Spring 2013
Entry 132

CALIFORNIA TROUT
KEEPER OF THE STREAMS

CalTrout's mission is to protect and restore wild trout, steelhead, salmon and their waters throughout California.

Inside

Look for the limited time offer on page 23 and don't forget to visit our website for news, events and more gear!

caltrout.org

24-PAGE PROJECT UPDATE

Streamkeeper's Log

Annual CalTrout Conservation Project Update

In the Spring 2012 Streamkeeper's Log, we summarized for our supporters the entire portfolio of current CalTrout conservation projects. Given the considerable amount of positive feedback, it only makes sense to update the summary in 2013 and commit to making this an annual effort.

Before you dig into this special edition, let me share my thoughts on the last 12 months, our work, and our ability to deliver on a mission that is uniquely CalTrout's – to protect and restore wild trout, steelhead, salmon and their waters throughout California. You don't get to be a 42-year old conservation-focused non-profit with a long history of noteworthy accomplishments without having a talented team along the way.

I had long admired the work of CalTrout veterans like Tom Weseloh and Jim Edmondson, as I'm sure many long-time supporters have as well. And admittedly, I'm a little biased about the team we have currently assembled.

This team today, from Mt. Shasta and Arcata down to Ventura and San Diego and over to Mammoth Lakes (and everywhere in between including our new Central California office), is an incredibly talented group of scientists and lawyers. These are the folks that see the opportunities in each of our six conservation regions, drive and design recovery plans, work productively and collaboratively with a broad group of stakeholders, secure the necessary funding, and oversee challenging project implementations.

Furthermore, I think we can make the case that this is the first time in CalTrout's history that we've had the organizational capacity and funding that enables us to drive large-scale (and often quite complex) projects simultaneously in each of our six regions.

Our biggies this year are:

North Coast $1 million in funding to restore a 1,200 acre chunk of the Eel River estuary.

Mt. Shasta $800,000 in funding secured to date to address degradation on Hat Creek and a 3-year restoration plan.

Central California The Knagg's Ranch pilot project – that demonstrates that agricultural habitat within the Sacramento River floodplain can be co-utilized as exceptional Central Valley salmon rearing habitat -- with the ability to scale to over 2,500 acres.

SoCal Launching coalitions focused on steelhead recovery in the Santa Clara watershed and watersheds near the boundary of San Diego and Orange counties.

Eastern Sierra $600,000 in DWR funding to support Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) projects, thus leading the way on water management for Blue Ribbon Waters in the region.

Northern Sierra Expanding our imperiled Lahontan cutthroat trout recovery efforts in the Walker River Basin.

It's an exciting time with lots of impactful work. The challenges in trout, steelhead and salmon restoration are never easy. And, time horizons and progress take longer than any of us prefer. That being said, I hope this Streamkeeper's Log gives you a good sense of the depth and breadth of our work and the tangible progress that is being made.

Thanks again for your support,

Jeff Thompson
Executive Director, CalTrout

Upper Truckee Watershed

Blue Ribbon Waters

Preserving treasured angling experiences across California's most noteworthy fly fishing waters for future generations.

REGION: MOUNT SHASTA

McCloud River Projects

A Trifecta of Issues on a Key Blue Ribbon Water

The McCloud River has been under much scrutiny lately. Three specific initiatives are currently underway: 1) a new flow recommendation related to the McCloud reservoir FERC dam relicensing, 2) a federal agency proposal to reintroduce Chinook salmon above Lake Shasta, and 3) the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed plan to raise Shasta Dam.

Conservation Goals

- Protect and enhance the hydrologic and ecological processes to sustain the long-term health of the McCloud River.
- Protect the quality angling experience.

Recent Accomplishments

Over the last year, we have been actively engaged on all fronts related to the McCloud:

Dam Relicensing Flows

The relicensing process continues as we await a State Water Board permit. Through this process, flows below McCloud dam will be set for the next 40-50 years.

Since 2006, CalTrout has been working to protect spawning rainbow trout and rearing fry from current detrimental dam operations (during the winter and early spring) while also protecting the high-quality angling experience.

We have helped craft a flow proposal that meets our goals and we have reviewed the flows with the guiding community to ensure their understanding and buy-in.

Salmon Reintroduction

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Bureau of Reclamation are conducting feasibility studies for the reintroduction of winter and spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead into the McCloud and/or Upper Sacramento Rivers. This would entail trapping adults in Redding and downstream and trucking fish around Shasta Dam. And that would be the easy part; trapping the downstream outmigrating juveniles before they enter Shasta Lake is difficult and expensive.

Philsophically, CalTrout is not in agreement with trap and haul as a long-term, viable solution to salmon recovery. We are engaged with both NMFS and the Bureau of Reclamation to understand the early study proposals, and will stay engaged in the planning of a three-year pilot study that begins this year in an effort to ensure factors of concern are addressed appropriately.

Shasta Dam Raise

The Bureau of Reclamation released a report in 2012 calling for the raising of Shasta Dam by 18 feet. CalTrout is concerned because raising the dam would inundate up to three miles of the Upper Sac and McCloud Rivers combined.

The McCloud is protected under the state Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the federal agency (NMFS) in charge of winter-run Chinook recovery is not advocating for the dam raise as a critical recovery initiative. In short, the McCloud River has given enough. You can read our comments on Bureau of Reclamation's plan on our website, caltrout.org; search 'Shasta Dam.'

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Comment on State Water Board EIR for McCloud River dam relicensing and ensure the McCloud River preferred flow agreement is implemented. For details, see *river flows explained* on our McCloud screencast at caltrout.org
- Engage with agencies, landowners, and the public regarding salmon reintroduction and Shasta Dam raise to ensure that critical issues are addressed.
- Comment on the Draft EIS for raising Shasta Dam.

Pit River Flow Relicensing

Ensuring Optimal Flows for Fish and Anglers

Flows on the Pit River increased in 2011, reflecting the terms determined thru the 2003 FERC licensing process. The final approved flows (Pit 3: 300cfs, Pit 4: 375cfs, and Pit 5: 400cfs) represented significant increases over the prior baseline flows and CalTrout's recommendations.

Conservation Goals

- Protect and enhance hydrologic and ecological processes to sustain long-term health of Pit River rainbow trout.
- Protect the quality angling experience.

Recent Accomplishments

CalTrout has remained actively engaged in order to understand the new flow impact on both fish populations and recreational usage (especially angling).

PG&E released its second year of monitoring data on the new Pit River flows. The angler data shows that angler use and satisfaction have gone up in all three reaches as anglers become more accustomed to the flows. More anglers are giving the new flows a try and rediscovering how productive the Pit River can be. Catch rates this past year ranged from 2.6 to 1.6 in all three reaches.

The data also show that concerns about depth and velocity remain with over 60% of anglers indicating the flows were too high. However, 67% of anglers were satisfied with their overall experience and over 70% were satisfied with the number and size of trout caught.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Continue to engage with the guide and angling community and review monitoring data to evaluate flow and fishing impact, and then provide feedback as part of the project's adaptive management framework.
- Fish the new Pit River flows!

Fall River Restoration

California's Largest Spring-fed Wild Trout Fishery In Distress

At over one million acre feet per year (890 million gallons a day), the Fall River generates more cold, clean, nutrient-rich, spring water than any river in California.

This water fuels one of the state's largest hydroelectric projects (Pit River Hydro System), recharges (with steady year-round flows) the state's largest reservoir (Shasta Lake), and irrigates tens of thousands of acres of agricultural lands in the Sacramento Valley (Central Valley Project). Additionally, the Fall River supports the state's largest blue ribbon spring-creek wild trout fishery. Existing threats to the fishery include invasive aquatic plants (Eurasian watermilfoil), degraded streambanks caused by unrestricted cattle grazing, and over sedimentation of the streambed and channel.

Conservation Goals

- Protect over 1 million acre feet of cold, clean, nutrient rich spring water for California's largest blue ribbon spring-creek wild trout fishery.
- Restore over 30 miles of spring creek habitat conditions and riparian corridor for wild trout.
- Restore wild trout populations to more than 5,000 fish per mile throughout the Fall River's designated Wild Trout Area.

Recent Accomplishments

- Helped establish the Fall River Conservancy (FRC) as a strong regional organization dedicated to the protection of Fall River wild trout populations and the restoration of spring-creek habitat conditions.
- Partnered with FRC to develop the Fall River's first streambank restoration program on CalTrout property.
- Partnered with FRC, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and UC Davis to design and coordinate the Fall River's first Passive Integrated Transceiver (PIT) Wild Trout Monitoring Program.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Launch PIT Wild Trout Monitoring System: Tag 1,000 Fall River wild trout with PIT tags to monitor population trends and life history patterns and to identify key habitat areas for protection.
- Partner with the FRC to launch our 2013 Streambank Restoration Project on the CalTrout property at Island Bridge.
- Fund key research by Chico State, USDA, and UC Davis aimed at restoring native aquatic vegetation and finding solutions to the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil outbreak.

