

Wood for Salmon Workgroup Meeting Summary

Date: November 7, 2013

Location: CAL FIRE Forest Practice Conference Room, Santa Rosa, CA

Attendees: Bill Snyder, CAL FIRE
Jonathan Warmerdam, NCRWQCB
Jonathan Ambrose, NMFS
Patty Madigan, MCRCD
Erika Lovejoy, SusCon
Erik Schmidt, SusCon
Dave Wright, CTM
Kathie Lowrey, Prunuske Chatham, Inc.
Steve Reynolds, CGS
Cheryl Hayhurst, CGS
Joe Pecharich, NOAA RC
Katie Haldeman, SusCon
Pete Cafferata, CAL FIRE

Participating by Conference Line:

Doug Albin, DFW
Dr. Stephen Swales, DFW
Mary Olswang, DFW
Jen Carah, TNC
Lisa Bolton, TU

Action items are shown in BOLD font

Agenda Items

This Wood for Salmon Workgroup (WFSW) meeting focused on the following topics: (1) wood and fisheries restoration announcements, (2) update on the SWRCB General 401 Certification revision, (3) update on DFW implementation of Assembly Bill No. 1961, Coho HELP Act, (4) update on MCRCD wood enhancement projects funded by CAL FIRE, (5) update on the large wood guidance document and a summary of the large wood field workshops held in October, (6) update on the Mendocino County RCD Permit Coordination Program, (7) brief discussion on updates needed for the white paper on permitting for large wood projects, (8) update on the Central Coast Priority Action Coho Team (PACT) effort, (9) update on the SDSF large wood and channel complexity project, (10) brief discussion on possible approaches to encourage greater use of the THP process for wood enhancement, and (11) discussion on the future of the WFSW and new leadership.

1. WFSW Meeting Announcements

- Bill Snyder announced his retirement from CAL FIRE on December 31, 2013, and expressed his appreciation for all everyone's participation in the Wood for Salmon Workgroup since its inception in December 2010.
- Jonathan Warmerdam, Erik Schmidt, and Jonathan Ambrose stated their thanks to Bill for his excellent leadership for the group over the past three years.
- Kathie Lowrey stated that she has a project funded at the Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in Marin County, but a source of large wood is needed for the project. Work is scheduled to start around July 1, 2014.
- Jonathan Ambrose stated that NMSF staff will begin working on an updated version of the Biological Opinion (BO) for fisheries restoration projects within the CCC ESU for coho salmon in the fall of 2014 (the current BO expires in 2016). Bill Snyder urged NMFS staff to craft the new BO so that it fits DFW's needs for a Consistency Determination (CD).
- Jonathan Warmerdam stated that he will continue to investigate whether the SWRCB Cleanup and Abatement Account can be used by RCDs for restoration projects, such as large wood enhancement projects.
- Dave Wright asked the WFSW to think about the long-term liability issue resulting from wood enhancement projects that adversely impact downstream infrastructure. To date, no large storm events have tested accelerated recruitment structures, but eventually such an event will occur and it would be highly advantageous to have some type of "safe-harbor" liability assurance/bond or liability fund in place to address this issue.

2. Update on SWRCB General 401 Certification Revision for Small Habitat Restoration Projects

Jonathan Warmerdam stated that the revision of the SWRCB General 401 Certification for Small Habitat Restoration Projects (SHRP), which expired in August 2012, remains underway. The expired General 401 Certification was extended with minor modifications, and continues to be available for use for small habitat restoration projects until the new permit is complete. Mr. Warmerdam continues to work with SWRCB staff, including Bill Orme, to develop a new application form. It is anticipated that the revised permit for small habitat restoration projects will be finished in 2014, and it will either be another general certification, waiver, or a WDR permit. Project size limitations and fee structure are likely to remain the same as with the interim permit. Mr. Orme has determined that both the five acre and 500 foot limitation apply (not one or the other). State and Regional Water Board staff are continuing to evaluate whether the revised SHRP can utilize the DFW's Coho HELP Act (AB 1961) process to streamline the Water Board's permitting process. A decision regarding coordination of these two permits is ongoing.

