PUBLIC POLICY FACILITATING MEETING

DATE: October 1, 2008

TIME: 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: WELLS FARGO CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Carston Cabaret
50 Mark West Springs Road
Santa Rosa, California 95404

REPORTED BY: MEGAN F. ALVAREZ, RPR
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PUBLIC POLICY FACILITATING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor Tim Smith, Chairman
Supervisor Paul Kelley
Lee Howard
Dick Butler
Carre Brown
Bob Anderson
Mike Dillabough
Lieutenant Colonel Laurence Farrell
Supervisor Michael Delbar

PANEL MEMBERS:

Dr. Bill Hearn
Pam Jeane
Jessica Martini-Lamb
Bob Coey
David Manning
Anne Crealock

OCTOBER 1, 2008 - WEDNESDAY 4:30 P.M.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Good afternoon and welcome. For those folks who are conversing or on their cell phones or whatever, if you would cease that activity and kindly have a chair, I would appreciate it.

My name is Tim Smith. I'm the chair of the Public Policy Facilitation Committee, and also member of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and I would like to welcome all of you today for what is, I think, a historic moment. Most of you realize that this work has been going on for 11 years now. And if you ever need anybody to chair a meeting to get some product out, I would suggest calling somebody other than me. It's taken a look long time, but I think that the final product is well worth waiting for.

First of all, a few ground rules, we do have speaker cards available, and you can obtain those and turn them into either Renee Weber in the back of the room, or Ann DuBay, who is right there. And we'll try to take those cards up at the end of the meeting.

I'd just like to tell you in advance that we've got a lot of information to go through and understand that most people have not had an opportunity

to actually review the biological opinion. And we are going to have an ongoing public dialogue, which will be explained later on in the agenda, so don't feel that if you don't have a question today to ask, don't feel bad about it because there will be plenty of opportunities down the road.

Also, just for a note of clarification, this is not typically like explaining an environmental document. This is a final document prepared in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, Corps of Engineers and County Water Agency, and what we have is the product of some 11 years of work.

And hopefully, we can take advantage of all the information in there and figure out ways so that we can implement it.

And before I go on any further, I'd like to introduce -- have our panel of people up here, the committee introduce themselves.

And maybe, Carre, you could start so we know who everybody is?

CARRE BROWN: Carre Brown, Mendocino County, Mendocino County Farm Bureau.

DICK BUTLER: And I'm Dick Butler with National Marine Fisheries Service. I'm the area office supervisor here in Santa Rosa.

LEE HOWARD: Lee Howard, Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District.

SUPERVISOR PAUL KELLEY: Paul Kelley, Sonoma County Supervisor, Sonoma County Water Agency director.

SUPERVISOR MICHAEL DELBAR: Michael Delbar, Mendocino County Supervisor, Mendocino County Water Agency.

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: Lt. Col. Laurence Farrell, commanding officer, United States Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District.

To my right, Mr. Mike Dillabough, San Francisco District, and he's directly responsible for the safety and operation of the Lake Sonoma and the Mendocino Park and Dam.

BOB ANDERSON: Bob Anderson, North Coast Region, Water Quality Control Water Board.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Very good. Thank you.

And also, just to make you all aware when you fill out your speaker cards at the end of the meeting, we do have a court reporter who would appreciate your name and any affiliations you might have as well.

And before the formal presentation begins, just a little history for you in case some of you aren't familiar with this process. There was a memorandum of understanding signed with Sonoma County Water Agency,

Corps of Engineers, and the National Marine Fisheries Service in December of 1997 just goes to show that Rome wasn't built in a day.

The purpose of the MOU is to establish a framework for the consultation and conference required by the Endangered Species Act in regard to how flood control and water supply projects affected endangered steelhead, coho salmon and eventually chinook.

Now, the PPFC was created as part of that MOU to serve as a sounding board for the Section 7 process. Normally, the Section 7 process or processes are closed consultations. So the fact that we're having this meeting and the PPFC was created is kind of new thing, and I think it afforded a lot of public interaction over the last 11 years. This is, in fact, the 20th meeting of this body. Interestingly, I've been here 20 years and there have been 20 meetings. I don't know if that's a sign of the time or what.

In the decade since the process began, the water agency in cooperation with other agencies and private consultants have completed several studies of different aspects of water and flood control operations in regard to how it affects the fish. Based on these studies, the biological assessment was written by the consulting firm, Entrex, and released in late 2004.

National Marine Fisheries Service took this voluminous information back to the shop and last week released a biological opinion which is the subject of our meeting today.

And before we even start, I'd like to thank them for -- Dick promised me a Christmas present last year and pointed out that -- we didn't quite make last Christmas, he told us all the specifics, in fact, this Christmas, so I appreciate it.

And before we get into the details of the biological opinion, there are many, many people to thank for the development of this document and far too many for me to name. But we do have some, and I'd like to start with Lt. Farrell who may have a word to say and may have somebody who he wants to acknowledge, but certainly, the Corps of Engineers was a vital partner and a friend.

Do you have any comments or --

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: No. Obviously, it's been a long time coming to collaborate on among the agency. I look forward to good work and moving the process forward.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I appreciate that. And Rod McGinnis, regional administrator for National Marine Fisheries Service.

MR. MCGINNIS: Yes. Thank you for this opportunity. And just a couple of words, first of all, it has been a long haul. It's been a very complex project, and there have been a lot of people engaged in this, and congratulations to all of those who were engaged.

I particularly want to recognize the local community leadership and your leadership, Supervisor Smith, Delbar and Supervisor Kelley as well.

It's difficult to sometimes find the leadership on the local level that can transcend some of these issues, and you folks have filled that need along with other community leaders.

So thank you and looking forward to the presentations.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Very good. John McCamman, Chief, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Fish and Game.

John?

MR. MCCAMMAN: Thank you very much, Supervisor.

By the way, I just want to congratulate you on a process well -- or a product well-earned out of a process which has engaged a number of people over many years. I know it's been very difficult. It's very

contentious, and our department has been proud to participate with you to come to this point and look forward to moving it to through the next steps in the process.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thanks for being here, John.

Lee Howard, Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Group, but you can't say that fast.

LEE HOWARD: I know. And, again, it's been a long process and Barbara Spazik has been a person that has worked on it, yeah, and helped and participated. I think there's still a lot to do. This is just the -- this is the start of it really. And to see how it's going to shake it out is going to be interesting to all.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Very good. And I would just like to add my thanks to the water agency staff who have been incredible, stepping out in the leadership, Randy Pool and Renee Weber, Pam Jeane, Dave Manning, and certainly somebody from Mendocino County stole Sean Wake from us.

SUPERVISOR PAUL KELLEY: That's how long the process has been going on.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Lisa, I mean, we've got names of people a mile long, and we certainly thank

them, and they should all be acknowledged for their great work and helping them forge this final document.

And I think with that, we will move on and ask Dick Butler to keep it off and take us through the process.

DICK BUTLER: Thank you, Supervisor Smith.

Indeed, this was a large and complex project for us -- for the Santa Rosa staff to put it altogether in the end here, and we're here to begin the next phase which is the implementation of these changes.

I'm personally excited, actually, and encouraged that we may actually be able to pull Central California coastal coho salmon back from the very brink of extinction. They're just about blinking out in this watershed, and we are -- with the conservation measures contained in the BO, I'm confident that we can bring them back.

We've been working on a parallel process and that's the development of recovery plans. And the first one, and the farthest along is the Central California Coast coho recovery plan. And that plan and the work that we've done, that leads us to the conclusion that the Russian River basin is key to recovery of that particular management unit along with Lagunitas Creek, Gualala River, Walker Creek and Redwood Creek

watersheds.

Out in the lobby, we've got a map of the North Central California coho recovery domain. If you'll take a look on your way out or sometime during the meeting, you can see that the Russian River is central to this particular evolutionary significant unit as what we call it. Kind of like -- management unit is good enough.

Before I get talking about the biological opinion, we must start -- I think we need a little background on the Endangered Species Act. So -- that drives this process.

The purposes of the act is stated in Section 2B of the act, and it says, "The purposes of this act is to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depends may be conserved, the ecosystems upon which they depend. We all want healthy ecosystems not just for fish but for people as well. And healthy ecosystem provides, among other things, a safe and reliable water supply."

Section 7 of the ESA or the Endangered Species Act that has driven this process sets out a consultation process that requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions are not jeopardized, endangered and threatened species.

In this case, the Army Corps of Engineers is

the federal action agency. National Marine Fisheries Service is the consulting agency and Sonoma County Water Agency is included in the process by the signing of the MOU that Supervisor Smith mentioned.

Later, Mendocino County Flood Control joined in and the Department of Fish and Game has also been involved all the way long. We've worked very well collaboratively and cooperatively for 11 years to get to where we are right now. And the biological opinion is final, but within it, there's plenty of room for what we call adaptive management. There's a lot of things we're not sure about and need to study and survey and make decisions down through the process.

In this formal Section 7 process, the end result is the biological opinion. And that document analyzes the effects of the federal actions and all the other related actions. And in this case, the conclusion of the biological opinion is that the status quo of flood control operations, water supply operations and maintenance in the Russian River would indeed jeopardize Central California coastal coho salmon, and Central California coast steelhead, and it would also adversely affect their designated critical habitat.

So to ensure that we are conserving the ecosystem, and not jeopardizing our salmonoids, we need

changes in the way that the Army Corps and Sonoma County Water Agency and others in the basin to conduct their operations.

So throughout this process, the Public Policy Facilitating Committee here has been a forum for public input. There will be more opportunity for public input later on if there's an EIR or changes in flows.

