

Conservation Report
Submitted By: C. Mark Rockwell, V.P. Conservation
December 2, 2006

A summary of actions and goals of the Conservation Network: the general Network group discussed how we could improve organization, communicate better and be more efficient.

1. Split the Network E-mail list to general info that all members could post to, and then have one controlled by the V.P. and used for specific "Take action" needs, like letters, calls, etc.
 2. More joint projects where clubs are working together on "on the ground" projects, like the NZMS effort on Putah Creek, and the American River stranding reduction work. Increase efforts on Policy issues like CHRC, letters and lobbying efforts with agencies and state gov't. Trout in the classroom could be expanded if more clubs were educated on the process. Diablo Valley and CFFU both have large Trout in the Classroom projects, and could educate others on how it is done. Suggested that we might do an annual "TICR" display and education process at Festival of Fly Fishing.
 3. Solicit twice annually for Conservation projects for the Conservation Grants program. Put up deadline dates on the website and in the newsletter. Conservation committee would then prioritize them, and fund based on priority and funds available. Deadlines are October 31, and April 30. Board approval would be sought for any request over \$2,000. It was suggested that we need a grants coordinator to oversee the website "grants page", and to help track the progress on grants already approved. Additionally, this person could look into grants from other groups like Patagonia, etc. Heath Wakelee was suggested due to his experience.
 4. Increase communication and coordination between V.P. Conservation and club conservation Chairs. Mark to work on this.
 5. A presidents meeting at Conclave was heavily supported as a way to increase communication, and to get the clubs involved in NCCFFF actions. Along with the Presidents newsletter Dave Ford started, this should be very helpful. Possibly use it to kick off the Trout in the Classroom action.
- We discussed a possible joint project with Cal Trout. It is called the "**Annual State of the Salmonid Report**", and it is a joint project between Cal Trout and U.C. Davis Watershed Center (Dr. Peter Moyle and Dr. Jeff Mount).
 1. Dr. Moyle has done preliminary fish run surveys in Calif. as a prelude to his most recent book on all Calif. fish.
 2. U.C. will highlight a specific group of salmonid populations to measure annually, to determine if the population is increasing, decreasing or staying steady. Dr. Moyle feels that most are decreasing.

3. U.C. Davis would lead the field work, compile data, submit for peer review, and become the credible science of the project.
 4. Cal Trout and other conservation groups would become the advocacy side for pushing state and federal agencies to take action. The science support provides the platform from which strong pressure can be borne, and provides support for pushing agencies into action.
 5. There would be two annual events. One “on the stream” of a selected fishery to do work, publicize the problem, and get media attention (the Eel River is first), and the second event, **Sacramento Day**. This last one is of special interest to NCCFFF, as it could be the event we sponsor. It includes a press conference, press interviews, meetings with legislators and State Agency people. Additionally, a legislative hearing on the State of the Salmonid and a Luncheon for fish and river advocates and Government leaders are planned.
 6. Chuck Bucaria, Dave Ford and Mark Rockwell have held a phone conference to discuss the project, answer questions, and get clarity on the project and how NCCFFF and Cal Trout would work together on the project. **A discussion at the Board Meeting on December 2nd will be held**, to determine if NCCFFF will participate as sponsors of Sacramento Day. (documentation to follow in separate e-mail)
- **Reports on Current Conservation Network Actions and projects:**
 1. **Sacramento – S.F. Bay Delta** – Doug Lovell – Doug has proposing a Striper Slot Limit to the F & G Commission, to help to protect the remaining striper population. Recent summer DFG trawl survey show the “young of the year” stripers are still at historic lows, and adult population data shows a dramatic decline. Commission presentation was done in Sept. with final decision due in early December. **Striperfest was November 4 at Sugar Barge Marina, and Doug will provide a report to the Board.** Efforts continue on the Delta through the Allied Fishing Groups, Restore the Delta group, and meetings with legislators and agencies. DFG and FWS POD studies continue to determine why the Delta fishery is in such dire trouble.
 2. **California Water Planning** – Efforts continue on advocating for changes in the way Calif. sees the future for water. Environmental Water Caucus groups are working with the Resources agency, DWR and others for policy change. Mark and some of the groups have met with Senator Feinstein’s office to discuss the PCL, Bay Institute and Bulletin 160 (state water plan update) with the Senator. There is a meeting being set up with Resource Secretary Chrisman in January to begin a dialogue with the State on it’s water policy.
 3. **Smith River regulation change** – After much effort by Chuck, Ben Taylor and others, to protect the Chinook Salmon run during the low flow part of the year, a suggested reg change was presented to the F&G Commission in September designed to stop snagging and waste of Fall Run Chinook. In the end, to allow local group attempts to work, the reg change was pulled, and we will wait to see if increased enforcement and