DFW staff who oversee the Coho HELP Act were asked if they endorsed the use of the *Calculator for Determining Project Disturbance Area* developed by Jonathan Warmerdam

and members of the Wood for Salmon Working Group in 2012.¹ Mary Olswang stated that the wood calculator is one tool that project applicants can use, and that only one of the three Coho HELP Act applications has used it to date. Mr. Warmerdam stated that he will continue to work with his management and State Board staff to determine what additional steps, if any, would be required to achieve an official State Board endorsement for the guidance tools. He said that he is also considering broadening the calculator tool so that it could be used for other types of restoration projects besides wood enhancement.

3. Update on DFW Implementation of Assembly Bill No. 1961, Coho Salmon Habitat Enhancement Leading to Preservation Act (Coho HELP Act)

Mary Olswang informed the WFSW that DFW's AB 1961 program has received three applications to date, including two projects in Siskiyou County and one in Mendocino County (no new recent applications have been received by DFW). The two Siskiyou County RCD applications aim to improve habitat conditions for coho with bioengineered streambank stabilization (Scott River Bank Stabilization) and culvert removal (Shasta River-Parks Creek Culvert Removal²). The Mendocino County application was submitted by Trout Unlimited for the South Fork Garcia River and involves placement of large wood using the "accelerated recruitment method." All three applications have been approved by DFW. The Scott River Bank Stabilization project has been built, and the Shasta River-Parks Creek Culvert Removal and South Fork Garcia River Large Wood projects will be implemented next season.

Mary stated that revised instructions for the Coho HELP Act were completed in October. These instructions and additional information on the Coho HELP Act are posted on the following DFW website: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fish/Resources/Coho/HELP/>. Mary added that DFW is attempting to get project application approval within two months, and that it is helpful to receive project design plans (60% to 90% design) sent in for pre-consultation review before the application is submitted. Also, she said that the "engineering checklist" should be included with the application. Mary recommended that project proponents should start planning possible projects early for 2014, especially for projects that require engineering design reviews.

Erika Lovejoy thanked Mary for the DFW Coho HELP Act presentation at the Coho Recovery Team meeting held on October 2nd and asked about the commitment DFW made for outreach meetings with project proponents. Erika stated that SusCon staff may be able to help with outreach efforts. **Mary agreed to discuss the concept of holding training workshops with DFW's Kevin Shaffer. Following this WFSW meeting, Mary informed Pete Cafferata that DFW has tentatively agreed to hold the workshops in**

¹ The *Visual Guidance for Calculating Discharge Area for Large Wood Augmentation Projects* and *Calculator for Determining Project Disturbance Area* are posted on the internet at the following address: http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/california/salmon/Pages/wfs_resources.aspx

² The culvert, which is blocked with flashboards during the irrigation season, will be removed and the stream restored with a roughened channel. This project opens four miles of excellent spring water to fish, which is normally blocked during irrigation season.

February, possibly in Ukiah and Yreka. The WFSW suggested that the workshop agenda should include: (1) DFW expectations for Coho HELP Act applications, (2) examples of completed applications, and (3) a discussion session where project applicants can express their challenges with the current application process.

4. Update on MCRCD Wood Enhancement Projects Funded by CAL FIRE

As reported earlier, Patty Madigan reiterated that there were two successful applications to the MCRCD for wood enhancement projects using CAL FIRE funding. The projects being funded are: SF Garcia (submitted by Trout Unlimited) and NF Gualala (submitted by the Gualala River Watershed Council). These projects are using the MCRCD permit coordination program CEQA document, and the TU project was submitted and approved by DFW under the Coho HELP Act. Due to permitting approval delays, the projects will not be built until next summer. **The CAL FIRE contract with the MCRCD expires on June 30, 2014, so Pete Cafferata agreed to amend the contract until December 31, 2014, to ensure that sufficient time is available for project installation.** Patty stated that it would have been better, in hindsight, to have had the permitting in place prior to awarding the contracts.

