

**SAN LUIS REY WATERSHED COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES: 01/22/2007**

- **Call to Order:** 1:00 pm by George Wilkins.
- **List of Attendees present on 01/22/07:**

Valerie Ackley	La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians
John Beresford	La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians
Heidi Brow	Pala Band of Mission Indians, EPA
Anne Burdick	Mission Resource Conservation District
Paul Campo	Vista Irrigation District
Jack Griffiths	Rainbow Municipal Water District
Ruth Harber	Riverwatch
Dave Kajtaniak	Department of Fish & Game
Mo Lahsaie	City of Oceanside
Bill Pankey	San Luis Rey Municipal Water District
LaVonne Peck	La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians—Tribal Member
Bethany Principe	Mission Resource Conservation District
Rob Roy	La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians
Holly Sheridan	Department of Fish & Game
Don Smith	Vista Irrigation District
Vic Smothers	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
George Wilkins	Pacific REMS
- **Approval of Minutes:**

--The minutes of 11/27/07 were approved; the motion was put forward by Paul Campo, and seconded by Jack Griffiths.
- **California Department of Fish & Game: Steelhead Watershed Assessment for SLR River (Holly Sheridan, Guest Speaker):**
  - **Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP)**—annual grant funding: *public solicitation notice to be released this February/March* <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/nafwb/fishgrant.html>
  - **Coastal Watershed Planning & Assessment Program (CWPAP)**—annual grant: *fishery-based watershed assessment along CA. coastline* <http://coastalwatersheds.ca.gov/>
  - **DFG CONTACT:** Holly Sheridan: (916) 327-8658; [hsheridan@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:hsheridan@dfg.ca.gov)
  - **DFG CONTACT:** Dave Kajtaniak: (562) 342-7146; [dkajtaniak@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:dkajtaniak@dfg.ca.gov)

**DFG Presentation on Re-Introducing Southern Steelhead into the SLR River:**

**I. Southern Steelhead Trout:**

- This Fish is very tough & adaptable (resistant to drought/flash flooding events/adjusts to wider temperatures); it is genetically different from all other types of steelhead. Typically, a So. Steelhead lives in both the ocean & fresh water streams/ponds. It swims upstream to cooler tributaries in order to spawn, then returns back to the ocean; the juveniles stay in streams/ponds for a few years, before swimming out to sea to repeat the process. On average, they live for 5-8 years; they can hold up in pools/ponds for 2-3 years, before returning to the ocean. In 1997, the So. Steelhead was put on the US Endangered Species List.
- The current population of So. Steelhead is around 200-300 spawners. There are records from the Ventura River in the 1940's of over 10,000 spawners, in that river alone. The numbers are starting to improve, as they recover from California's extreme drought years, and from re-introduction efforts in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Historically, the Southern Steelhead was native to this area, so it would be a great success story to bring them back.

- Timing of Spawning Events: January – April. Steelhead swim up the stream in order to spawn, depending on rain events; juveniles will stay for up to 2 years, then return to the sea, also depending on rain events. There would have to be some flow in the river/creeks every year, between January and April. There would also have to be some pools or ponds in SLR River or tributaries with water present all year long (at least 6”), for juvenile steelhead to stay in (upper watershed/tributary creeks); the fish would need access to spawning-gravel areas (for aeration).
- II. Field Trip of the SLR Watershed** (preliminary-assessment): Held in Nov. 2006 by DFG & local stakeholders. Based on reconnaissance from this trip, the DFG has decided to do a Steelhead Assessment of the SLR River. Supporting factors: (1) the fish were historically here, (2) the watershed is still intact and mostly rural, and (3) there are good, local stakeholder partnerships.
- III. Steelhead Assessment Report:**
- Dave Katjaniak (Dept. of Fish & Game) will perform a 3 month Field Survey of the SLR River/Watershed, and will develop an Assessment Report by late summer; the report will be made available to all Watershed Council members. This report strives to find any current conditions along the river/streams/ponds that would support the re-introduction of a steelhead population. DFG hopes to walk the main stem of the SLR river from the river mouth to Henshaw Dam, depending on permission/access; they will also look into streams that branch off the SLR river (tributary creeks/ponds/riffles/pools/riparian covered areas within streams), that could support spawning efforts/juveniles. They will survey stream habitat for any barriers that could prohibit the steelhead from swimming upstream.
  - **DFG Needs:** Any related reports done on the SLR Watershed area; Bio-Assessments; Historical Information that might mention past steelhead sitings; Help with coordinating access to SLR River and streams. The more information we share with DFG, the more accurate their report will be.
  - The SLR Watershed Council as a group, and/or independent agencies, can use the completed Assessment Report to apply for future funding & projects (not just for the steelhead project).
- IV. Funding Opportunities for the Re-Introduction of Steelhead:**
- The Fisheries Restoration Grant (annual funding source) has 10 million dollars available for Steelhead Trout for the West Coast of California & Oregon. Current focus is: Work within the River/Stream.
  - **Funding Projects could include:** Purchase of water to release into the SLR River, to increase water quantity for the fish; purchase of land (river sections) for fish passage; removing culverts or other barriers to fish movement; construction of fish ladders.
  - This funding usually requires a Management Plan to be in place (like the assessment DFG is currently doing). Since the Steelhead Assessment Report will not be ready until late summer, which is after the next FRG grant cycle has passed, we might be able to submit a grant proposal now with an Outreach/Education Element (since an SLR Watershed Plan is not yet in place).
- V. Why would ‘Steelhead Re-Introduction’ be Beneficial to the SLR Watershed?**
- The presence of Steelhead Trout in the SLR River and tributary creeks would be an indicator that: SLR Water Quality is good; SLR benthic macro-invertebrates are present and healthy; groundwater quantity and quality is improving; the SLR watershed has good riparian coverage; SLR wildlife habitat is improving. **The overall result would be a healthier SLR watershed.**
  - Actions taken to reintroduce Southern Steelhead **will also help to improve both water quality & water quantity** along the entire San Luis Rey River.
  - This will help to **accomplish the mission and goals** of the SLR Watershed Council.
  - It will be easier to address these issues now (water quality & quantity) with the grant funding available for this project. In the future, the State will force stakeholders to do it through TMDL’s implemented for the entire San Luis Rey River – which then be paid for out of taxpayers’ & stakeholders’ pockets (grant funding is not available for TMDL regulatory programs).
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**VI. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Santa Margarita/San Luis Rey Watersheds Weed Management Area: Request for adoption by SLR Watershed Council – Voting Item:**

