



California Fish Passage Forum Fall 2019 Meeting

September 10 & 11, 2019

Day 1 - Southern California Field Tour

Sandra Jacobsen (CalTrout) organized a full day, four stop field tour showcasing key examples of fish passage advancements in Southern California to Forum members and guests.

Site 1: I-5 Trabuco Fish Passage Site (San Juan Capistrano)





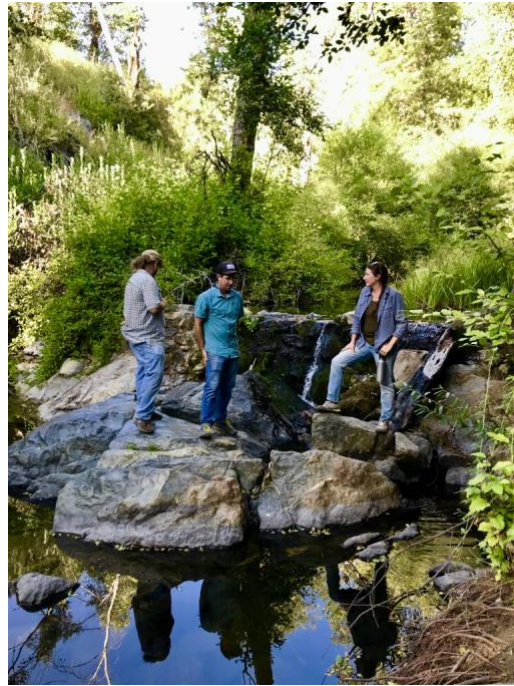
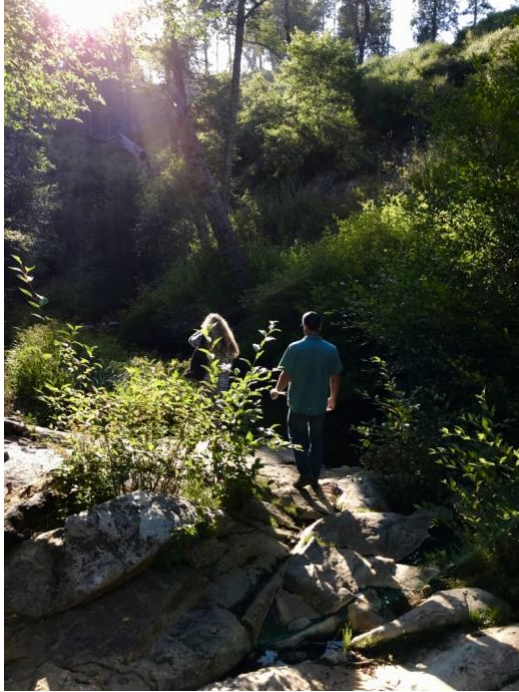
Site 2: Santa Margarita River Bridge Replacement Project at Sandia Creek (Fallbrook)



Site 3: Pauma Valley Weather Station on Pala Roberts Ranch Grove – N of Pauma Creek Crossing



Site 4: Palomar Mountain – Hike to Visit Headwaters of Pauma Creek & Resident Rainbow Trout



Day 2 – Forum Business Meeting

California Department of Fish & Wildlife
3883 Ruffin Road
San Diego, CA 92123

Attendees: Bob Pagliuco (NMFS), Javier Linares (USFWS), Stan Allen (PSMFC), Damon Goodman (USFWS), Eric MacMillan (USFWS), Alex Jones (USFWS), Sandi Jacobson (CalTrout), Russell Marlow (CalTrout), Brett Holycross (PSMFC), Anna Halligan (Trout Unlimited), Sam Jenniches (SCC), Russell Barabe (CDFW), Kirsten Winter (USFS), Zach Hoagland (CCC), Julie Donnell (USFS), Brittany Struck (NMFS), and Alicia Marrs (CFPF)

Remote Participants: Holly Eddinger (USFS), Anne Elston (CDFW/PSMFC), Jon Mann (CDFW), Kyle Maxwell, Megan Sheely (CDWR), Krissy Atkinson (CDWR), and Tom Shroyer (CDFW).