signage will help. The Commission is on notice that if this does not work, regulation change will be necessary.

4. **Central Valley Steelhead Suit** – The **Modesto Irrigation District** has filed suit to remove CV Steelhead from the ESA listing, based upon the change by NOAA from the ESU listing to a DPS listing. It is a ploy to get at more water and to reduce limitation on use and habitat. Additionally, the **Pacific Legal Foundation**, representing the California Grange, et al, filed suit to delist all five California ESA listed populations of steelhead. We are litigants in the suits, represented by Steve Mashuda, the Earth Justice attorney for Save Our Wild Salmon in Seattle. Additional litigants are FFF and Trout Unlimited... Contact Dougald Scott for copies of the litigation or briefs filed.
5. **Osprey Up-date** – Norm Ploss is now working as an editor on the Osprey, the definitive newsletter on Pacific Northwest Steelhead. You can now go to the FFF website and download all back issues of the Osprey. Norm would like all in the NCCFFF to take the time to submit articles on Calif. steelhead. Call Norm for more info.
6. **Carmel River** – Dougald gave us a summary of a possible dam removal project on the Carmel. It is a very old dam, and basically filled with sediment, and is a major barrier to steelhead passage. We and other groups like PCL are supporting a removal process that would be minimal cost, low impact, and very feasible for fish passage. Would provide several miles of additional spawning habitat.
7. **North Fork Feather** – Again this year, the NFF has been the point of much tension between environmental interests and the boating community. A proposal is on the table to limit “ramped flow days”, and currently there has been no increase in flow days awaiting agreement on one of three proposals. CHRC has proposed the fewest days, with other off sets in access, camping and transportation. Mark has details if you want them.
8. **Klamath River** – Much negotiation has been going on now, and we are down to the few “most difficult” issues. Additionally, under the new FERC rules, proposed by the Administration, the power company can ask for a hearing before a law judge, on FERC requirements. PacifiCorp requested a hearing on a list of over 40 issues, and the Klamath Conservation Caucus has spent many weeks and much money getting experts to testify on behalf of the fishery. The good news is that we won on all but 3 issues, and PacifiCorp’s attempt to undermine the dam removal proposal was blocked. There will be a Governor’s summit on the Klamath in late January or early February, and the extended caucus (negotiating group) hopes to have an agreed to offer ready by then. Summit will be attended by the two Governors, DOI Secretary Kempthorne, and Commerce Secretary Gutierrez. All want a settlement, and the summit may provide an opportunity to apply appropriate political pressure to PacifiCorp.