And I'm going to introduce now my distinguished colleague, Dr. Bill Hearn, who has been really instrumental in developing biological opinion, and he's going to give you an overview in some detail. But time constraints, we have here today, we are not going to allow him to touch on much more than the highlights.

So I recommend that for full understanding that, to the extent you can, to take a look at the biological opinion and review. I think it's a very solid document. I'll turn it over to you, Bill.

DR. BILL HEARN: Thank you, sir.

National Marine Fisheries Service completed the biological opinion for the Water Supply and Flood Control Operations and Channel Maintenance by the Corps Sonoma County Water Agency and the Mendocino County Regional Flood Control District, and it was issued September 24th, 2008.

It is a 380-page document. It is the longest BO that our office ever did. And I'm thinking it's the longest BO that our region, California Southwest region, has ever generated. I'm supposed to now summarize that in 15 minutes.

To start with, what was the purpose of this? The purpose is to provide the Corps and some kind of water you can see in the Mendocino County, dot, dot, dot, with ESA take exemption for the project.

What that means, take exemption, it means we're providing exemption from the prohibitions against the killing and harming of listed species, for and otherwise lawful project.

As the project operates, there can be fish that can be killed. And so we go through this process in order to provide take exemptions.

And in doing that, we need to try to minimize that take, that killing and harming of fish, listed fish. And in doing that, we need to do an analysis and we need to ensure that the Corps' actions and the -- what are called interdependent and interrelated actions do not jeopardize federally listed species or adversely modify a designated critical habitat.

As an aside, this interdependent and interrelated actions, basically, you think of it as

those things that might happen, that would only happen but for that project.

In the case of this particular opinion, the water diversions down at Mirabel and Wohler are an example of interdependent and interrelated action. We wouldn't be getting the water if they weren't releasing the water out of the reservoirs.

It's a large project, and we're considering a lot of things. What we looked at were the operations at Warm Springs Dam and Coyote Valley Dam. Horrendously, in looking at the effects of the flood control operations, the hydroelectric project operations at both dams and water supply releases from the dams.

We're also looking at the channel maintenance by Sonoma Water Agency and Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control District. There's channel maintenance for flood protection in the Russian River main stem and in Dry Creek, below Warm Springs Dam, and something which Sonoma County called Zone 1A.

That's basically a geographic area that encompasses, call it the urban Santa Rosa area. It's like Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, primarily. And so there's a lot of flood, you know, flood control channels and hardened channels, and we are -- we were providing taking exemptions for flood maintenance activities in

Zone 1A.

Other things we're looking at were the water level management of the estuary at Jenner, where fish hatchery operations at the Warm Springs Dam and at the Coyote Valley Dam, the Corps operates a fish facility up there as well.

And we're also -- we're considering the water diversion operations by SCWA, as I said at Mirabel and Wohler.

What we were looking at was the effect of all of these various activities on three particular salmonoid species, and believe it or not, southern resident, killer whales, orca, I'll tell you about that in a minute.

We were interested in looking at the effects of the project on chinook salmon which was listed as threatened coho salmon which is endangered, and steelhead which are also threatened.

We were years into the process, and only in -- I think in the last year, someone in, I think, our regional headquarters said that we needed to look at orca because there were concerns that there was some populations of orca that actually feed largely on chinook salmon. And these projects affecting chinook salmon and orca, which was listed as endangered, was an

issue, so we looked at that. And actually, we kind of dismissed that pretty quickly because this project does not adversely affect chinook salmon, does not have significant impact on chinook.

When we talk about the species, the coho, chinook and the steelhead, we're not talking about Alaskan coho, we're not talking about Sacramento River fish. Our agency basically lists the species in geographic units. I'm not going to get real technical with you here, but this is the chinooks, Central California chinook units.

And what I've done is, we got the Russian River watershed which is in the dark, and that's part of this particular unit. You can see the relative side of the Russian River and its proximity and location within that particular listed unit.

And in the case of the coho, you can see that the Russian is rather large. It's -- this color here, that is the area where the CCC coho are located.

And they basically extend right along here. And you can see that the Russian River is very large portion of the area of the listed coho, and it's centrally located, and it's really important watershed for trying to recover coho.

And likewise, for the Central California coast

steelhead, it basically is the Bay Area populations, as well as the Russian River.

And the Russian River is, you know, the northern side of the entire listed unit. So the Russian is a very important watershed.

When we do this analysis, here's the basic organizations for those that you aren't going into the 300 pages. We -- we first have to look at the status of the species. We look at those three species and we have to consider, you know, how -- how are they doing, what -- what are the limiting factors for these species, you now, what -- in the situation when the coho, they're in really dire condition.

So we do an analysis of that. Then we look at the environmental baseline within the action area. The action area is basically the area where the project literally has a physical effect or influence.

And in this case, we're talking about the Russian River watershed. And in looking at the environmental baseline, we have to consider all of the things that are -- have been adversely affecting the species.

And so in that discussion in the opinion, we have to talk about gravel mining, we have to talk about agriculture and water diversions and roads and all the

things that basically screw up the habitat for the species in the population.

Then we look at the effects. And that's literally what the project is doing to the species. And so you have the status, the baseline and the effects. And then once you do those three components, we have what is called the integration and synthesis section. And we basically look at the effects of the project, the actual physical, what's the project doing, and we put it in the context of the status of the species and the environmental baseline.

And so then after we've done the integration and synthesis, we come up with a conclusion. Is this or is this not jeopardy? Is this or is this not adverse modification of the critical habitat? And in the case of this project, we found that it was jeopardy for steelhead and for coho salmon.

And when you have a jeopardy determination under Endangered Species Act, you have to figure out what are we going to do about it. For that, you'll end up having what is called a reasonable and prudent alternative. It's -- you know, let's try to operate the project this way, now, we don't have jeopardy.

And then once you have that reasonable and prudent alternative crafted, you then add additional

terms and conditions to minimize taking of the species. Because even with a reasonable and prudent alternative, which we call an RPA, you're still going to have some minor losses, and so we try to minimize that.

I would point out that the reasonable and prudent alternative, we are, as an agency, encouraged to work with the action agency and the applicant to try to figure out how we could do that. And so we ended up having an interesting year with David Manning and me, over the past year and we worked out a reasonable and prudent alternative for avoiding jeopardy to coho and steelhead.

This is an interesting map. I apologize to people who are color blind, but this is a map of the southern part of the Russian River Watershed. The northern part of the watershed up in here does not have any coho habitat to speak of.

And what we have here is a map, all of these heavily bolded streams, if you will, are places that still have cold water habitat for coho salmon. They are very finicky fish. They like water really cold. And you can see that there's a fair number of places that are, you know, cold, with potential cold water. However, those are red, do not have coho. The coho are gone. The places in the watershed where coho remain are

few and far between, the Green Valley, Dutchville, Sheep House, the Miller Creek watershed and some tribs of the Austin Creek and that's it.

And for the most part, those last remaining coho are sustained by the hatchery program up at the Corps facility at Warm Springs Dam.

So we have a species which is -- we refer to an extinction vortex. There aren't a lot of them left.

And you can see that the Dry Creek, maybe I'm getting ahead of myself, but the Dry Creek has a ton of cold water, beautiful cold water, where the fish can reproduce but it is very fast.

So here is a fast summary of the project effects. First of all, high summer flows from Coyote Valley Dam impact rearing steelhead habitat in the upper mainstem Russian River. High summer flow releases from Warm Springs Dam adversely affect salmonoid rearing habitat in Dry Creek in 14 miles of it.

And high summer flow release adversely affect salmonoid rearing habitat in the estuary down near Jenner.

Management of water levels in the estuary to protect flooding down the Jenner area, also, the way it's being done, adversely affects salmonoid rearing in the estuary. Also found that annual dam inspections up

at Coyote Valley Dam stop flow totally in the east branch of the Russian.

And it's for a short time, but still you're shutting off the flow, and that is not good.

We also found releases of turbid water from Coyote Valley Dam are a concern.

Regarding the high summer flow releases, we conducted an interagency study in 2001. We had the Sonoma County Water Agency, NMFS, DFG and the Corps, biologist, we went out, we did assessment of both the upper Russian River, upstream of Cloverdale, and the 14 miles of Dry Creek below the Warm Springs Dam. And we found that current velocities were really fast of the way the project is currently operated. And the more release you have, the worse it gets. And there wasn't a lot of cover where the fish hide behind, so you're really reducing the amount of habitat in these areas.

We found that the high summer flow releases out to Lake Mendocino affects 34 miles of rearing habitat and 14 miles of Dry Creek.

And high summer releases from the two reservoirs create unnaturally high flows that come into the estuary. And that high inflow basically interferes with the natural processes of lagoon closer or more normal dynamic of the Central California estuaries.

Very briefly talking about the estuaries, here's a picture that basically shows Sonoma County water agency staff doing out of the extraordinary and basically go right out to the beach, and they cut a big hole in it. And ultimately, with the marine action, it basically washes open and it just creates an open estuary. Eventually, the ocean and river just widen that whole gap and that reduces the lagoon depths. It increases the salinity, it reduces it to somewhat complex dynamics.

And I'm gonna go into the best dissolved oxygen concentrations in the estuary. And fresh water lagoon formation is a common and normal thing, and they're normally very productive. Estuaries are usually these lagoons that would normally form are very valuable rearing habitat for salmonoids, and the way it's being operated, we believe is not good for production for lots of steelhead.

Here's the bottom line for the conclusions. First of all, status quo operations significantly impact the abundance of coho and steelhead. Status quo operations affect the population growth rates of coho and steelhead and affects the ecological diversity of those species.

And based on that, status quo operations

jeopardize cohos and the steelhead and adversely modifies their critical habitat. We did find that the status quo operations do not jeopardize chinook salmon or adversely modify their critical habitat. Don't have time to tell you why.