Overview of Action Items

- The Forum's funding opportunity is currently open. The [FY20 RFP](#) deadline is **October 11, 2019** (**this has been moved back from Oct 7*). Forum members are asked to help spread the word within their organizations, and share this information with other networks they are affiliated with. They are also asked to encourage potential applicants to submit a proposal, and send Alicia any questions they may have.
- Javier has announced that he will be stepping back from his role as the primary representative from USFWS to the Forum. While Javier will still be available if needed, Damon Goodman and Alex Jones will be taking on his tasks associated with the Forum.
- With Javier stepping down the Governance Committee is looking for one or two new member(s) (current members include Bob, Damon, Stan and Anna). We do not currently have any State representation on the committee and are looking for a state participant. Please contact Bob if you are interested in joining the Governance Committee.
- Volunteers to represent the Forum on the Barriers to Tidal Connectivity Inter-FHP working group (MSGC 2019) that will help guide the evolution of this grant are still being sought. Please contact Alicia for more information.
- Sandi will work with Alicia to develop ideas for barrier removal case studies.
- Alicia will work with the newly reconstituted Policy & Permitting Committee to schedule their first call in October.
- Alicia will consolidate the comments from the Strategic Framework discussions, incorporate them into the current document and distribute to the Forum to be discussed further on a future yet to be scheduled call geared solely towards this topic.
- The Forum will continue to seek new member organizations if/when the opportunity arises. Please contact Alicia and Bob with ideas of potential new members.

Meeting Minutes

Forum Administration

Member Updates

- **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)/NOAA Restoration Center**
 - NMFS will be releasing a funding opportunity in a couple months that will fund projects like fish passage, habitat restoration, water conservation etc. Bob will share this information with the Forum when the announcement is made. Expecting around \$6M nation-wide.
- **US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)**
 - Javier will be stepping down as the rep for USFWS, Damon will be stepping in as the lead for USFWS with support from Alex.
- **California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)**
 - The 2020 Proposal Solicitation Notice for Prop 1 & Prop 68 is expected to come out in September.
 - Anne will be going on maternity leave (approx. 12 weeks) soon (likely end of September/early October) is expecting to return sometime in Dec/Jan. She plans to send out a PAD Newsletter before she leaves which will include points of contact for while she's out of the office. One will be Brett, who will help support the data needs and inquiries related to the PAD for the Forum.
- **California Department of Water Resources (DWR)**
 - Kristine (Krissy) Atkinson is the new DWR representative to the Forum.
 - DWR released the RFP for the [San Joaquin River Fish Enhancement Program \(Prop 13\)](#) funding this summer and will be accepting applications through November 1, 2019. (\$3.5M) lower San Joaquin River. To be competitive, a project needs to align with the State Water Resource Control Board Water quality control plan and NMFS. Priority projects include fish passage, water temp, migration enhancement, etc. Contact Krissy for more info at kristine.atkinson@water.ca.gov.
 - The Urban Streams Restoration Program RFP closed Aug 30. DWR is developing a GIS tool to evaluate applications submitted. If folks are interested in seeing a demonstration of the tool, please contact Krissy (see above) or Megan Sheely (megan.sheely@water.ca.gov).
- **U.S. Forest Service**
 - American Rivers recently wrote a feature [article](#) on the work Cleveland National Forest (CNF) did to lump the removal of 81 dams as part of the Trabuco District Dam Removal Project (this will also be presented on later in the day at the meeting) into one Environmental Assessment (EA), greatly reducing the cost and time to compete NEPA requirements. The relatively new (2014) USFS NEPA regulations added three new categorical exclusions (including dam removal). USFS Region 6 (OR and WA) is working on taking a similar but different approach to streamlining NEPA through a region-wide EA on USFS land in the PNW that will include information on removal of dams as well. Contact Holly or Kirsten Winter (Cleveland National Forest) for more information.

Forum Budget Update

Stan provided the following overview of the Forum's current budget status.

