Wood for Salmon Workgroup

Photo Credit: Matt Coleman

Jonathan Warmerdam

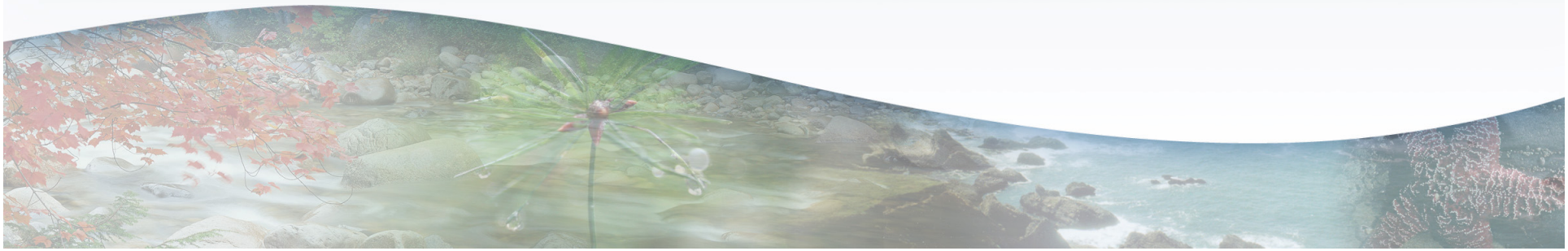
North Coast Regional
Water Quality Control Board

May 17, 2011

Wood for Salmon Workgroup

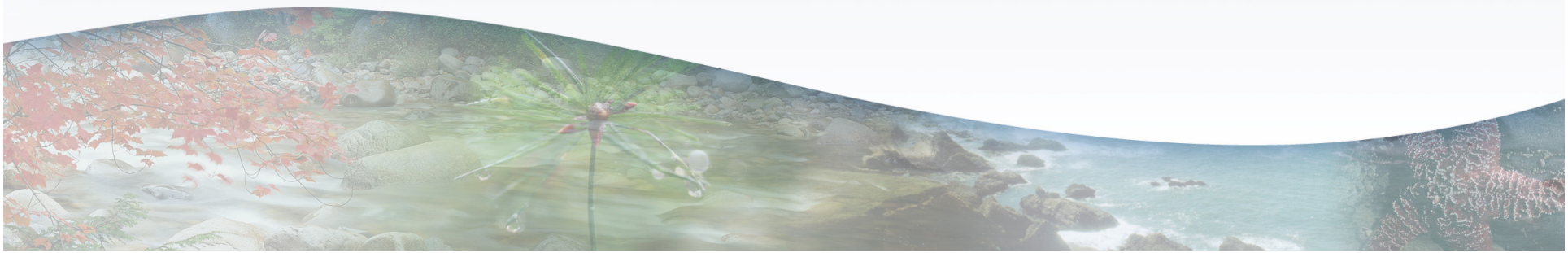
- NOAA / NMFS
- California Department of Fish and Game
- CAL FIRE
- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- California Geological Survey
- Army Corps of Engineers

- *Alnus* Ecological
- Campbell Timber Management
- The Nature Conservancy
- Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
- Natural Resources Conservation District
- Sustainable Conservation
- University California Cooperative Extension



Workgroup Goal

- **Promote recovery actions** detailed in state and federal recovery plans - *especially large woody material (LWM) projects* – in order to improve habitat for endangered salmonids.

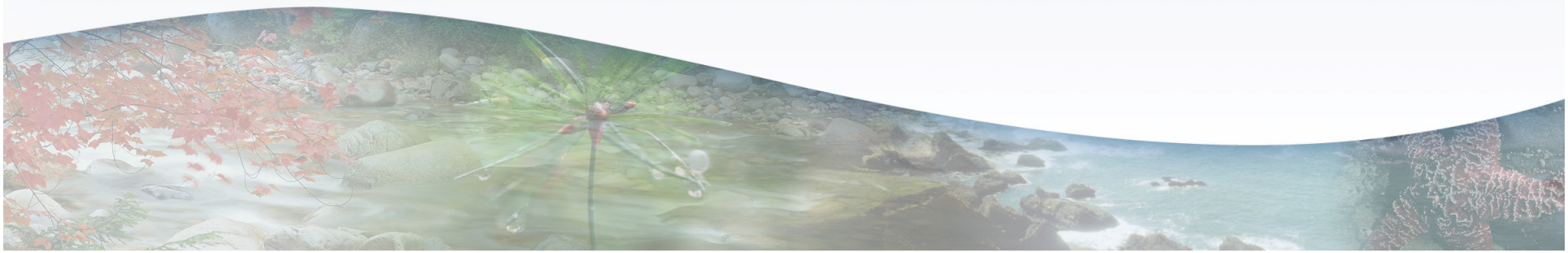


Presentation Outline

1. Eras of Instream Wood

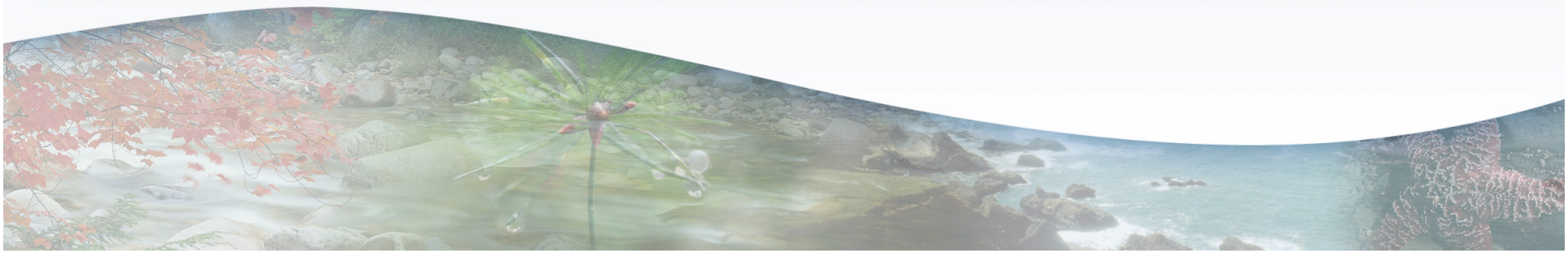
2. Coho Salmon Status (CCC ESU)

3. Wood for Salmon Workgroup



Part I:

Eras of Instream Wood



Phase 1: 1,000,000+ years of wood loading

Phase 2: Early Logging / Conversions (1860s – 1920s):

