



Science & Data Committee Meetings

Present: Emily Seigel, Gena Lasko, Sandi Jacobson, Andrew Hampton, Mark Gard, Adrienne Chenette, Tim Loux, Anne Elston

Absent: Holly Eddinger, Van Hare, Ted Masters, Marisa Parish Hanson

Meeting attendance: [Meeting Attendance \(Google Sheets\)](#)

3/12/25 Agenda

- Announcement of ranked project list (Holly S)
- Update on Technical Advisory Committee for Effectiveness Assessment (Holly S and Sandi)
- Update on development of Version 4 of Aquatic Organism Passage Rapid Assessment Field Form (Anne)
- Develop attendees survey for SRF Workshop (All)

3/12/25 Meeting Minutes:

FY26 Ranked project List and funding amounts

Rank	Project Name	Funding Requested	Cumulative Ask
1	Operations	\$125,000.00	\$125,000.00
1	CA Fish Passage Structure Assessment: Evaluation of Effectiveness and Durability	\$88,920.00	\$213,920.00
2	Last Dam: Restoring Steelhead Rearing Habitat through Barrier Removal on Stuart Creek	\$45,000.00	\$258,920.00
3	Coastal Del Norte Habitat Restoration Response Monitoring	\$44,839.44	\$303,759.44
4	NF Ryan Fish Passage Project	\$36,340.00	\$340,099.44
5	Little Grass Valley Creek Fish Passage Improvement	\$99,325.00	recommended, likely not able to fund
6	SPAWN's Feasibility Study for Fish Passage within the Nicasio Reservoir	\$80,000.00	not recommending for funding
7	North Fork Schooner Gulch Culvert Replacement	\$41,959.70	not recommending for funding

Project Descriptions

Rank #1- Operations

Ask: \$125,000

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Requesting the maximum 125k in operations funding for FY25 could allow the Forum to advance many goals discussed in the Forum Work Plan. Examples include plan and execute more workshops in fall 2025 and spring-summer 2026, fund travel assistance for members to attend meetings, host an outreach event with a Forum meeting, or hire a communications specialist. The committee can re-evaluate the ask in FY27 after assessing need (i.e. we don't have to request as much in future if project funding is higher priority).

Rank #1- CA Fish Passage Structure Assessment: Evaluation of Effectiveness and Durability

Ask: \$88,920.00

This fish passage assessment will review a representative subset of completed hardened ramp and technical fishway fish passage structures throughout California to identify key factors resulting in successful projects and lessons learned that can improve future projects. The project will be conducted by a project team comprised of experienced fish passage engineers, researchers and technicians guided by a Technical Advisory Committee. The results of this fish passage assessment, conducted through interviews and site visits about performance criteria, durability and O&M at selected sites, will be synthesized into a Technical Report with conclusions and recommendations.

Rank #2- Last Dam: Restoring Steelhead Rearing Habitat through Barrier Removal on Stuart Creek

Ask: \$45,000.00

The proposed project puts into action 100% design plans to remove Bouverie Dam - the final man-made barrier to unimpeded fish passage on Stuart Creek, a major tributary to Sonoma Creek in Sonoma County known for its important steelhead spawning and rearing potential. Channel incision and scouring below the spillway has made the dam a depth, velocity, and leap barrier to high quality salmonid rearing habitat and cool climate refugia pools in the creek's upper reaches. The dam will be replaced by a stream simulation reach with hydraulic and sediment transport characteristics that support recent downstream spawning habitat restoration.

Rank #3- Coastal Del Norte Habitat Restoration Response Monitoring

Ask: \$44,839.44

This project evaluates the effectiveness of salmonid recovery actions by monitoring habitat and biological responses in the Smith River Plain's coastal tributaries. The Smith River Alliance aims to restore natural hydrology, reconnect floodplains, and improve habitats for fish and wildlife. Monitoring will focus on areas where barriers to fish passage have been remediated or removed, in collaboration with other agencies. The project will also contribute to monitoring the summer adult salmonid population in the Smith River.

Rank #4- NF Ryan Fish Passage Project

Ask: \$36,340.00

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This project will address a fish passage barrier that is the last man-made barrier in the Ryan Creek watershed. By removing a blown-out culvert and rock weir, this project will provide juvenile Coho and steelhead access to 1.0 miles of summer habitat and winter refugia that is currently inaccessible. The project is located on a tributary to Ryan Creek, colloquially known as NF Ryan Creek, which is part of the Outlet Creek watershed, known as the longest migration corridor for Coho salmon in California.

Rank #5- Little Grass Valley Creek Fish Passage Improvement

Ask: \$99,325.00

The project consists of removing one existing undersized and failed culvert (removal is complete) and stabilization of 5000 cubic yards of decomposed granite soil. The culvert will be replaced with an 18' CMP multiplate culvert or suitable alternative that will allow the natural channel width to be maintained through the structure. Fill depth prevents installation of an arch per manufacturer. Restoration at the project site will restore access to at least 5 miles of potentially suitable anadromous salmonid habitat upstream of the crossing. An identified suitable structure alternative includes a bridge with an approximate 96' span (precast) and abutments (precast).