CFPF NFHP Budget Status (USFWS)

1072.17 ;.18; .19	Budgeted	Spent	Remaining
Personnel	\$ 38,793	\$ 13,770	\$ 25,023
Rents	\$ 1,700	\$ 487	\$ 1,213
Supplies/Software	\$ 6,712	\$ 240	\$ 6,472
Sub-Contracts (*)	\$459,253	\$340,382	\$118,871
Travel	\$ 10,270	\$ 1,706	\$ 8,564
Sub-Totals	\$516,728	\$356,585	\$160,143
Indirect	\$ 20,465	\$ 11,282	\$ 9,183
Totals	\$ 537,193	\$367,867	\$169,326

Sub-Contracts to Date

Western Fishes (Pacific Lamprey; 17-44)	\$20,000 (completed)
Trout Unlimited (Pennington Creek; 18-08)	\$40,000 (completed)
Forum Coordination (Creative Resource Strategies; 18-07)	\$36,000 (completed)
CA State Parks (Benbow Dam; 18-25)	\$58,499 (completed)
Gold Ridge RCD (Upper Green Valley; 18-26)	\$30,089 (completed)
Ecotrust (FISHPass User Interface; 18-90)	\$63,500 (completed)
Earth Island Institute (Davy Brown; 18-96)	\$44,538 (nearing completion)
Forum Coordination (Alicia Marrs; 19-30)	\$50,000 (nearing completion)
Harvey Diversion	CANCELED
Neefus (Trout Unlimited; 19-25)	\$39,513 (in progress)
Cooper Mill (Trout Unlimited; 19-61)	\$65,782 (in progress)
Mid-Klamath	\$38,680 (directly funded by USFWS)

End Date: 9/30/20 (5-year agreement that started 8/8/16)

CFPF Multi-State Grant Budget Status

1121.19	Budgeted	Spent	Remaining
Personnel	\$10,752	\$ 2,283	\$ 8,469

Mtgs/Workshops*	\$ 2,000	\$ 0	\$ 2,000
Supplies	\$ 550	\$ 0	\$ 550
Sub-Contracts	\$	\$ 0	\$
Travel	\$ 519	\$ 0	\$ 519
Sub-Totals	\$	\$ 0	\$
Indirect	\$ 2,180	\$ 360	\$ 1,820
Totals	\$ 16,000	\$ 0	\$ 13,357

End Date: 12/31/19 (was extended)

*Note: \$2,000 for meetings/workshops is for WNTI Coastal Cutthroat

CFPF NFHP Budget Status (USFWS)

New 5-Year Agreement (starting FY20)	Budgeted	Spent	Remaining
Personnel	\$ 16,038	\$ 0	\$
Rents	\$ 700	\$ 0	\$
Supplies/Software	\$ 4,196	\$ 0	\$
Sub-Contracts (*)	\$205,752	\$ 0	\$
Travels	\$ 4,000	\$ 0	\$
Sub-Totals	\$230,685	\$ 0	\$
Indirect	\$ 6,826	\$ 0	\$
Totals	\$ 237,511	\$ 0	\$

Sub Contracts to Date

New 5-Year Agreement with USFWS (not started yet)

Forum Coordination (Alicia Marrs; new)	\$60,000
Trout Unlimited (M-1) Road Crossing; new)	\$81,857
Gold Ridge RCD (Iron Horse; new)	\$20,039
Mid-Klamath Watershed Council (Seiad; new)	\$28,856

Trout Unlimited (Upper Novo-Skunk; new)	\$15,000
Tolowa Tribe (Pacific Lamprey - Rowdy)	\$19,500 (USFWS Direct)
Western Fishes (Pacific Lamprey – Sacramento)	\$34,853 (USFWS Direct)

National NFHP Update

Eric MacMillan joined USFWS in March 2019 as the new coordinator for [NFHP](#) and the [National Fish Passage Program](#). He provided the group with an overview of his responsibilities at USFWS HQ:

- **National Fish Passage Program:** This is a voluntary USFWS restoration program focused strictly on fish passage. USFWS provides various levels of assistance (technical, project coordination, engineering etc.) for fish passage removal projects (see website). Total funding nationally is approximately \$13M, and each region receives approximately \$1M/year for fish passage work. Projects are typically developed in coordination with USFWS staff (it is recommended that you contact regional them directly to develop a proposal). The two main points of contact in USFWS Region 8 (California and Nevada) are Tim Loux (tim_loux@fws.gov) and Ryan Fogerty (ryan_fogerty@fws.gov).
- **National Fish Habitat Program:** Eric is also USFWS national coordinator for NFHP. In this role he facilitates coordination between FHP coordinators (eg Alicia) and USFWS regions. He also coordinates and manages the USFWS funding process and NFHP board staff.
 - **Update on FY19 USFWS NFHP Funding:** Funds have been sent to the Service regions and which will be developed into service agreements and distributed. USFWS plans to release the template for the USFWS Annual Work Plan & Accomplishments Report in Fall 2019 (likely October) and reports are expected to be due in January 2020.
- The Steering Committee had the opportunity to ask Eric questions and learned the following:
 - NFHP and Fish Passage Program funding can be combined.
 - In addition to on-the-ground restoration projects, NFHP project funding can be spent on assessments, implementation, and have been used by other FHPs to build support with stakeholders (outreach/workshops). Eric recommends working with FWS regional coordinators to iron out specific parameters around what can and can't be funded with these dollars. NFHP funding cannot provide funding for land acquisitions or research, but could potentially fund monitoring/assessment work (this work does not have to be done on a project that has already received NFHP funding).
 - Eric was asked if the Forum could see examples of what the other FHPs are funding and he said he will work with Alicia to provide the Forum that information.

Forum-Funded Project Status Updates

Bob reviewed the current status of Forum-funded projects. All projects that received FY17 funding (Benbow Dam, Pennington Creek and Upper Green Valley Creek) have been completed. Mid Klamath is underway, and the Forum-funded portion of Davy Brown has also been completed, but Stan is still waiting for invoices. Anna Halligan provided updates on Cooper Mill and Neefus Gulch (both Trout Unlimited projects). Central California Traction Railroad Bridge (CCTR) (FY16) has still not received its permits, so construction has been delayed again. Kelly Gulch (FY14) has yet to secure the necessary permits and is not completed.

Alicia has been working with Alex, and others, to collect as much information on projects that have received Forum funding since its inception. Reports collected (progress and/or final) are now available for further review on the [Forum's intranet page](#). She has also created a central database to collect relevant information that the Forum is asked on its projects (partners, barriers removed, miles/acres of stream/habitat opened

and/or restored etc.) This is a living document and will be updated as new information is received, and made available upon request and eventually on the intranet as well.

Sandi and Russel also provided an update on the Harvey Diversion Project, originally selected for funding by the Forum in FY18 (for design and implementation of a pilot project), but late removed from consideration after the plans and scope of the project changed. The project has since been repackaged for 100% design and permitting and is receiving funding of \$1.07M for implementation.

FY2019 Project Selection & NFHP Funding Update

On August 20, 2019 the Forum was [notified of the results](#) of the review of its FY19 USFWS Annual Accomplishments Report and Work Plan by USFWS, and that it scored a performance Level 3. Level 3 is the highest possible funding level through NFHP/USFWS, and this is the first time in the Forum's history it has scored at this level. In addition to all FHPs receiving an extra \$10K in coordination funding (now \$85K), the Forum will receive \$206,864 in project funding for FY19 for a total of \$291,864.

There were seven eligible proposals received as a result of the FY19 RFP which closed (October 1, 2018). Of those proposals, five were recommended by the Forum for funding in December 2018: Iron Horse Vineyards (Gold Ridge RCD), Lamprey Passage at Rowdy Creek (Tolowa Tribe), Little Case Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project Design (Eel River Watershed Improvement Group), M-1 Road Fish Passage Improvement Project (Trout Unlimited), and Siead Creek Off-Channel Connection Project (Mid Klamath Watershed Council). However, due to the substantial delay in receiving these funds from USFWS (funding decisions are usually anticipated sometime in the Spring, and this year did not happen until August), ERWIG removed its proposal for Little Case Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project Design from Forum consideration. This left a surplus in available funding, and the Forum was forced to solicit project proposals via the Steering Committee. Through that process two additional projects were selected: Upper Noyo River – Skunk Train (Trout Unlimited) and Lamprey Passage Design for Priority Obstacles in Sacramento Basin (Western Fishes). Many promising proposals were received through this process, and Alicia has encouraged them to submit proposals to the FY20 RFP.

2020 Funding Announcement & Process

Alicia reviewed the resources and timeline for the FY20 funding opportunity. The [FY20 Request for Proposals](#) opened on September 3, 2019 and will now close **October 11, 2019** (*please note this is a different date than was discussed at the meeting in San Diego, an updated timeline is also included below*). All proposals should be submitted online via the Forum's online [webform](#). Forum members are asked to pass along this information within their organizations, to stakeholders, and throughout any other networks they deem appropriate. Alicia is available to assist with this upon request.