Now, what is the RPA that we worked out?

First of all, we call for reducing flows in main stem Russian River from about May through October. And that would benefit salmonid production in the estuary and 34 miles of the upper Russian River.

We couldn't exactly reduce flows in Dry Creek easily because it would shut off much of the water supply to Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Novato, and I think that would be a hard sell.

And so in order to deal with that, we call for a rather significant habitat enhancement of pool riffle habitat in 6 miles of Dry Creek plus the other areas beyond that 6 miles of Dry Creek, the installation of 20 large boulder clusters, which help reduce the velocity, which provides habitat for steelhead and coho.

The RPA also calls for adaptive management of the estuary breaching, and I'll talk about that later when Pam here goes through some of the specifics of the BO. And it also calls for strengthening the captive coho brood stock program up the Warm Springs hatchery.

It also calls for a feasibility study of building a Dry Creek bypass pipeline, but it doesn't say permitted or building, but it's kind of a back up plan if the -- if the habitat restoration project were to fail. I know it won't, but it's a back up. We have that.

And we have the installation of a back up water supply and pipeline to the Warm Spring Dam fish hatchery, and monitoring of fisheries, water quality, and aquatic invertebrates, and monitor occurring in the main stem Russian, the estuary and in Dry Creek.

This is my last slide.

So I showed you the RPA. The additional terms and conditions are to design and install minimum bypass through a pipeline in Coyote Valley Dam. And that would be for a 25 CFS flow. So that when they do the dam inspections every year, you don't shut the flow off in each branch.

Another term and condition is to study and implement dam release ramping rates that minimize the fisheries while ensuring flood protection. We also want the Corps to study the turbidity issues at the dam, so it's kind of a complicated issue. Don't have time to tell you about it. But we want them to develop and implement a plan to implement -- to minimize the

turbidity impacts to salmonoids, and we also want to see new fisheries at Mirabel water intake in -- I think it's like five years. It's not next year.

And lastly, we would like the Corps to improve genetics management of the hatchery steelhead program.

And so that is the BO in a nutshell.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Dr. Hearn, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Next on, Pam Jeane from the water agency will provide a brief overview of the current flows and the summary of the changes and flows of the BO, and she will be followed by Jessica Martini-Lamb, and David Manning of the Water Agency will discuss NEPA and CEQA processing changes proposed for Dry Creek. Bob Coey, from the Department of Fish and Game, will discuss projects in Dry Creek tributaries, and Bill Hearn will come back and discuss estuary management.

So with no further adieu, Pam, take it away.

PAM JEANE: Thank you. So I'm gonna kind of back up here and put some of this in context of the Russian River and the way we operate the river today, in the summertime specifically.

And just so you know, there's a little logo up here on this side, RRIFR. And we, as a result of the biological opinion are going to be starting a process to

look at in stream and restoration direction of the RRIFR, stands for Russian River Instream Flow and Restoration.

And we will be heading into environmental review process, and that this is the name of the project for that process. Jessica will describe that process to you when I'm done speaking.

So the Russian River water system has three main reservoirs that provide summer flow into the Russian River. The first reservoir is actually not in the Russian River watershed. It's in the Eel River watershed. It's lake called Lake Pillsbury. It's owned and operated by Pacific Gas & Electric. PG&E releases the water out of Lake Pillsbury dam, Eel River, and at Cape Horn Dam, and it's diverted through a tunnel into the Potter Valley.

In the Potter Valley, that water is used to create hydroelectric power, as well as provide water to farmers that farm land in that valley. The remainder of the water that's not used by the farmers does go down the east fork of the Russian River to Lake Mendocino.

Lake Mendocino is one of the two Corps of Engineers projects on the Russian River that Sonoma County Water Agency is the local sponsor for.

These, both Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma,

were constructed for three purposes, recreation, but most importantly, flood control on the Corps side, and water supply on the Sonoma County Water Agency side. Water is released out of Lake Mendocino, flows down the Russian River, and meets the water that's released out of Lake Sonoma and flows down Dry Creek, just south of the town of Healdsburg and just downstream of Healdsburg.

And the Sonoma County Water Agency's water diversion facility, as shown at the bottom of this slide, a little green star down there, that actually will not get highlighted. I apologize.

One of the requirements of our water rights except that Sonoma County Water Agency's water rights is that we maintain instream flows in summertimes, and three breaches of stream. Two of those breaches are on the Russian River. The first breach is sending from Lake Mendocino down to the confluence of Dry Creek.

The second breach that we maintain flow on is the lower part of the river, between Hacienda or between the confluence of Dry Creek out to the mouth of the Russian River at the ocean. And I'm skipping these on purpose, so I'll get back on that.

And the last breach that we have to meet a minimum flow requirements is on this breach downstream

of Lake Sonoma and Dry Creek. I'm skipping over these numbers here because they're a little bit too much detail for us here. I'm going to go over them again in a second.

One of the requirements of the biological opinion requires the water agency of Sonoma County Water Agency to obtain both permanent changes to instream flow requirements as well as interim changes to instream flow requirements from State Water Resources Control Board.

Those changes are spelled out in the biological opinion, and I'll give you sort of a synopsis of those here. When you came in the door earlier tonight or this afternoon, there is a handout out there. That top of the handout is titled "Russian River Water System." It's sort of blue green 8-1/2-by-11 handout, and it has this information on it with regards to instream flow requirements, what they are today versus what's being required in the biological opinion.

I'm going to run through those really quickly. And if you have questions about those, you're welcome to ask me afterwards, or I can give you a business card if you want to call me later. But the first section where the biological opinions requiring permanent changes inflows is the Russian River from Lake Mendocino essentially down to the mouth of Dry Creek where Dry

Creek comes into the river.

And decision 1610 flows between June and October of any given year range of 150 cubic feet per second to 185 cubic feet per second. Biological opinion is requiring a permanent change, a reduction down to 125 cubic feet per second.

Lower reach of the river between the Dry Creek confluence and Pacific Ocean, normal and dry year instream flow requirements currently are 85CFS in a dry year and 125 in a normal year. Biological opinion in a normal year is looking for 70 cubic feet per second, but also recognizes water agency operates with some buffer.

And so it would be approximately 85 cubic feet per second would be expected to be seen at our lowest gauge where we do monitoring, which is at Hacienda. The biological opinion also requires that the same dry flow that you would see today.

The last breach of the river that a permit change is being requested or required is on Dry Creek from Warm Springs Dam down to the Russian River.

Those flow requirements range from about 75 to 105 CFS currently in a normal year. And biological opinion is looking for a minimum instream flow requirement from May through October of 40 cubic feet per second. And I want to make sure that I make it

clear that this 40 cubic feet per second, which is a pretty big change from what we use today, will only be required if the structure changes that we make to the creek that Dave will describe to you are not successful.

Interim changes that are being required in the BO are only on the Russian River. There is no interim change required in Dry Creek. The first one is, again, in the upper Russian River, between the east fork and Dry Creek confluence. Again, the range today is 150 to 185 cubic feet per second between June and October. The biological opinion is requiring a reduction down to 125 CFS.

And the last change is in the Lower River, between Dry Creek all the way out to the mouth of the river. In the normal year, we see 125 cubic feet per second is our minimum now. And we are looking again in the biological opinion for interim change of about down to 70 cubic feet per second.

The process for amending this decision 1610 and changing our instream flow requirements with the State Water Resources Control Board will include a public outreach component, preparation of the EIR and certification of the -- I'm sorry, environmental impact report and certifications of documents as well as state board decision process.

And Jessica will talk about that, the preparation of the environmental impact report, impact statement. And I'm done.

JESSICA MARTINI-LAMB: The permanent interim changes to decision 1610 are going to require --

(Reporter interruption.)

JESSICA MARTINI-LAMB: The permanent interim changes to decision 1610 will require compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act. And State Water Resources Control Board will require a CEQA document in order to consider interim changes to decision 1610. And agencies currently evaluating the type of environmental document that will be needed.

The biological opinion is going to require the agency to petition for interim flow changes to decision 1610, and to be implementing those interim flow changes by 2010.

So to respond to the requirements for permanent changes to decision 1610, the agency is going to have to prepare a joint environmental impact report and impact statement that will address a minimum instream flow changes in the Russian River and Dry Creek, long term habitat restoration projects in Dry Creek, a potential Dry Creek bypass pipeline and changes

in estuary management.

EIR, EIS will also look at alternatives to those projects that are requiring the biological opinion. And in fact, the biological opinion states that during CEQA and NEPA process, alternatives to projects that are identified in BO may be identified, and those projects may also be able to meet the goals of restoring some habitat in the Russian River and Dry Creek.

So the EIR, Environmental Impact Report, the impact statement will evaluate the effects of the proposed projects on recreation, socio-economic and biological resources, water quality, cultural resources and hydroelectric facility operations at Coyote Valley Dam and Warm Springs Dam.

Other studies may be needed as issues are identified during the public scoping process of the EIR, EIS, and they may require additional studies.

So there's multiple opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental impact report and impact statement process. The water agency will issue a notice of preparation and notice of intent to prepare these environmental documents to the responsible agencies in the public.

After that, there will be a public review

period and scoping process, where we will hold scoping meetings with the public to help identify alternatives, and that will be evaluating the environmental document, and also to identify issues that needed to be addressed in the environmental documents.

We'll use that information from scoping process to prepare a draft EIR, EIS. And once that document's final, we'll file a notice of completion and issue a notice of availability, which will be followed by a longer public review period, and will hold public hearings to take comment on the draft environmental documents.

The agency will then use those comments to prepare responses to comments, and then a final environmental impact document.

