

**California Cooperative Fish Research Unit
2008 Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

The annual coordinating meeting was held at the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center, 921 Waterfront Drive, Eureka, California. It began at 9:10 am and concluded at 3:20 pm.

In attendance:

Bernard Shanks, Supervisor - USGS/BRD/Cooperative Research Units
Walter Duffy, Leader, CA Cooperative Fish Research Unit
Peggy Wilzbach, Asst. Leader, CA Cooperative Fish Research Unit
Sharon Kahara, Research Associate, CA Cooperative Fish Research Unit
Russell Bellmer, Cooperator Representative, California Dept. of Fish & Game
Phil Bairrington, California Dept. of Fish & Game, Arcata
James Howard, Dean, CNRS, Humboldt State University
David Hankin, Chair, Department of Fisheries Biology, HSU
Randy Brown, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata
Paul Zedonis, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata
Eric Bjorkstedt, NOAA Fisheries Service, Adjunct Professor, HSU
Irma Lagomarsino, NOAA Fisheries Service, Arcata
Terry Hofstra, NPS, Redwood National Park
Kay Brisby, Administrative Coordinator, CA Cooperative Fish Research Unit

Walt Duffy opened the meeting with introductions and announced the rotating meeting chair, Jim Howard. Walt Duffy gave a brief description of the unit program and purpose of the annual coordinating meeting. The agenda was reviewed and no changes were requested. Minutes of the 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved (Shanks motioned/Bellmer seconded).

COOPERATOR REPORTS

Report from California Department of Fish and Game - Russell Bellmer

Russell Bellmer is the new representative, attending first unit meeting. He provided updates to the information provided in the previous year.

- The Coho Recovery Fund (Prop. 84) is \$45M but not fully released by legislature, just starting to become available. DFG has been criticized for the lack of information produced.
- Looking for funds for the state-wide coastal monitoring long term plan.
- Restoration Grants Program received 173 proposals for the \$20M available funding. Four projects have been funded, 169 are in review.
- The Lake Davis project appears to be successful, no negative publicity and the restocking went well.
- The case regarding coho salmon south of San Francisco was won by the Resources Department but is being revisited by the courts.
- Program to reduce mud snails and quagga mussels got nine canines for roadblock searches - they seem to be effective.
- A positive note is there has been an increase in number of game wardens.

Bellmer was asked to speak about the new Director (Don Koch) but he has not met him yet so has little to share. Koch was appointed in April, comes from the Northern

Region office. The state is facing a \$22 billion deficit which means budget hits are certain. A position with incumbent has already been lost.

Report from California Department of Fish and Game - Phil Bairrington

He is speaking for Steve Turek on the Northern Region perspective. Worked with Don Koch as regional manager - he is known to be short and to the point. Koch is very concerned about the social, economic and biological importance of the Klamath-Trinity. Gary Stacy is taking over the regional manager position. He embraces cooperation and partnership and the importance of fisheries monitoring on reasonably healthy systems such as the Smith River.

- The 2006 salmon disaster funds have \$6.5M left to be allocated for restoration projects on the Klamath-Trinity, Eel, Smith, Humboldt Bay/Freshwater, and Mendocino Coast. Five proposals equaling \$2.5M
- Last year we spoke about the coastal monitoring plan, we really need to get the 50 page document done. Need 30 year funding for monitoring - not year by year.
- If anyone has issues with collecting permits Michele Gilroy can assist.

Report from Humboldt State University - James Howard, CNRS Dean

Last year was 6th year of budget decline. Promised if we showed enrollment increases we would see \$2-3M extra this year. Then the state realized the severity of budget deficit and now the CSU is facing \$5-6M reduction. The university is in process of identifying programs that are not central to mission or that are too expensive. Academic prioritization process will reduce offerings but do what we do retain well. This is consequence of too much reliance on state general fund. CSU must pursue other resources and build relationships with agencies to help fund faculty.