Thank you to the following individuals who volunteered to participate in this year's review panel: Bob, Javier, Alex, Sandi, Holly, and Brett.

The expected timeline (also distributed to the Forum Steering Committee via email in August for their review) for the remainder of this RFP solicitation and review process is below (***incorporating changes made since the Forum meeting in San Diego in red to accommodate requests to extend the deadline*):

Sept 27: Alicia will send out reminder email and deadline announce extension

Oct 11 7: RFP closes at 11:59 PDT

Oct 14 8: Alicia will review proposals received for eligibility

Oct 15 11: Alicia will distribute eligible proposals, scoring sheets and instructions to the Review Panel for their review.

Nov 1: Scoring sheets are due to Alicia

Nov 5-8: Review panel will meet (via webinar) for approximately 2 hours to discuss scores and make ranking recommendations to present to the Governance Committee.

Nov 12-14: Deadline for Governance Committee to approve the Review Panel's ranking recommendations.

Nov 18: Alicia sends ranking recommendations to Forum for comment.

Dec 2: Deadline for Forum Steering Committee to comment on ranking recommendations.

Dec 4: Barring any objections, Alicia will distribute the final list of recommended projects to the Forum and begin incorporating them into the USFWS FY20 Work Plan & Accomplishments Report (assuming the template has been received from USFWS).

****All dates are subject to change as needed.****

2019 & 2020 Multi-State Conservation Grant (MSCG) Updates

• 2019 Update – Tidal Connectivity

The Forum continues to work in partnership with Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) and the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative (PLCI) on the Barriers to Tidal Connectivity (BTC) Project which was awarded \$60k in 2019 MSCG funding. PMEP continues to be the lead FHP on this project, and Alicia is working with Joan Drinkwin (PMEP coordinator), Christina Wang (PLCI) and Van Hare (PSMFC) to refine and execute the SOW. As this project is still evolving, Alicia provided the Forum with the most recent description of the project and plans for implementation. *Since the meeting on September 11, this core organizing group met again on September 19 and the following includes an updated overview of the project.*

- **Goal:** The goal of this project is to characterize and synthesize information available regarding the location of intertidal water crossing structures and their impacts on estuarine fish and their habitats. This project will identify existing efforts currently underway to document and map restrictions to tidal connectivity in U.S. West Coast estuaries. Part of this work is to identify key data gaps and spatial analysis methods for future exploration. PMEP will also incorporate the salient information from this effort into its broader spatial data management system, allowing experts in the field to access location-specific data on intertidal water crossing structures within the broader West Coast-wide estuary data framework. This information will be helpful to practitioners along the West Coast working to protect and restore tidal connectivity, and for those who are planning future studies. The following includes the overarching tasks currently planned as part of this project:
 - **GIS Analysis** of available datasets from across the FHP regions
 - **Workshop/Summit** that will bring together experts from across the three FHPs to review the information collected and products developed through the GIS analysis, share other local knowledge/expertise, and identify gaps and technical (science and data) information needed to address ways to reduce restrictions to tidal connectivity.
 - **Report** summarizing the spatial data sources that were catalogued and the key data groups identified, as well as a description of the outcomes from the workshop.
- **Next Steps:** Establishing the Inter-FHP BTC Working Group, which will meet via conference call/webinar at the end of October. Alicia asked again for volunteers and/or recommendations to represent the Forum on an inter-FHP working group that will help guide the evolution of this grant. Brett is already participating, and Damon agreed to also sit on the BTC working group. If anyone else would like to participate, please contact Alicia ASAP.

• 2020 MSCG Proposal Update and Project Brainstorming

In March the Forum submitted a proposal, through NFHP and in coordination with other interested FHPs under the theme of "Communications & Outreach", for \$25K in MSCG FY20 funding to support a California Fish Passage Summit (\$22K) and general outreach materials (\$3K). In July, each of the

FHPs that submitted project proposals were asked to reduce their requests by approximately 40%. The Governance Committee decided to move forward with the proposal for a Fish Passage Summit at \$15K.