*Note: A Vote on this item was postponed until the February 26 SLRWC Meeting (2007)*

--This is a variation of the original MOU, put forth by Mission Resource Conservation District and agreed to by the SLR Watershed Council several years ago. The new MOU will not commit the Watershed Council to any funding obligations; it will designate MRCD as the lead agency for projects/funding focused on removal of invasive plant species within the SLR Watershed. The Council agreed to postpone a Vote on this subject until the February meeting, to allow members time to review this item. In the meantime, a copy of the original MOU with MRCD and also the new proposed MOU are to be sent to watershed council members for review.

**VII. SLRWC Non Profit Formation – Discussion & Voting Item:**

--At the November 2006 Watershed Council meeting, there was discussion about turning the SLR Watershed Council into a non-profit organization. Several reasons for considering this were discussed and an informal vote was taken. The “straw poll” found that 99% of members present at the November meeting thought incorporating the Watershed Council into a non-profit would be beneficial. Currently, the SLR Watershed Council has no legal status and is not able to apply directly for grant funding; MRCD has always supported the Watershed Council with grant funding support and administrative costs. Unfortunately, this negatively impacts the budget of MRCD, because they must pay taxes on any grant money that passes through their agency, even if it’s for public benefit purposes.

--A small workgroup met twice in January (2007) to discuss an offer made by Wallace Tucker, of the Fallbrook Land Conservancy. Wallace offered us the use of an already existing non-profit group, for the purpose of turning it into a watershed-wide non-profit group. Rob Hutsel runs a similar and very successful non-profit group (San Diego River Park Foundation and SD River Coalition; <http://www.sandiegoriver.org/>). Rob graciously met with the SLRWC workgroup to discuss the reasons the San Diego group chose to organize their group in the way they did. Based on these discussions and meetings, the SLRWC workgroup sees 3 main options before us.

***San Luis Rey Watershed Council – Three Options Open to the Us:***

(1) Continue the Watershed Council as it exists today. Make no changes to our current status and format. We will have no legal status, no way of seeking grant funding directly, and little power in issues that affect the watershed..

(2) Turn the Council into a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization. We’ll need to file incorporation paperwork with the State of California; we’ll need to develop SLRWC bylaws, mission statement, elect a board of directors, etc. Most of this could be developed from existing SLRWC policy documents. We would maintain equal representation for stakeholder members across the board, and there are several possible ways to structure the group. This option will allow the Council to apply for grant funding directly, to hire a Watershed Coordinator (Executive Director), and will provide a strong voice to the Council for watershed-based issues. We would need to decide what our ‘purpose’ is.

(3) Have 2 Parallel Watershed-Based Groups Form. Using the model of the San Diego River Coalition and the San Diego River Park Foundation, we form a smaller Non-Profit organization to provide guidance and secure funding for the SLRWC. In San Diego, the smaller non-profit group (SDRPF) is responsible for securing grant funding and providing administrative support for the San Diego River Coalition. The River Coalition, similar to the Watershed Council, offers a forum to exchange information, network together, and discuss potential projects and the needs of the River. In our case, these 2 groups would work side by side, with the non profit group seeking funding for the Watershed Council and helping the Council become more active. The SLRWC would remain the primary forum for all stakeholders and interested parties in the San Luis Rey River watershed.

***--A Motion (in principle) was carried unanimously by the Watershed Council:*** to form a ‘fact-finding’ committee to look into forming a non-profit group (either option B or C), & report their findings back to the Council for a Vote (at a later unspecified date).

**VII. Public Solicitation by SWRCB for water quality data:**

--The State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) advertised a Notice of Public Solicitation for the 2008 Clean Water Act 303(d) listing process. The SWRCB is asking for water quality data & related information in order to identify & possibly list (or re-list) surface waters as being impaired water bodies. For more information: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/integrated2008.html>

**VIII. NEXT MEETING: February 26, 2007 (Facilitator: George Wilkins)**