CalTrout's Andrew Braugh at a Water Talk

Hat Creek Restoration

Bringing Hat Creek Back to Its Glory

Reports from the early 1900s suggest that Hat Creek was once California's premier spring-creek fly fishing experience. By the 1960s, however, the fishery collapsed due to invasive, non-game fish and heavy angling pressure. In 1968, CalTrout founders and CA DFW led a major effort to restore wild trout populations. These efforts were remarkably successful, and in 1972, Hat Creek was designated as the state's first Wild Trout Management Area -- a major paradigm shift away from hatchery supported fisheries. But in the early 1990s, conditions began to deteriorate again due to heavily degraded streambanks, unrestricted cattle grazing, and a collapse of native aquatic vegetation. In 2012, CalTrout secured the largest restoration grant in the organization's 40-year history. This funding will support a substantial, three-year project commencing in the summer of 2013. Funding will be used to stabilize degraded streambanks, replant native vegetation, and restore in-stream habitat conditions.

Hat Creek Power House

Conservation Goals

- Restore wild trout populations to over 5,000 fish per mile with at least 30% of trout greater than 12 inches.
- Re-vegetate 6.3 acres of riparian area with assemblages of native plants, shrubs, and trees (4,500 plants).
- Restore 1.5 miles of in-stream habitat conditions with cover and shelter for wild trout.

Recent Accomplishments

- Led a large coalition of partners to design, fund, and permit the Hat Creek Restoration Project.
- Secured **over $700,000** in grant funding for restoration.
- Developed and executed an MOU with PG&E to carry out the project.
- Partnered with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to secure necessary CEQA permits.
- Applied for an additional $250,000 in grant funding to expand project scope.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

2013 Execute grant contract with state, finalize conservation design, secure all state and federal permits, complete geomorphic assessment of Wild Trout Area, collect native seeds and begin propagating over 4,000 native plants for use in restoration.

2014 Finalize riverside trail system and angler access plan, begin trail construction and relocate parking lot, propagate native plants, finalize in-stream habitat design and placement of large woody debris, select bridge design and build abutments, launch planting pilot program, install kiosk and signage.

2**015** Plant native vegetation, restore streambanks and muskrat damage, construct trails and parking lot, install pedestrian bridge, install large woody debris in river, install final sign plan/picnic tables/ benches.

Mount Shasta Spring Water Management

Protecting One of California's Most Important Water Sources

Mt Shasta's cold, clean spring waters feed critical municipal water supplies and nourish the region's famous trout populations in the Upper Sac and McCloud Rivers and the salmon and steelhead in the Shasta River. Lack of base-line information and limited awareness of Mt Shasta's water resources makes it difficult to develop science-based water policy and management decisions.

Conservation Goals

- Educate and inform 1,000 community members per year about water issues and policy affecting the community.
- Participate in developing a strong IRWMP for Upper Sac, McCloud and Lower Pit.

Recent Accomplishments

- Published and distributed "Mount Shasta Spring Waters: An Introduction to Mt. Shasta Springs 2009 Summary Report, an initial baseline study on general water quality and geochemical parameters, recharge area, age, and vulnerability of Mount Shasta's unique volcanic springs" in September 2012.
- Conducted 7 informational and educational outreach events featuring local and regional experts (in 4 communities with approximately 450 attendees) as part of the Siskiyou and Shasta County Water Talks Program. The purpose of Water Talks is to increase awareness and understanding of complex water and water policy-related topics like: Fall River's Unique Geo-Hydro-Ecology, Timber Management and Water Resources, Shasta River Salmon, USFS Mt. Shasta Watershed Analysis.
- Identified projects to implement and fund under the IRWMP project. Played an active role as a stakeholder in the Upper Sacramento Regional Water Management Group and in developing the Upper Sac IRWMP. (CalTrout's interests in protecting and restoring the area's blue ribbon waters and fisheries are included in the plan.)

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Ensure that CalTrout's recommended projects (including meadow and stream bank restoration, invasive species removal, native species enhancement, and fish passage assessment) are reflected in the final IRWMP.
- Continue water-related education and outreach (Water Talks program).
- Develop a comprehensive springs monitoring program that will include water supply forecasting and support for the upgrading of municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.

REGION: EASTERN SIERRA

Eastern Sierra Region Water Management

Balancing Supply and Demand for Fish and Communities

The eastern Sierra region supplies water for numerous economically disadvantaged communities in the area, the City of Los Angeles (30-50% of LADWP's water), as well as local fisheries. At the state level, over exploitation of natural resources to meet urban water demands is posing a threat to the health of Sierra Nevada ecosystems, and thus the health of our imperiled native trout fisheries. Therefore, integrated and comprehensive water planning is essential for the long-term sustainability of our ecosystems. California's IRWMP provides an opportunity to coordinate regional resources management to help ensure 1) adequate water supplies and flows, 2) improved water quality and 3) healthy ecosystems. In 2008, CalTrout initiated what has become the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program. For more information, go to inyo-monowater.org.

Conservation Goals

- Protect the water resources necessary for sustaining healthy populations of wild and native trout and the habitats that support them throughout the Inyo-Mono planning region and beyond.
- Increase water-use efficiency resulting in greater water supplies to relevant fisheries.
- Improve water quality throughout the eastern Sierra.
- Remove and control the invasive species threatening eastern Sierra watersheds.

Recent Accomplishments

- Oversee five fully-funded regional water management staffers.
- Produced the IRWMP plan document which outlines goals and objectives for the region (including a critical climate change vulnerability assessment).
- Secured **$600,000** in incremental funding to support an array of projects including: a) development of the West Walker River restoration plan, b) Oak Creek watershed restoration plans, and c) a Phase I stormwater management plan for the town of Mammoth Lakes.
- Mark Drew, CalTrout Eastern Sierra Program Manager, was selected to serve on the Strategic Focus Group, tasked with providing guidance to DWR's Strategic Vision for IRWMP.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Implement various restoration projects including: eradicate invasive species (flora) in Inyo & Mono counties, manage storm water, improve regional water quality.
- Ensure that Sierra Nevada watersheds receive increased IRWMP funding.

Mammoth Creek Flow/Habitat

Instream Flows to Support Healthy Fish

Mammoth Lakes Basin sits above and feeds the Upper Owens River. Mammoth Creek, which flows into Hot Creek, is a primary tributary to the Upper Owens. So, the health of Mammoth Creek is directly related to the health of Hot Creek and in turn, the Upper Owens River system. Currently, CalTrout is actively involved ensuring that the recently completed Mammoth Creek EIR moves forward to completion. This EIR evaluates whether or not the existing instream flows are adequate for the health of our fisheries.

Conservation Goals

- Protect fisheries in Mammoth Creek and Hot Creek.
- Improve urban water conservation for the town of Mammoth Lakes.
- Seek and achieve full appropriation designation of water resources in the Mammoth Lakes Basin ensuring no additional water diversions are allowed.

Recent Accomplishments

During the last year, the Mammoth Creek EIR and related projects moved towards implementation based on the Settlement Agreement previously achieved between CalTrout, the Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) and CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. However, two separate but related court cases were filed by the LADWP. Although those cases are unresolved, the State Water Resources Control Board recently issued new water licenses to the MCWD which should trigger the implementation of the Settlement Agreement, ensuring long-term benefits to the Mammoth Creek fisheries. CalTrout has worked and will continue to work with all parties to resolve outstanding litigation, and thus, resolutions will be completed shortly.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Ensure the implementation of the Settlement Agreement.
- Initiate a Mammoth Lakes Basin fisheries enhancement fund to improve local fisheries.
- Monitor groundwater extraction to ensure instream flows are not negatively impacted.
- Monitor implementation of comprehensive water conservation plan to maximize water use efficiency.
- Communicate Settlement Agreement progress to stakeholders and the community.

Hot Creek/Upper Owens Water Quality

Controlling Pollutants Associated with Development

Mammoth Creek and by extension, Hot Creek and the Upper Owens, are iconic fisheries in the eastern Sierra, yet they remain vulnerable to impairments associated with stream chemistry and hydrologic characteristics. These possible impairments to the river are the result of historical land use and more recent rapid development in the area. Excessive nutrient and metals concentrations in streams (often due to urban and agricultural development) can increase aquatic biomass production and degrade aquatic ecosystem conditions.

Conservation Goals

- Identify and characterize sources of non-point pollution impacting waters of the Mammoth Lakes Basin and downstream rivers within the Upper Owens hydrologic region.
- Develop management recommendations and strategies to mitigate non-point sources of pollution in the Upper Owens hydrologic region.
- Improve water quality (and in turn the fisheries) in the Upper Owens hydrologic region.

Recent Accomplishments

- Completed extensive sampling and found that nutrients were not impairing Mammoth Creek, but elevated-levels of manganese and mercury were detected. Fortunately, elevated levels of manganese and mercury are not thought to have significant impacts to the fisheries.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Identify and develop management strategies to mitigate water quality impairments.