Official notification from AFWA and NFHP as to whether or not these proposals will be funded had not yet been received as of September 11, and Alicia asked the Steering Committee to send her any thoughts on the Summit, potential partners, and/or funding opportunities. Anna pointed out that the Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) has not held a Fish Passage Field School since 2014, and that could be a potential option for partnering etc. Once MSCG funding confirmed, Alicia plans to work with the Education & Outreach Committee to further scope out the Summit and whether or not the Forum would like to pursue other funding sources as well.

UPDATE* On September 24, Alicia and the other FHP Coordinators that had submitted proposals received notification that AFWA's National Grants Committee had **not decided to award any funding to NFHP's proposal. Alicia will discuss with the Governance and Education & Outreach Committees as to whether or not the Governance Committee would like to proceed with this concept.*

Spring-run Chinook Salmon Stranding in Big Chico Creek's Iron Canyon (Butte County)

In recent years approximately 200-300 Chinook have been stranded in a popular swimming hole in Big Chico Creek. Krissy Atkinson (CDWR) and Tom Schroyer (CDFW) led a discussion seeking the Forum's input on long and short-term solutions to prevent/manage the situation if/when the spring-run Chinook are stranded in the future. They also sought input from the Forum on the value of enhancing passage and habitat on this stream vs making investments in the major spring run creeks, strategies for enhancing passage, and potential funding mechanisms to execute that work. Other questions were raised as to the quality of habitat above the barrier, and the value of providing access. The Forum's ability to provide direct assistance to this issue is limited, but a feasibility study was suggested, as well as submitting a proposal to the current RFP. DWR will continue to work with CDFW and other agencies on this issue. Please contact Krissy if you'd like to discuss further.

Cleveland National Forest Fish Passage Barrier Removal Project

Julie Donnell (USFS – Trabuco Ranger District) gave the Forum presentation on the Trabuco District Dam Removal Project, which has involved removing at least 81 dams (and low water crossings) in four creeks. Most built between 1930-70s by Orange County. Almost all are barriers to Arroyo cutthroat and at least a partial barrier to steelhead (especially during low flows). Thus far 71 barriers have been removed, but this project has helped uncover additional barriers, and at the moment there are at least 17 additional known barriers that need to be removed. USFS is hoping to have the project completed by 2021.

Forum Committee Updates

Each of the chairs/co-chairs of the Forum's three Committees (Governance, Science & Data, and Education & Outreach) walked through their Committees' respective work plans and provided an overview of 2019 accomplishments thus far and plans for the rest of 2019. The updated work plans Alicia distributed to the Forum prior to this meeting are available on the [Committee Resources](#) page on the Forum's intranet. Additional highlights from each Committee's discussion include:

- **Governance Committee:** Bob provided the Forum with an overview of the Governance Committee activities since the Forum's last meeting in Sacramento in March. He also reviewed the process and

comments received during the Forum's recent review of the Strategic Framework as a primer for the more in-depth conversation later in the afternoon. This exercise was not a full-fledged review as the document was recently updated at the end of 2017, but is intended as more of a status check. The Forum used this time to discuss whether or not the Forum should be seeking new member organizations and brainstormed some potential options. The Governance Committee will continue this discussion on future calls.

With Javier's departure, the Governance Committee is seeking new members (current members include Bob, Damon, Stan and Anna). Bob has also served as the chair of the Governance Committee for many (approximately 6) years. He would be willing to hand over the reins if there is another individual interested in stepping into this role. Interested Forum members are asked to contact Bob if they are interested in joining the Governance Committee and/or serving as chair.

- **Science & Data:** Sandi Jacobsen and Alex Jones continue to serve as co-chairs of the Science & Data Committee (S&D Committee). FISHPass continues to be the primary focus of the S&D Committee, and following the completion of Ecotrust's contract with the Forum, a FISHPass Working Group (FPWG) was formed. The goal of the FPWG is to continue to update the input data incorporated into the tool (including cost data, PAD updates and baseline fish habitat) and refine some of the last front end tweaks that were requested by the Forum that Ecotrust was unable to address before the end of their contract. With the approval and support from the S&D Committee and the Forum, the public release of Phase 1 of FISHPass is planned at the American Fisheries Society national conference in Reno, NV on October 3 where Alicia and Brett will be giving a presentation on the Forum and FISHPass.