9. **Board of Forestry** – Mike Laing reported that new T & I rules that are being proposed, and the need to keep DFG in the process of watching timber harvest plans. Much of this is taking place on the North Coast, where much pressure exists on watersheds due to logging. Narrowing of buffer zones and roads are big problems.
10. **So. Fork Pit Hydro project** – Cindy Charles and Anne-Marie Bakker are working on this project. They made a site visit, and did some fishing and found the S. Fork as a beautiful and productive fishery. Proposal is to build a small hydro project which would essentially dewater several miles of the stream, and increase temps in many more miles. The Golden West Women's Fly Fishers and NCCFFF, along with others, have filed negative comments with FERC. As of this time, this project has not been approved by FERC, but the developer may try to press this forward again. Time will tell.
11. **Lower American River** – Mike Laing reported that after many years of negotiation, the Water Forum and others have reached agreement with the Bureau of Rec. on flows and temps. What now remains is for everyone to sign off on the agreement. This has taken years to get the Bureau to finally set minimum standards that will support the fish. "Endless pressure, endlessly applied" won. Many thanks to Leo Winternitz of the Water Forum. Leo has now been appointed as a special Governor's assistant to CALFED, to deal with the Delta. Hopefully, he will be an advocate for the resource, as he was for the Sacramento River.
12. **NZMS** – Ken Davis is investigating the possibility of NCCFFF sponsoring a NZMS conference here in Central California. It appears that there is a conference now scheduled at UC Davis during the summer of 2007, and Ken is coordinating how we might be involved and help out.
13. **CABY** – Consummés, American, Bear, and Yuba rivers are engaged in relicensing now, and issues of managing the watershed are open for discussion. It is a stakeholder group which will be the decision making body for this entire watershed relative to habitat enhancement projects and funding. This is the State's first try at a "watershed wide" process, as opposed to a "river-by-river" approach, used in the past. **Frank Rinella** is participating in this for the Gold Country Fly Fishers and NCCFFF. Currently, NCCFFF has a voting seat on the decision committee, but we need to approve the Resolution for Endorsement and Adoption. Additional documentation has been sent to the Board, and a vote for approval to sign the resolution will be requested at the meeting Dec. 2.
14. **New Conservation Grant Web Page** – Thanks to Michael McWilliams, and his technical ability, we now have a Club Grants page on the website. On this page is the timing for submission of requests, the form for doing so, and the selection criteria to qualify. Due Dates are November 15th and June 15th. This program is supported by funds raised at the Hall of Fame Dinner, and goes to our member clubs to support their conservation projects in their local waters and watersheds. Several clubs and Board

members have participated in this program in the past. This makes the process more structured, and available. Thanks Michael.

15. Conservation presentations were given by Mark Rockwell to the Peninsula Fly Fishers in Redwood City, Ca. on September 21st, and to the Mt. Tamalpais Fly Fishers on November 28th. These presentations are a full hour, and include briefings on most of the issues in this report. Additionally, it includes an appeal to join FFF as a way of supporting our efforts. They are designed to answer the question often asked by our clubs – “What does the FFF do for us?”

- **Department of the Interior Listening Sessions** – A series of 25 “listening sessions” were held around the U.S. in September and October, as a way for the Federal Agencies to hear what people thought about environmental laws and private landowner actions to protect habitat and wildlife. Mark Rockwell, working for the Endangered Species Coalition, worked to organize attendance and comments for the two meetings in California, Redding and Colton. He also worked to get the FFF involved by writing a comment letter, and attending the Montana session in Bozeman. . Protecting the ESA, NEPA and the Clean Water Act (Administration’s targets) is vital to fishery protections. Without them, we have no basis for advocacy. Concerns in the coming Congress is that Secretary Kempthorne will make regulatory changes within the Fish and Wildlife Service that will negatively impact the ESA actions under the FWS.
- **FFF becomes Endangered Species Coalition (ESC) member group, and joins the steering committee.** The FFF has joined over 375 other National, State, and local conservation groups, business and other organizations as a member group of the ESC. In discussions with Peter Van Gytenbeek, FFF CEO, and Ron Cordes, FFF Chairman, Mark Rockwell presented the opportunity for the FFF to join this coalition of National groups, to increase the influence of FFF, and to connect FFF with other influential groups working to improve our National environmental heritage. Because the ESC has decided to expand its efforts, and reorganize its structure, a steering committee, to make policy direction decisions, was formed, and the FFF was chosen as a member of this select group. Van will be the primary representative for FFF, with Leah Elwell, FFF Conservation Coordinator, as his backup. This is a great opportunity for FFF to step into the National spotlight on conservation issues, and to present the fishery prospective at a National level.

Those attending the joint Conservation/Steelhead Committee meeting in Late August:

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| • Dave Ford | Norm Ploss |
| • Mark Rockwell | Ron Forbes |
| • Dougald Scott | Doug Lovell |
| • Bill Hetland | Darrell Bridgeman |
| • Warren Carlson | Sandy Leo |
| • Anne-Marie Bakker | Michael Mc Williams |
| • Mike Laing | Chuck Bucaria |
| • Cindy Charles | Jerry Ng |