Mono Basin Campaign

Ensuring Healthy Flows on Four Main Tributaries

In 2014, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is scheduled to pursue an amended water license from the SWRCB. The terms of the new license are subject to progress made on restoring the Mono Basin – per Restoration Orders resulting from the precedent-setting 1983 California Supreme Court decision to protect Mono Lake and its tributaries. As directed by these orders, state-appointed stream scientists were tasked with developing long-term flow recommendations for four main tributaries to Mono Lake – Rush, Lee Vining, Parker and Walker Creeks. In April 2010, the stream scientists completed a Synthesis Report with findings and recommendations. CalTrout (and partners) are tasked with: 1) determining the feasibility of implementing these recommendations, 2) reconciling any disputes resulting from the Synthesis Report, and 3) drafting a request to the SWRCB regarding LADWP's new license.

Conservation Goals

- Restore ecosystem processes of the Mono Basin's four primary tributaries essential for self-sustaining populations of wild trout.
- Ensure feasibility of recommended base flows and stream ecosystem flows for Rush, Lee Vining, Parker and Walker Creeks.

Recent Accomplishments

- In an attempt to reach a settlement agreement, worked closely with the Mono Lake Committee, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the LADWP to resolve outstanding issues associated with implementing recommended flows and a long-term monitoring plan for the Mono Basin.
- Made progress on reaching a mutually acceptable agreement ensuring healthy streams, fisheries and Mono Lake itself.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Help secure final settlement agreement.
- Partner with DFW, Mono Lake Committee and LADWP on the implementation of long-term flows and monitoring programs.

East Walker River Improvements

NEW!

East Walker River Improvements

The East Walker near Bridgeport is a heavily fished and trafficked area that can benefit from a more respectful approach to the resource. CalTrout, in partnership with the Eastern Sierra Guides Association, secured funding through the CA DFW to establish restroom facilities on the East Walker near Bridgeport reservoir. This may be considered a "big relief" for all those fishing in the area and it is a first step in being better stewards of the resource.

REGION: NORTHERN SIERRA

Carson River Restoration

Wild Trout Populations Are Dwindling

This highly regarded angling destination is in a state of decline. There has been limited focus on fisheries conservation resulting in dwindling wild trout population and an over-dependence on stocking. Furthermore, habitat is declining due to agricultural impact and channelization.

Conservation Goal

- Significantly increase the number and distribution of wild and native trout in the Carson and ensure their long-term sustainability.

Recent Accomplishments

- University of Nevada Reno, under contract with CalTrout, is in final stages of completing a literature review that will help identify conditions of the watershed and fishery, and thus serve as a basis for restoration recommendations.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Develop a long-term strategy for the Carson including a comprehensive set of restoration and recovery actions.

CalTrout's 30+ projects

Imperiled Native Trout

Reestablishing resilient populations of inland trout which maintain the biodiversity and genetic integrity unique to California.

REGION: NORTHERN SIERRA

Upper Truckee River Wild and Scenic

Saving an Endangered Species

The Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) species suffers a high likelihood of extinction in California. The only wild stream population of LCT found within the Tahoe Basin resides in the Upper Truckee River. Population expansion through restoration would create the largest meta-population within the Sierra.

Upper Truckee

Conservation Goals

- Protect headwater population of LCT in large part by securing Wild and Scenic designation of the headwaters.
- Improve degraded habitat and remove non-native competitors in lower river sections thus expanding upstream populations.

Recent Accomplishments

- Gained significant community support of the Upper Truckee Wild and Scenic campaign through a focused outreach effort (including producing and distributing Wild and Scenic video) in both the Tahoe area and around the state.
- Secured the necessary community signatures and support for designation.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Advocate to secure the support of both the El Dorado and Alpine County Boards of Supervisors.
- Rally the support of state, and ultimately, federal legislators.

Walker River Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Preservation

Expanding Threatened Populations in the Upper Walker

The LCT situation in the Walker River Basin is bleak. The only remaining Walker River strain populations of LCT within the watershed are small, disconnected and threatened by non-native competitors. The project to protect LCT in the Walker River Basin requires not only electro-shocking and removing non-native brook trout, but also creating secure barriers to prevent non-native repopulation. Slinkard Creek and Silver Creek, two upper Walker River tributaries, have been identified as prime recovery opportunities.

Conservation Goal

- Recover LCT across the entire Upper Walker River Basin through research, restoration, community engagement and long-term management planning.

Recent Accomplishments

- During the summer of 2012, initial fieldwork began to eradicate invasive species on Slinkard Creek. Progress was slower than originally planned given logistical challenges and extensive vegetation removal required to access the creek.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Complete non-native fish removal on a two mile stretch of Slinkard Creek.
- Secure funding to expand the program to Silver Creek in 2014.
- Develop an outreach and education program.

Eagle Lake Rainbow Preservation

Enabling Survival without Human Intervention

This unique species, native to Eagle Lake and its tributaries, is no longer naturally self-sustaining. Historically, this fish migrated to surrounding streams for rearing prior to spawn. Due to decreased flows in surrounding tributaries (such as Pine Creek), passage is now impossible. CA DFW must physically transport fish up into spawning tributaries past fish barriers. Even this upstream habitat is not in ideal condition, so restoration improvements are required.

Conservation Goal

- Create a healthy self-sustaining population of Eagle Lake rainbow trout requiring no human intervention.

Recent Accomplishments

- Engaged and partnered with Trout Unlimited, NFWF, and Eagle Lake Coordinated Resource committee to assess needs and opportunities related to fish passage and spawning habitat restoration.
- Identified habitat and ecosystem issues impacting Eagle Lake rainbows.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Work with agencies and other partners to draft an action plan to guide future management of habitat restoration and fish passage.

Paiute Cutthroat Trout Protection

Removing Paiute from Endangered Species List

The Paiute cutthroat is currently listed as threatened under the ESA. Restoring fish to its entire historic habitat in the Silver King Creek watershed, located in Iceberg Wilderness, is the highest priority recovery action in the 2004 USFWS Recovery Plan.

If successful, this could become the first listed fish species to be removed from the threatened and endangered species list. The restoration plan for Silver King Creek has been held up in litigation. In 2012, CA DFW is believed to have addressed the legal hurdles and is expected to move forward with rotenone treatments in Silver King which are necessary to remove non-native fish.

Conservation Goal

- Restore Paiute back to their historic range.

Recent Accomplishments

- Continued to provide commentary in support of CA DFW recovery approach (including use of rotenone).
- Remained engaged in community outreach efforts to build local support and eliminate what we believe is attempts to obstruct progress.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Support USFWS, USFS and CA DFW through the litigation process.
- Work with agencies to help fund and implement long-term population monitoring.

REGION: EASTERN SIERRA

US Forest Management Planning

New Management Plans to Benefit Sierra Nevada Watersheds

Once every decade or longer, the USFS embarks on a revision to their Forest Management Plans. This is currently underway with three of CA's national forests. In an effort to influence forest management planning, CalTrout is a fully engaged partner, focusing particularly on the Inyo National Forest plan. By filling an important niche, CalTrout helps ensure fisheries and supporting habitats are duly considered both at the Sierra-wide and individual forest scale.

Conservation Goal

- Ensure the revised National Forest Management Plans adequately address the needs of target aquatic species.

Recent Accomplishments

- With partners, helped completed the Conservation Strategies document. This component, which is a critical guide for the broader forest planning process, will influence key planning and management decisions.
- Currently working to ensure essential fishery-related needs are met in Manangement Plans.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Identify research/restoration recommendations (specific to aquatic systems), ensure that they are included in revised Management Plans and ultimately adopted.

Golden Trout Protection

Saving California's State Fish

In 2004, a Golden Trout Conservation Strategy was developed by relevant agencies (with the help of CalTrout) to support the recovery of California's golden trout, and imperiled native species. Resources are needed to implement the Conservation Strategy. CalTrout remains a key partner in this implementation – meeting with agency representatives and supporting restoration efforts. Specifically, CalTrout's Wild and Native Trout Internship Program provides direct support to agency staff and volunteer efforts working in the Golden Trout Wilderness and beyond.

Golden trout by Val Atkinson

Conservation Goals

- Continue implementation of the CA Golden Trout Conservation Strategy.
- Ensure sustainable land-use practices (including grazing) where appropriate on the Kern Plateau.
- Support completion and implementation of genetics management plan for CA golden, Little Kern golden and Kern River rainbow trout which is necessary for the long-term management of these species.
- Increase public awareness about the importance of wild trout conservation programs relevant to the Kern Plateau.

