

**Grape Creek Report for the California Fish Passage Forum  
Trout Unlimited  
July 15, 2014**

**Background**

The Fish Passage Forum and its members have generously supported work to improve flow in the Grape Creek watershed. The US Fish and Wildlife Service -- through the National Fish Habitat Action Plan -- and the State Coastal Conservancy funded early outreach and gauging work in Grape Creek. That work was critical to developing projects to improve streamflow in the watershed. Multiple Fish Passage Forum members -- including USFWS/NFHAP, the NOAA Restoration Center, and the State Coastal Conservancy -- supported project work, specifically the Upper Grape Creek Project. The work in Grape Creek and four other Russian River tributaries continues through the Coho Partnership with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Sonoma County Water Agency, and others.

In 2013, Grape Creek was selected as one of the ten national Waters to Watch. The project has also been featured in the following media pieces:

- USFWS video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32md1fRc3No&feature=youtu.be>
- Coho Partnership video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUU3v7C45c0>
- Trout Magazine Article: <http://online.qmags.com/TU0613S#pg1&mode2>

**Project Work**

Landowners in Grape Creek have participated in fisheries conservation efforts in various ways. At one point, every riparian landowner along Grape Creek has either allowed access for fisheries survey work, hosted a streamflow gauge, allowed for Coho broodstock releases or monitoring efforts, or completed some form of habitat/water conservation or flow improvement project. Many were engaged in multiple ways. Through these partnerships, we have been able to eliminate the last known frost protection diversions in the watershed. In many ways, the Grape Creek watershed is a microcosm for the many types of water needs and potential conservation projects that can be implemented coast wide. We are using the lessons learned on streams across coastal California.

Wine Creek Ranch: Constructed an off-stream pond for irrigation water use that improves water supply reliability (and economic viability) for the grower and eliminates irrigation use of a streamside well. The project was funded by the landowner and NRCS (through AWEF).



Martorana Family Winery: Installed a frost fan in order to eliminate a diversion and on-stream dam (which was a fish passage barrier). Completed a project that included bank layback, riparian revegetation, and installation of instream structures, and allowed access for the West Dry Creek Road fish passage project. The company celebrates the work in its tasting room, and through its annual Bikes, Vines and Fish tour. The grower was just featured in the Huffington Post! (see #2):

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anneli-rufus/10-things-to-do-in-the-wi\\_b\\_5552305.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anneli-rufus/10-things-to-do-in-the-wi_b_5552305.html)



Quivira Vineyards and Winery: Completed a conservation project to reduce the winery's water use (by installing a steam cleaning machine), and installed three frost fans. Allowed access for West Dry Creek Road fish passage project and participated in SCWA Dry Creek Habitat Enhancement Demonstration Project. [http://www.quivirawine.com/index.php?option=com\\_submenu&id=2&show=22](http://www.quivirawine.com/index.php?option=com_submenu&id=2&show=22)



Weed Farms: Off-stream pond project in development to store vineyard water and eliminate dry season irrigation pumping from a well near the stream. The project will benefit over-summer survival in a critical coho spawning reach of Grape Creek.



G. Mazzer Co.: Constructed an off-stream pond for frost protection and irrigation water, and completed a source switch to eliminate use of an on-stream pond and frost diversion. The frost protection diversion had a demonstrable effect on Grape Creek. The first photo is of the on-stream flashboard dam; the second photo depicts the repurposed flashboards, now in use in the pond.



**Upper Grape Creek Project Photos**



**Pre-Project Construction Site**



**Existing On-Stream Flashboard Dam and Pond**



**Plant Relocation**



**Earthwork**



**Compaction**



**Offstream Pond Taking Shape**



**Liner Installation**



**Installed Liner**



**Completed Offstream Pond**

No frost events have occurred since the Upper Grape Creek Project was completed in 2013. The grower reported that the off-stream pond has been instrumental to his operation in this critically dry year.



Minimum counts for juvenile steelhead and coho for Grape Creek are depicted in the graphic below (courtesy of UC Cooperative Extension/California Sea Grant).