We'll take that final environmental impact document to our board of directors for their consideration and approval. And at that meeting, the board will take public comments on whether or not to certify the document as final. If they decide to certify it, there will be finding on the feasibility of reducing or avoiding any significant environmental impacts that are identified in the document.

And at which time, there will be a second meeting by the board of directors where they will make a

decision of what we call project approval. And if the project is approved, then we'll file a notice of determination and record of decision, and that will conclude the environmental process.

So biological opinion actually requires the water agency to demonstrate progress in obtaining changes to decision 1610 both for interim changes and permanent changes.

So permanent changes, the water agency is required to file a petition to change the decision 1610 with State Water Resources Control Board within one year of issuance of the biological opinion.

And in 2009, 2010, we anticipate that will be issuing a notice of preparation and notice of intent. The biological opinion requires us to file that document within six months of the state board issuing a public notice of their acceptance of the petitioner to change decision 1610.

And the biological opinion requires the Water Agency Board to certify as final environment impact report and impact statement within four years of filing that original petition to change decision 1610 with the State Water Resources Control Board.

So in the meantime, we'll also be looking at implementing interim changes. So the next couple of

years, the water agency will be preparing CEQA compliance document and a petition for changing decision 1610 on the interim basis.

The biological opinion requires the agency to begin implementing interim changes to decision 1610 by 2010, and implementing those changes every year until the permanent change is approved by the state board.

And that concludes my presentation. Bob Coey?

DAVID MANNING: I'm actually -- I can just grab the microphone.

Hopefully, the volume is okay.

I tend to -- I'll try not to shout here.

So Bill has given us a bit of background about Dry Creek as has Pam, but just in case you didn't retain all that information, 14 miles long, run, of course, Lake Sonoma to the mouth of the river, our flow rate typically in our current operations, in the summertime is between 90 and 130 cubic feet per second. U.S. Army Corps takes over flood control releases during the wintertime, and those releases are typically in the 1,000 to 6,000 cubic feet per second range.

Dry Creek is a bit unique in the Russian River watershed --

(Reporter interruption.)

DAVID MANNING: It's also known to Warm

Springs hatchery at the base of Lake Sonoma, which is also where the coho recovery program is housed.

So what are the habitat conditions on Dry Creek. As Bill alluded to in 2001, we conducted the multi-agency flow and habitat study, looked at three different flow rates on Dry Creek, 47, 90 and 130 cubic feet per second.

We found that while the water quality was excellent, this water is extremely cold, 12-degree C.

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: Excuse me.

Just for a point of clarification, 1 cubic feet per second is about 7 1/2 gallons per second. So when you see a number of 100 cubic feet per second, it's under 800 gallons per second. Just so they understand it.

DAVID MANNING: Sure.

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: So 110 cubic -- thousand gallon per second or 60,000 gallons per minute. That puts the numbers in perspective. So, again, I just want everything -- it's good for us that we know it, but unless you're an engineer, that's --

DAVID MANNING: Absolutely. It will take quite a while to interpret this document. To all of you here, we're using some technical terminology, and we'll make ourselves available to clarify any of this points.

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: Just to convert cubic feet per second, you multiply by eight to convert. Make that aware to everyone. Thank you.

DAVID MANNING: So as Bill also mentioned, the really high water velocities in Dry Creek equate to poor habitat quality for rearing juvenile coho and steelhead.

This is the picture from that survey at a 130 cubic feet per second and that rather fast water in uniform looking habitat is what you'll find in the vast majority of Dry Creek. Our operations, both the Sonoma County Water Agency's and the Army Corps' operations have simplified this habitat.

We say at last structural complexity and that's woody debris, boulders, elements that break up the flow. Fish really need diverse habitat conditions, generally slower water velocity to optimize their growth and survival.

So what are some of the options to improve critical habitat in Dry Creek. As Bill mentioned, we can dramatically reduce flows from Warm Springs Dam, but of course that really affects water supply for 600,000 people. That also provide a lot of destruction to habitat the fish desperately need. We can bypass the flow in a pipeline around Dry Creek. That has a very high cost. It takes a very long time to complete a

project of that magnitude.

We could also -- and this is a sort of a preferred course, modify the stream channels to accommodate current water supplies and enhance the habitat. This is something to be implemented much more quickly and has multiple benefits to water supply both summer and winter habitat enhancement and stream bank protection.

So the biological opinion mandates a 12-year plan to restore habitat in Dry Creek, and monitor the results of the projects. It's multi-phased projects, multi-goals, the same graphic, which I'm going to step through, is also in the hall. I'll describe the components, you don't have to squint to read the very fine print.

Those goals are the completion of tributary enhancement projects, and Bob could describe those in just a minute. Completion of total 6 miles of restoration on the main stem of Dry Creek, at a variety the sites in the upper middle and lower portions of Dry Creek, treating a habitat across 14 miles of Dry Creek. Both summer and winter habitat improvements is a measure to protect bank stability, and also to preserve flow in our current water supply regime.

So stepping through this plan, by year three

of implementation of biological opinion in 2011, we'll have completed extensive restoration planning study in Dry Creek. Simultaneously, a feasibility study for pipeline alternative should be needed. Extensive biological monitoring, increased production from the coho brood stock program, putting small -- into Dry Creek. Bob will talk about that as well.

Five tributary enhancement projects, they really involve fish passage, and some small habitat improvement measures on those tributaries.

(Reporter interruption.)

By the sixth year -- of biological 2014 we'll have secured land owner agreements to allow us to construct a mile of main stem habitat restoration, again, at multiple sites in these projects.

And I'll show you some examples of them in just a moment -- to pools, back water areas, low velocity habitats. And some of these boulder clusters that Bill mentioned -- while performing bank stabilization and protection activity is what you see in the photograph below. And, of course, extensive monitoring which really extends through every phase of this process.

In the 9th year, we'll complete an additional two years of habitat restorations to main stem of Dry

Creek. So at that point, we'll have restored little amounts of habitat. Again, a variety of sites, extensive monitoring.

Year 10 is a pivotal time frame in this 12-year plan. So in 2018, we're going to step back and ask ourselves, "Are 3 miles of this habitat restoration really meeting the objectives?"

And those objectives again are the creation of low velocity of habitat. Are they performing as anticipated and improving the fish population? If the answer to that question is yes, the water agency will proceed to restore additional 3 miles of habitat by 2020 to get us to a total of 6 miles. If the answer is no, we may pursue a pipeline alternative, use the feasible study that was completed in the first three years of the project.

So what defines restoration success? NMFS, department of fish and game and water agency will all enter into an adaptive master plan. And you'll notice when you read this document a discussion about meet and confer about the restoration planning. The water agency will have to meet specific physical habitat criteria that have been recognized to provide beneficial habitat to coho and steelhead.

You'll see that described in the document as

well. And we also have to show a measurable response in the fish population. And exactly the form of that response is something that we'll have to determine in consultation with Fish and Game and NMFS, but it could be increases in abundance, growth rate survival.

So what are these projects? How will we accomplish this? NMFS and water agency have selected first rate consulting firm with an international reputation in doing these natural channel enhancements.

That company is Inter-Fluve in Oregon. They constructed five international channel enhancement projects since 1983 --

(Reporter interruption.)

Natural enhancement projects. That means really taking the stream and having it perform for fish in a way that it didn't previously.

So in Kelley Creek, Oregon, they're able to take a stream and add habitat elements to it that the fish have been shown to really grow well and survive in when they're placed in stream. This is a picture of the stream where stream banks were treated to protect them using by remediation techniques. There's also some large wood anchored and a part of this channel. This is an example of what might be a very small project as part of this large 12-year plan.

On the other side of the spectrum, Inter-Fluve constructed a 4,400 foot long side channel in Clackamas River, Oregon. This extensive project involved the engineering of 450 log structures in an incredibly complex channel that provides just the structural complexity these fish need at a variety of flows.

What you see here is the side channel at a lower flow, all of the log structures are elevated up so that when the water floods this site in the wintertime, the fish can find refuge from those high velocities behind some of those log structures.

So how do we know this working? We've got long term monitoring immediately post construction, that's that first slide. That is certainly not what the project looks like when it's finally constructed. We'll measure fish production in various reaches of Dry Creek by trapping fish as they emigrate through the stream, move down stream, towards the ocean after they finish their growth period in fresh water. We'll look at the habitats in a lot of detail the areas that were improved or enhanced and areas that were not.

That's actually the electro fishing operations that Fish and Game -- way of sampling stream looking for juvenile fish that was conducted last week as part of the pilot study. And we'll also be looking at the

growth and survival of the fish in a very direct way.

So as Pam mentioned, this Russian River instream flow restoration project is really all about multi-agency collaboration, where all the agencies assist in the planning. We see local, state and federal funding to construct and monitor these projects. But the really critical link here, especially for the restoration, is private landowner cooperation.

We see this entire effort moving forward really as a collaboration between the agencies and private landowners in Dry Creek to accomplish these critical restorations.

I'll just leave you with a picture of what we're trying to enhance, an adult coho salmon and adult steelhead, and that we'll find out about we're gonna do some of the tributaries, Bob Coey, Fish and Game.

BOB COEY: Bob Coey, senior fisheries biologist, Bay Delta region. Like Bill discussed, the effects of the project had to be analyzed in view of the California Endangered Species Act. And the Department of Fish and Game has been involved in this biological opinion all along, and we support the RPAs that have been developed for chinook salmon and steelhead. But we specifically had to evaluate the effects on coho salmon for the operations and to help recommend mitigations for

the water agencies operations and their effects on coho.

I'm going to be discussing three mitigations, tributary enhancement, smooth release and some monitoring.

Briefly kind of give you status of coho in the Russian for this a little bit. These 28 historic streams in Russian River watershed are those colored ones down below in Sonoma County.