Recent Accomplishments

- Engaged with agency representatives involved with restoring populations of golden trout on the Kern Plateau.
- For the fifth year, implemented our annual Golden Trout Internship Program – providing an intern to work in partnership with the Inyo National Forest on several projects on the Kern Plateau.
- The Inyo National Forest has embarked on preparing a National Environmental Policy Act aimed at assessing the status of golden trout to determine whether and/or under what conditions grazing should be reintroduced in this area. CalTrout has actively engaged with Forest Service to better understand current and historical impacts of grazing.
- As part of the National Forest management planning effort (see US Forest Management Planning), CalTrout has been directly involved in the Inyo National Forest Management Plan revision process, providing input specifically related to golden trout protection.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Implement the Golden Trout Conservation Strategy and habitat restoration work.
- Provide field support and interns in partnership with CA DFW's Heritage and Wild Trout Program and Inyo National Forest staff to implement restoration programs.
- Support the development of genetics management plans.

Meadow Habitat Restoration

90% of Meadows in the Sierra Are Degraded

California's inland native trout are especially vulnerable to degraded habitat conditions as they have limited ability to migrate away from poor conditions. Many of these species are native to high elevation, lower productivity ecosystems, where even minor levels of habitat degradation can have significant impact on the ecosystem's capacity to support the species. Meadow systems are one of the most altered systems in the Sierra, and it has been estimated that as much as 90% are impacted and degraded.

Conservation Goals

- Broaden the scientific understanding of appropriate meadow restoration practices.
- Use these practices to restore meadow ecosystems necessary to recover populations of inland native trout.

Recent Accomplishments

- Led a study in conjunction with Trout Unlimited, UNR and UCD to do a comprehensive habitat assessment on the lower Upper Truckee River.
- Sent crews out in the field to survey the Upper Truckee and collect data on stream flow, temperatures, riverside riparian vegetation, fish and micro invertebrate populations. This study, which will be released May of 2013: 1) provides critical insight for the design of restoration projects slated for the lower Upper Truckee River, and 2) helps inform restoration practitioners on how fisheries monitoring should be implemented on meadow system restoration projects throughout California.

Salmon & Steelhead

Restoring healthy, self-sustaining populations of California's native steelhead and salmon across their historic range.

REGION: NORTH COAST

Coho Recovery

Coho Populations Declining Region-wide

Central California coho salmon are listed as endangered and Northern California populations as threatened under federal and state ESA. The CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA DFW) developed a Coho Recovery Strategy with assistance from the State Coho Recovery Team, which was completed in 2005. The CA DFW is currently preparing a Status Report for the Fish and Game Commission. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) also prepared a draft Coho Recovery Plan, released in 2012. Funding for coho salmon recovery is available (but limited) through state and federal grant programs and many projects are underway. But, despite these activities, coho salmon abundance has continued to decline region-wide – as state and federal agencies (e.g., CA DFW) have not committed enough financial or human resources, nor have they committed to regulatory enforcement in clear cases of endangered species act violations.

Conservation Goals

- Facilitate coho salmon recovery through restoration actions, regulatory program implementation, and enforcement of regulatory statutes against Incidental Take.
- Consider recommending a jeopardy ruling status for coho salmon by state and federal agencies.
- Focus on the Shasta River, Smith River, South Fork Eel River, and Elk River as key opportunities for coho recovery.

Recent Accomplishments

- **AB 1961 (Huffman)** The Coho HELP Act. California's coastal salmon species are on the brink of extinction and emergency habitat restoration actions are needed to prevent the permanent loss of these iconic fish. In 2012, a coalition of conservation organizations including CalTrout, local public agencies, and private landowners passed legislation to streamline the approval process for the most efficient and cost-effective habitat restoration projects. Those targeted actions include the removal of fish passage barriers, restoration of eroded or denuded streambanks, and placement of large wood into channels that are an important component to coho salmon habitat.
- **The Coho Coalition** Government agencies and conservation organizations spend tens of millions of dollars on salmon restoration actions annually in California, much of it affecting coho watersheds. However, because there is no accessible centralized database, our understanding of the types and amount of restoration work conducted over the years is incomplete.

To better understand the state of watersheds within the coho range in California, CalTrout and our conservation partners, TNC and TU, have undertaken a status review of restoration projects that highlights:

- Restoration activities that have occurred over the past decade in the California Central Coast and Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast populations
- Priority restoration activities that need to be completed according to the CA DFW and NMFS recovery plans for coho salmon
- Economic activity and jobs created for completed restoration

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Facilitate coho salmon recovery through restoration actions, regulatory program implementation, and through enforcement of regulatory statutes against Incidental Take.
- Consider recommending a Jeopardy Ruling status update for coho salmon (Southern Oregon/Northern CA) by state (CA DFG) and federal (NMFS) agencies.
- Design a Shasta River coho supplementation program to address dwindling populations.

Eel River Restoration

Coho Populations Once 100,000, Now 1,000

At over 3,600 sq. miles, the Eel River watershed is the third largest in California. While the majority of the watershed is privately owned and managed for timber production, cattle and dairy ranching, the area also includes several State Parks, Wilderness Areas, and National Forests.

Historically the Eel River was a major salmon and steelhead producer with runs in wet periods estimated to annually average over a million adults (~800,000 chinook, ~100,000 coho, ~150,000 steelhead).

Today, nearly all the mainstem and large tributaries in the Eel River Basin have been listed as "impaired" under the Federal EPA's Clean Water Act, primarily due to excessive sediment, habitat degradation and increased water temperatures.

As a result, salmon and steelhead populations have been severely depressed over many decades: fall-run chinook and steelhead runs fluctuate between 1,000 and 10,000 adults; coho likely number less than 1,000 adults annually.

In recent years, there have been some encouraging signs of recovery believed in large part due to very favorable ocean conditions. In 2012, Chinook salmon adult returns at the Van Arsdale Fish Station increased to over 3,000 compared to average annual runs in the low-hundreds thru most of late 1900s, and endangered coho salmon counts at monitoring stations in the South Fork Eel River have remained steady.

It is estimated that counts at the Van Arsdale station represent ~10% of the total Eel River return. While the current trend is encouraging, the Eel has a long, long way to go to once again support its historical productivity. With concerted efforts and continued restoration work, we have the opportunity to take significant steps toward salmonid recovery and ecosystem protection.

Mouth of the Eel River looking east

Conservation Goals

- Continue to drive the Eel River Forum and focus on improving the status of salmonid populations, evaluation of Potter Valley Project (dam flow releases) and non-native pikeminnow eradication.
- Work with Regional Water Quality Control Board to address warm water temperature and sediment impairment.
- Restore access to ancestral spawning and rearing habitat.
- Reconnect estuary tributaries and improve critical estuary rearing habitat.

Recent Accomplishments

- In July 2012, behind the initiative and leadership of our North Coast office, CalTrout drove the formation of the Eel River Forum. This group, comprised of 22 federal and state agencies, county resource conservation districts, water agencies / public utilities, tribes and NGOs, represents a strong watershed-wide coalition to address recovery on the Eel. The group's mission is to coordinate and integrate conservation and recovery efforts in the Eel River watershed to conserve its ecological resilience, restore its native fish populations, and protect other watershed beneficial uses. These actions are also intended to enhance the economic vitality and sustainability of human communities in the Eel River basin.
- CalTrout leads this group in monthly meetings focusing on the many critical issues impairing salmon and steelhead populations and preventing meaningful recovery.
- Over the last year, CalTrout secured funding for two critical restoration and recovery opportunities in the Eel system:

  Eel River Estuary
  Approximately $1 million in funding to develop restoration designs for the 1,200 acre Eel River Estuary Preserve located at the mouth of the Eel, a former cattle ranch now owned by The Wildlands Conservancy. This project will restore tidal marsh, estuarine habitat, and re-connect surrounding tributaries to the Eel itself. Our goal is to restore valuable nursery habitat for juvenile salmonids migrating to sea.

  Bridge Creek
  Approximately $560,000 in funding for removal of fish passage barrier on Bridge Creek. This will open up valuable coho and steelhead habitat and in particular allow access to critical summer cold water flows required for coho rearing.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Complete the restoration and engineering designs for The Wildlands Conservancy's Eel River Estuary Preserve located at the mouth of the Eel River.
- Work with state and federal resource managers to explore ways to address critical low summer streamflow conditions, excessively warm water temperatures, and sediment impairment.
- Implement the Bridge Creek fish passage barrier removal project and develop engineering designs and construction plans for the Woodman Creek fish passage barrier removal project.

Trinity River Restoration

Restoring Salmon & Steelhead to Their Near-Historic Abundance

The Trinity River is the largest tributary to the Klamath River and it sustains important tribal, recreational, and commercial salmon fisheries. The Trinity River Division (TRD) was completed in 1964. With the TRD, up to 75-90% of the inflow into Trinity Dam was captured each year and exported to Southern California farms and municipalities. The impacts of flow regulation and other land uses combined to degrade the river and its salmon and steelhead habitat.

By 1970, the decline in fisheries became obvious. Studies were conducted and the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) was developed to restore naturally-spawning salmon and steelhead populations to near pre-dam levels. In 2002, a Record of Decision (based on the TRRP) was signed by the Secretary of the Interior to begin the process of restoring the river. While the TRRP is considered the largest and most important experimental river and salmonid restoration program in California, its primary decision-making body has demonstrated a lack of shared and consistent vision.

