

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
May 24, 2007

**ADOBE CREEK FISH BARRIER REMOVAL**

File No. 07-024-01  
Project Manager: Jeff Melby

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$62,973 to Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District to remove a bridge and instream concrete slab foundation on Adobe Creek and to replace these barriers to fish passage with a clear span bridge located approximately 0.5 mile northeast of the City of Petaluma.

**LOCATION:** Adobe Creek crossing, approximately 0.5-mile north of Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park and the northeast corner of the City of Petaluma, Sonoma County

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

---

**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Photographs](#)

Exhibit 3: [Letters of Support](#)

---

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed sixty two thousand nine hundred seventy three dollars (\$62,973) to Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District to remove a bridge and concrete slab foundation on Adobe Creek, and install a clear span bridge located approximately 0.5 mile north of Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park and the northeast corner of the City of Petaluma, subject to the following condition:

1. The project shall not commence and no Conservancy funds shall be disbursed for the project until the Executive Officer of the Conservancy has reviewed and approved in writing:

- a. A project work program, budget, and timeline.
- b. The names of any contractors that Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District will retain to carry out all or part of the project.
- c. A sign plan that acknowledges Conservancy funding.
- d. Evidence that Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District has obtained all permits and approvals required for the project under federal, state, and local law.
- e. Evidence that Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District and the landowner have entered into an agreement to construct, operate and maintain the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165, regarding the Conservancy’s mandate to address the resource goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.”

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The proposed project would provide grant funds to Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District (SSCRCD) to enable Central California Coast Steelhead to access spawning and rearing habitat along Adobe Creek, located approximately 0.5 mile north-northeast of the City of Petaluma, Sonoma County (Exhibit 1). The project is located on a section of Adobe Creek that passes through the Adobe Creek Vineyards property, owned by Fred and Nancy Cline. The site contains a wooden bridge with metal I-Beam supports that is perched on a concrete slab foundation. The instream concrete slab is a total migration barrier to fish passage (Exhibit 2). The project involves removal of these structures and replacing them with an 80-foot clear-span railcar bridge and new abutments that would be outside of the stream channel. This would facilitate upstream immigration of adult Steelhead and downstream emigration of juveniles by opening up 2.6 miles of spawning and rearing habitat upstream of the project site and 0.6 miles of downstream habitat.

Adobe Creek is one of five major tributaries to the Petaluma River. Adobe Creek is designated critical habitat for Steelhead, with current and historical runs of the species (Leidy et. al, 2005, NOAA, 2005). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has identified the North Bay watersheds (Napa River, Sonoma Creek and Petaluma River) as some of the most important Steelhead watersheds in the entire San Francisco Bay ecosystem. Adobe Creek is the most critical sub-watershed within the Petaluma River watershed for recovery of Steelhead. The 2.6 miles of habitat upstream of the project site and the 0.6 miles of habitat downstream of the project site contain the best spawning and rearing habitat in the entire sub-watershed (Rich 1998).

The proposed project would be implemented by the United Anglers of Casa Grande High School (UACGHS), the NOAA Restoration Center, the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the

landowners of the project site, and contractors hired by SSCRCDC and the landowner. The NOAA Restoration Center, with assistance from the SSCRCDC, UACGHS, and CCC would oversee and monitor the removal of the existing stream structures and the replanting of stream bank sites after construction. NOAA, on behalf of the SSCRCDC, would coordinate the onsite project activities with all parties; work with UACGHS personnel with the removal and relocation of fish from the worksite; oversee the CCC in the hauling, placing erosion control matting, cleaning-up, and replanting of the riparian habitat after the demolition and construction work is completed; and monitor and maintain (weeding, irrigation systems) of the stream bank replanting efforts. The demolition contractor would be managed by NOAA, and NOAA would provide construction oversight for both the bridge removal and the new bridge installation. NOAA would coordinate the environmental compliance and permitting coordination for the project and monitor the in-stream channel to see how the channel and adjacent banks adjust after the existing structures are removed. The CCC would assist with planting native plants, hauling concrete and placing erosion control matting at the site. Conservancy funds would be used for project management, permitting, instream barrier removal, and creek bank protection and revegetation. The landowner would fund the entire clear span replacement bridge and would be responsible for the contracting and monitoring and maintenance of the new bridge. The landowner would also, with the assistance of UACGHS, set up steelhead interpretive displays in a visitor center that the landowner would construct near the project site. The interpretive display would use the crossing project as a demonstration of fish habitat restoration on Adobe Creek. It is anticipated that the work will be implemented in the autumn of 2007.

SSCRCDC is one of 103 Resource Conservation Districts in the State and covers the Petaluma River Watershed, Sonoma Creek Watershed, and the portion of Stemple Creek Watershed located in Sonoma County. SSCRCDC's mission is to improve resource management while supporting sustainable agriculture and urban communities. It provides technical assistance, education and funding sources to empower landowners to be committed stewards in preventing soil erosion and in improving water quality and habitat.