Fish and Game surveys have found consistent presence in only three of those tributaries, Green Valley Creek, Dutchville and Dry Creek. With Green Valley Creek being the only streams that has naturally supported three consecutive year classes of the fish.

These projects were selected based on habitat surveys that Fish and Game and NOAA has conducted. And they've been documented in our recovery plans, both in Fish and Game's and NOAA's, I believe which has just been released.

The tributary projects, we recommended 10 projects for the water agency to consider, five of which must be implemented by year five of the project. All of them are in coho-bearing streams, 7 of the 10 are in the Dry Creek watershed.

All of these projects have been developed to benefit summer and winter survival of juvenile coho,

which has been the life stage that has been identified as having take under CESA.

All of the projects have and will involve pre and post consultation by NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Game, and the success of these project, as Dave indicated, will be monitored by the water agency staff and evaluated by a Fish and Game and NOAA.

The objective of these specific projects is to provide excellent coho habitat and rearing on conditions in the tributaries of Dry Creek during the first stages of the project's infancy.

As Dave discussed there's a lot of things coming down the line up to 20 years long. Under CESA, we require that there be immediate mitigations to coho to avoid jeopardy the species.

I don't have a time to go into the details of all these projects, but you can see that there are fish passage projects in Crane Creek, Wallace Creek and Miller Creek proposed. And in Dry Creek basin as well as Purrington, Willow Creek and Redwood Creek, which are tributaries to the Myacman drainage.

And then there are a number of instream projects sprinkled throughout the Dry Creek basin. Each one of these projects is thousands of feet in nature, sometimes miles, and specifically in the case of the

fish passage projects.

Types of projects that are specifically -- I'm not sure which this one is coming out, but erosion control, instream habitat improvements and barrier modifications. This is one of the projects that is proposed. It's a county culvert on Wallace Creek, and it's been identified through a survey as needing modification in the form of baffles to improve fish passage.

Crane Creek conditions there have been simplified, as Dave identified, through a farming and urban development and through the head cutting that has occurred in Dry Creek as a result of the historic gravel mining.

And so here, instream improvements and fish passage improvements are being planned. The idea there being that we deepen the channel and provide cover for juvenile salmon to make it through the summer.

Grape Creek, tributary to Dry Creek, the department has been working in this stream for quite a long time doing a lot of instream improvements and repairing improvements.

But there is a still a barrier in this system to a partial stage of the life stage of salmon. And this is a county culvert on West Dry Creek Road, and the

water agency is looking at baffling this culvert as well to improve passage.

Wine Creek, another tributary, has been over simplified through different activities, and also has a quite bit of a bank erosion occurring. So in Wine Creek, we're looking at doing bio-engineering repairing zone improvements as well as habitat restorations in the channel.

As Dave indicated, all of these projects have the required physical monitoring component based on peer reviewed protocols.

We'll see that they're constructed correctly and we'll -- the high flows. As well as a biological project monitoring component, both on Dry Creek and in the tributaries to validate that there's a fish response from the activity. Okay.

Another project is the Russian River brood stock program, and I'll just give you a little bit of a background here, so can you know what the context is.

Essentially, this project has been going on since 2001. Juvenile coho are captured from Russian River tributaries. They are reared to maturity and spawned at the Warm Springs hatchery. And then their offspring are released into historic barren coho streams. The fish are not released into the Russian

River. They're actually released into streams and return to the streams, not to the hatchery. This is a wild fish program.

This essentially describes the component of the life cycle that we're trying to address. We're supplementing the wild population here with juvenile fish so that they return back to adults, go to see and start to cycle over.

These fish are backpacked into remote areas of the Russian River basin and released into historic streams.

And this is the size of the fish that we've been releasing. These are presmolt essentially fried because we are releasing these fish early in the life stage. They're not domesticated, like normal hatchery fish can be depending on conditions.

And they're also the genetically correct fish for the Russian River basin that we've been working with NOAA fisheries, utilized a genetic matrix and have looked at the lineage of fish on this river over the past -- essentially about eight years.

These are the kinds of numbers for the fish we've been releasing since 2001. It's considerably increased to where we released close to 90,000 fish this year. But the change that is coming is that up to this

time, we've been releasing pre-smolts into the tributaries, and with the water agency will be funding for the next 10 years is the release of 10,000 smolts each year into the Dry Creek.

The reason this is significant is that we have very few fish, these are the streams that we've been planting, and we have very few fish, native fish and program fish in these streams.

Essentially, the brood stock program is continuing, but as we go down the road and the coho population continue to decline, we are essentially beginning to mine our own brood stock. What the water agency's action will do will make a run of fish coming up Dry Creek that will return to the hatchery, and this will reduce our reliance on the captive population.

Since 2001, we've been monitoring these fishes to see how this pilot program has been going. Until now, the department has been funding this monitoring through our restoration grants program. And in the future, the Army Corps of Engineers will be funding this monitoring, which includes late summer abundance to verify that the fish that we release are actually surviving, and they are.

Smolt abundance estimates to verify that the fish are going to sea, so they're surviving both summer

and the winter. And then we've just begun adult trapping on the tributaries to verify that we're getting actually returning adults from the ocean. We're just now at the phase of where we've been releasing a large enough numbers of fish and we're getting the return of fish based on material returns to actually see adults start to return.

I just want to say this has been a collaborative partnership with many involved and the department feels that that there is very many good actions in the BO to not only mitigate the effects of operations but to assist in the recovery of coho.

DR. BILL HEARN: This is the last of our little technical presentations. This concerns the estuary.

The estuary management is a complicated matter and we are going to need to adaptively manage the estuary for the enhancement of salmonid rearing habitat.

This is a similar to a picture I showed you a while ago. Basically, what happens is the ocean process has picked up a sand bar across the mouth of the Russian River, and it closes off the flow. And the inflow from the Russian River basically builds up the water level. Water level starts to rise at Jenner. And after a point, it threatens flooding.

And so the Sonoma County Water Agency goes down and they breach it. And the way the breached it is, they basically take the shortest distance between two points and they cut a slot in the sand bar, and then the ocean rushes in and becomes a marine system.

And what normally would be a fresh water lagoon becomes tidal, highly saline and shallow, and not particularly good for the survival of small steelhead.

Now, there are some steelhead that are -- you know, if they're up to about, say, 5, 6 inches long and they make it to the estuary, they can grow very well. So there is this what we call a half pounder football-sized steelhead that do utilize the estuary. But what we want is a more productive estuary with lots of juvenile salmonoids rearing there.

When the lagoon closes again, and there's salt water in there, what happens is the salt water is -- it's more dense than fresh. It sticks on the bottom, it heats up, and that solid water becomes anoxic. And so you end up low dissolved oxygen and you have a dead zone in effect in the deeper pools of the estuary.

And that's not good. Here's a picture of one that, one of the notchings. And they basically find the closest point and they just hack a slot, and then create that estuary.

Here's an interesting photo of the estuary before it has been notched. And what we have been thinking, and I may be getting ahead of myself, is that you could extend that channel along here, make a longer, lower-sloped channel. You would not necessarily get immediate breakage by the ocean into the estuary. And you would get a what we call a perched lagoon where you maintain some depth in the estuary, and it would maintain a fresh water habitat that would be highly productive for rearing juvenile fish.

So the objective for this adoptive management is to manage the estuary as a closed system. And there are basically two options. One is you could have it entirely closed, and entirely flows the inflow that's coming into the estuary, would basically percolate through the sand. And you'd have a sand bar right across the mouth, and you'd have inflow equals outflow, and you'd have an entirely fresh water lagoon, or you could have a perched lagoon. That is where you have the flow essentially spilling over the sand barrier at the mouth.

Our objective is to maintain depths of 3- to 8 feet. We'd like to try to get about 3- to 8-foot depth in the estuary between May and October 15th. And again, that's adaptive management. The deeper the

better, meaning, it would be nice if we get 8-foot, but then again, see what we can do. I'd be happy with 3- or 4 feet depths.

And the reason it says on October 15th is that we do not want to have a closed lagoon that runs straight into December, which I think we would be adversely affecting the chinook salmon population which is running rather strongly during the months of October and November.

The biological opinion calls for a three stages of activity in which we start by trying to manage the breaching by -- by the way that we breach the sand bar at the mouth. We try to create that, elongate wider channel with the reduced slope and to try to cut it to the north that would give you a longer stretch of beach where you could provide that outlet channel.

If we are not successful, I hope we are, and I think we will be based on what I saw out in the estuary this about three weeks ago -- the water level actually was, but the stream was actually running right around on that sand beach that I showed you three slides ago. I think we'll be successful. But if not, there is a jetty that is sitting at the mouth of the Russian River. And it's been there for -- I don't know how long but long time, about 50 plus years. And it is -- we want to look

at modifying that jetty.

That jetty is a -- it affects the percolation rate of the water through the sand. It's a large blockage to that percolation. And so we may want to remove the jetty. We may want to perforate it. We may want to attach a pipe to it. But somehow, we look at that jetty and try to deal with it.

And so there's a study plan that first needs to be prepared for that, and then we'll go forward with the implementation of dealing with a jetty. And if the jetty doesn't work, then we have other options. And that's what you might call if nothing else works where thinking that possibly we could elevate some structures in the vicinity of Jenner, we're looking for other solutions. I mean, we're -- this is -- we're open to suggestions.

And the local input is definitely welcome on this. There is a community meeting on Wednesday, November 19th, I understand, down at the Jenner Community Hall. I would be there, and we will talking more details about the adaptive management of the estuary.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you very much, Dr. Hearn. I appreciate that.

Next, Anne Crealock and Ann DuBay with the

water agency, will discuss opportunities for public participation in the remainder of this process.