HSU is seeking partnerships with other states (Hawaii) to expand the unit to include wildlife. Attending meetings to develop congressional coalition from both Hawaii and California to gain support for both state expansions.

Report from HSU, Fisheries Biology - Dave Hankin

Department is still suffering from the loss (retirement) of Terry Roelofs. They will be able to hire temp replacement next spring. Current year enrollment of fish students is 70% in marine which is strange - trying to learn more about the why of that. A positive note is Andrew Kinziger is doing well with ichthyology and genetics. Need someone to do likewise in the freshwater area. Hankin is serving on the university prioritization task force mentioned by Dean Howard. High cost programs will have to be reduced.

Dr. Hankin encourages a workshop to talk about merits and needs of the coastal monitoring plan. Russ Bellmer acknowledged the comments and says it is on his agenda.

Report from US NOAA Fisheries - Eric Bjorksted

Pacific Coast Ocean Observing Program (PACOOS) - A program primarily driven by NOAA Fisheries, other agencies, CDFG, FWS. Extent of coverage is California current ecosystem. On governing board is Scripps, Univ. of WA, OR State Univ., and HSU. They are doing oceanographic cruises off Trinidad. Bjorksted just completed a survey with HSU class of the Klamath River plume, examining extent of influence of discharge

and distribution of prey items for salmon. Like everywhere this is oceanography on a shoestring but doing some good work.

A side note from Hankin, he is looking at Klamath River flows - high flows in June equate to good survival rates of fish. Flows affect the plume - an interesting future theme in need of long term time survey.

Report from US NPS - Redwood National Park - Terry Hofstra

Watershed rehabilitation program was authorized by the Park expansion in 1978. Focus was first removing roads. Geology, hydrology were primary areas of expertise. Expanding to aquatic resources, important to integrate disciplines as was mentioned before (oceanography/marine biology example).

Park Service held a one day fish workshop in April to summarize work in Redwood Creek. Updating their previous research topics needs. Need information on long term effects of watershed restoration. Funds may be available for local effects of global climate issues - assure spent where most useful. They have 30+ active research projects within the Park. Support and oversight is provided to be sure meaningful and researchers are not stepping over one another.

Old hatchery is historic so it can't be torn down. Looking for viable use of buildings with \$1M for rehabilitation.

Report from US Fish & Wildlife Service - Randy Brown

Service has been lucky to have Dale Hall director. Change on horizon with new administration. Decent budget this year - added four new positions in Arcata. California-Nevada was part of Region 1 out of Portland, now separate - Region 8, still share administration with Portland regional office. Regional Director Steve Thompson will retire this year in August.

At the Arcata level things have been going well. Stress cooperation with staff and all agencies. Several great projects going on: Andrew Kinziger work on the tidewater goby; Klamath-Trinity issues; Conservation Partnership Program - involved with McDaniel Slough Restoration, Salt River, mouth of Eel, tide gate work (Rocky Gulch example).

Report from US Fish & Wildlife Service - Paul Zedonis

Zedonis provided additional comments about the Fisheries Program. The Klamath-Trinity is the main focus with dedicated funding. Run downstream trap on the Trinity. Klamath River topics are dam relicensing, sediment, disease studies with the Yurok and Coop Unit -hope to add year end funds.

Nick Hetrick really brought connectivity with the university. Look forward to more collaboration. HSU graduates have always been important to the service.

- Green sturgeon - Humboldt Bay
- Sonic tracking
- Looking to establish work on Eel River system
- Expand good science as provided by University
- Need avenue to biometric support - have contracted with Rob Van Kirk (new HSU faculty)

Report from US NOAA Fisheries - Irma Lagomarsino

Introduced self and Arcata office program (80% of her staff are also HSU graduates). Three new positions in the office for Klamath River work. Transform from regulators to conservation partners. Have GIS, restoration specialists on staff. Some current research topics are green sturgeon, eulachon, disease issue in the Klamath (there will be a post-doc working with Michael Moore). FY09 budget has increased funding for Klamath Basin but will come under "continuing resolution". Frustrated that the funding stream is always such a patchwork.

