

# California Fish Passage Forum

## January 12, 2017 meeting

### Location: Conference call/webinar

**Attendees:** Anne Elston (CDFW), Tom Schroyer (CDFW), Bob Hughes (CDFW), Jon Mann (CDFW), Bob Pagliuco (NMFS), Michael Bowen (Coastal Conservancy), Brett Holycross (PSMFC), Candice Meneghin (CalTrout), Erin Gleason (USFWS), Donnie Ratcliff (USFWS), Kate Sherman (PSMFC), Mark Lancaster (5 Counties), Melinda Molnar (Caltrans), Anna Halligan (TU), Stan Allen (PSMFC), Frank Meraz (Caltrans), and Lisa DeBruyckere (Forum) participated.

- A. Donnie Ratcliff—The Forum thanked Donnie for his service to the Forum as Donnie moves on to his new role and promotion in the USFWS.
- B. Cradle to Grave Engineering Discussion

PROPOSAL—It is proposed that State and federal agencies should adopt a "cradle to grave" approach to design review by agency engineers. At a minimum, a team of two engineers would be assigned to each project at the feasibility stage level so they can converse and learn to work together on a design approach. If during the design process one leaves or is too busy, there is consistency on design approach and methodology. In the event that both leave, and a new engineer is assigned, it should be expressly prohibited that a new arrival or engineer reverse or alter the design approach through the introduction of new design preferences or concerns.

Comments: Mark Lancaster would like to have an active role in this discussion. The accuracy of the problem statement needs work; perhaps a smaller group should work collaboratively on the problem statement and to address this issue. There is room for improvement among many aspects of fish passage barrier remediation. The consistency on how resource agencies work together involve more than just engineering—it's biologists, permitting, etc. The design changes that occur during a project often substantially increase the cost of the projects, which reduces project dollars for restoration, etc. Individual project decisions can influence the outcomes of many other projects because of that reduced funding—there may be two problem statements here. The problem statement has to do more with not taking the restoration community for granted (they are already operating on a shoestring) and doing everything we can to provide practitioners with stability over a 3–5 year period so that they can successfully implement the project with predictability. Let's define the issues—CEQA coverage, permitting, etc. and develop proposed solutions for each of those. Staff resources do not exist to assign 2 engineers to any particular project. **ACTION ITEM:** The Engineering Group will convene to address these issues, including other practitioners and people, such as Marjorie Kasly and Rick Wantuck, who could help craft the problem statement and discussion potential solutions. Then the issue will be brought back to the entire Forum for full vetting and discussion. Anna Halligan is interested in participating on this committee project.

- C. FISHPass – **ACTION ITEM:** Lisa will send out a Doodle for the week of February 20 to conduct another small group testing. The latest version of FISHPass has mapped spatial outputs – it links to BIOS, CDFW’s map viewer. In terms of new watersheds individuals would like to see tested, Bob suggested Smith River and Michael suggested reviewing the recovery plans and any weighting systems they used at the time and select hydrologic units from those recovery plans. The coho plan priority HUCs would be a great place to start (CDFW’s plan). **ACTION ITEM:** Anne will check the coho plan and the priority HUCs. **ACTION ITEM:** Jon has the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> open, and will pare back his tracing request. The hope is that FISHPass can help the Forum achieve a broad expression of priorities that help guide application for limited resource recovery funds. Therefore, the highest priority goal may not be a program that every person can use online to set priorities.
- D. April 2017 meeting  
Santa Barbara and Ventura counties were recommended; tour - Carpinteria and Mission Creeks with Ventura River, includes dam removals – headwaters to the ocean. Santa Clara River fish passage projects could be included. Ventura is the recommended central location (40 minutes from Santa Barbara) – accommodations are less expensive. City Hall, TNC, the County of Ventura, or Caltrout offices may be able to host us. Santa Barbara airport is 40-minute drive from Ventura; 70 miles from Burbank or LAX. There are airport shuttles from Burbank to Ventura. The meeting was scheduled for April 25–26, 2017. **ACTION ITEM:** Lisa will send out a doodle to see if people are available for the following week.
- E. Forum Governance Committee  
The Forum Governance Committee currently consists of Donnie Ratcliff, Erin Gleason, Melinda Molnar, Bob Pagliuco, Stan Allen and Michael Bowen. Donnie and Erin are moving into different positions with the USFWS, and the opportunity exists for new members to join the Governance Committee. If anyone is interested in that, please contact Bob. Bob is looking for a co-chair.
- F. Forum 2016 Projects:
- Manly Gulch—The project will be implemented this summer, likely in August, after consultation on marbled murrelets is approved.
  - Central California Traction Company RR Bridge project—all permits are in hand.
  - Juvenile Fish Passage Assessment Criteria—Testing will begin in May.
    - Pacific Lamprey—  
**Task 1.** They developed a historical Pacific lamprey distribution GIS layer (all available museum specimens have been examined to confirm id and add to distribution dataset. Assessment of potential historical distribution based on elevation, habitat an access have been completed for most CA drainages.  
**Task 2.** The distribution database of current/recent distribution was developed for GIS, preparing for conversion to PAD; field visits occurred to fill in information gaps; a peer-reviewed paper was published to support/document coastal distribution and contraction of southern populations.  
**Task 3.** There is an ongoing examination of field criteria for assessment of barriers in association with various survey projects and passage assessments.