

MEETING SUMMARY

Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team

January 22, 2015

ATTENDEES:

Bob Packard, MSHCP
Bonnie Johnson, OCWD
Brett Mills, RCRC
Daniel Bott, OCWD
Dave Woelfel, RWQCB
Guillermo Morales, SBCE
Hannah Smith, SBMWD
Heather Dyer, SBVMWD
Jon Rishi, OCWD
Justin Wood, Aspen Environmental Group
Kai Palenscar, USFWS
Kerwin Russell, RCRC
Kim Romich, SBCFCD

Maricela Archer, SAWA
Nancy Sansonetti, SBCFCD
Rebecca Franklin, SBMWD
Tyson Fristran, SBCFCD
Theresa Sims, SBCFCD
Phone: Bradd Bridges, FWS
Phone: Chris Medak, FWS
Phone: Claire Ingel, CDFW
Phone: Justin Nakano, CBWM
Ian Achimore, SAWPA
Mark Norton, SAWPA
Zyanya Blancas, SAWPA

Introductions and Announcement:

The Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team (Conservation Team) meeting was called to order at 1:31 P.M. by Ian Achimore at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) located at 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503. Brief introductions were made.

Meeting Summary Approval:

Ian Achimore asked if there were any additions or corrections to the November 20, 2014 meeting summary. There being none, the meeting summary was approved.

Guest Speaker on Illegal OHV Task Force: County of San Bernardino

Ian Achimore introduced Tyson Fristran and Guillermo Morales from the San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department Code Enforcement Division. Mr. Fristran provided a report on the efforts of the San Bernardino County Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Team which has been part of a larger OHV Task Force effort started by the County Department of Public Works in 2011 between the police departments of Colton, Redlands, Riverside and San Bernardino, as well as the County Sheriff's department. County Code Enforcement officers are also working closely with the County Flood Control District to eliminate the use of OHVs in the Santa Ana River.

Shortly after 2011, the Team began focusing on access points to the River and placed thousands of feet of concrete k-rails and boulders. Enforcement increased on a weekly basis and involved education, citations and warnings. Between 2011 and 2012 the Task Force collaborated on ordinances and added a no parking ordinance in addition to the trespassing ordinance. From 2011 to 2014, with the help of Code Enforcement and authorities, the different agencies greatly reduced the OHV traffic within the River. As an example, Mr. Fristran described that on July 13, 2014 a sweep involving 27 personnel from six different agencies, including Fish and Wildlife Service, was implemented using horses, ATVs and OHVs. Three citations and 22 warnings were issued. Mr. Fristran noted that a lot of OHVs access the River from the Riverside area. On August 26, 2014 an illegal camping and trespassing sweep was implemented whereby nine enforcements contacts and nine criminal citations were given. They posted vacated notices, whereby Public Works cleaned up the remaining trash. Another sweep was implemented during the Labor Day holiday weekend.

Mr. Fristran explained that the Team provides flyers focused on the natural resource value of the River and maps to educate the public on the no trespassing ordinance. Discussion ensued on the issues of homeless camps and the efforts of the San Bernardino Sheriff Department's Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) Team which consists of four officers.

Mr. Fristran noted that blocking access points by placing rock and concrete barriers was not as effective as the implementation of sweeps by Code Enforcement, which is patrolling the River on a weekly basis.

The Conservation Team discussed their interest in providing funding and support to the OHV Team. Conservation Team Agencies and attendees asked about signage that would market the contact information and web-based applications used by authorities, in order for the public to notify authorities when they witness illegal OHV use and trespassing. Another need discussed was providing funding for overtime to police departments which is used when conducting sweeps. Some local police departments were not able to participate in the recent Labor Day sweep due to overtime issues.

A meeting to discuss funding opportunities with Mr. Morales's supervisor and chief will be set up.

Dave Woelfel from the Regional Water Quality Control Board suggested that the Team apply for the Supplemental Environmental Project funding that is available from the Santa Ana Regional Board for further assistance.

Announcement: \$10,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Sucker Sampling in 2015

Due to the coordination between Fish and Wildlife Service, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) and SAWPA, the Services is pledging \$10,000 to the Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Plan Team for a sucker sampling methodology and implementation for 2015. Ian Achimore introduced Bradd Bridges, Recovery Branch Chief from FWS. Mr. Bridges reported that the FWS is working on a cooperative agreement for this funding. Data from the sampling will provide sucker and arroyo chub fish count and will allow for a standardization of a sampling methodology for different watersheds.

Heather Dyer reported that SBVMWD's Board approved \$119,000 for the native fish survey which will focus on the top seven miles of the HCP's planning area. There will be 18 to 20 sample locations and it will begin in September 2015. Snorkeling, seining, and electrofishing will be conducted to try to calculate the effectiveness of each methodologies. Ms. Dyer noted that volunteers will be needed.

2014 Riverwalk Press Release

Ian Achimore announced the posting of the Riverwalk Atlas, a document that graphically displays the substrate data from the 2014 Riverwalk, through constant contact email to a distribution list of over 3,000. Mr. Achimore encouraged the Conservation Team Agencies and attendees to repost and/or retweet the announcement that is located at <http://sawpanews.org/?p=321>.

Consider Approval of Budget by Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team Member Agencies

Ian Achimore presented the Conservation Team's FY 2014-5, FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17 budgets which had been coordinated with the Conservation Team Agencies: Orange County Water District, City of Riverside and SBVMWD prior to the meeting. Ms. Dyer noted that the administrative cost reflected in the budgets was still too high for her management to agree to the budget. The Conservation Team Agencies requested that SAWPA recruit more members. Mr. Achimore will develop a white paper to solicit new members.

Upon further discussion regarding the approval of the budgets, it was determined that further coordination will take place through email after the Team Agencies have discussed the budget further with their management.

Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker

Greg Herzog of the City of Riverside requested that Department of Public Works and Riverside Public Utilities should be referenced as only City of Riverside.

Upon motion by Greg Herzog, seconded by Heather Dyer, the motion unanimously carried:

15-1-1

MOVED, approve to submit comments to FWS on behalf of the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team on the Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker.

Critical Habitat Litigation and Other News

Kai Palenscar of the Fish and Wildlife Service reported on the Rapid Infiltration and Extraction (RIX) Plant's five hour shut down on Thursday, January 15, 2015. Fish and Wildlife Service and other public agency volunteers observed an unexpected dewatering of the channel half way between Riverside Avenue and the RIX facility. Fishes were moved immediately upstream to the Rialto channel, but some fish were lost. Mr. Palenscar stated that they are working on improving their emergency response.

Ms. Dyer stated that the species profile for the Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Plan will be released soon. The program was developed using ARC. She noted that the variety of layers will allow for agencies to view land ownerships, vegetation, etc. all the way down to Prado Dam. The program is new and they are looking for feedback.

Restoration Project Updates

Sunnyslope

Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is planning on removing vegetation out of the channel just upstream from the Sunnyslope tributary. During a native fish survey on Tuesday, two sucker fishes were discovered. It was assumed that the fish were in their second year.

Tequesquite Creek

Kerwin Russell of Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District reported that because of drought and the reduction of urban runoff the creek's water flow has been reduced. There was no connectivity between the upper and lower stream due to dryness. A few trees were damaged because of stress. Soil at this location is damped, but there is no visual surface layer. Discussion ensued on the decreasing levels of runoff and its effect on water quality.

Next Meeting and Adjournment:

The next Conservation Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2015