(Short Break)

Report from US Geological Survey-Cooperative Research Units - Bern Shanks

Another repeat - could just use the notes from last year. Following the long primary season he notes that the candidates are the oldest and the youngest. Both promise change. He is more optimistic than he has been. USGS budgets have been flat since Interior moved research to USGS. The intention was to have science agency, non-regulatory. People are realizing that Federal research is in crisis. Struggle will be between new priorities and the huge deficit. States at least try to balance a budget. Federal government is several trillion in debt.

Attends 14 of these meetings per year and is struck by similarities among the natural resource programs. Next few years will be critical in how programs evolve. Wyoming and NM may lose Fish & Wildlife programs, Range as a major is almost gone.

There are now 22-23 vacancies in the Coop Research program. Culture has been to have 2-3 scientists at each unit - that may be changing. Cooperators are able to influence the legislature. He gave an example of Congress adding \$1M to Coop Unit Program, to the benefit of all units. Cooperators are concerned about retirements with little chance to fill positions. Need \$6M to resolve. Future funding requests to congress will need support from multiple states. Several universities in the western states will become the centers for natural resource programs. Existing budget will likely be a "continuing resolution" which may actually be better for this year. All states, except WY with energy funds, are seeing declines in education funding.

Jim Howard summarized comments. There is an overriding theme of change and cooperation. The USGS Cooperative Research Program is great example. We must seek other opportunities for coordination and cooperation and advancement. As example Lyle Laverty, USDI Assistant Secretary and HSU alumni has offered to help develop a concept for a multi-agency research center at the university.

UNIT RESEARCH SUMMARY

Walt Duffy and Peggy Wilzbach reviewed the four projects that were completed since the last meeting (see narratives in meeting notes).

(Break for lunch at 11:35. Meeting reconvened at 1:10)

Peggy Wilzbach's student, Mark Ashenfelter, gave a presentation on "Growth and movement of resident rainbow trout transplanted below barriers to anadromy" a thesis project supported by the CA Department of Fish and Game.

Dr. Sharon Kahara presented an introduction to the research project "Assessing the effects of USDA conservation practices on wetland ecosystem services in California's Central Valley."

Walt Duffy referred to the documentation for a review of the current research projects.

Walt Duffy and Peggy Wilzbach introduced the new research projects to be approved:

1. Estimating salmon and steelhead escapement to Redwood Creek using a dual frequency identification sonar (DIDSON) imaging system.
2. Prairie Creek Sub-Basin Life Cycle Monitoring
3. Upper and Lower Redwood Creek juvenile salmonid (smolt) abundance projects (2008-2009 continuation).
4. Prairie Creek salmonid population monitoring (existing project funding augmentation).
5. Sample, identify, and enumerate macroinvertebrates of Caspar Creek Watershed.
6. The role of barriers in the conservation of McCloud redband trout.

Bern Shanks moved to approve the projects as described, with Russell Bellmer seconding the motion. All approved.

UNIT PROGRAM DIRECTION

General discussion of the merits of the Coop Unit program and its differences from other programs. Use of soft money to increase the mass of expertise.

Need to create a list of talking points. Bern will provide a copy of other states as example. Provide information to make a letter from HSU president stronger.

Walt updated the status of the new Cooperative Agreement review. Changes at DFG have delayed progress but it should be in the signing process soon. US FWS and WMI will be added as cooperators. NOAA has been considered but is not inclined to participate, questions the legality of Cooperative Agreements.

Dean Howard referred to the green pages of the meeting notes for unit budget information and opened for questions. The arrival of the DFG funding contribution was noted.

CLOSING

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm. The executive committee session was convened following a short break.