ANNE CREALOCK: Even though the biological opinion is a final document, there's still a lot of decisions to be made as we move forward in implementing it. So there's so plenty of opportunities for public participation. That's what I'm going to talk about.

We've set up three different avenues for public participations both to distribute information to the public and receive input back.

First, as Jessica -- as Jessica Martini-Lamb has already described, our environmental review classes will have several opportunities to comment.

And second, we'll host several community meetings in the coming weeks throughout the watershed, and Ann DuBay will tell you a little more about that in a moment.

And third, we're conducting what we're calling issues assessment, and that's what I'm going to be focusing on for the next few minutes.

The purpose of this assessment is two fold. First, it's to talk with individuals and organizations and who might be affected during the implementation of the biological opinion.

Second, it's going to tell us how to create a

good public process for discussion and input. And to conduct this issues assessment, we've hired the Center for Collaborative Policy, which is based out of CSU Sacramento. And they specialize in working with government agencies, stakeholders and public on collaborative processes that deal with really tough issues such as what we're dealing with.

And they might sound familiar to some of you because the Center recently worked with stakeholders in the Sonoma Valley on the Sonoma Valley ground water management plan.

The assessment will include confidential interviews by two impartial mediators from the center to assess key issues and determine how local communities would like to address those issues.

So those two mediators are here this evening, and I'd like to introduce them to you. The names are Gina Bartlett and Ariel Ambruster. If you'll stand up so people know who you are.

The center is going to make sure to talk with people throughout the region who have a variety of interests including those listed on the screen here. And in fact, it's very likely that many of you this evening will be contacted in one way or another.

Once the interviews are complete, Gina and

Ariel will analyze the results in light of a variety of factors, such as those listed on this slide.

And the outcome of the assessment will be a report that summarizes the results of their interviews and recommends options for public involvement. As I mentioned earlier, the interviews will be confidential.

But the information shared in those interviews will be included in the report without attributing that information to its author.

As far as time line goes, Gina and Ariel are ready to start contacting people this week and will continue to conduct interviews through November.

We're expecting their results and their recommendations by December or January.

So if you'd like to receive updates about public involvement, be sure to sign in this evening, and please include your contact information, especially e-mail and phone numbers, as those are very useful.

If you'd like to find out more about the Center for Collaborative Policy, check out their website, it's up here on the screen.

And we have a website -- we have a website dedicated to the Russian River instream flow and habitat restoration project at sonomacountywater.org. Check out that website as well.

And now, Ann DuBay is going to cover upcoming community meetings, so thank you.

ANN DUBAY: Hi, thank you. I'm Ann DuBay, public information officer with the water agency. And there's a lot to digest in the biological opinion as you know. And there's a lot for the community to digest and a lot of questions. So starting in early November, we are holding a series of community meetings. Each meeting will take place from 6:30 to 9:00 o'clock. And from 6:30 to 7:00, it will be an open house where you can come and look at maps and look at documents and talk to staff informally one-to-one. And then at 7:00 o'clock, we'll go ahead and start with some staff presentations, and there will be plenty of opportunities to have questions answered and to ask your questions.

So the first meeting will be in Healdsburg, and the focus of that meeting is going to be the Dry Creek changes. So Dave and other folks will go into more details about what's being proposed in Dry Creek. That will be Villa Chanticleer.

The second meeting is on the next night, on November 6, and that will be in Guerneville at the Veteran's Hall, and that's gonna be on proposed flow changes.

And just as I see some of you writing, we

have -- you should have a blue handout, there's plenty up front. This has all the meeting dates and times on it, so you want to make sure you grab one of these.

The third meeting is on Thursday, November 13, and that's up in Ukiah. And that would be the board of supervisors chambers. The focus on that meeting will be on flow changes also.

The then fourth meeting is in Jenner. As Dr. Hearn mentioned, that's going to focus on estuary adaptive management.

So I hope to see you there at those meetings. They're open. Please tell the folks in your communities about them. And there will be information posted on the water agency website. You go to this RRIFR logo, the Russian River instream flow and restoration logo. Click on that, along with other information.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Ann, have we made the information available to these folks where the biological opinion can be --

ANN DUBAY: Yeah. The biological opinion can be downloaded or looked at from our website. You go to that RRIFR logo and click on it. And there's a biological opinion, there's also a press release on that. We will have up on that site the frequently asked

question handouts that all of you should have picked up outside, and community meeting information, so...

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Very good. Thank you. I think it's the -- the hope that the PPFC is a requirement under the biological opinion will require ongoing participations, and my suggestion simply is to wait until we have the issues assessment completed this spring.

And the PPFC in my mind should reconvene at that point. If there are written or I should say requests for public speakers, people will fill out cards and should be happy to get those. And as they are making their way forward, I just might say that we, in fact, do now have a road map for improving our fisheries.

And I think it's everybody's interest in this room to see that we do our best to bring those fisheries back to healthy status and hopefully at some point in the future get them off the Endangered Species Act.

And really, so many people have worked so hard in preparing what I think is a very thorough documents. These efforts are doable. I know that they come with some degree of work and some degree of controversy about some of the suggestions. But I think the bottom line as I understand it is that we do have this blueprint, it's

a final document.

It is what we're going to have to achieve and I hope that people will certainly put their best foot forward in helping all these agencies and parties in actually getting these info letters.

So I think this is really high mark day and hopefully, we'll make all this a reality.

First, Jake Mackenzie, please.

JAKE MACKENZIE: I don't know how my card got up there so quickly, but, Mr. Chair, I'm pleased to be here this evening. I stand in front of you as the chair of the water advisory committee.

This is a committee, which as you well know and your colleague, Mr. Kelley, well know, represents the eight contractors, which has a relationship for the wholesaler of water in Sonoma County Water Agency and has been noted in the frequently asked questions document. There are going to be potential impacts on the 600,000 people that we represent. That number has previously been mentioned.

And as someone who at the moment is running for reelection and is out walking in the streets of Rohnert Park, the cost of water is something that is on the minds of at least 43,000 citizens of the 600,000.

We, having just introduced an increase in

water rates based on the increase of water per acre foot from our wholesaler, the Sonoma County Water Agency. And of course, the questions and the facts that are of interest is how much will this project cost, and then who will pay for it. And the rate payers are mentioned. Then it says, if there is less water in the creek won't that mean less water for the people.

And does the biological opinion require pipeline to be built from Lake Sonoma to Russian River? We've heard something about that this afternoon.

And so before I make a couple of statements and sit down, I'd just like to say first of all, congratulations on the acronym. This is a splendid acronym. RRIFR, it rolls off the tongue. It tells you what you're talking about, it's very elegant. And I'm a creator of acronyms in my old career in the U.S. EPA, I was renowned for acronyms, but this is quite excellent.

Secondly, this, in fact, is a very significant document. And those of us in the contractor group, and I include our technical advisory committee, the chair of which is here with us this afternoon, Chris, if you could just be recognized, and our water advisory committee which consists of elected officials, we have been following and have been involved to some extent in this process.

And we have -- in fact, some of us have gone back to Washington DC and lobbied and talked about the need for this to be issued promptly. And I guess now is prompt because here's the day, finally, after all these years. So, we, as contractors clearly have a significant interest in what is now a final document.

We expect to be involved, our attack meeting on Monday coming up. This will be discussed when we meet as the water advisory committee on the first Monday in November. This will be discussed. I guess, we'll be interviewed it would seem by these ladies who were over on the left there, and we'll look forward to that.

But I think just in conclusion, Mr. Chair, we will be working with you, we do promise our cooperation both of the technical and at the elected level. We have and we are going to be significantly impacted by the implementation of this biological opinion.

We have a record of putting money into projects to help in the restoration and the protection of fishes, and we'll continue to do that.

But I do have to say that we also must be aware of costs. There are a lot of very unhappy rate pairs out there who are recognized in here as some of the people to pay for this. And when we conserve, when we put into effect interim -- you know, our conservation

measures, 15 percent for the last two years, to be interim flow requirements to help protect the fishes, and when our customers reduce their comsumption of water, and then we go to budget discussions with the Sonoma County Water Agency. And the cost per acre of foot of water goes up because we're using less, that logic does not appeal to the rate pairs. They do not understand it.

There tend to be concerns now with these pocket book issues, and we who are involved in this know that this is essential for the preservation of the species. But I'm just here to say that we must have an outreach program that is not just talking to the people who are concerned at the mouth of the Russian River, not just the people who are concerned about what habitat restoration may go into the Dry Creek, but those 600,000 people who are going to be asked to pay part of this cost.

So thank you, Mr. Chair, thank you panel, and thank all of you for the hard work that's gone into this. Much appreciated.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Great. I'm sure the ladies that you mentioned have taken down those very suggestions about how we're going to access the 600,000 people.

And your talk, Mr. Mackenzie, reminds me I'm supposed to admonish people to hold their comments to two minutes.

JAKE MACKENZIE: I missed that.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: By a mile, but we're gonna ask people to please move along as quickly as they can.

First, Suki Waters. Is Suki here? Yes, please.

SUKI WATERS: Hi, I'm Suki Waters. I'm from Jenner, California. I went to a one room school house there. My great, great, great grandmother actually was at Fort Ross when the Russians arrived.

I have several questions that came up. I just became aware of this a few days ago. I'm sure I'll have more after I get through the 380 pages of biological opinion.

I believe just from right off the top, that there's many more questions that need to be asked prior to actually purposely blocking off the mouth of the river.

Historically, yes, the mouth would close a lot, but since the Redwood logging industry and the formation of the town in Jenner, people have built within the normal floodplain. So I'm sure that there's

going to be a lot of questions asked and need to be addressed how to prevent flooding.