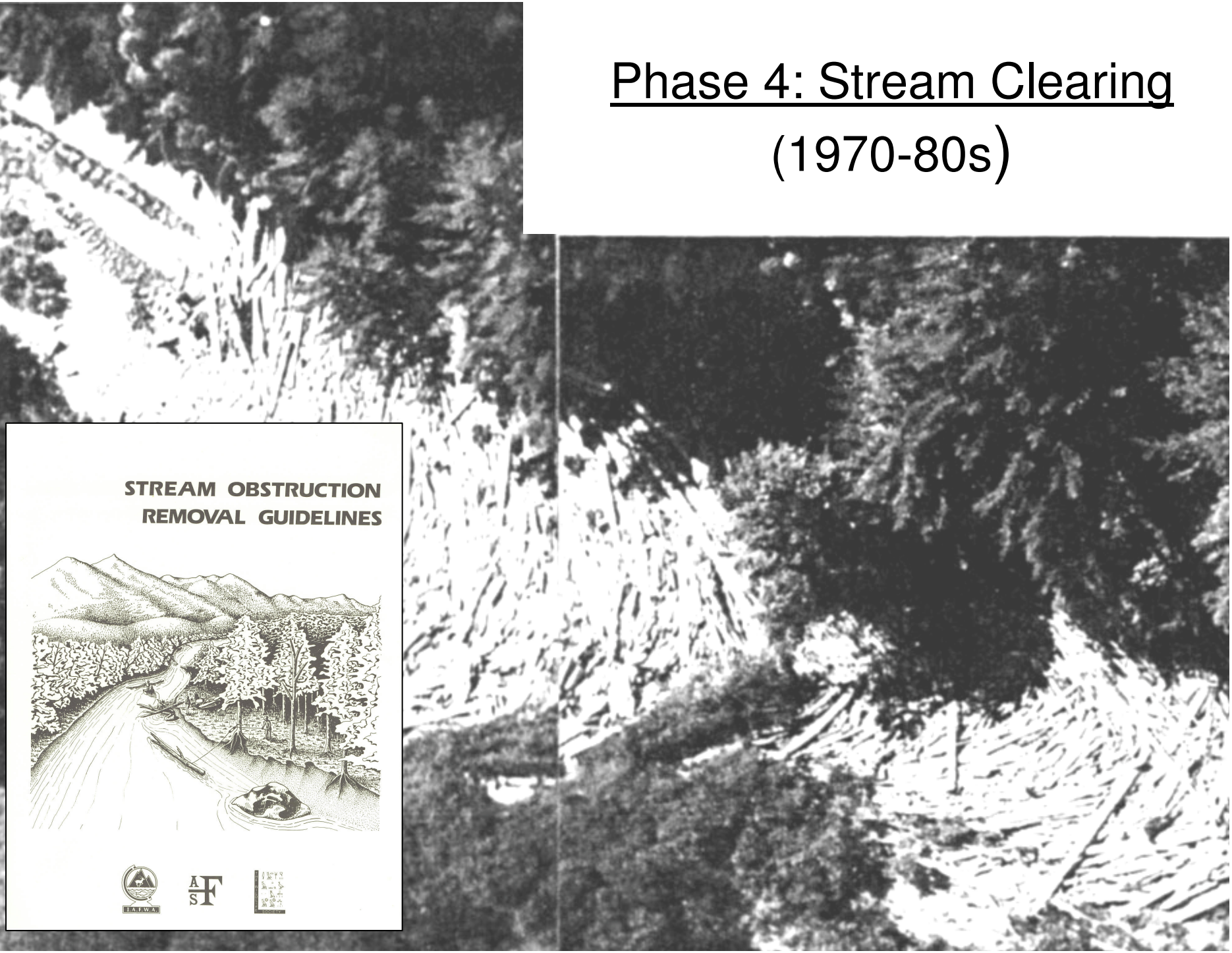
60 years of instream and streamside wood clearing

Phase 3: Post WW-II Logging (1940s – 1970s)

30 years of excessive wood loading

Phase 4: Stream Clearing

(1970-80s)

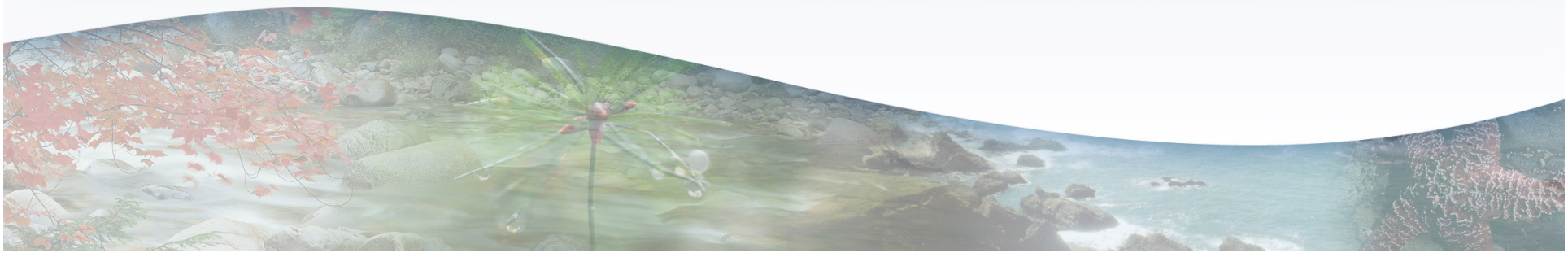


Phase 5 (Present):
Waiting for forests to mature…and waiting.

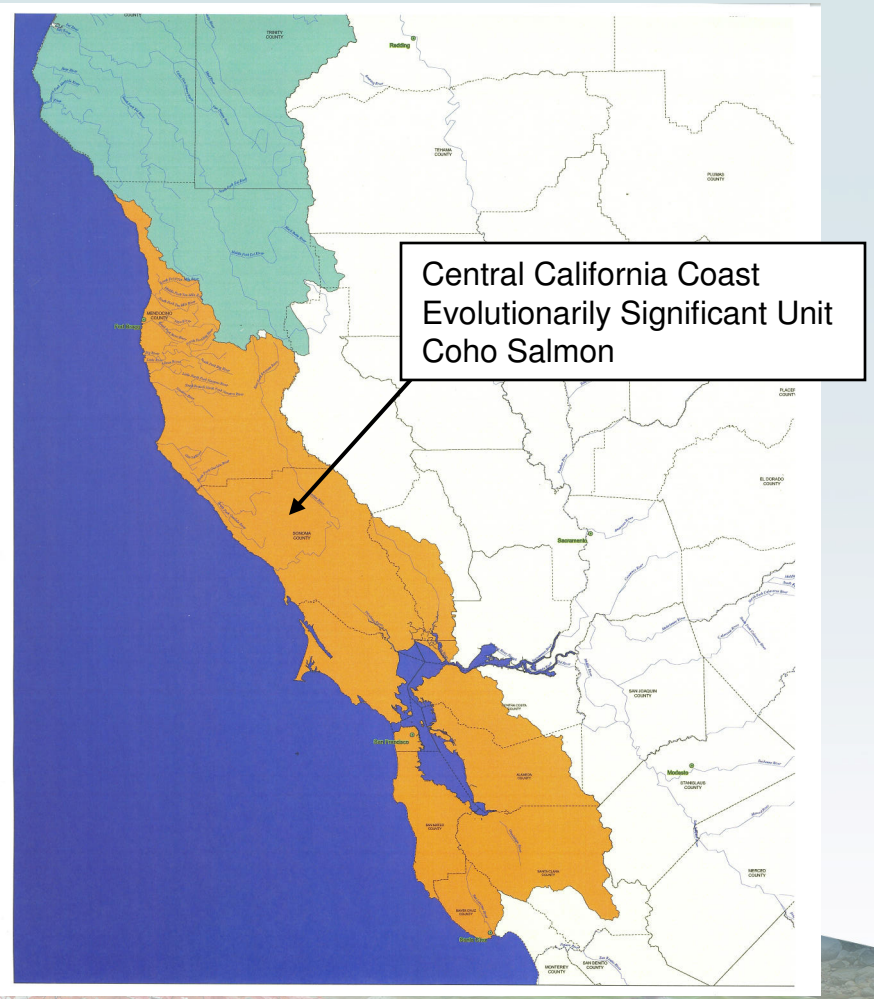
Part II:

Central California Coast Coho Salmon

A population in crisis.

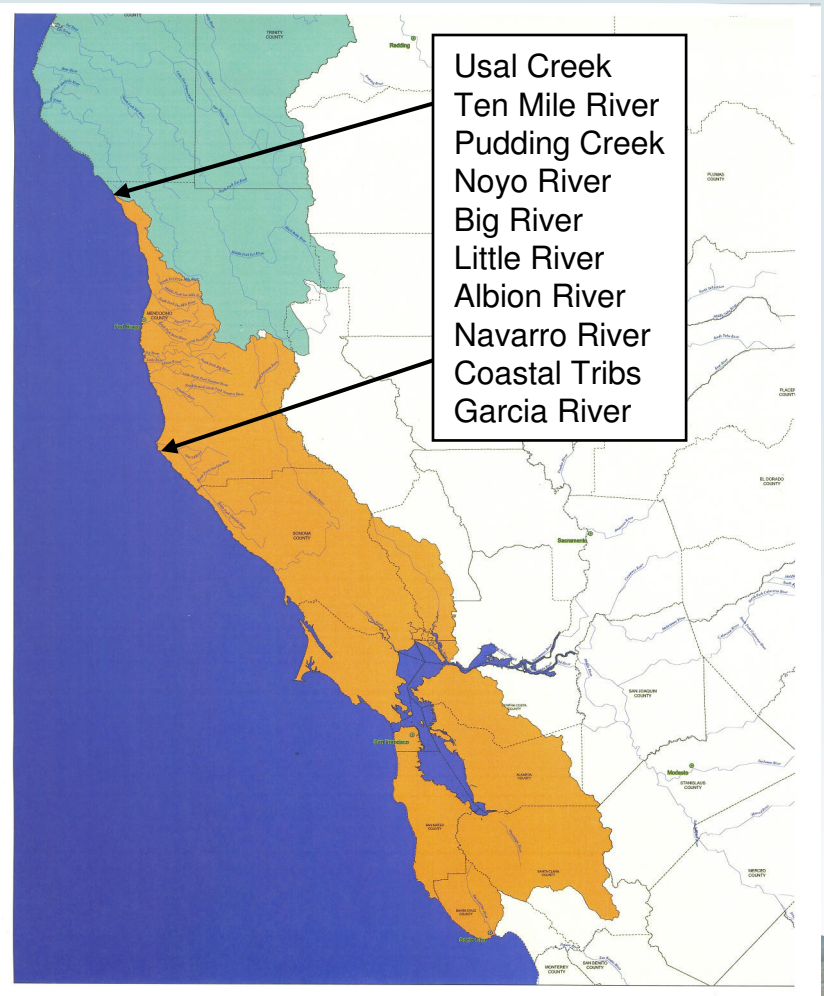


Coho Salmon Status



Coho Salmon CCC ESU
Escapement Estimates:
1960: 56,100

Coho Salmon Status



Mendocino County Escapement Estimates*:

2008-09: 1,327 adults

2009-2010: 887 adults

*Sean Gallagher, CDFG Pers. Communication

Key Recovery Strategy: ↑ LWM

STATE OF CALIFORNIA RESOURCES AGENCY DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon

Report to the California Fish and Game Commission

PREPARED BY
The California Department of Fish and Game

Species Recovery Strategy 2004-1

FEBRUARY 2004

RECOVERY PLAN

FOR THE EVOLUTIONARILY SIGNIFICANT UNIT OF
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COAST COHO SALMON

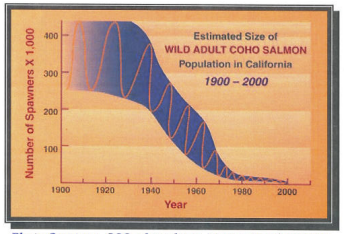


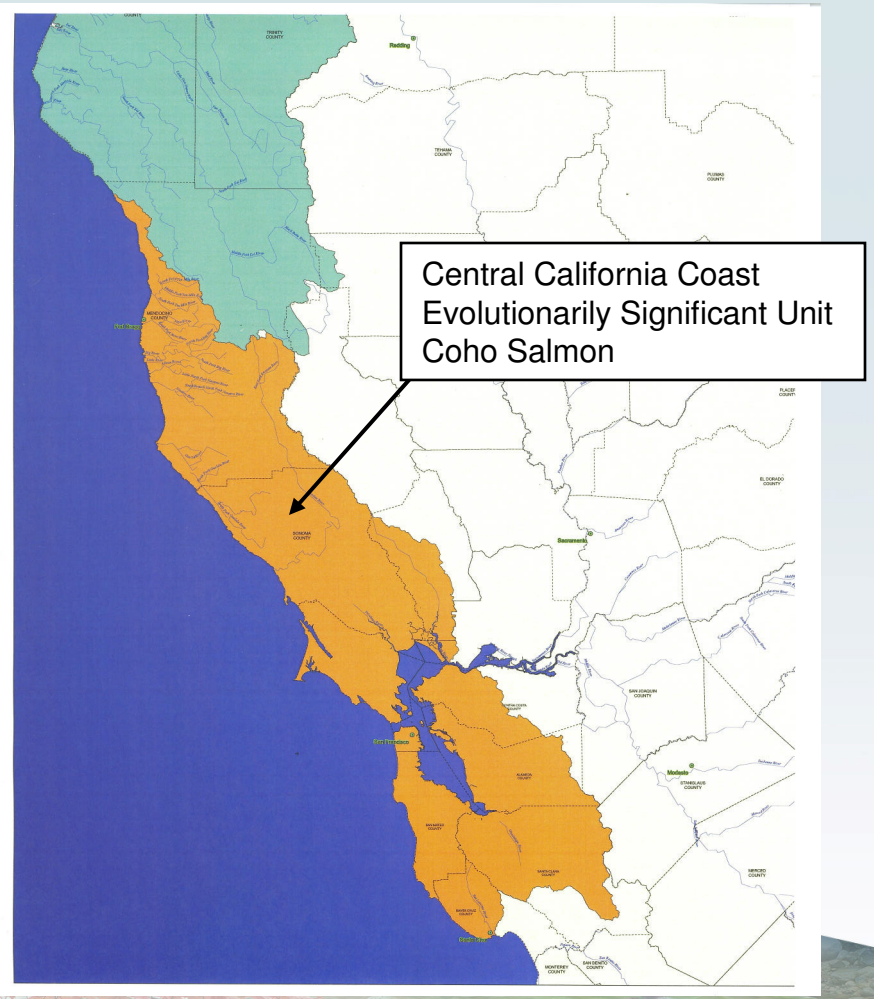
Photo Courtesy: CCC coho salmon, Morgan Bond, SWFSC
Conceptual Model of the Extinction Vortex for California's Coho Salmon, Peter Moyle 2009