Additional tasks/activities being addressed by the S&D Committee include continuing to update the PAD including integrating Pacific Lamprey passage data, continued refinement of the [Fish Passage Incidental Report](#) and the creation of an accompanying mobile app (currently being tested by the Science & Data Committee), as well as collaboration and information sharing with other FHPs (Alicia, Brett and Anne had calls/webinars with the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) and the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) to discuss their barrier prioritization tool (SARP) and interest in finding ways to develop something like FISHPass in their region (MGLP)).

Additionally, Sandi has offered to take the lead in helping to identify topics for new barrier removal case studies (Goal 3 Objective 1 Task 1.1).

Once FISHPass Phase 1 is released, the S&D Committee will continue to support its updates and refinement and the rollout in coordination with the Education & Outreach Committee. Other tasks include continuing the data gap analysis, which once a region/watershed is identified as a priority focus area could help provide focus on how/where and to which groups/stakeholders FISHPass outreach is targeted, as well as providing a specific region/watershed when refining/testing FISHPass input data.

- **Education & Outreach:** Alicia gave a quick overview of the activities the Education & Outreach Committee have been working on since the last meeting including Anne and Alicia presenting a poster and FISHPass preview at SRF in Santa Rosa, developing a new Forum fact sheet for outreach events, nominating and publicizing the Forum project for [NFHP's 2019 10 Waters to Watch \(Upper Green Valley Creek Fish Passage Project\)](#), the development of the FISHPass Rollout Strategy, and continued updates to the new Forum intranet that serves as an internal sharedrive for the Forum. Resources include documents associated with Forum-funded projects (original project submissions, progress and final reports when available), past and current versions of Forum administrative

documents (in Word and PDF when available), and meeting notes and other associated documents from Forum Committee calls/meetings. Alicia is working with Alex to collect other archived/historical Forum documents, and Forum members are asked to reach out if they have access to missing documents or if there are things that they would like to see housed on this site as well.

If Forum members have not yet created a log-in (or need to reset their password) for the intranet, please use click on the “sign up/login” link in the top right hand corner of the Forum website. Reach out to Alicia if you have any questions, or if you need assistance accessing it.

Santa Margarita River Conjunctive Use Project & Fish Passage at Lake O’Neil Diversion at Camp Pendleton (Brittany)

Brittany Struck (NMFS Long Beach) provided the Forum with a presentation on NMFS’ work with Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton to address the fish passage structure at the Lake O’Neill diversion. The removal and replacement of this barrier was a required component of the Santa Margarita River Conjunctive Use Project developed to manage surface and groundwater in the lower portions of the river. Brittany discussed NMFS’ efforts to find a balance where water was allowed to be diverted off the river while still preserving the integrity of the hydrograph to maintain the ability of adult and juvenile steelhead passage up river (ultimately potentially reaching sites like the bridge at Sandia Creek visited during the field trip on Sept 10). Ultimately, NMFS issued a non-jeopardy opinion, and a new inflatable weir diversion has been constructed. Damon noted that the Santa Margarita is also a historical river for Pacific Lamprey, and passage could be achieved for lamprey if designed correctly. Camp Pendleton will be responsible for monitoring moving forward.

Forum Strategic Framework (2018-2023) Review

Bob continued the earlier discussion surrounding the results of the Forum’s review of the current Strategic Framework. The comments received were synthesized into eight main points and discussed to the extent possible during the time allowed. The Forum agreed that further discussion was needed. Alicia will be sending a summary of the points made during this discussion to the Forum and schedule a call to continue this discussion.

Additionally, this discussion led to a desire to reestablish the Forum’s Policy & Permitting Committee. Sandi Jacobsen (CalTrout), Sam Jennchies (Coastal Conservancy), Holly Eddinger (USFS) volunteered to join this new committee, and Anna Halligan (Trout Unlimited) agreed to serve as the chair. Alicia will work with them to schedule their first call, and if there are any other members of the Forum that would like to participate please contact Anna and Alicia.