(Not recommended) Rank #6- SPAWN's Feasibility Study for Fish Passage within the Nicasio Reservoir

Ask: \$80,000

Our feasibility study of the Nicasio Reservoir seeks to undertake an assessment and cost-benefit analysis of fish passage strategies around the Seager Dam structure. This would be done in order to reconnect habitat between Lagunitas Creek and the headwaters of Nicasio Creek above the dam. Nicasio Creek and its tributary Halleck Creek were once significant spawning and rearing streams for coho and steelhead, prior to the installation of Seager Dam. These headwater creeks can likely still support salmonids, so our study is aimed at determining the feasibility for undertaking fish passage strategies around the dam.

(Not recommended) Rank #7- North Fork Schooner Gulch Culvert Replacement

Ask: \$41,959.70

North Fork Schooner Gulch. Access is a private road of Schooner Gulch County Road that crosses North Fork Schooner Gulch. In 2016, a severe storm washed out the 4-foot diameter culvert, resulting in no vehicular access to seven properties. Replacing the road crossing on NF Schooner Gulch will provide access to 0.7 miles of salmonid habitat, benefiting threatened North Coast Steelhead Trout. CDFW monitored the stream in 2018 and observed several age classes of steelhead within the first 0.15 miles of stream.

Update on Technical Advisory Committee for Effectiveness Assessment (Holly S and Sandi)

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Sandi Jacobson, Ed Wallace and Mike Love will be helping lead the Technical Advisory Committee. The TAC members are, currently:

Name	Organization	Role
Andrew Hampton	CDFW	Statewide Aquatic Connectivity Coordinator
Sandi Jacobson	CalTrout	South Coast Regional Director
Adrienne Chenette	American Rivers	Associate Director California Data Science & River Restoration
Theo Claire	DWR	Environmental Scientist
Marisa Parish-Hanson	NOAA	Environmental Scientist
Anne Elston	PSMFC	Data Management Specialist
Ruth Goodfield	NOAA	Marine Habitat Resource Specialist
Tim Loux	USFWS	Senior Fishery Biologist
Mark Gard	CDFW	Senior Hydraulic Engineer
Garrett Altmann	EPIC	Western Restoration Program Manager
Emily Seigel	State Parks	Engineering Geologist

The committee recommends some targeted outreach to increase the diversity of the TAC. Some suggestions are:

- Jean Castillo – NMFS
- Randy Beckwith – DWR
- Derek Acomb – CDFW
- Ted Grantham - UC Berkley
- Yurok Tribal Fisheries

Holly will reach out to each of the above with an invitation to the TAC. Additional TAC members can be recruited by the TAC also when Holly is on leave.

Project Status: CalTrout has applied for CDFW WCB funding for the remainder of the funds not covered by the Forum. FPP or DWR are other discussed options, but we have not submitted for these. If funded through WCB, July 2025 starts with a 2 year start date. Forum funds would come in later in the project to help fund site visits, report drafting, publishing, etc.

Roles of the TAC:

- Attend TAC meetings and be engaged as able
- Suggest key members to query throughout the project.
- Review list of sites, prioritize and add additional in case we can cover more than 20
- Compile information on selected sites as supported by Mike and Ed.
- Attend site visits if possible based on proximity
- Review and edit report drafts

Next Steps: Holly to reach out to additional TAC members. Holly to send out most up-to-date work plan and preliminary list of sites to TAC along with request for first meeting. **Shooting for first TAC meeting in first week of April.**

Update on development of Version 4 of Aquatic Organism Passage Rapid Assessment Field Form or AOP Rapid Assessment Field Form (Anne)

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Anne shared her work on the AOP form. She had made several changes, including improving consistency, clarity, adding some structure types, and improving alignment with PAD.

Next Steps:

- Anne will work with Mark Gard to add last few instructions which are not included yet.
- Anne will work to make the form a fillable PDF and reach out to Van or Holly if she encounters issues.
- AFTER SRF WORKSHOP: Incorporate any additional feedback changes from SRF workshop and make changes based on an accessibility audit to meet ADA requirements so that the Form can go in the CDFW documents library.

Develop attendees survey for SRF Workshop.

The **SOLD OUT** (Woo!) SRF workshop will have ~30 participants. We want to capture information from them during and after the workshop. We can pursue a survey beforehand if we don't want to take time from the workshop. We will have best response rate before and during, but still may want to capture information from them after in a follow-up.

Committee Ideas for survey questions:

- What types of in-water work do you do? Have you done fish passage assessments before? Will you be doing fish passage assessments in future? If so, where?
- Based on this workshop, would you feel comfortable filling out the rapid assessment form in your work?
- Do you have any suggested changes to the Form that would make it easier to use?
- Would you be interested in using this form in a digital format through Survey 123?
- Would you recommend this workshop for others in the future? Do you have any suggested changes to the workshop to improve it?
- Is there additional training or technical assistance that would be useful to you, either related to fish passage assessment, or other AOP passage or riparian restoration work? If so, what?

The committee suggests asking some of these **IN WORKSHOP**, on paper, and perhaps again in a follow-up survey. Holly will develop a survey and have it ready to review at the next S&D committee meeting in April.