PUBLIC DRAFT
Version: March 2010
Southwest Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
Santa Rosa, CA

Why wood?

- Natural watershed product
- Improves habitat complexity
- Sorts spawning gravels
- Mobilizes bedload
- Scours pools
- Provides year-round shelter
- Promotes water availability
- Improves temperatures
- Cost effective measure

Large Woody Material Volumes



80% of coho core areas have “poor” LWM volume and cover (2010 NMFS Coho Recovery Plan).

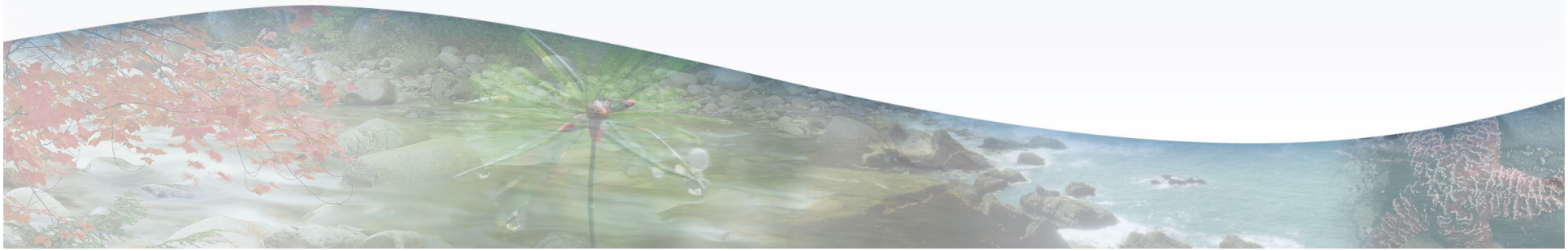
Part III:

Wood for Salmon Workgroup

Inman Creek LWM Project – The Nature Conservancy

Workgroup Objectives

1. Understand the LWM Permitting Process
2. Learn from Successful Projects
3. Identify Roadblocks
4. Develop Opportunities
5. Improve Existing Permits
6. Coordinate Permitting



Understanding the Permitting Process

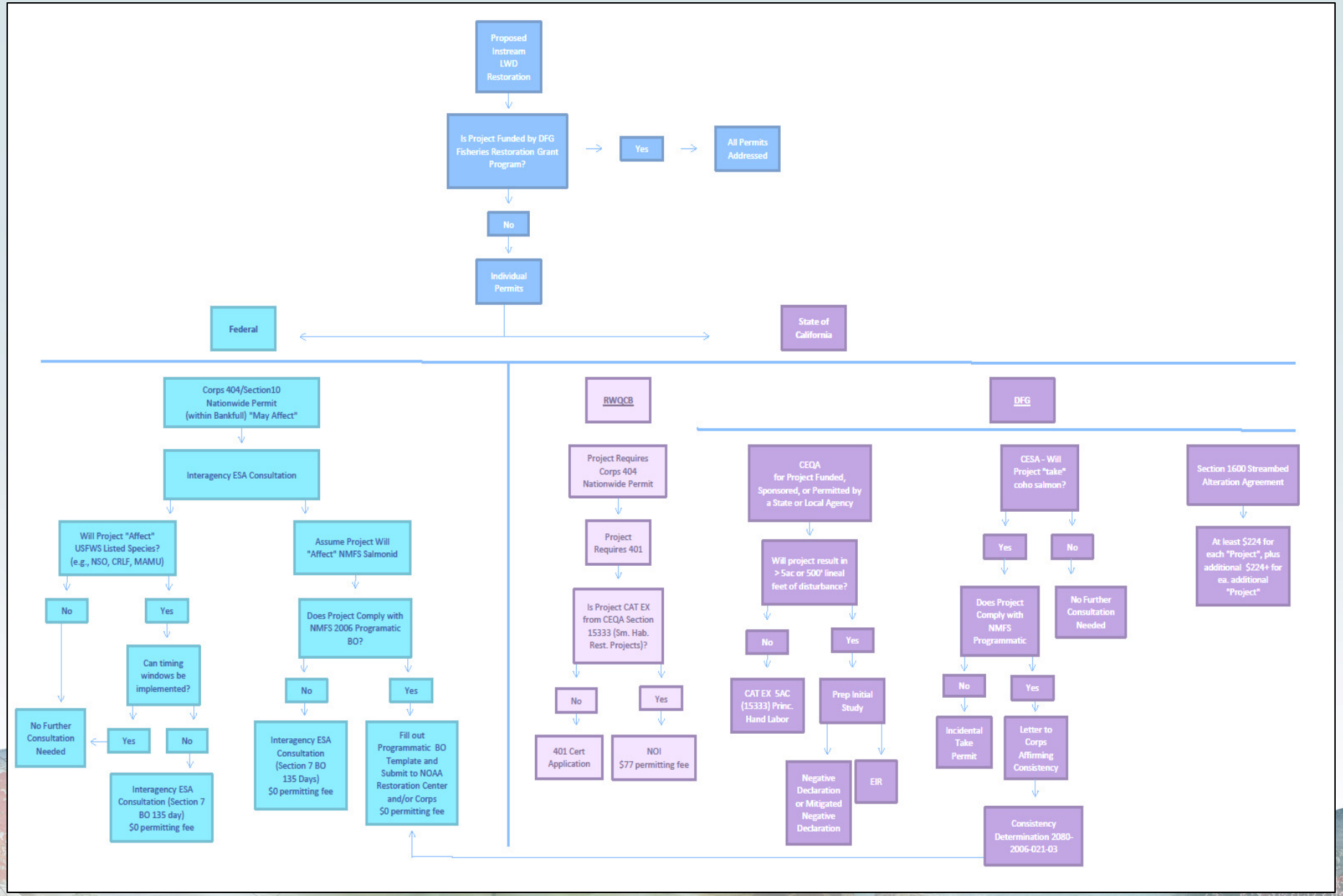
Federal Regulations:

1. Army Corps of Engineers
   - (a) Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
   - (b) Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act
2. National Marine Fisheries Service / NOAA
   - (a) Incidental Take of Federally Listed Salmonids
3. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
   - (a) Incidental Take of other Federally Listed Species
4. National Historic Preservation Act

California State Regulations:

1. California Department of Fish and Game
   - (a) Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
   - (b) California Endangered Species Act
2. Regional Water Quality Control Board
   - (a) Section 401 of the Clean Water Act
   - (b) Waste Discharge Requirement Permits
3. State Coastal Commission
   - (a) Coastal Development Permit
4. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Understanding the Permitting Process



Workgroup Key Findings

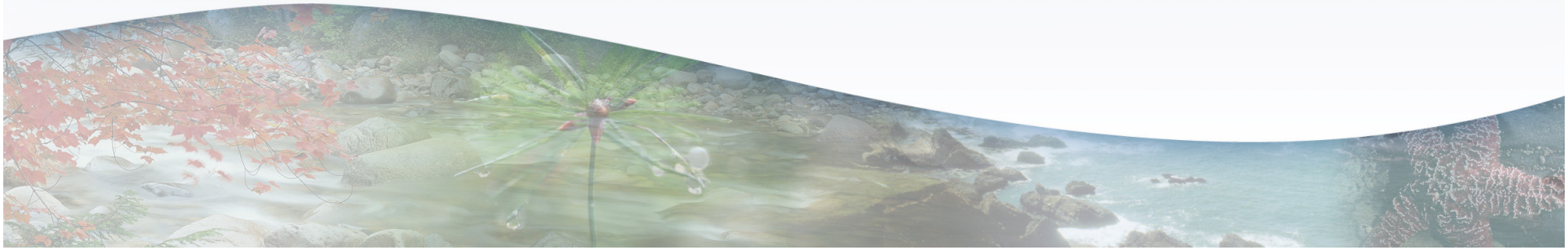
I. Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) currently provides best LWM project pathway, but has limits.

Pros:

1. Delivers all necessary permits (except CDP).
2. Provides financial assistance.
3. Proven track record for successful projects.

Cons:

1. Lengthy application/prep process.
2. Not available to private landowners – relies on NGOs.
3. Numerous projects not funded each year.
4. Greater need for LWM projects.



Workgroup Key Findings

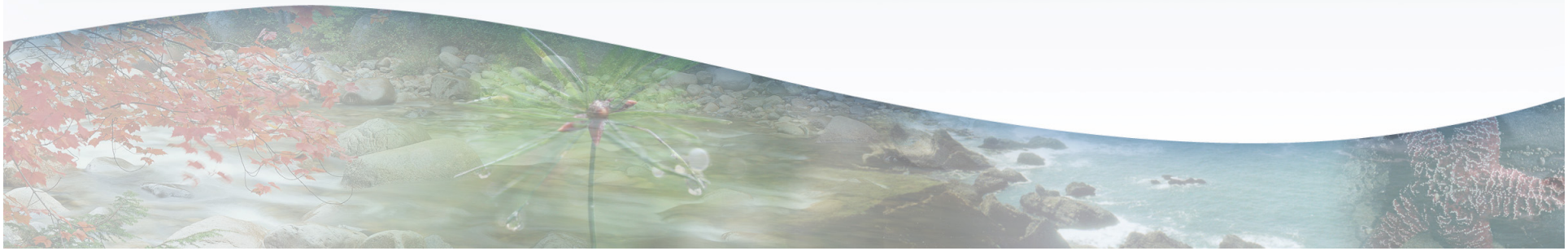
II. Individual permitting process (non-FRGP) disincentivizes LWM and other small habitat restoration projects.

Pros:

?

Cons:

1. Federal, state, and local permits may be required.
2. “Incidental take” coverage (ESA, CESA).
3. Permitting fees.
4. CEQA Analysis.



Workgroup Key Findings

III. Additional Coordinated Permitting Needed

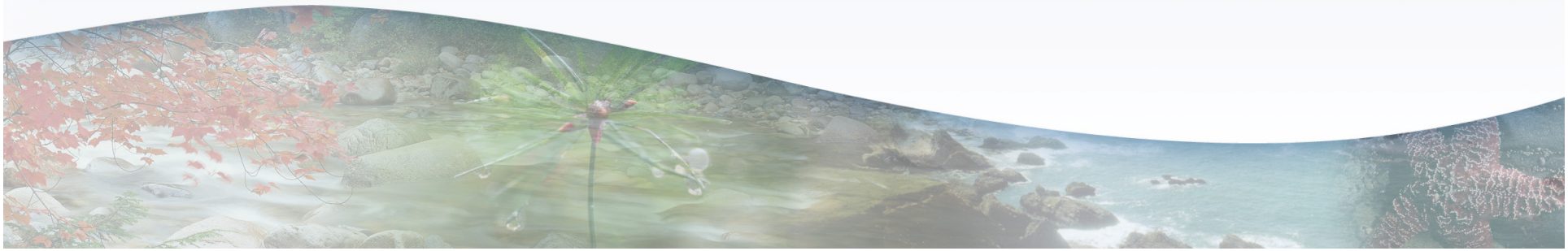
Partners in Restoration Programs:

Expired
Elkhorn Slough Watershed
Morro Bay Watershed
Calleguas Creek Watershed

Active
Coastal Marin Watersheds
Navarro River Coordinated Permit Program
Santa Cruz County
Alameda County
Cache, Putah & Willow Creek Watersheds

Pending
Upper Pajaro River Watershed
San Luis Obispo County
Santa Barbara County

Proposed
Mendocino County
Sustainable Conservation - Statewide Coordinated Permit Program



How can we accelerate successful LWM projects?

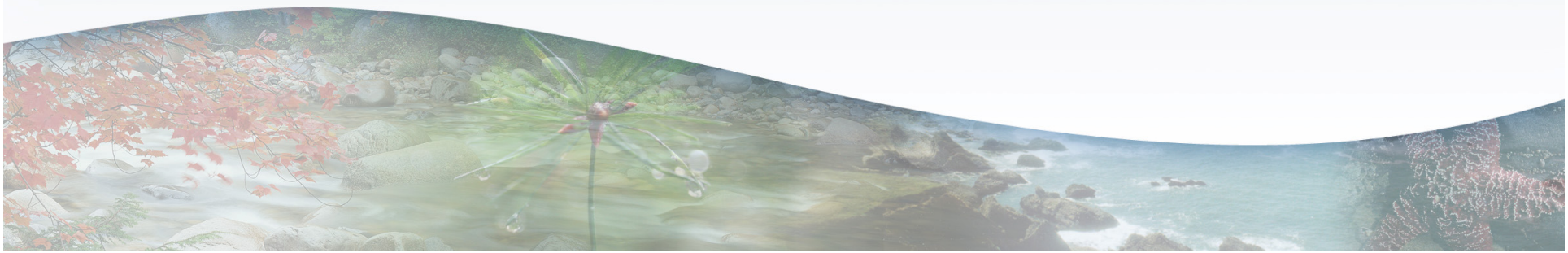
Inman Creek LWM Project (2009) – TNC / TCF

Possible Solutions

1. Build Upon Fisheries Restoration Grant Program
   - Extend coordinated permitting to private parties
   - Consider use of “micro-grants”?