And also, we have the harbor seal colony there. And study show that when the mouth is closed, the harbor seals are impacted by more human and dog issues up on the colony. I suspect that if the mouth were to be closed permanently, that it is possible that the colony could be impacted to the point of no longer existing.

Also, there's many other wildlife within the estuary. We have a lot of shrimp, and these are estuary shrimp. And I'm curious as to what the changes in salinity over extended period of time, and how would that affect them.

Now, granted, ideally, we would have never have done the work on the jetty in the late '20s and early '30s. That also impacted a lot of things in the area. Things have changed since European contact. For example, in the original work on the jetty, what lies underneath that Goat Rock parking lot is a very productive historic plant bed that the native village relied on there. We've changed things over the years to the point where there's many things that can't be changed back just by closing the mouth up.

I think we need to take further studies in

finding out what can actually be repaired and what can't. And being that there are studies that also shows that if we don't make changes, and I understand why you want to make changes for the salmonoid and steelhead populations, but if things don't change the way we've been going, we may no longer have a fishery as early as 2040.

So I understand the concern here. However, at the same time, I have concerns that since these changes have made, we have run off that comes from the streets from Santa Rosa and from upstream.

All any toxic run off, anything that comes in that filters there through the river, and all those downstream, and we're talking about blocking that out up at the mouth of the Russian River and filter that through the sand berm where our local public and wildlife frequents, and so I'm also curious if there's been any studies on that.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Suki, I'm gonna have to ask you to conclude, and what we'll do is the folks here are happy to discuss some of this with you. And also, there will be more forums. And one of the beauties about adaptive management is that it's going to be a work in progress as Dr. Hearn, Mr. Butler referred to, is that we're going to get through all of these things,

and we certainly won't do it tonight in the next two minutes. But I think these are fair questions and I would encourage you to deal with Ann or -- either Ann or the ladies from the -- forgot their name.

ANNE CREALOCK: Center for Collaborative Policy.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Yes. That would be the greatest form to take it out.

SUKI WATERS: One other comment now, we're just starting to get our tulle beds back that were historical for the coast Miwok and the Pomo they're tuna boats for fishing and collecting and we do make boats -- those are just starting to come back.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you for being here. I appreciate that.

I have a note here from Vesta Copestakes, is it? Yes, and I don't know if you have a comment or you're asking?

VESTA COPESTAKES: Yeah, I do.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Come on up. I think it has to do with Green Valley Creek -- having a hard time reading this, but you were curious about a project with that had to do with Green Valley Creek?

VESTA COPESTAKES: Yeah. One of things that I heard was that one of the three streams that still has

fish is Green Valley Creek. And A number of years ago, the Forestville Chamber of Commerce sponsored a -- Planning Association sponsored a Green Valley Creek restoration project.

And a number of volunteers have carried it on. And the water agency was somehow called to funding part of that as well. It's been a number of years that this project has been going on, and I'm wondering if the project is why the fish are still there.

Are these volunteers responsible for making sure the fish are still there, would the fish still be there if the volunteers had put all these hours and hours and hours of efforts into it. It's both --

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I don't know how to answer that question. Absolutely, not the fish wouldn't be there.

VESTA COPESTAKES: So that's really the volunteers --

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I haven't lost my desire for elected office.

VESTA COPESTAKES: They're out there every Sunday. They still carry buckets of water to make sure the fish have pools of water.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: It's great stuff.

VESTA COPESTAKES: And it sounds like it's

similar to some of the restoration you're talking about because it's bank restorations, it's creating places for fish to hang out and have pools, et cetera.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Very good.

VESTA COPESTAKES: And the other question I have was around the 600,000 people who would be impacted by less water if we were to do that. They still have lawns, and of course this is my own personal mission is to eliminate all lawns in California.

So water conservation may have been cut down by 15 percent but it doesn't seem to be enough. Is there anything in the future that would simply eliminate lawns. I mean, even the water agency in Forestville has a lawn. I'm not getting why there are all these lawns?

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Like I said, I haven't lost my instincts for political office, and I'm not going to answer that one at the moment. But I do appreciate the message, though, which is a serious one, the conservation.

I mean, if you take a look at the county center, for example, we're doing xeriscape and nonwater required planting. I think you'll see more of that in the future, not less. Thank you.

Tom Roth from Congressman Lynn Woolsey's office?

TOM ROTH: Thank you very much, Chairman Smith. And thank you very much to the Public Policy Facilitating Committee, did I get that off? And the Corps of Engineers and the water agency for putting together this meeting. It's very informative.

I think it's a good start of the very long process that we're all going to go through, and there's probably going to be a lot of agony as well as pride, hopefully, at the end.

I have a lot of questions which I'm not going to take up the time to ask right now, but I have one really basic question that I'd like to ask Dr. Hearn. And that is, what constitutes success for this project?

Do you have numbers that you're aiming for? Do you have goals of how many fish, how many coho, how many steelhead should be in the Russian River system. Is there a minimum, is there a maximum and how -- if you do have numbers, how did you determine this?

DR. BILL HEARN: We're basically approaching it from more of a habitat standpoint. We know through lots of analysis, I won't go into that, the closure of the estuary could -- should be a much more productive, more natural system.

And so we have a monitoring program to look at their biological response to our efforts, and we want to

close the estuary. And we believe that that, you know, that would be considered, if you're looking for success, that would be success relative to the estuary.

In Dry Creek, the flows and the quality habitat is basically blown away by the high flows. And so therefore -- then we looked at it and it looks like much lower flows would be better. But as David said, well, you could have a pipeline.

And in fact, we were pursuing a pipeline for years until only just this year. And it's expensive, and it would take 15 years. And so therefore, we're looking at trying to fix that high velocity habitat problem by putting in the pool riffle habitat, the velocity refugia fixing it up. And we'll be looking at the biological response to that, but we don't have a number of fish. But we do have the enhancement of that, habitat. And we have clear statements as to how much habitat should be fixed. I would say that those are two principal objective criteria.

And by lowering the flows in the summer in the upper Russian River, we have found that the quality of the habitat would be markedly improved as well. So by doing that, you have increased enhanced production up there as well.

TOM ROTH: Thank you very much, and I look

forward to talking to you.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you for coming, Tom.

Next is -- if I'm reading this correctly, Zeno Swijtink?

(Reporter interruption.)

ZENO SWIJTINK: S-W-I-J-T-I-N-K, Z-E-N-O.

So I had a question also for Bill Hearn. The river to me is a very complex and interrelated system. And a project like this will be like the effects of a particular interference with the system.

And obviously, there are many other effects or project that goes on in the river constantly that affect the same variables that you're looking at. And so in this biological assessment to you in the opinion, you proposed a number of measures, and my concern is that how are they going to interrelate the other projects in the watershed.

DR. BILL HEARN: Say that again?

ZENO SWIJTINK: How are you going to work together with other people that also do project in the watershed? It seems like you kind of operate under the assumption that this is the only thing that's going on in the watershed.

And in particular, you spoke some of those,

I'm a member of the Russian River Water Council. And there is a project that has been funded by the Army Corps of Engineers for years, which is called the Russian River adaptive management system.

And so the question is, why these two adaptive management projects in the watershed should we not spend our tax money kind of more sensibly than having all these special projects. And in relation to that, I wonder what's the board review of project. You mentioned the interdependent effects.

So for example --

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Mr. -- Zeno, if I may, why don't we give Dr. Hearn a chance to respond to you?

DR. BILL HEARN: I would love to be able to just answer what -- respond to what you said. We're looking at the project which we have defined. The project which is the flood control, water supply operations of the Corps and Sonoma County water agency, and channel maintenance activities.

And that is the project we're looking at. We're providing take authorization for that project, and we're looking to see what is the effect of those very activities on the fish.

And granted there are lots of things, I mean, there's agriculture, there's road building, there's

gravel mining, you name it, there's lots of things that are happening, but we're not consulting on this biological opinion on all of those other nonproject activities.

ZENO SWIJTINK: No, no. I understand.

DR. BILL HEARN: So we're focused on that, those projects, this project, and what do we do in order to minimize the effects of it. And so we have analyzed that and we end up with these particular recommendation.

ZENO SWIJTINK: Okay.

Let me then just finish with a -- kind of this follow-up question here. What is the borderline of this project? For example, you mentioned this concept of interdependent effects?

For example, summer flows diverted from the Russian River main stem both by the water agency and by people that have water rights and probably by a number of other people. Now, in a way, that is a effect of the project that was in -- would you disagree? The effect that people can divert in the summer flows from this water, is an effect of the project.

DR. BILL HEARN: Correct.

ZENO SWIJTINK: And so then the question is, have you looked into that?

DR. BILL HEARN: Yes.

ZENO SWIJTINK: Because often that water flows back into the river heat control or other functions in the -- on the -- by the people that take the water out.

DR. BILL HEARN: We did look at that. For example, we looked at the water temperature affect. We look at the water temperature in the Russian River, in the main stem of the Russian River. So we have a handle on that, and that incorporates the existing water diversions. I mean that --

ZENO SWIJTINK: Including the illegal diversion?

DR. BILL HEARN: In fact, yes. Correct.

ZENO SWIJTINK: And that's somewhere in your --

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I think I'd suggest that you read through the document, and if you'd like to, I'm sure that Dr. Hearn --

ZENO SWIJTINK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you very much. We have a couple more speakers. David Keller?

DAVID KELLER: Good evening. I want to thank you all for the work that you've done on this. It's remarkable to see you all in one place at one time. Thank you.

David Keller, Friends of Eel River Bay Area

Director. Needless to say, as you're well aware, the source of a good deal of the summer flows in the Russian River through Lake Mendocino are Eel River water.