Conservation Goal

- Ensure that the original mission and vision of the Trinity River Record of Decision is fulfilled by the TRRP.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Continue to support this vitally important Trinity River program as a model for large-scale river restoration and adaptive management.
- Review and comment on the Science Advisory Board's review documents and assess current implementation programs to ensure the TRRP is implemented in line with the vision expressed and shared by CalTrout.

Trinity River managers and stakeholders tour the Lower Junction City restoration site

Steelhead on Redwood Creek

Redwood Creek Estuary Restoration

New!

Restoration for the Benefit of Salmonids

The Redwood Creek flood control project was completed by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1968 to protect the community of Orick from floodwaters. Flood control levees were erected along the lower 3.5 miles of Redwood Creek, disconnecting the creek from its estuary and off-channel over-wintering rearing habitat. Levee construction caused major physical changes to the lower reach of Redwood Creek and its estuary. The estuary volume has been reduced by approximately half of its pre-levee size due to sediment deposition, and this fish habitat and water quality is severely impaired. Restoration of the Redwood Creek estuary would provide substantial benefit for the recovery of estuarine fish species including three threatened salmonid species -- coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead. Estuary restoration would also complement other large-scale restoration efforts conducted within Redwood National Park and throughout the entire watershed.

Conservation Goal

- Complementing decades-long efforts by Redwood State and National Park to restore salmon and steelhead habitat throughout the watershed, restore and revitalize Redwood Creek's lower floodplain and estuary to make this magnificent watershed once again whole, and thus stand out as a regional salmon stronghold.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Participate in a peer review committee to advise Humboldt County and Redwood National and State Parks on desired ecological conditions and restoration goals and objectives (and steps needed to accomplish these goals).

Elk River Recovery Assessment

New!

Overcoming "Timber Wars" to Recover High Quality Habitat

The Elk River is the largest tributary to Humboldt Bay and once provided many miles of high-quality habitat for Chinook and coho salmon and steelhead. The Elk River is not only part of the Humboldt Bay Tributaries coho salmon population, but it is also listed as a core population within the NMFS Draft Coho Recovery Plan – the highest priority for recovery and restoration efforts.

The Elk River was a central focus of the north coast's "timber wars" over the past several decades. During the period 1988-1997, the watershed became heavily degraded by fine sediment and nuisance flooding resulting from excessive timber harvest activities. The previous industrial timberland owner – Pacific Lumber Company or PALCO – filed for bankruptcy in 2007, and in 2008, transferred its holdings to the Mendocino Redwoods Company, later to become Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC). The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is currently preparing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) allocation under the federal Clean Water Act to better regulate future timber harvest and ensure recovery of the Elk River's water quality and salmonid habitat.

A pilot modeling assessment of potential recovery actions was completed in 2011 in a small portion of the Elk River watershed. This recovery assessment has broad support from local landowners, HRC, the Regional Water Board and State Water Resources Control Board, County Supervisors, and the restoration community.

Conservation Goals

- Provide leadership to a broad group of stakeholders to work toward resolving decades-long contentious and polarizing resource management issues in Elk River.
- Develop a comprehensive and feasible recovery strategy for Elk River.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Work with key project partners (HRC, Regional Water Board and State Water Resources Control Board, Elk River residents, Coastal Conservancy) to conduct an expanded Elk River Recovery Assessment in an effort to determine feasible and appropriate actions to restore ecosystem functions, abate nuisance flooding, and recover water quality conditions beneficial to salmon and steelhead.
- Secure grant funding from state agencies and private sources to conduct a multi-phased recovery assessment and pilot restoration implementation effort.

REGION: MOUNT SHASTA

Shasta River Restoration

Readying Steelhead & Salmon for Dam Removal

The Shasta River is a relatively short, but unique high dessert-like spring creek north of Mount Shasta. It is a critically important and historically productive tributary to the Klamath River. As the last major tributary to the Klamath before Iron Gate Dam, the Shasta River population of Chinook and coho salmon and steelhead will be the primary natural populations to colonize the area above the Klamath dams once removed in 2020. Chinook salmon numbers historically topped 80,000 but declined precipitously due to habitat decline and unfavorable water management approaches.

Conservation Goals

- Enhance anadramous fish runs to a ten-year average of 10,000 returning adult fall-run Chinook, 2,000 adult coho, and 2,000 adult steelhead.
- Expand and connect cold water refugia for summertime rearing of coho salmon by five miles in Parks Creek and the Shasta River above County Road A12.

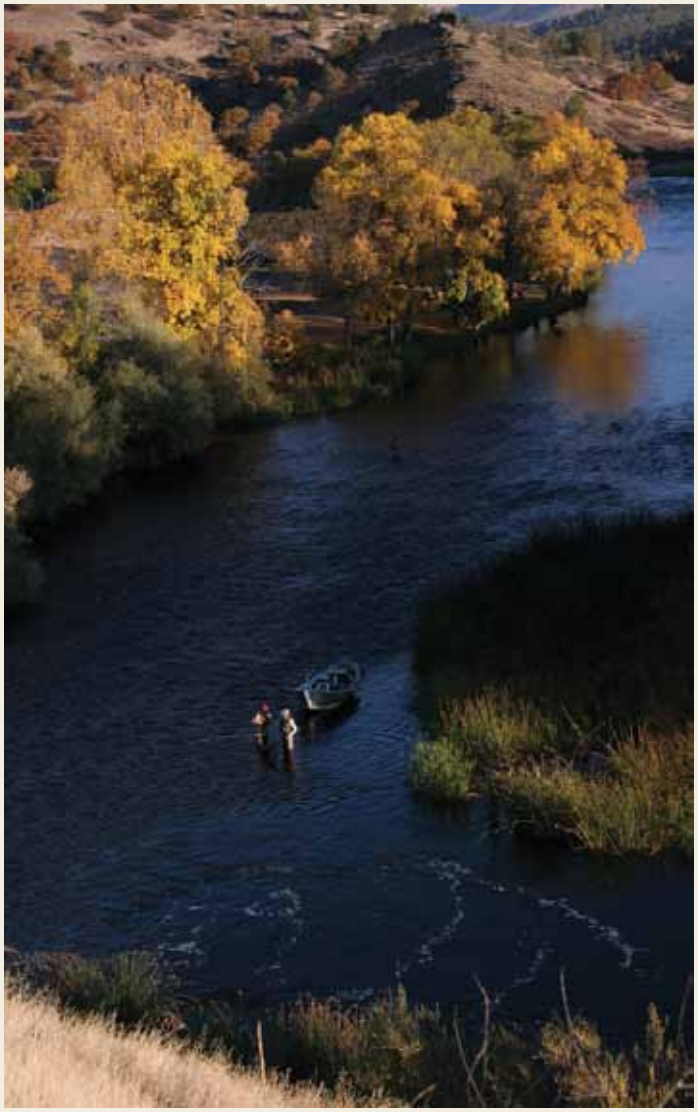
Recent Accomplishments

- CalTrout has been working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and UC Davis to address a full-spectrum of habitat and water management improvements. In fall of 2012, ~ 29,000 Chinook salmon returned, a significant rebound in numbers. Out-migration numbers this spring already are estimated at over 3 million juveniles, suggesting future returns at greater than 60,000 adults. We take this as clear encouragement that our recovery efforts are on the right path.
- ESA and California ESA listed coho salmon numbers are still low. In 2013, a charter was signed with the Siskiyou County Water Agency in support of a "coho supplementation effort" using Klamath coho stocks to replenish the dwindling Shasta River populations.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Implement the Cardoza diversion fish passage improvement project.
- Continue to fund Humboldt State University/CA DFW coho tagging program to track juvenile coho survival and habitat use.
- Assess and implement a coho spawning supplementation project to jumpstart in-stream recovery.
- Develop flow, monitoring and water management plans with landowners, agencies and Farm Bureau to ensure flow regularity and incentives to improve habitat.

Shasta River by Val Atkinson



Klamath River

Klamath River Dam Removal

Largest U.S. Dam Removal Leads to Largest River Restoration

The removal of four dams on the Klamath River will be the largest U.S. river restoration project implemented to date. CalTrout and 41 other organizations signed the Klamath Agreements in 2010 and we are awaiting Congressional approval. There are two separate but companion agreements which address the terms of dam removal (Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement) and river flows, and habitat restoration and community sustainability (Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, KBRA). The removal of four mainstem dams is being planned for 2020 (all out in 1 year) and already over $40 million is in the bank for the expected $275 million removal cost. The Agreements represent the best opportunity to remove these dams – the dam owner is on board and the fund to remove the dams is growing.

The KBRA has negotiated agreements to balance water flows in a basin-wide, comprehensive way that takes into account all the competing flow needs – threatened coho salmon below Iron Gate Dam, Upper Klamath Lake levels important for endangered suckers, wildlife refuge needs in the Upper Basin, and irrigation deliveries. The KBRA provides relief for the stresses of a limited water supply by providing a more coordinated approach. This entire effort hinges on Congress – they need to act. CalTrout will be issuing several Trout Clout action alerts over the coming months asking you to help by urging Senators Wyden and Feinstein to take a leadership role on the Klamath.