2. Develop DFG small habitat restoration permit
   - Use the existing CEQA Categorical Exemption for small habitat restoration projects (15333)

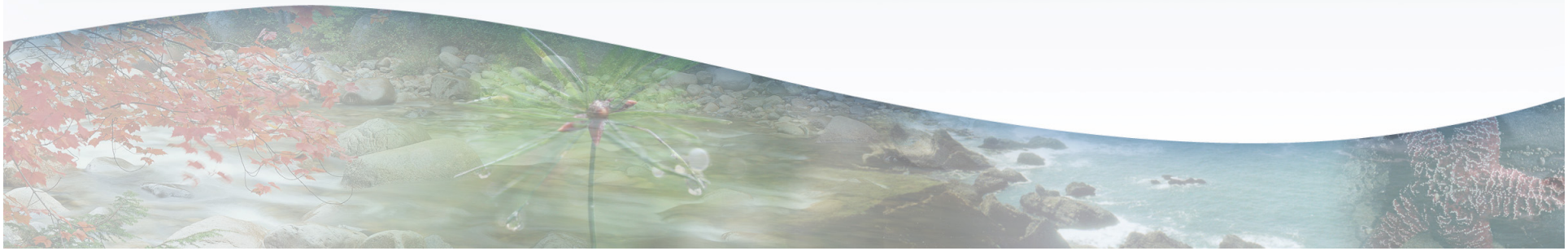
3. Support the development of additional Coordinated Permitting Programs

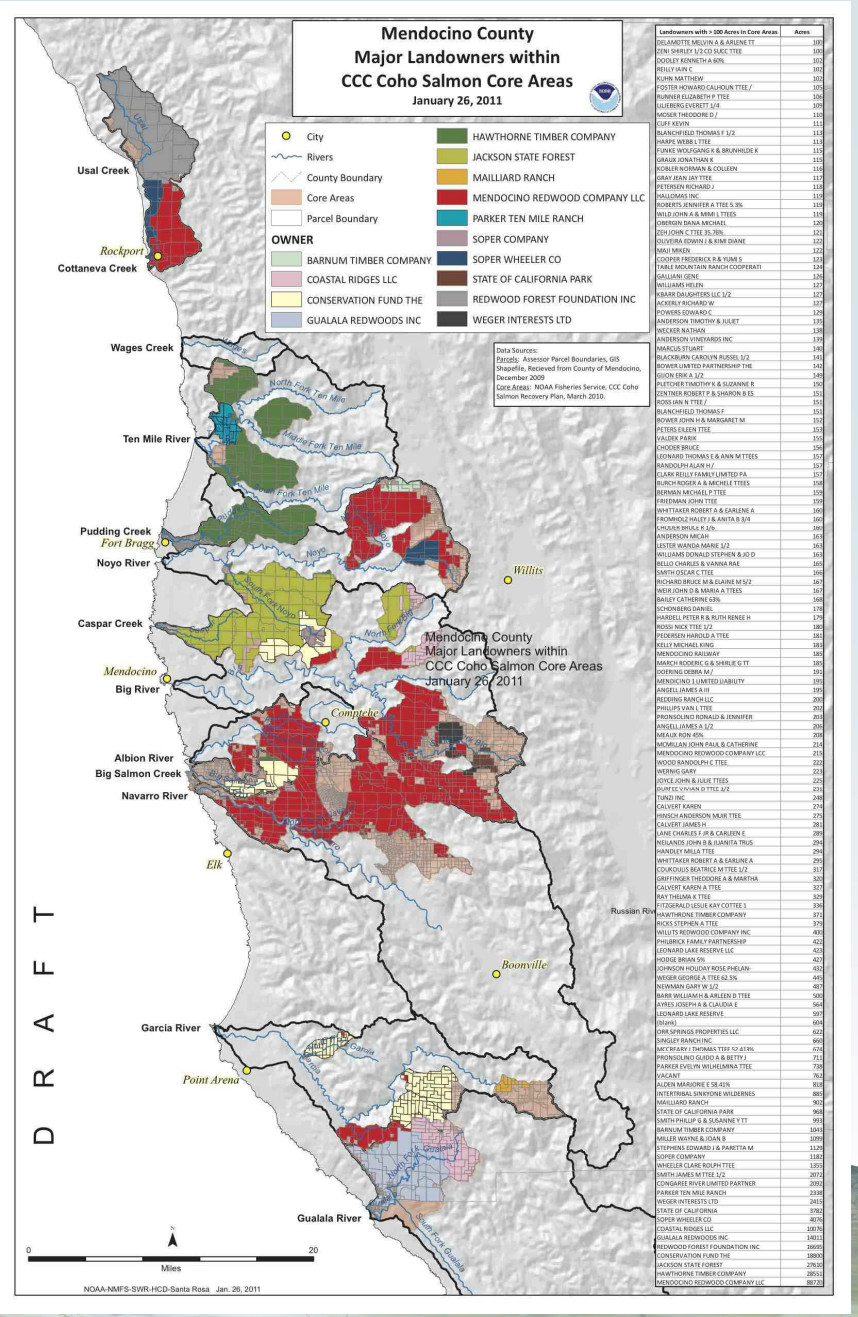


Possible Solutions

4. Improve existing individual permitting process:
   (a) Modify existing permits
   (b) Modify permit fees

5. Work directly with largest landowners to develop LWM management plans:
   (a) Campbell Timberland Management
   (b) The Conservation Fund
   (c) Jackson Demonstration State Forest
   (d) Mendocino Redwood Company

