



CALIFORNIA FISH PASSAGE FORUM

Policy & Permitting Committee Meetings

Present: Grace Adams, Anna Halligan, Stephanie Falzone, Erika Lovejoy

Absent: John Sayers

Meeting attendance:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NApL93PWEhVy2thUfWbRoe0ILJVullm5_YTjQfazKil/edit?usp=drive_link

6/4/25 Agenda

- News or Updates
- Quiota Creek Case Study Review

6/4/25 Meeting Minutes:

Policy & Permitting News or Updates

Anna noted that the current federal budget rescinds the remaining BIL/IRA money for fish passage, but this isn't finalized. It was discussed whether or not it is worthwhile sharing updates that are not yet finalized. The Forum is not an advocacy organization, however because we are a consortium of organizations, individual organizations could take this kind of information back to their policy people.

Sustainable Conservation's survey on the small habitat order has wrapped up and summarization is in the process. It was shared with folks who had used the process previously in addition to Sustainable Conservation's broader email list. Sustainable Conservation is planning to provide an update on survey results once summarized. The Water Board is planning to update the small habitat order restoration permit at some point. In general, survey results were positive, but people would like greater size limits to the disturbance distance (within the 5-acre area). In comparison, USACE's 404 programmatic permit used to have 500 ft disturbance distance, but they recently increased it to 1000 ft.

Erika noted that ultimately it would be great if the disturbance distance requirement was removed, as long as the disturbance stays within the 5-acre area. The likely scenario is that it will be a negotiation between CDFW and the Water Board, with a speculation that it will be 1500 ft. Project proponents said they would like to see it expanded or removed. Distance lengths are somewhat arbitrary because it ultimately depends on the project.

Q: How is the new RMP process is going?

They are working on 60+ new applications via the RMP process and have had to turn away smaller/simpler projects, so there is a lot of interest. CDFW is also short staffed for the moment. Only one project has been formally approved (Salmon City RCD).

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Q: What is the common trigger for folks to get into the RMP process?

We don't know yet and are not sure how many are FRGP.

Anna submitted an LSAA for a FRGP project and has been going through the state system using key nomenclature to alert staff that it is an FRGP project, but it hasn't been pulled to the RMP process yet.

It might be worthwhile to have a conversation with CDFW to better understand the process. The FRGP program is efficient, and the programmatic permits are broad, but they don't allow for project specific adaptations. When RMP was initially presented, it was assumed that all LSAA's would go through FRGP.

Anna will add this to the permitting/policy update slide for the Steering Committee meeting, specifically, to give a broad update on the transition happening towards the RMP process.

It might also be worthwhile to talk to folks who are part of the permitting process and those who are applying to improve our understanding of the process. It was noted that there is a webinar out.

[Link to CA Natural Resources Agency's YouTube page.](#) There appears to be a series 'Regulatory Strategies to Advance Restoration.'

It was noted that the CA legislature has several placeholder bills that will "backfill" key environmental protections if they are gutted at the national level.

Prop 4 funding will be coming online with the next CA FY budget in July; Anna has numbers on how much going to fish passage specifically.

Quiota Creek Case Study

Everyone provided good comments, but some questions will require following up with Tim Robinson.

Grace to collate comments/questions to send to Tim and can facilitate reconnecting, whether that be another call or providing answer over emails.

The committee revisited the three goals for the permitting case studies –

1. Communicating what has worked well re. simplified permitting pathways within individual interviews.
2. Communicating challenges encountered within individual interviews.
3. Exploring where consistent challenges exist in broader document which include common themes identified from previous interviews.

It was noted that a final review of the case study, with these goals in mind is necessary. There might be a better way to structure the case study and/or condense it to ensure we are clearly communicating the goals above.

Another question for future case studies is to ask about long-term maintenance when pulling together permit applications. One of the common themes of the case studies, so far, is that securing funding becomes a challenge for long-term maintenance. **Are there questions that we could ask in the case studies that would help illuminate this issue?**

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Next Steps:

- Grace to collate questions for Tim and reach out for his responses (cc Anna, Sandi, Stephanie).
- Anna to revisit the Quiota Creek case study with the above goals in mind to see how to best structure final draft.

Future Agenda Items

- Quiota Creek Case Study Updates
- Other Case Studies Next Steps
- 2026 Work Plan Brainstorming
- Policy Updates to send to Steering Committee