



California Fish Passage Forum

Meeting Minutes

September 9-10, 2015
Arcata, California

Attendees: Michael Bowen, Melinda Molnar, Sam Akkad, Bob Pagliuco, Lisa DeBruyckere, Marc Commandatore, Stan Allen, Candice Meneghin, Gordon Leppig, Jennifer Gillies, Susan Leroy, Charlie Fielder, JoAnn Dunn, Dan Gale, Sandra Rosts, John Woolley, Tom Weseloh, Amy Bailey, Mark Wheatley, Scott Lee, Rebecca Bernard.

By phone: Tom Schroyer, Kevin Shaffer, Robin Carlson, Anne Elston, Marc Commandatore

ACTION ITEMS:

- Marc Commandatore will work with Anne Elston in the Winter of 2015 to discuss priorities and incorporate their data into PAD.
- The Science and Data Committee will compile representative examples of case studies by inquiring within Forum members, and Lisa will produce a glossy 11x17" document that highlights these case studies.
 - Bob is taking the lead on case studies for projects with pre- and post-monitoring. Bob created a template and candidate projects – will be finalized in early October, then the document will be produced and a story map developed online.
- MOU – Caltrans is the remaining organization that needs to sign the MOU.
- Robin is soliciting habitat assessment updates for NFHP from agencies through October.
- The joint PMEP/Forum Science and Data Committee phone call is November 17 from 1pm-3pm.
- Forum members that have not yet sent their bios AND PHOTOS to Lisa need to do so asap – this includes both primary members and their alternates. Existing bios can be found [here](#).
- Donnie will send an email to the Forum requesting contacts and contact information for specific individuals to test run *FISHPass*.
- Kevin Shaffer was tasked to query FRGP leads to determine which fish passage projects have performed less than expected so that the Forum Engineering Working Group can evaluate the projects and compile a lessons learned set of case studies.
- The Forum discussed five potential key tasks for the Engineering Working Group to advance fish passage issues for anadromous fish in California. Forum members suggested these priorities for consideration, but leave it to the Working Group to affirm or change those priorities:
 - (#1) Develop scope for literature review and assimilation for tide gate modification technology – complete Caltrans request form (potential preliminary investigations (literature review) by Caltrans – which could lead to a full-blown research project)
 - (#2) Comment on Caltrans fish passage project implementation flowchart (draft estimated to be available early 2016)
 - (#3) Coordinate standardized design solutions
 - (#4) Determine maximum jump heights for juvenile salmonids based on scientific research, and seek

policy alignment on agency criteria

- (#5) Review designs of failed projects after post-construction monitoring - reviewing designs to advance lessons learned (e.g., specific design features, how it was implemented, etc.)

Forum members also discussed the desire to ask the Engineering Working Group about their priorities, how long they estimate it would take to complete each recommended task, and any additions or deletions to the list of five suggested items.

DECISION ITEMS:

- The Forum will begin meeting three times annually instead of four, and will aim for two day meetings if the agenda warrants.
- The Forum is reviving the Engineering Working Group to address five key initial tasks.

Agenda Items:

- 2015 Forum work plans – the [Governance, Science and Data](#) and [Outreach and Education Committee](#) Forum work plans were presented and discussed. Latest versions have been uploaded to the Forum website.
- At the October NFHP Board meeting, Donnie Ratcliff will be presenting on behalf of the Forum – a PowerPoint presentation has been created. The Forum recommended field trip option #2, which includes large fish screens as well as fish.
- American Rivers members were not present to discuss their request to the Forum, so this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.
- Dan Gale of the USFWS gave [a presentation](#) on USFWS-funded fish passage projects through the Conservation Partnerships Program.
- The Forum discussed the NFHP application for funding, which will be announced October 15. The Forum affirmed commitment for funding the Arroyo Grande project as the top priority project in 2016. The Forum will be transparent about the amount of funding that may be available in 2016 as a result of committing to Arroyo Grande. On the project scoresheet, the Forum combined project readiness and permitting. On the application, the Forum changed question #6 to read, “If you answered yes to the question above, please provide the PAD ID number and describe, under ‘average’ conditions, if it is a complete, temporal, or partial barrier and how often passage is provided for both adult and juvenile salmonids, if the information is available (e.g., meets fish passage criteria for adults 45% of the time and 0% of the time for juveniles). The updated form can be found [here](#). The draft listserv announcement was reviewed.
- Steph Wald gave [a presentation](#) and update on the Arroyo Grande Creek Stream Gage Modification Project. Permits are complete, but the CDFW FRGP funding contract was cancelled in July due to a contract management determination that a funding shortfall existed. The CCSE is applying to the CDFW Watershed Restoration Grant Program – the deadline is September 16.
- Day 2 of the Forum meeting included a presentation by Melinda Molnar of Caltrans on Fish Passage Remediation on the State Highway System, followed by a great deal of discussion about how all of the agencies could work together to support one another and fish passage efforts.

Caltrans made four recommendations to the Forum:

- Forum Governance/Permit Policy Group address permit review and application streamlining.
- Forum Engineering Working Group address design standardization for State Highway projects, streamlining scoping, & design review/approval milestones.
- Help identify and resolve project issues via review of active fish passage projects at scheduled Forum meetings.
- Forum Participate in identifying opportunities to align infrastructure and recovery.

In addition, there was discussion about the Forum Permitting and Policy Committee:

- exploring ways to permit fish passage projects rapidly;

- developing a practical approach to individual ITPs, perhaps by convening a conference call with Caltrans and CDFW (Region 1 & HQ) to advance this issue and potentially pilot criteria to advance level 1 and level 2 opportunities;
- CDFW Region 1, seeking Caltrans coordination to facilitate a review process for project design within the ecological function of streams and for a variety of species (e.g., bats, wildlife corridors, etc.).

Other key points:

- Caltrans staff asked Forum members to articulate the issues of concern relative to cost, timing, streamlining, etc.
- The Margaret Lang study helped identify problems and needed refinements, but that the study is in need of some updates and additional identified surveys.
- Streamlining and a programmatic approach could improve Caltrans' process and approach.
- There is momentum within Caltrans to remediate fish passage barriers.
- Several agency representatives asked what is needed from their organizations to assist Caltrans in their efforts.
- Locations where structural or critical transportation maintenance needs have been identified are currently excluded from mitigation.
- Incidental take permits should be issued quicker – a programmatic ITP may not be necessary. Developing agreed upon, standard practices to avoid and minimize impacts to habitat and species may be an option to streamline projects. Project teams will then use those agreed upon standard practices to develop new projects.
- Caltrans has identified upcoming transportation projects and estimated the related impacts that are likely to require mitigation. Fish passage projects could be funded out of the Caltrans Advance Mitigation program (Shopp 240), if a crediting system and guidance were established, particularly for locations that do not have an identified transportation need (funding nexus).
- Caltrans is seeking innovative ways to work with natural resource partners to establish timelines and design remediation solutions in a timely manner.
- California has 24 species of bats, of which 12 are of federal concern and several are state sensitive. CDFW, Region 1 would like to look for opportunities to consider providing bat habitat during bridge construction. The upcoming DN 101 (Dr. Fine Bridge) would be a potential candidate.
- Forum members and guests spent the afternoon in the field looking at three projects – Sultan Creek (an emergency order project), Little Mill Creek (a soon-to-be-funded project), and Peacock Creek, which was remediated in 2013. Excellent discussion was had by all during visits to these sites.
- The next Forum meeting will be in Sacramento in the Spring of 2015.