5. Update on a Large Wood Guidance Document and Summary of the Large Wood Field Workshops held in October

Patty Madigan stated that remaining funds from the large wood contract with CAL FIRE are being used for two education activities related to large wood stream habitat improvement projects: (1) a short guidebook illustrating the “accelerated recruitment” approach, and (2) large wood field workshops. Patty stated that she has discussed the wood guidebook project with Kathie Lowrey and Chris Blencowe, and she will be discussing it with Jen Carah, Dave Wright, and Lisa Bolton. Dave Wright stated that this type of document is needed so that project proponents know where to propose this type of work. Jonathan Ambrose suggested that eventually it could be added as an appendix to DFW’s Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, and Bill Snyder said that it may be possible to use funding from an existing Western Forestry Leadership Coalition grant to support this effort. **Patty agreed to develop a Scope of Work and Budget for the guidebook, as well as coordinate the effort with DFW staff. Upon completion, hard copies will be produced, as well as a pdf version to post on websites.**

Pete Cafferata showed a brief PowerPoint presentation on the two accelerated recruitment large wood field workshops held in the Big Salmon Creek watershed, western Mendocino County, on October 17th and 23rd. The workshops were organized by Patty Madigan and led by Chris Blencowe, the contractor for this FRGP project implemented in 2012 on The Conservation Fund timberlands. There were 16 people in attendance on October 17th, and 25 people participated on the 23rd. Following an opening discussion about the accelerated recruitment method, the groups viewed 10 sites along Big Salmon Creek where wood had either been felled into the channel (usually at 45 degrees upstream) or winched into place with a rubber tired skidder. In all, 6.5 miles of channel were treated, with 377 pieces of wood installed. Only one bankfull streamflow event occurred last winter, so little wood

movement has occurred to date. Monitoring has shown that average pool shelter rating (cover) has increased approximately 50%.

6. Update on the Mendocino County RCD Permit Coordination Program

Patty Madigan stated that the MCRCD Permit Coordination Program is moving forward. This program's CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) document covers nine types of common small habitat improvement projects: (1) access roads, (2) critical area planting, (3) stream habitat improvement and management, (4) grade stabilization structure, (5) road/landing removal, (6) stream bank protection, (7) stream channel vegetation, (8) structure for water control, and (9) restoration and management of declining habitats.

The next step is to get NCRWQCB approval for Order No. R1-2013-0059, General 401 Water Quality Certification, Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements, and Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Mendocino County Permit Coordination Program (see: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/11_2013/items/01/131104_MCPCP_draftOrder.pdf). This Order relies heavily on the other components of the RCD permit coordination program already in place and was developed by Jonathan Warmerdam. **NCRWQCB approval is expected at their November 20th meeting in Santa Rosa.** This approach will help applicants by reducing the paperwork needed for filing. The DFW 1600 agreement and USACE 404 permit components have yet to be incorporated in the RCD permit coordination program.

7. Updates Needed for the White Paper on Permitting for Large Wood Projects

Jen Carah stated that updating the white paper she authored on permitting required for large wood projects is currently on hold, pending further use of the Coho HELP Act (and outputs from the planned Coho Help Act workshops), and final revision of the SWRCB General 401 Certification process. The current version of the document is posted on the WFSW webpage (on the TNC site) at: http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/california/salmon/Pages/wfs_resources.aspx.

8. Update on the Central Coast Priority Action Coho Team (PACT) effort

Jonathan Ambrose provided the PACT update. PACT is a joint effort between NMFS and DFW that is attempting to identify new and available resources to expedite immediate actions to prevent extinction of coho salmon within the CCC coho salmon ESU. Formed in early 2011, the PACT consists of Management and Coordination Groups who oversee the program, and six technical working groups (Education and Outreach; Funding; Habitat Restoration and Protection; Water Quality, Flow, and Conservation; Regulations and Permitting; and Fish Rescue and Captive Rearing). The technical working groups supplied draft recommendations to the Coordination Group in 2012.