FISHPass Update

Alex, Brett, Damon and Alicia gave the Forum an overview of the status of FISHPass and plans to release “Phase 1” at AFS in Reno on/around Brett and Alicia’s presentation on October 3. This included an overview of the components of “Phase 1” and the timeline for release. In addition to the new user-friendly web interface, FISHPass Phase 1 will include the following:

- Updated data inputs:
 - Cost data
 - Information from PAD updates
 - Baseline Fish Habitat (BFH)
 - Barrier Tracing

- Supporting materials
 - User guidance
 - FAQs
 - Supporting webpages (About, FAQs, etc) and other outreach materials

Other Outstanding Issues with User Interface

Two of the outstanding issues with FISHPass identified at the last Forum meeting in Sacramento that were not addressed by Ecotrust by the end of their contract were 1) removing cost data as a default and 2) sorting of the results page. Brett investigated a variety of options to address these issues including hiring Ecotrust or another contractor to address them. Ultimately, staff at PSMFC was able to complete this work at no additional cost to the Forum.

PSMFC has also created a development site for FISHPass where changes like these can be made and tested before uploading to the publically accessible version of the tool.

Cost Data Analysis

Alex and Brett reviewed the Coast Data Analysis document that has been developed to describe the data collected and analysis behind the cost dataset input in FISHPass. This input was one of the primary concerns raised by the Forum when FISHPass was presented at the last Forum meeting in Sacramento. Since that meeting in March, the Science & Data Committee, and especially members of the FISHPass Working Group (FPWG) have worked to gather as much additional data as possible. Many Forum member organizations and partners were helpful in providing additional datasets. The Cost Data Analysis addresses the feedback received from the Forum, has been reviewed by the Science & Data Committee, and was also distributed to the Forum prior to the meeting in San Diego for their consideration.

Baseline Fish Habitat

Brett continues to update and refine this input using updated data from the PAD and other sources. The BFH layer essentially hydrography of upstream habitat to help define “what’s possible”. Recent refinements have included, but are not limited to, updating of gradient thresholds (high gradient reaches weren’t showing up previously), additions of updated PAD data, new species database observations.

PAD Updates

Alex and others have been working with Anne to review barrier information from various recovery plans and other sources to update the information on barriers that were either missing or unassessed. As Anne verifies this new information it will be incorporated into the PAD and uploaded to FISHPass when PAD updates are applied.

Refining Habitat Quality

While not included in the rollout of Phase 1, Habitat Quality was recognized early on in the development of FISHPass as an important component members of the Forum would like to incorporate if possible. The Forum has already supported the development of important resources (e.g. NorWeST data) needed to help develop this input, and once the refinement of the gradient data in the BFH is finished it will be something the FPWG plans to incorporate into Phase 2.

Damon and Brett have been brainstorming approaches, and Damon walked the Forum through an example for Chinook on the Smith River and Eel Rivers. The group discussed possible approaches, as well as necessary and available datasets. Damon reminded the Forum that ideally data used would be available statewide. If Forum members are interested in helping with this effort, please contact Damon.

Supporting Resources & FISHPass Rollout Plan/Outreach

The FPWG has reviewed the User Manual initially developed by Ecotrust, and will be using information from which to create an FAQ and other supporting documents for the tool. Alicia also reviewed the rollout plan that was first developed by the Education & Outreach Committee in January 2019, and has been refined in the months since to coincide with the expected release of the tool. (This rollout plan is also available on the Forum intranet.) In addition to an email announcing the release of FISHPass to the Forum listserv, an “Intro to FISHPass” webinar is planned for late October, and if successful, will be recorded and made available on the Forum website. The FPWG is helping to identify target watersheds/regions/user groups that may be best for targeting outreach. Alicia also asked for Forum members to consider hosting presentations/webinars within their organizations as the first phase of targeted outreach to build support and also collect feedback. An important component of the outreach strategy during Phase 1 will be to continue to collect feedback to help refine and improve the tool. The FPWG and Science & Data Committee have recognized that in order to be effective and remain relevant, FISHPass will be a living tool, and that will be continuously updated and tweaked by the Forum.

The FPWG asked if Forum members had any additional feedback, or issues with releasing Phase 1 of FISHPass on October 3. Various members voiced appreciation and support, and no opposition was raised.

Next Forum Meeting

The Forum was asked for possible dates and locations for the next in-person Forum meeting. The group agreed to shoot for January/February 2020. Various locations were proposed including Arcata, Merced/Fresno, Redding, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Yreka. Alicia will send be sending out a doodle poll to find a date and a survey to help zero in on a location. Please contact her with any additional thoughts and suggestions ASAP.