

Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team



Conservation Team

Monday, April 24, 2017

ATTENDEES:

- Bob Packard, Western Riverside Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan
- Brett Mills, Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District
- Cameron Macbeth, Orange County Water District
- Christopher Jones, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Dustin McLain, Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Edgar Tellez Foster, Chino Basin Watermaster
- Greg Herzog, Riverside Public Utilities
- Ian Achimore, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
- Jason Bill, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Jennifer McAdoo, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Kai Palenscar, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Liz Hurst, Inland Empire Utilities Agency
- Nate Scheevel, Scheevel Engineering
- Robert Eland, Riverside City Department of Public Works
- Phone: Ileene Anderson, Center of Biological Diversity
- Phone: Joanna Gibson, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team (Conservation Team) meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Ian Achimore at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) located at 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503. Brief introductions were made.

PROJECT KICKOFF FOR THE SANTA ANA SUCKER PROTECTION AND BENEFICIAL USE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Ian Achimore provided an overview of the Project including the funding for the project, scope of the project, timeline, project partners and other similar projects planned in the Santa Ana River:

Project funding is provide by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Supplemental Environmental Project Funding from the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, funding from the Team Partners (Orange County Water District and City of Riverside) and cost share from San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. The Project would provide further beneficial habitat to the Santa Ana sucker, and where possible the Arroyo Chub, by creating unique habitat in an area that has a predominantly sandy substrate.

The Project would be implemented in the Santa Ana River low flow channel, downstream of the flood control levees that are maintained by Riverside and San Bernardino County flood control districts. The possible project location includes the area near the Van Buren Blvd. bridge crossing. Dustin McLain from the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District noted that the bedrock layer is shallower in the area near Van Buren Blvd. known as Tyler Beach.

Minimization measures to reduce temporary impacts could include conducting habitat structure creation outside of breeding/nesting bird season, conducting work outside of the Santa Ana sucker spawning season and clearing native fish out of the work area.

Project partners who are assisting in the design include San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who are both interested in developing similar in-stream habitat projects to benefit the Santa Ana sucker.

Nate Scheevel of Scheevel Engineering was introduced as the engineering consultant for the Project. His scope includes designing the habitat structure through a 65% technical memorandum and finalizing the design at the 100% level after the project is reviewed by the regulatory agencies who will be issuing permits for its construction. Next steps include concluding the 65% technical memorandum in Summer 2017, Orange County Water District leading the permit application effort in Summer 2017 after the memorandum is complete, receiving feedback from the regulatory agencies in Winter 2017/2018, and constructing the structure in Fall 2018 after bird nesting season concludes.

OTHER UPDATES

Jennifer McAddo from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) discussed a sediment transport study focused on the Santa Ana River system from Seven Oaks Dam to Prado Dam. The Corps is currently collecting data through 2017 and is interested in using datasets that other agencies are willing to share. Datasets of interest are those involving suspended sediment, bedload, sediment gradation and hydrology. Kai Palenscar noted that the U.S. Geological Survey is finalizing a study on the amount of sediment currently being transported downstream from the upper Santa Ana River Watershed. The goal of the USACE study is to understand the relative sediment contribution from the tributaries to the River mainstem and changes overtime. The other goal of the study is to integrate the existing USACE small-scale sediment transport models that are focused on sub-segments of the Santa Ana River system. Another study focused on the reach downstream of Prado Dam is being implemented simultaneously through an effort with San Diego State University.

Christopher Jones from USACE provided an update on his agency's sucker habitat project which is focused on exposing cobble and substrate of larger grain size that the fish use for foraging. The agency is interested on implementing six habitat "nodes" (or areas) in fall 2017. The area they are looking at implementing their structures is downstream of Van Buren Blvd. crossing to Prado Basin.

Kai Palenscar from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided an update on the Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which is currently in the effects analysis phase. The phase includes analyzing how the covered project activities are going to be effecting the river.