Conservation Goals

- Increase habitat – by 2020, remove 4 major dams thus opening up over 300 miles of spawning and rearing habitat.
- Restore salmonid populations to 25% of historic levels (250,000 adult spawning salmon and steelhead).

Recent Accomplishments

- Continued to build community support in the region directly impacted by dam removal and counter media efforts and misinformation designed to derail the project.
- Drove PR efforts in major media centers in California, especially San Francisco and Sacramento.
- Engage with state and federal legislators and staffers to build critical support required to secure final authorization and budget approval.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Urge Congress to pass two bills that would authorize and fund the Klamath Agreements.
- Mobilize the CalTrout membership base and our network of partners to prompt federal representatives to take a leadership position on Klamath Agreements.
- Conduct outreach to Siskiyou County residents and opinion leaders.
- Advocate for California's share of funding for dam removal.

Klamath River

NEW REGION: CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Knagg's Ranch Agricultural Floodplain Study

New!

Salmon Habitat on Rice Fields – A Model for Ag, Flood Protection, and Fish

The California Central Valley was once dominated by marshes that flanked the Sacramento River and its tributaries. During most winters, the valley's rivers overflowed their banks and spread out, creating a vast seasonal wetland. The valley hosted one of the largest and most genetically and phenotypically diverse stock of Chinook salmon on the Pacific coast.

This was likely a function of a highly productive rearing habitat -- one sheltered from the main river current and presented with rich food resources. In these wetlands, salmon grew large and strong, greatly increasing their probability of returning to spawn. Today, only 5% of these floodplain habitats remain -- meaning that most young, natural salmon are isolated from prime spawning habitat and forced to remain in less productive main river current and habitat. The result is much smaller salmon when they reach the ocean than they would have been historically.

CalTrout, working closely with UC Davis, Cal Marsh and Farm Ventures LLC, and Knagg's Ranch LLC, is helping spearhead the Knagg's Ranch project, a collaborative effort between farmers and researchers to help restore salmon populations by reintroducing them during winter to inundated floodplains that are farmed with rice during the summer.

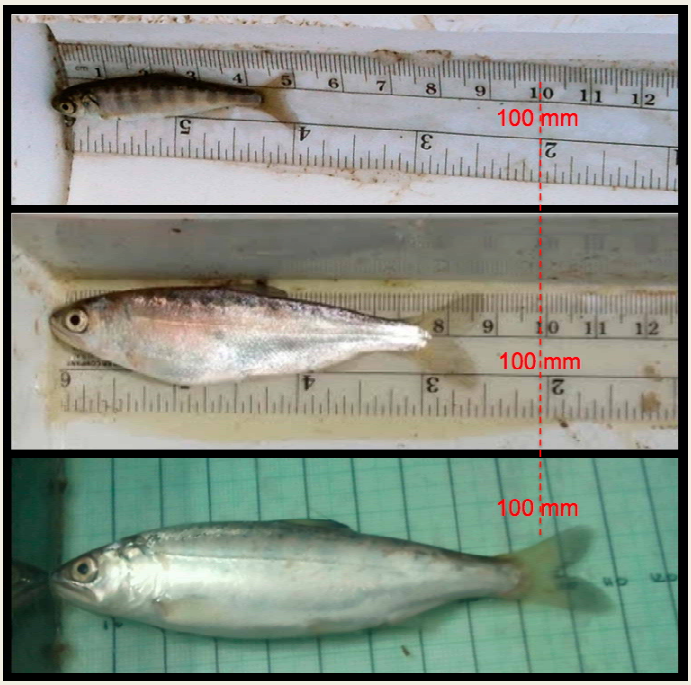
Explaining the project

The Knagg's Ranch is an agricultural property in the Yolo bypass (outside of Sacramento). The project is funded cooperatively by Cal Marsh and Farm Ventures LLC, Knagg's Ranch LLC, California Trout, Resources Legacy Fund, Department of Water Resources, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the Metroplitan Water District.

Experimental fish enclosures, photo by Noah Berger

Collecting samples, photo by Noah Berger

Gathering fish in the net, photo by Noah Berger



Documenting growth of "floodplain fatties"

Conservation Goals

- Optimize habitat benefits for salmon and water birds, while maintaining farming on the largest floodplain of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the 60,000-acre Yolo Bypass.
- Re-establish self-sustaining stocks of Chinook salmon in the Central Valley by allowing for:
  - more rapid juvenile salmon growth
  - delayed out-migration timing for juvenile salmon
  - superior out-migration route
  - improve survival rates and return rates of Chinook salmon.

Recent Accomplishments

- Proved, through a pilot test (flooding 5 acres) in 2011, that rearing in off-channel habitat results in rapid growth for juvenile Chinook salmon; juvenile salmon on average tripled in weight during the six-week experiment.
- Given the success of the small scale experiment, expanded the Knagg's Ranch study in 2013 by releasing 50,000 salmon fry (a.k.a. "floodplain fatties") onto 20 acres of inundated rice fields at Knagg's Ranch. Again, initial results show growth rates are astounding. Results of this study will be released soon.
- Garnered significant interest and excitement around this project including substantial regional and national press coverage.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Expand the program and demonstrate success can ultimately be achieved on a larger landscape level scale, approximately 2,500 acres.
- Secure funding and landowner agreements to achieve a 2,500-acre roll-out over five years.

Searsville Dam Removal

Returning San Francisquito Creek to an "Anchor Watershed" for Steelhead

New!

CalTrout and partners (American Rivers and the Beyond Searsville Dam Coalition) have been urging Stanford University to assess the feasibility of fish passage and removal of Searsville Dam on the San Fancisquito Creek which flows through the Stanford campus. For over a century, Stanford University's antiquated Searsville Dam has impacted San Francisquito Creek watershed and the greater San Francisco Bay estuary. Built in 1892, Searsville Dam has lost over 90% of its original water storage capacity as roughly 1.5 million cubic yards of sediment has filled in the reservoir. Searsville Dam does not provide potable water, flood control, or hydropower – its primary use is providing irrigation water to Stanford campus.

Conservation Goal

- Remove Searsville Dam to allow steelhead to return to over 10 miles of habitat in the upper watershed. The removal of the dam will allow San Francisquito Creek to be one of the critical "anchor watersheds" for threatened steelhead trout recovery in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Recent Accomplishments

- Stanford University has responded to our and others' request to assess Searsville Dam by embarking on a process to identify and recommend a set of actions and strategies that address the dam, the surrounding resources, and associated watershed.
- CalTrout, American River, and Beyond Searsville have been appointed to the Searsville Advisory Group (along with representatives from downstream communities, flood control districts, and other stakeholders) to work with the Stanford's Searsville Steering Committee to assess future actions. The Searsville Advisory Group has met once a month since February 2013 to review existing information and identify all the interests and concerns of the various parties. Ultimately, the Advisory Group will provide recommendations to the Steering Committee that will address a long-term vision (50-year plan) and consider various actions and strategies necessary to reach that vision (including potential interim measures, adaptive management approaches and sufficient monitoring to assess appropriateness of subsequent actions).

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Complete assessment of Searsville Dam.
- Develop a dam removal plan for Searsville.
- Continue our legal strategy as back up to the Advisory Group process.

Southern California steelhead

REGION: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Santa Ynez River Restoration

Bradbury Dam Blocks Steelhead Access

The Santa Ynez River in the Santa Barbara/Lompoc/Solvang area once supported the largest steelhead run south of San Francisco. In the 1950s, steelhead access to roughly half of the watershed and more than 2/3 of the spawning habitat was completely obstructed with the construction of Bradbury Dam. With the endangered species listing of steelhead in 1997, CalTrout filed a water rights challenge at the State Water Board to obtain adequate flows and fish passage at Bradbury for the benefit of the steelhead. This process was stalled for several years.

Conservation Goals

- Provide fish passage to historic spawning / rearing habitat.
- Provide adequate flows to maintain/enhance the steelhead population below Bradbury Dam.

Recent Accomplishments

- In 2012, State Board hearings resumed with the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) representing CalTrout and advocating for adequate flows and fish passage. Because steelhead continue to utilize habitat below the dam, EDC also represented CalTrout in connection with the environmental review for the proposed installation of municipal wells that could negatively impact the lower watershed.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Bureau of Reclamation will be issuing a Biological Assessment regarding steelhead as part of the proposed relicensing of the Bradbury Dam and the NMFS will follow suit with a more detailed Biological Opinion. CalTrout will closely evaluate and comment on these agency documents to ensure that the protection/restoration of the species is given the highest attention.