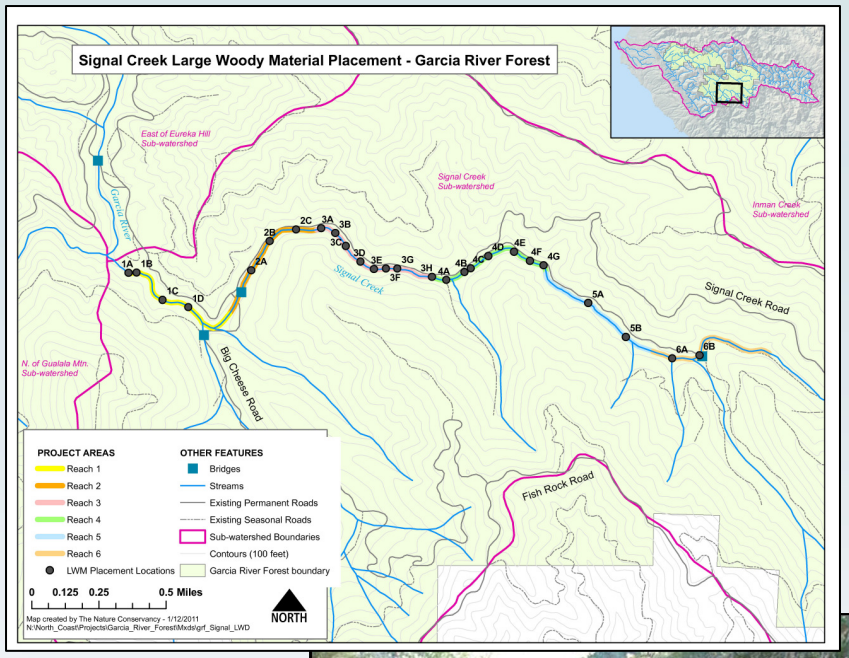


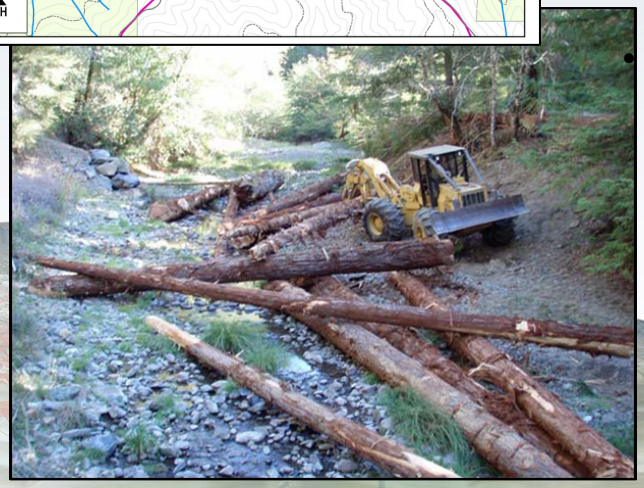


Big Holdings = Big Opportunities

In Mendocino County, the 7 largest timberland owners manage 73% of the properties in Mendocino County's CCC ESU Coho Core Areas.

New LWM techniques proving successful and cost effective.





- "Stream-seeding"
  - Unanchored wood loading
  - Wood wedging
  - Directional felling
- Permits and Incidental Take Coverage:
  - ACOE Nationwide 27
  - NOAA Biological Opinion
  - Lake and Streambed Alteration Ag.
  - General 401 Certification for Small Habitat Restoration
- Practitioners:
  - Chris Blencowe and Associates
  - Campbell Timberland
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - The Conservation Fund

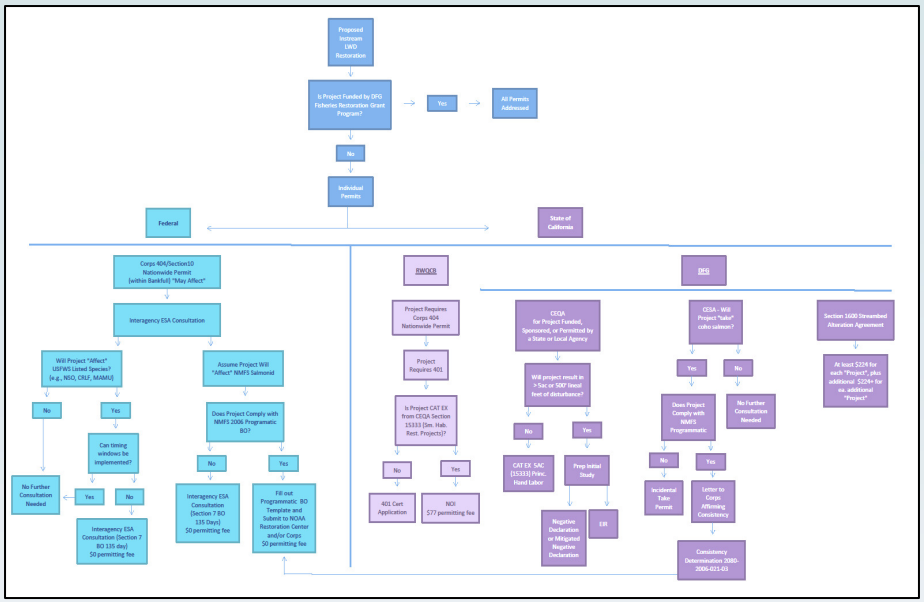
Workgroup Accomplishments

1. Defined existing permitting pathways

2. Identified Permitting Impediments

3. Learned from successful non-FRGP projects proponents:

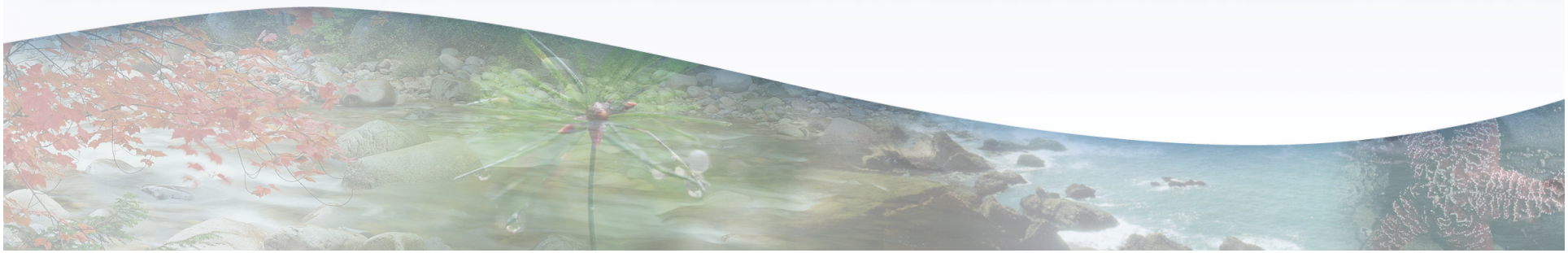
   - Campbell Timberland Management
   - The Nature Conservancy
   - *Alnus* Ecological



Workgroup Accomplishments

4. Engaged “Coordinated Permitting”organizations:
   - *Alnus* Ecological
   - Sustainable Conservation
   - Mendocino RCD
   - NRCS