And so first of all, in terms of the public outreach, I think it's really important -- glad to see Supervisor Delbar here, but I would like to see outreach into the Eel River watershed that is affected by the diversions, so that means Mendocino Humboldt County as well. They're stakeholders in the outcome of this and will be affected, and I appreciate meeting or solicitation of information and opinions from there.

Secondly, how does this biological opinion process that you outlined in detail here, how will this affect the timing on the water agency, WSTRP EIR, which was being held off until this is complete or are there significant changes that need to be made to the EIR, is anybody have an estimate on what the timing of that right now.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I believe -- I don't know if we have a time certainly for -- maybe Pam or Jessica can tell me what the release...

We don't know. They're going to have to go through the opinion and pull the pieces out but obviously, you'll be certainly notified when it comes out.

DAVID KELLER: Okay.

I appreciate that. Following up on Zeno's questions about other diversions, other impacts. This focuses as you described particularly on the joint operations of Corps of Engineers and the water agencies, and to a lesser degree, the Russian River's districts operations, primarily of two dams and two reservoirs and releases from that.

And yet, the flows in the river, particularly the summer base flows, are composite of far more than what comes out of the dams. And as so Zeno was saying, a critical component is looking at legal and illegal diversions. And pumping from the river, both from tributaries and ground water, that has to be part of the solution as this loss of soil cover through logging operations, through vineyard expansion, and all that, leads to a question again from the Eel River perspective.

If flows are reduced in the Russian River during the summer, does that water get to stay in the Eel River because we sure think it should. We have fish that are in trouble there. They need water. And if we continue operating the system as if the Eel River is merely unidentified and endless supply of water for the Russian River, neither the Russian River nor the Eel

River will ever get to being cured, and that's really critical.

Another piece, of course, you have to deal with is the gravel mining and the impacts on the aquifer storage in the Russian River. That needs to be part of your calculations on this.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you.

Brenda Adelman, and then Mr. Phillip Gitchell.

BRENDA ADELMAN: Thank you.

This has been a very good meeting with lots of good explanations about what you're doing and a good start to this process.

I had a lot of concerns about flows, but I'll save that for the Guerneville meeting and concerns about the estuary and it will be out in Jenner.

But there's one issue that wasn't brought up at all that I've been very concerned about all along. And I have an article here that was -- came through e-mail on July 31st, '08 about the National Marine Fisheries Service will review the effects of 37 pesticides on salmon and steelhead under a lawsuit settlement reached about that time. They'll complete reviews over a four-year period. The first deadlines are in October, they're supposed to finalize three

biological opinions on organophosphate pesticides, and most of it found in California and Pacific Northwest in rivers used by salmon and steelhead.

I'm just wondering if this is going to be looked at at all. I have a lot of concerns about emerging contaminants besides the pesticide issue. You've all heard about it a lot.

Thus far, nobody wants to do much about it because it's such a difficult issue. We continue to discharge a lot of waste water. We have run off from urban areas. We have agricultural operations all contributing to the problem. And while I think your efforts are fine and may end up in really good results, it just seems to me that this is also an essential aspect of this.

And if there isn't some activity along that line, concurrently, then you may be wasting time and money with this other efforts. So just seems like both things have to be pursued. And my question to Dr. Hearn is, will NMFS be doing anything along these lines as a result of this lawsuit that happened up north? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thanks, Brenda.

DR. BILL HEARN: I hear your concern about that. I'm not the person to talk to quite frankly. I

mean, I'm aware of the consultations concerning pesticides but I really am not -- it's not my bailiwick. And I have not -- I don't know the details quite frankly. Dick, do you have a handle on that?

DICK BUTLER: No. I think that consultation is being conducted back at our headquarters. We are not directly involved. We're concerned about those kinds of contaminants.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Phillip Gitchell. And again, we are running about half an hour behind, so I really appreciate it if you could move as quickly as you can.

PHILLIP GITCHELL: Thanks a lot for showing up here. I definitely want to see something work here for the estuary to get better if it's feasible. But from what I'm seeing here, it's seems like they want to see if it's feasible afterwards. Do it and then see if the end result is better.

And basically, the river is deeper than 3 feet to 8 feet, and is deeper all the way up. And from what I can see here, the only reason that it would not be that deep is because we would be cutting the flow from 180 cc down to 70 cc, which is less that half. And that would be the only reason why it would get that shallow. And the only reason why you would need to make a dam

there and try to turn it into a lake. And the river does open up by itself.

If it were not to flood, in fact, it would actually open up on its own. You also have, if it were closed completely, I don't see any issue here about estuary fish passages.

How are salmon from the wild gonna come from the ocean and get in as well as shad and other types of fish that are coming in, and let's see. Basically, from what I can see, the town of Jenner should receive the same evaluation process, the Coyote Creek and Warm Springs Dam, concerning basically environmental socio-economic and the recreational impact. So that's all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Gitchell.

Chuck Williams? Chuck Williams, and then I'm going to wrap this up.

Mr. Williams?

CHUCK WILLIAMS: Yeah. I have two questions. First one is you mentioned the east fork, that there's a problem with the east fork drying up during dam inspection, and I have two parts of that question.

Is that I understand historically not only that tributary, but also the main Russian River

virtually dried up into trickle and pond type style, so I'm wondering what really is, what's the exact impact that virtual drying up has in this some other fish.

The other second part of that question is, so what, it's above the Lake Mendocino, and there is no fish ladder. So how does the east fork of the Russian River impact anything with salmonoids?

DR. BILL HEARN: That's easy. We're talking about the east branch downstream from Coyote Valley Dam. We're not talking about east branch above Lake Mendocino, downstream from it.

CHUCK WILLIAMS: Downstream.

DR. BILL HEARN: Downstream from --

CHUCK WILLIAMS: But what's that, only about a mile long?

DR. BILL HEARN: That's correct. And every year, the Corps does a safety inspection. They do their thing, they check out the dam and its facility, and they just flip off the switch, and there's no water in the east branch.

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: If I can interject, this year it was in the Press Democrat I think it was front page, Lake Sonoma we're able to conduct the inspection with the water.

DR. BILL HEARN: Lake Sonoma?

LT. COL. LAURENCE FARRELL: Correct. And we shut it off just for safety. You can't bring people into that channel with that water. It would be a risk to their safety, but we were able to put them on a vehicle, so we do not perceive any need to shut water off any more in Lake Sonoma for the annual inspection.

And for Lake Mendocino, we have not tested it yet, so we do not know if it would work because the outlet structure is different. But for Sonoma, the problem is effectively solved. We didn't have to shut the water off this year. We do not perceive the requirement to shut the water off in the future. But at Lake Mendocino, until we test it, we don't know.

CHUCK WILLIAMS: And the historical effect, in other words, in the past, before we started messing around with the river, it went dry in the summertime anyway, or virtually dry, so what's the impact of drying up now.

DR. BILL HEARN: Before they built Lake Mendocino?

CHUCK WILLIAMS: And before Lake Pillsbury was diverted into it, yes.

DR. BILL HEARN: What's different is that we have steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act, and when they die, that's not good. And so therefore,

we need to have some minimization of that. And so therefore, the biological opinion calls for -- has a term and condition for a minimum bypass for pipe that would provide 25 CFS down right below the dam in order to avoid dewatering of that east branch.

CHUCK WILLIAMS: So is that 25 CFS similar to what would have been on the river, that section of the river historically before we started messing with it?

DR. BILL HEARN: What you have is you have a different situation. It is not the 1880s, so you have steelhead living in the channel where they may not have lived, but there they are. And when they die, that's not a good thing. We're trying to protect them.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: Thank you very much. If you have other questions, you're going to have to wait and you can talk to Mr. Learn.

CHUCK WILLIAMS: I did have another question.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: You can wait -- I'm gonna provide an opportunity, I had a request, supervisor Delbar I believe you had a comment you wanted to make?

SUPERVISOR MICHAEL DELBAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This PFFC is actually a very unique process for a Section 7 consultation. And I want to take this moment, if I can, Mr. Chairman, to thank the Corps, at

that time it was the Colonel Thompson, and the Sonoma County Water Agency for creating, really, this open process and involving Mendocino County interests as well.

And I think that having the public and you said this is 20th meeting, give or take, of the PPFC, we've bounced between Ukiah and Santa Rosa, having that public process and public inputs into a Section 7 consultation as resulted in a very high quality BO here, and I think that's only possible because of that -- because of this process that these entities that set up at the beginning some 11 years ago.

And while there may be unlikely parts of this BO that folks are not happy with then as many questions that had come up as we go, as you stated, this is the -- I think you said the blueprint to fisheries management in the Russian River and Dry Creek system.

And so the last thing I'd like to say is to thank you for your leadership on this committee and your chair of this committee for the last 11 years, since 1997, as we sat up here, and my colleagues from Sonoma County -- we went through these 20 meetings and listened to the comments and the inputs. And I know I've learned a tremendous amount. I know this is your last PPFC meeting, and I did want to thank you from those of us

from Mendocino for your leadership on this committee.

CHAIRMAN TIM SMITH: I appreciate that. Thank you very much, Michael. I do appreciate that. Other comments from anybody before we conclude?

If not, I just like to thank you all for your kind attention and your questions and sticking with us, and certainly our panel of experts and all the people who made this meeting possible.

And again, to NMFS and the Corps and Fish and Game, certainly, and our water agency staff, thanks a million because I do think we have a good project.

Thank you all.

(Whereupon, at 6:45 p.m. the proceedings were adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Megan Alvarez, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were taken in shorthand by me at the time and place therein stated, and that the said proceedings were thereafter reduced to typewriting, by computer, under my direction and supervision;

I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to the said proceedings, nor in any way interested in the event of this cause, and that I am not related to any of the parties thereto.

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