Ventura River Restoration

Removing Dams & Securing Fish Passage

Matilija Dam Removal

Matilija Creek is a major tributary of the Ventura River. Historically, both waters provided miles of high-quality steelhead habitat. Matilija Dam, located on the creek, is a 190-ft. structure with a reservoir that is now filled with 6 million cubic yards of sediment. In its current state, the dam poses seismic/safety risks for downstream communities and completely blocks fish passage. CalTrout helped launch an initiative to remove the dam through the formation of the Matilija Coalition and is working with groups such as the Matilija Dam Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Over the past year, the TAC has completed a draft workplan addressing preliminary tasks for the removal of the dam.

Conservation Goal

- Provide fish passage to historic spawning / rearing habitat through the removal of Matilija Dam.

Recent Accomplishments

- In March 2013, based on recommendations in the workplan, a Request for Qualifications was sent to consultants addressing their ability to do the following: select feasible dam removal methods; generate order of magnitude cost estimates; create a mitigation plan to address sediment that would be temporarily deposited into Matilija Creek and the Ventura River; and generate sediment transport modeling.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Work with the Coalition to ensure that its work is completed in a timely fashion and that the removal of the dam proceeds as expeditiously as possible.

Robles Diversion

Through threatened legal action, CalTrout previously secured the construction of the Robles Fish Ladder on the Casitas Water Diversion Canal in the Ventura River. Thereafter, the National Marine Fisheries Service mandated certain flows to ensure fish passage at the ladder. Casitas sued the United States claiming that the government was illegally "taking" Casitas' water by mandating flows and demanded compensation for its "taken" water. CalTrout was an Amicus party in the case (offering factual and legal arguments to assist the Court in reaching an appropriate decision).

Recent Accomplishments

- We are pleased to report that the trial court ruled in favor of the United States, and its decision was affirmed on appeal. In March 2013, Casitas announced that it would not seek further judicial review; effectively, ending the litigation. This is a critical, precedent-setting legal victory that will have significant long-term impacts on steelhead recovery in that watershed and potentially many other watersheds.

Santa Clara River Restoration

A Watershed with Exceptional Spawning Habitat

The Santa Clara River near Ventura represents one of the most valuable watershed systems for restoring endangered Southern California steelhead populations – in fact, it's considered a stronghold watershed under the North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership. There is exceptional spawning habitat in the Sespe Creek (a large tributary) with only one barrier between the Creek and the Pacific Ocean and in Santa Paula Creek (another large tributary). But, there are issues. United Water Conservation District (the river's largest water manager) diverts river flows at facilities such as the Vern Freeman Diversion Dam and the Santa Felicia Dam to meet agricultural and community water demands.

Such dams are fish passage barriers that deny fish access to historic spawning grounds and/or restrict flows blocking upstream return migration of adult fish and downstream out-migration of juveniles. CalTrout sued United Water in 2008, alleging violations of the federal Endangered Species Act in connection with the operation of the Vern Freeman Diversion. That lawsuit was settled on terms favorable to the steelhead including the creation of a fish panel that studied and recommended fish passage alternatives (including a hardened fish ramp).

Conservation Goals

- Provide fish passage to historic spawning / rearing habitat on the Santa Clara River and its major tributaries.
- Enhance habitat to promote increase in steelhead population.

Recent Accomplishments

- Currently working with United Water and resource agencies to implement a fish passage solution at the Vern Freeman Diversion and the Santa Felicia Dam.
- With funding from the Ventura Coastkeeper, studied the effects of sediment transport following the hypothetical removal of the Vern Freeman Diversion – a study, which will inform restoration activities in the watershed for many years to come.
- Laid additional groundwork for the successful completion of other restoration opportunities in the Santa Clara watershed.
- In 2012, hired Candice Meneghin as a Coalition Coordinator. Before joining CalTrout, Candice worked on steelhead monitoring and restoration projects in Malibu Lagoon and Topanga Creek. Candice hales from South Africa where she served as a regional coordinator of ecological projects to promote integrated watershed management.
- Under Candice's energetic leadership, formed the first ever Santa Clara River Watershed Steelhead Coalition (Santa Clara Coalition). In addition to CalTrout, the Santa Clara Coalition's Members include The Nature Conservancy, Ventura Coastkeeper/WishToyo Foundation, the Santa Clara River Conservancy, Friends of the Santa Clara River, Keep the Sespe Wild and Stoecker Ecological.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Seek funding through the California Department of Fish & Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grants Program to fund the following steelhead restoration identified by the Coalition:
  - The Harvey Diversion Dam: This project would elevate the creek bed in Santa Paula Creek to restore fish passage via a fish ladder at this water diversion. In the second phase of the project, the diversion would be notched to create a natural appearing fish channel that will facilitate fish passage without the need for a fish ladder.
  - Watershed Monitoring Plan: This project is a wide-ranging monitoring program that will serve to identify the number, size, age and location of the steelhead throughout sections of Santa Clara River and its major tributaries. This data is critical and will inform all future restoration activities in the watershed.

Santa Monica Mountains Restoration

Momentum in Santa Monica Mountains

The Santa Monica Mountains Steelhead Habitat Assessment was produced by CalTrout in 2006. By outlining priorities and actions across the area's 23 watersheds, this document laid the foundation to launch a steelhead recovery campaign in the L.A. area. From 2006 to 2011, other groups worked to implement several critical actions, including Malibu Lagoon restoration, Topanga Creek rodeo grounds restoration and the proposed removal of Rindge Dam on Malibu Creek. CalTrout participates in the Malibu Creek restoration project group. The group consists of state, federal, local and non-profit stakeholders focused on the potential removal of the Rindge Dam on Malibu Creek. This 100-ft. dam that was built in the 1920s has completely filled with sediment and has been blocking steelhead passage to historic spawning grounds for decades.

Conservation Goal

- Provide fish passage to historic spawning / rearing habitat.

Recent Accomplishments

- In 2012, California Trout's contractors completed a study to replace an "Arizona crossing" and restore steelhead passage near the mouth of Zuma Creek.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Seek funding from government and other sources to design and build a replacement (i.e., a bridge) for the crossing that provides fish passage on Zuma Creek.
- Participate in The Watershed Group Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to prepare a dam removal feasibility study on Malibu Creek, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of Summer 2013.

SanDOC Watersheds Restoration

A Complex Watershed Needs CalTrout's Leadership

San Diego and Orange Counties (SanDOC) encompass the largest stretch of undeveloped coastline in urban Southern California. Land is owned by the state and federal government, private entities, two counties and more than a dozen cities. These factors, coupled with the surrounding press of urban and suburban sprawl, present complex jurisdictional issues and incredible demands on resources. Current issues require participation by and leadership from CalTrout to ensure these watersheds, which historically supported steelhead runs, benefit from the consistent application of the Endangered Species Act protections.

Conservation Goals

- Restore hydrologic and ecological processes across critical SanDOC steelhead watersheds.
- Provide fish passage to historic spawning / rearing habitat.

Santa Margarita River

Recent Accomplishments

- In 2012, hired Roxanne Carter (an attorney and graduate of the University of San Diego School of Law). Roxy is tasked with driving the formation of the first ever San Diego and Orange Counties Watersheds Steelhead Restoration Coalition (SanDOC Coalition). To date, a host of NGOs have participated in the coalition including Trout Unlimited, Golden State Flycasters, The National Audubon Society, San Diego Coastkeeper, and the Chaparral Lands Conservancy. Government Coalition participants include NMFS, USFWS, USFS, and the United States Marine Corps. The Coalition is committed to the preservation of endangered Southern California steelhead, with particular interest in implementing recovery actions in San Juan/Trabuco Creek, San Mateo, Santa Margarita and the San Luis Rey watersheds.
- With the SanDOC Coalition, identified multiple steelhead restoration projects.
- Currently seeking funding through the California Department of Fish & Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grants Program for the implementation of these projects, including:
  - The removal of the Los Alamos "Arizona crossing" to restore fish passage on the Los Alamos Creek.
  - The removal of small dams to restore fish passage to portions of the Santa Margarita River.
  - The removal of invasive species to restore steelhead habitat in the Santa Margarita River.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Develop an overall strategic plan to restore core watersheds to optimal health required for steelhead recovery.
- Prioritize conservation efforts that will directly benefit endangered Southern California steelhead or indirectly benefit steelhead through watershed health.
- Focus on community education and engagement to promote the Coalition's activities.

Key Partners

CalTrout works in partnership with many organizations, conservation groups and institutions to get our work done. Our list of partners is extensive. It includes universities, Native American tribes, multiple state and regional water agencies and water management authorities, federal and state land and wildlife management agencies, fishing guides, community members and fly clubs. We could not accomplish our work without these strong collaborations. A list of some of these partners appears on our website at caltrout.org/about/partners.