**Site Description:** The Petaluma River Watershed is a 146 square mile basin, encompassing the cities of Petaluma and Penngrove. Adobe Creek is approximately 7 miles long and runs along the eastern edge of the City of Petaluma. The project site is located on a crossing of Adobe Creek approximately 500 feet southeast of the intersection of Manor Lane and Manor Lane West on the 640 acre Adobe Creek Vineyards property, approximately 0.5 mile north of the northeast corner of the City of Petaluma and the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. The site is a bridge crossing located in a dense willow/alder riparian corridor that extends for approximately 600 feet downstream and then extends for roughly 3 miles upstream to the headwaters of the stream. The riparian corridor in the section ranges from approximately 100 to 150 feet wide.

**Project History:**

Since 1983 the student members of UACGHS in Petaluma have made it their mission to restore nearby Adobe Creek and save the genetic strain of steelhead trout native to the creek. The landowners of Adobe Creek Vineyards, where the proposed project is located, Fred and Nancy Cline, have been very supportive of UACGHS efforts. These parties have collaborated with NOAA and the SSCRCDC to develop the proposed project plan for restoring fish passage at the

project site. There have been many restoration projects on Adobe Creek and this project is one of the last efforts needed to complete restoration of the creek.

**PROJECT FINANCING:**

Coastal Conservancy	\$62,973
Landowner	188,000
NOAA	2,400
In kind (UACGHS)	<u>1,000</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$254,373</b>

The expected source of the proposed grant is a fiscal year 2004/2005 appropriation made to the Conservancy pursuant to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), which allocates bond funds to the Conservancy, in part, to protect, restore, and enhance natural habitats of regional importance in the San Francisco Bay Area consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. The proposed project would achieve these purposes by assisting in the enhancement of the natural habitats of steelhead, an endangered species.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The project is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165, to address resource goals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The proposed Adobe Creek Fish Barrier Removal project site is located in Sonoma County, one of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties in which the Conservancy is authorized, under Sections 31160 and 31162 of the Public Resources Code, to undertake projects and award grants to address resource and recreational goals for the region.

Under Section 31162(b), the Conservancy may provide grants to protect, restore, and enhance natural habitats of regional significance. The proposed project would assist in the enhancement of the natural habitat of steelhead, an endangered species.

The Adobe Creek project satisfies all of the criteria for determining project priority under 31163(c), since the project: 1) is supported by adopted regional plans including the Petaluma River Watershed Enhancement Plan (SSCRCD 1999); 2) serves a regional constituency by creating access to habitat for steelhead, an endangered species; 3) can be implemented in a timely manner; 4) provides benefits that would be lost if the project is not quickly implemented; and 5) will include significant matching funds.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 10, Objective A**, the proposed project will enhance instream/riparian habitat through the removal of an instream migration barrier for steelhead. The project will open

up 2.6 miles of spawning and rearing habitat upstream of the project site and 0.6 miles of downstream habitat.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The project has received significant public support from the early concept and design phases, including the California Department of Fish and Game (Gail Seymour, Bay-Delta Region), as well as State Senator Carole Migden and Assemblyman Jared Huffman (Exhibit 3).
4. **Location:** The project is located in Sonoma County, within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
5. **Need:** The restoration of Adobe Creek is an important goal that requires coordinated financial support and participation from local, state, and federal agencies and organizations. The grant requested from the Conservancy is a critical part of the funding necessary to accomplish this goal. The project could not proceed without financial support from the Conservancy as no other funding sources besides the ones already secured are available to allow the project to be implemented this year.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The recovery of California's steelhead populations is of regional significance. Moreover, sport and commercial fishing provide an important economic benefit to California.

**Additional Criteria**

7. **Urgency:** Failure to implement the project in the near future would mean not providing access to spawning habitat for more runs of steelhead in Adobe Creek. Implementing the project would also build on the momentum created by UACGHS for overall restoration efforts in the Adobe Creek watershed.
8. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
9. **Readiness:** The barrier removal and bridge construction are scheduled to be implemented in autumn 2007.
10. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See the "Project History" section above.
11. **Cooperation:** The plan for removing the fish passage barrier was developed with significant input from many organizations, including the UACGHS, NOAA, CCC, and the landowner of

the project site. NOAA and SSCRCDC will work together to select and manage a contractor to remove the barrier, and the landowner will retain a contractor to construct the new bridge.

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA AND NEPA:**

The Adobe Creek Fish Passage Restoration project is categorically exempt from CEQA in that the project consists of small habitat restoration, enhancement, maintenance, and protection for fish, plants, or wildlife (14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15333). The project satisfies all of the criteria under Section 15333 as follows: 1) the project does not exceed five acres in size, 2) there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat, 3) there are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed, and 4) the project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Staff will file a Notice of Exemption from CEQA upon Conservancy approval of the project.