

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

April 27, 2006

SOLSTICE CREEK FISH PASSAGE RESTORATION

File No. 05-019

Project Manager: Kara Kemmler

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to amend the Conservancy's May 18, 2005 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to \$60,000 to National Park Service for restoration of habitat to facilitate passage for southern steelhead trout in Solstice Creek, Santa Monica Mountains.

LOCATION: Solstice Creek Canyon, a portion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in the City of Malibu, Los Angeles County (Exhibit 1).

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Regional Location

Exhibit 2: Project Area

Exhibit 3: May 18, 2005 Staff Recommendation

Exhibit 4: Photos of Barrier Removals

Exhibit 5: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby amends its May 18, 2005 authorization to further authorize the disbursement of an additional amount not to exceed sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) to the National Park Service (NPS) for restoration of habitat to facilitate passage for southern steelhead trout in Solstice Creek watershed, Santa Monica Mountains, subject to the May 18, 2005 conditions for use of the Conservancy funds.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following finding:

SOLSTICE CREEK FISH PASSAGE RESTORATION

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that the proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s May 18, 2005 findings regarding the Conservancy’s enabling legislation; Project Selection and Criteria Guidelines; Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives; Coastal Act and Local Coastal Program Policies; and the California Environmental Quality Act.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

In May 2005, the Conservancy authorized funds for the removal of human-made fish passage barriers and restoration of habitat conditions to facilitate passage for southern steelhead trout in the Solstice Creek watershed (Exhibit 3).

To date, all fish passage barriers in Solstice Creek on National Park Service property have been successfully demolished (Exhibit 2). The first Arizona crossing in the proposed project area was located at an access point to an historic structure referred to as the Keller House. This crossing has been removed and construction of a clear span bridge to replace the crossing has begun. Two additional upstream Arizona crossings were removed, as well as several small masonry summer dams and other structures that produced impassable waterfalls. The adjacent stream habitat will be restored using hand labor and tools. The additional funds would support continuing these restoration efforts along the creek.

Project History: Please refer to Exhibit 3 for project history.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy (as amended)	\$260,000
National Parks Service	\$100,000
California Conservation Corps (American Rivers Grant)	\$34,000
WCB	<u>\$200,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$594,000

Consistent with the Conservancy’s May 18, 2005 authorization, the additional Conservancy funding would come from a grant from NOAA Fisheries to the Conservancy to carry out a Southern California Steelhead Improvement Program, the purpose of which is to facilitate steelhead recovery by increasing habitat quality and availability in southern California coastal streams. The proposed project is one component of the program for the removal of several fish passage barriers in the Solstice Creek watershed.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION; CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S); CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES; CONSISTENCY WITH COASTAL ACT AND LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES; AND COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

This authorization for additional funding for the project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s May 18, 2005 authorization.