5. Participated in UCCE Coho Restoration workshop



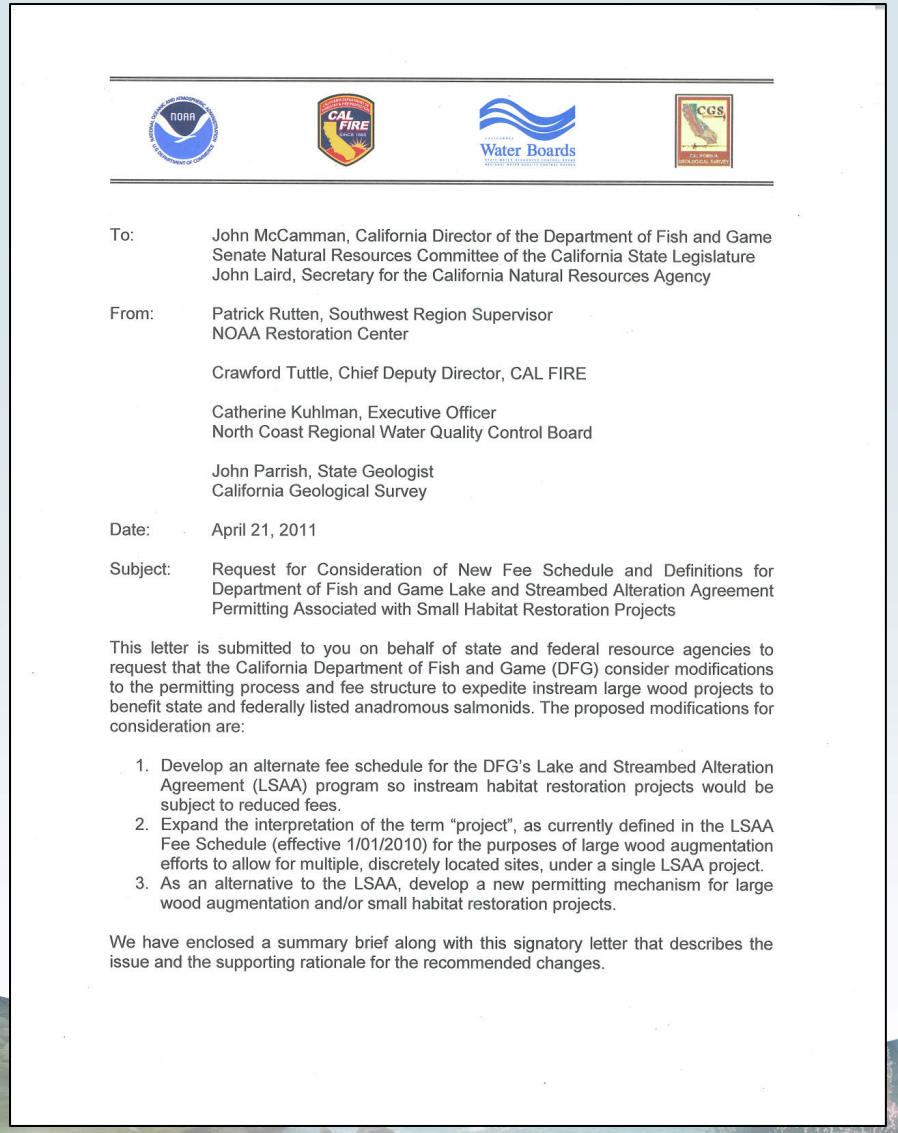
Workgroup Accomplishments

6. Submitted multi-agency signatory letter to Director of DFG with considerations to improve permitting:

   i. Reduce fee schedule for LWM and other habitat improvement projects.

   ii. Expand LSAA "project" definition to allow multiple discrete sites under one permit.

   iii. Consider development of new permitting mechanism for restoration projects.



To: John McCamman, California Director of the Department of Fish and Game
Senate Natural Resources Committee of the California State Legislature
John Laird, Secretary for the California Natural Resources Agency

From: Patrick Rutten, Southwest Region Supervisor
NOAA Restoration Center

Crawford Tuttle, Chief Deputy Director, CAL FIRE

Catherine Kuhlman, Executive Officer
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

John Parrish, State Geologist
California Geological Survey

Date: April 21, 2011

Subject: Request for Consideration of New Fee Schedule and Definitions for Department of Fish and Game Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement Permitting Associated with Small Habitat Restoration Projects

This letter is submitted to you on behalf of state and federal resource agencies to request that the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) consider modifications to the permitting process and fee structure to expedite instream large wood projects to benefit state and federally listed anadromous salmonids. The proposed modifications for consideration are:

1. Develop an alternate fee schedule for the DFG's Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) program so instream habitat restoration projects would be subject to reduced fees.
2. Expand the interpretation of the term "project", as currently defined in the LSAA Fee Schedule (effective 1/01/2010) for the purposes of large wood augmentation efforts to allow for multiple, discretely located sites, under a single LSAA project.
3. As an alternative to the LSAA, develop a new permitting mechanism for large wood augmentation and/or small habitat restoration projects.

We have enclosed a summary brief along with this signatory letter that describes the issue and the supporting rationale for the recommended changes.

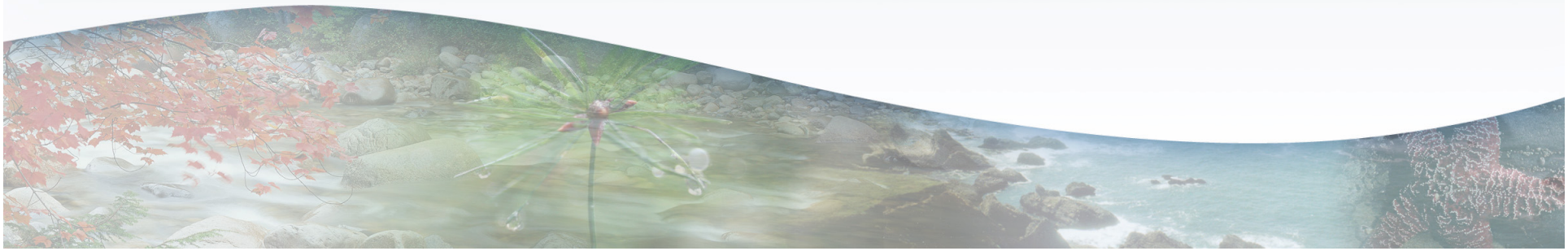
Wood for Salmon Workgroup

Ongoing Efforts:

7. Develop white-paper to assist landowners with individual (non-FRGP) permit process.

8. Support Coordinated Permitting Programs (regionally and statewide).

9. Explore CAL FIRE timber harvest planning process or Board of Forestry exemption for LWM projects.



Conclusions

1. Emergency status for coho salmon requires us to take action now.

2. LWM augmentation is a key recovery activity: fast-results, cheap, and effective.

3. FRGP provides best avenue to LWM projects, even more so if enhanced.

4. Non-FRGP permitting process impedes LWM projects, but can be improved.

5. Coordinated Permitting programs provides best alternaitve pathway.

6. Largest landowners provide big opportunities.

Robin Loznak Photography

Thank you

Robin Loznak Photography

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