 2012, the Water Agency installed and began operating a rotary screwtrap in Dry Creek, capturing 4,762 steelhead juveniles and smolts (a lifestage migrating to the ocean), 7,803 Chinook smolts and 525 coho juveniles and smolts (including 259 wild coho).
- ✓ In April 2012 the Water Agency began operating a pair rotary screw traps in the Russian River just downstream of an inflatable dam at Mirabel. Over the course of the 2012 trapping season, 2,266 steelhead juveniles and smolts, 1,632 coho juveniles and smolts, and 19,546 Chinook smolts were captured.
- ✓ Juvenile salmonid surveys were conducted in Dry Creek in late July and early October.
- ✓ The inflatable dam was lowered November 21-23. While final numbers are being verified, the Chinook salmon count is in excess of 6,600, breaking previous records.

### **Mirabel Fish Screen and Wohler Ponds**

**Milestone:** SCWA shall complete design of the new fish screen at Mirabel within three years of the issuance of this biological opinion and construct the new fish screen within three years of completion of design.

- ✓ The Water Agency received a \$255,000 California Department of Fish and Game Fishery Restoration Grant for design of the project. A grant application has been submitted for the construction phase of the project. The 90% design is anticipated in early 2013.
- ✓ An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project has been released. The comment period will close on January 18.

## **What's Ahead in 2013: Year Five Major Milestones**

### **Russian River & Dry Creek Flows**

**Milestone:** Within four years of filing the petition to change Decision 1610, the Water Agency's Board of Directors must certify a final California Environmental Quality Act/National Environmental Protection Act (CEQA) document. The petition was filed on September 23, 2009, meaning the CEQA document was envisioned to be certified by September 23, 2013. The schedule may be modified in consultation with NMFS, and a draft EIR will be released in 2013.

**Milestone:** In 2013, the Water Agency must petition the State Water Board for temporary changes in D1610 that will allow minimum flows to be reduced in the summer in the Russian River.

### **Estuary Adaptive Management**

**Milestone:** The Water Agency, in consultation with NMFS, California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is required to annually prepare a lagoon outlet adaptive management plan by April 1.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency must conduct and record monthly surveys of the beach topography and the outlet channel. The Water Agency must also use a time lapse video camera to record the interaction of waves, tides and the river mouth.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency must conduct annual estuary water quality monitoring.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency is required to conduct ongoing extensive surveys of estuary invertebrates.

**Milestone:** From late spring to early fall (when flows are below 300 cfs at Hacienda Bridge), the Water Agency must conduct monthly surveys of young steelhead in the estuary.

**Milestone:** Within nine months of completing the 2012 fish monitoring studies, the Water Agency must submit an annual report.

**Milestone:** By December 2012, the Water Agency must complete and submit to NMFS and CDFG a jetty study that evaluates alternatives including jetty removal and partial removal, jetty notching and potential use of the jetty as a tool for maintaining estuary surface water elevations. Following completion of a permit application process with the California Coastal Commission, field investigation will be completed and a final report submitted in 2013.

### **Dry Creek**

**Milestone:** The construction of the first mile of Dry Creek habitat enhancement must be completed in 2014. The Biological Opinion envisioned a two-year construction period, meaning construction must begin in 2013.

**Milestone:** Planning, permitting and right-of-way for Miles 2 and 3 of habitat enhancement are required in 2013.

**Milestone:** Pre-and post-construction fish and habitat monitoring must be conducted.

**Milestone:** The Water Agency, NMFS, the Corps and CDFG must determine success criteria for habitat enhancement.

### **Fish Monitoring in Russian River & Dry Creek**

**Milestone:** SCWA must annually operate rotary screwtraps at Mirabel and in lower Dry Creek to measure juvenile Chinook, coho and steelhead; conduct an annual juvenile steelhead and coho salmon rearing survey during Warm Springs Dam inspection periods, when water releases are lower.

### **Mirabel Fish Screen and Wohler Ponds**

**Milestone:** SCWA shall complete design of the new fish screen at Mirabel within three years of the issuance of the biological opinion (completed) and construct the new fish screen within three years of completion of design (by the end of 2013).