Jonathan stated that the Management Group will meet on November 12th and that four of the working groups' recommendations are ready to be moved forward. The two working

groups' recommendations with significant remaining issues are the Water Quality, Flow, and Conservation; and Regulations and Permitting.

9. Update on the SDSF Large Wood and Channel Complexity Project

Steve Reynolds and Pete Cafferata provided a short PowerPoint presentation updating the group on the Soquel Demonstration State Forest (SDSF) large wood and channel complexity project. Goals of the project are to: (1) accomplish placement of large wood that will contribute to survival of coho salmon and steelhead in the Soquel Creek watershed, (2) demonstrate feasibility of a large wood placement project within the NMFS Recovery Plan area, and (3) conduct an experiment to determine success of different types of wood placement projects. Jonathan Ambrose initially asked Bill Snyder for the project, and Steve Reynolds was the lead CGS engineer for the work. Jim Robins, *Alnus Ecological*, coordinated the permitting process and assisted with the field installation.

Large wood structures were installed along a 0.7 mile stretch of the East Branch of Soquel Creek at four sites, with each of the four reaches being approximately 300 feet long. Logs and logs with rootwads came from the nearby Fern Gulch THP road right-of-way and the riparian corridor. Site 1 consists of three log clusters (redwood clumps) which were excavated in the fall of 2012, using funding from a grant from the RCDSCC. Sites 2 and 4 had 200 foot dewatered reaches and have one log cluster, one log vane (anchored), one rootwad anchor (see the video posted by Jim Robins at: <http://youtu.be/HQYljQjY-xq>). Site 5 consists of one log cluster. Sites 2, 4, and 5 were constructed in August and September, 2013, utilizing funding from CAL FIRE.

At site 1, following a five-year return interval flow event last winter, CGS surveys have shown that pools have been scoured, lateral bars formed, and that there has been a modest increase in channel sinuosity. Photo points have been established and used, channel long profiles surveyed and as-built diagrams completed by CGS staff, pre-project habitat typing completed by Dr. Sue Sogard, NOAA SWFSC, and steelhead density at the two dewatered reaches documented by fisheries biologist Don Alley. Bob Pinkard Excavating completed the work at all four sites.

Jonathan Ambrose stated that it is critical to demonstrate these types of projects south of San Francisco Bay, where installation work is 20 years behind what has occurred in the North Coast Region. **Joe Pecharich asked Steve Reynolds for the as-built diagrams for the SDSF wood sites to include in the NOAA Recovery Center annual report.** Steve Reynolds stated that SDSF Forest Manager Angela Bernheisel would like to complete more large wood projects associated with future timber sales on the State Forest.

10. Discussion on Possible Approaches to Encourage Greater use of the THP Process for Wood Enhancement

Bill Snyder stated that he is encouraged to see that both the Campbell Timberland Management Mill-Smith THP project (1-13-031 MEN), where six sites will have up to 30

trees felled along a 2,500 foot stretch of Smith Creek, and the Green Diamond Resource Company large research project in the lower Klamath River basin, are moving forward. He said that he would like to see THPs play a larger role in promoting wood enhancement work. **To that end, he has initiated discussion with Jonathan Warmerdam and DFW's Bill Condon and Craig Weightman regarding holding a meeting to discuss: (1) ways to make large wood enhancement proposals as part of THPs less expensive for landowners, and (2) how the agencies can better coordinate their plan review efforts for these types of proposals. The goal is to get agency restoration and regulation personnel communicating and moving wood enhancement projects forward. Bill will attempt to schedule the meeting prior to his retirement at the end of the calendar year.**

11. Discussion on the Future of the WFSW and New Leadership

Jonathan Warmerdam volunteered to be the Chair of the Wood for Salmon Workgroup beginning on January 1, 2014. Pete Cafferata will continue to be the lead staff person for the group.

Next WFSW Meeting Date

Pete Cafferata agreed to send out a Doodle poll for the next WFSW meeting to be held in late February-early March 2014.