Terms & Organizations/Groups (used throughout this issue)

CA DFW:	California Department of Fish & Wildlife
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act
DWR:	Department of Water Resources
EDC:	Environmental Defense Center
EIS/EIR:	Environmental Impact Study/Report
EPA:	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA:	Endangered Species Act
FERC:	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
HRC:	Humbolt Redwood Company
IRWMP:	Integrated Regional Water Management Program
KBRA:	Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement
LADWP:	Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
LCT:	Lahontan cutthroat trout
MOU:	Memorandum of understanding
NFWF:	National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
NMFS:	National Marine Fisheries Service
SanDOC:	San Diego & Orange Counties
SRA:	Smith River Alliance
SRNRA:	Smith River National Recreation Area
SWRCB:	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC:	Technical advisory group
TNC:	The Nature Conservancy
TRD:	Trinity River Diversion
TRRP:	Trinity River Restoration Program
TU:	Trout Unlimited
UCD:	University of California, Davis
UNR:	University or Nevada, Reno
USFS:	United States Forest Service
USFWS:	United States Fish & Wildlife Service

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Salmon strongholds offer hope for preservation

The Smith River projects outlined here are being led by the Smith River Alliance. CalTrout remains supportive and enthusiastic about this work. The Smith River is a critical salmon and steelhead stronghold in the state, and we want to ensure that we are supportive of the Smith River Alliance and their great work.

The Smith

South Fork confluence by Zack Larson

The Smith River remains one of California's healthiest, most pristine, and protected rivers. Great strides have recently been made to further protect CA's premier salmon stronghold. With bridge funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, our partner, the Smith River Alliance (SRA), has permanently protected over 5,400 acres of the Hurdygurdy Creek, Little Jones Creek and Siskiyou Fork watersheds. SRA has transferred part of these lands into the Smith River National Recreation Area (SRNRA) and additional transfers will occur as federal Land and Water Conservation Funds become available. The project is ranked #6 on the U.S. Forest Service national priority list for FY2013 funding due in part to the significance of these lands for salmon and steelhead. Permanent protection of these lands will safe-guard the very heart of the SRNRA including over 12 miles of outstanding salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat in the Hurdygurdy Creek tributary. Completing the remaining land acquisitions and implementing conservation and restoration measures to all public lands throughout the watershed continues to be a critical priority.

Critical coho salmon habitat is threatened in the North Fork

Thirty years ago the threat of strip mines inspired CalTrout, SRA, and a many other partners to establish the 460+ square mile SRNRA which was passed by the 101st Congress and signed by President George H. W. Bush. Unfortunately, the SRNRA does not provide protection for approximately 45,000 acres of the North Fork Smith River in Oregon. A multi-national corporation is proposing to mine nickel in Baldface Creek, a major North Fork tributary. This is despite the documented presence of coho which are designated as threatened through the federal ESA – along with Chinook salmon, steelhead, Coastal cutthroat. The Oregon Department of Water Resources has issued a limited license to withdraw water to support summer 2013 drilling operations, and environmental documents will be released soon. Stay tuned through CalTrout's Trout Clout.

Monitoring salmon and trout populations

Several critical monitoring projects are underway in the Smith watershed thanks to the persistence and support of many partners. Projects include:

1) A long-term population abundance and spatial structure monitoring program for coho salmon (escapement surveys are completed for Chinook and steelhead as well)
2) Summer abundance dive counts which annually survey over 30 miles of the South, Middle and North Forks for adult coastal cutthroat trout, salmon and steelhead
3) Use of Dual Frequency Identification Sonar (DIDSON) units in the Lower Smith River to enable biologists to better estimate the number of migrating fish that swim up and down the river
4) Out-migrant trapping of juvenile salmonids in Mill Creek
5) A juvenile coho salmon tagging program in Mill Creek to evaluate how effective restoration actions are on the growth and survival of juvenile salmon.

Conservation Goals

- Protect and restore anadramous fish populations and habitat in the Smith River.
- Use the Smith River as a demonstration of conservation program success and salmon and steelhead population potential through the Salmon Stronghold program and population monitoring.

Recent Accomplishments

- In 2012, CalTrout offered recommendations to the Fish and Game Commission for revising Smith River recreational fishing regulations, primarily to curtail unlawful "snagging" and poaching.
- Our recommendations included raising the low-flow closure threshold from 400 to 600 cfs, implementing catch-and-release regulations in the lower river during low-flow closures, and moving the closure boundary downstream. We think this is the best balance of regulations to curtail harmful fishing activities.
- CalTrout is a stakeholder on the Regional Water Board's technical panel developing an Agricultural Lands Discharge regulatory program. The purpose of this program is to regulate potentially harmful runoff from pesticide use in the lily-bulb farms whose grounds and surface waters drain directly into the Smith River estuary.

What We Will Accomplish in 2013-14

- Continue our support and involvement with Smith River Advisory Committee.
- Support ongoing restoration projects in Mill Creek and Yontocket Slough.
- Advocate for SRNRA/USFS support and funding for restoration and monitoring, visitor services, ecosystem management, and improvement of forest health.

A Reel Deal

ORDER BY JUNE 15th!

Limited Time Offer...

Get Your CalTrout-engraved Abel Reels & Nippers!

In support of CalTrout, Abel has created a limited edition line of CalTrout products. Proceeds from the sale of these items will benefit CalTrout in its mission to protect and restore the wild trout, steelhead, salmon and their waters throughout California.

Classic Reel $625 +tax

The Abel Classic brings back the traditional look and feel of an ultra-lightweight Spey reel, but with the perfect modern fit and finish expected of an Abel.

- Reel frame, spool, drag knob and foot. Made of 6061-T651 cold finished Aerospace grade aluminum
- Quick release spool
- Externally adjustable pawl click drag to prevent line overrun
- Stainless steel internals designed for both fresh and saltwater applications
- Made in the USA
- Weight (Oz.): 5.9
- Spool Diameter (Inches): 3.300"
- Spool Width (Inches): 0.800"
- Line Wt / Yards / Backing: 3/4/5 Weight

Nippers $60 +tax

- Designed, Manufactured and Assembled in the USA
- Anodized aluminum body construction
- Replaceable jaws - machined out of premium grade stainless steel, then heat treated to 58-60rc
- Saltwater resistant
- Engineered to Cut 7x - 100 lb mono and braid line
- 2 Year limited warranty on the jaws after initial purchase
- Weight: .7 ounces – Height: .420" – Length: 1.800"
- Lanyard with aluminum hardware

Spey Reel $675 +tax

A perfect fit for those on big water throwing Spey and Skagit lines in the 8/9/10 category. The standard arbor gives plenty of room for the thickest of lines, making it large in capacity and light on weight.

- Reel frame, spool, drag knob and foot. Made of 6061-T651 cold finished Aerospace grade aluminum
- Quick release spool
- Externally adjustable pawl click drag to prevent line overrun
- Stainless steel internals designed for both fresh and saltwater applications
- Made in the USA
- Weight (Oz.): 9.0
- Spool Diameter (Inches): 4.050"
- Spool Width (Inches): 1.000"
- Line Wt / Yards / Backing: 8-9/10 Weight Spey Line

All orders must be placed by June 15th, 2013.

Note: A $15 shipping fee will apply. Please expect delivery by mid-July.

For product details and to place your order, please go to www.caltrout.org/caltrout-gear/abel/
For questions, please contact Lisa Clarke, lclarke@caltrout.org or 415.392.8887 x102.

CALIFORNIA TROUT
KEEPER OF THE STREAMS

Streamkeeper's Log

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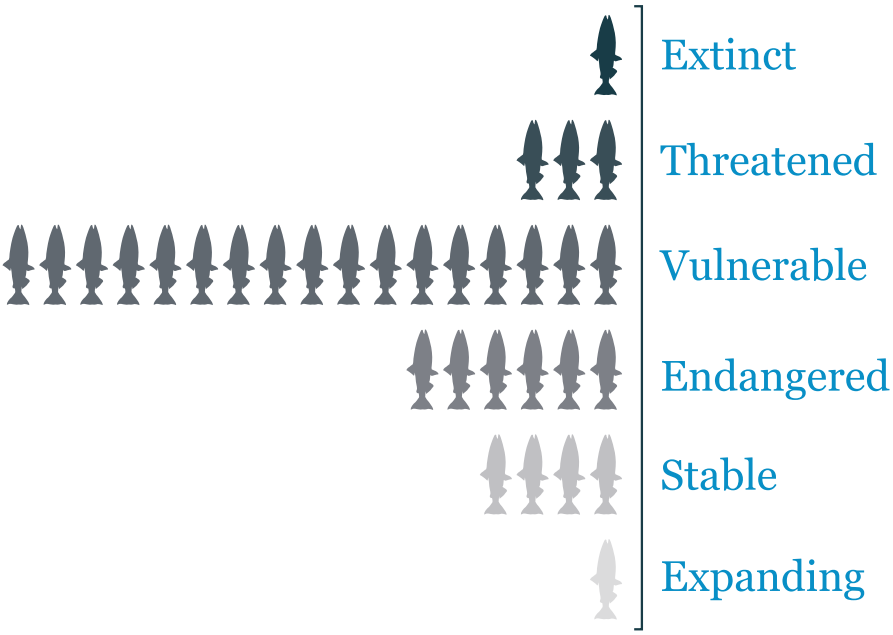

California's 32 Native Trout, Steelhead and Salmon Species

Help us fight for our wild fish.