

**Salmonid Coalition**  
General Meeting  
April 19, 2007  
**Draft Document**

**Item 1. Introductions**

Adina Merenlender, Al Cadd, Amy Mai, Bill Cox, Bill Hearn, Bob Anderson, Bob Burke, Bob Coey, Bob Klampt, Brenda Adelman, Carolyn Wasem, Chris DeGabrielle, Chris Murray, Colleen Fernald, Derek Aikman, Dick Butler, Glen Wright, Gregg Horton, Jennifer Burke, Joe Dillon, John Perry, Julie Collins, Kara Heckert, Lex McCorvey, Mike Ban, Mike Martini, Ralph Locke, and Randy Poole.

**Item 2: Water Quantity in the Tributaries**

Dr. Merenlender has been collecting information on streams in the Russian River Watershed and would also like to collect information on watershed management. She asked that some of the growers to take a look at the surveys. There are issues with the assurance of privacy, which is necessary so that everyone can feel comfortable with participating in the research.

Dr. Horton wants to work with the Ag subcommittee to gain access to private lands. It is vital that we understand the water management in flat areas as well as the hillsides. A lot of people are requesting appropriative rights in uplands where we do not have a great deal of information.

There are two primary charges:

- 1) Estimate the water supply in the watershed over space and time; and
- 2) Timing of water availability.

The other issue is how winter storage affects the ability of salmon to move through the streams. We are beginning to understand that placement of reservoirs affect stream flows, but we do not know how much.

The issue of storage is very complex. We are going to have to find alternative methods for storing water. With the support of the ag subcommittee we hope to gather information for Dr. Merenlender.

**Item 3: Update on Ground-Truthing Data**

There is a survey being conducted on the 15 tributaries relative to the Salmon Coalition to the Russian River. The survey is to verify data that DFG has collected over the last 10 years. We have been successful in completing surveys on five creeks including Grape Creek, Foote Creek, Redwood Creek and Wine Creek.

The collected data is in line with that of DFG data in most cases. The surveys will continue on the remaining streams with the help of RCD.

#### **Item 4: Update on Landowner Access**

There has not been much trouble getting landowners' permission to access Miller, Gird and Crocker creeks. However, there has been some trouble with landowners on other creeks, specifically Franz and Maacama but also Sausal, Gill, Yellow jacket.

Whether or not the surveying will be done in six weeks time (on schedule) depends on the assistance of several landowners. A letter to private property owners signed by Nick Frey, Bob Anderson, Al Cadd, Al Nelson, and Lex McCorvey was very powerful and their help is very much appreciated by Dr. Horton.

#### **Item 5: Board of Public Utilities/Sonoma County Water Agency: Sources and Uses for Reclaimed Water in the Russian River Watershed**

There is some confusion over reclaimed water supply, specifically with how it will be used and who will have access to it.

Discussions ensued relative to what the cities were doing and conversations around re-use and conservation. Representatives from the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) have met with Healdsburg and surrounding landowners to discuss current efforts and wastewater. The two issues that they focused on were the discharge component and the re-use component.

The BPU is appointed by the City Council. Their recommendations for availability for water re-use are a "best guess" as to what may be available in their system. They treat the sewage to an advance tertiary level. After it is treated some of the water is used for Ag irrigation, and the rest is either discharged into the river or sent to the Geysers.

The commitment from the Salmon Coalition is to promote to willing agriculture producers and appropriate urban projects, re-use in terms of conservation of potable water. The system capacity will be maximized, and if the water is available and we would rather re-use than dispose of it. Storage is crucial because without it we will only have water when people do not want it, not when people need it. We are also interested in understanding the proximity to the existing facilities – what the cost sharing is, and the impact on future domestic water supplies.

In 2002 we were very interested in partnering with the Ag community – but given the timing on the EIR and the diversion from Warm Springs – the emphasis is on demonstrating an offset of potable water. If a project is evaluated on water supply and offset, the project becomes more economically feasible.

Using our best guesses in the model as to what water might be available: there is not a whole lot of water left for Ag reuse.

A point that the Water Agency is having a difficult time making to the jurisdictions is that agriculture water use does impact potable use and that the city does not seem to get the connection.

The BPU recognizes that there are certain issues with re-use. They don't want people to think that they have to take retreated water and we won't take their water rights.

The urban users have invested a great deal in salmon recovery. Will the BPU consider salmon recovery and weight it as a criterion that is important? How will those impact ag re-use? To date, the BPU has not approached this from that perspective. But, the City of Santa Rosa and the BPU are very sensitive to this issue. Whether it becomes salmon recovery criteria is still questionable.

Additionally, there are still concerns regarding contaminants that may still be in the treated water. We need to move cautiously.

In conclusion, even though growth patterns in the county have changed over the last five years, none of the assumptions have been altered and the BPU will continue to follow the plan. What we have learned is that we must conserve a great deal more water than anticipated, and we have a great deal less water available.

#### **Item 6: EIR Update**

The SCWA are looking to 1610 modifications because of the fish issues and the Potter Valley decision. The big question is how to solve water rights issues for Ag users while still preserving the habitat for the fish. We will need help from Dr. Merenlender and Dr. Horton to understand cumulative impacts of ag water rights permitting.

We have a draft EIR/EIS on ag re-use. This needs to be available in October. This may help with fish issues and understanding how to balance demands and get this integrated into the 1610 decision.

In terms of this year, based on current projections we will be below 10,000 acre-feet at Mendocino before the onset of the rains.

#### **Item 7: Update on Lawsuit on Urban Water Management Plan**

The decision on Potter Valley is making a bigger impact than we originally thought. This year is calculates out to a 50,000 acre feet reduction.

The Ag community uses about 60,000 acre-feet of potable water supply that comes down the Russian River, which is similar for the urban users as well. A great deal of water that comes down the Russian River is abandoned water.

Some of the difficulty with water rights are the issues that surround Coyote Dam. All we are doing is passing through the flows for their use. In addition to that, if the flows are higher than ag needs, then it becomes available for those who hold riparian rights. It is a complicated issue – the type of year (whether it was wet or dry year) determines in part whether or not we are over-appropriated.