

## MEETING SUMMARY

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# Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team

May 15, 2014

### ATTENDEES:

Bob Tincher, SBVMWD  
Bonnie Johnson, OCWD  
Dan Bott, OCWD  
Dave Woelfel, RWQCB  
David Garcia, RPU  
Dick Zembal, OCWD  
Greg Herzog, RPU  
Hugh Wood, SAWA

Kai Palenscar, USFWS  
Liz Hurst, IEUA  
Mike Roberts, EVWD  
Rebecca Franklin, SBMWD  
Sue Hoffman, SAWA  
Mark Norton, SAWPA  
Ian Achimore, SAWPA  
Zyanya Blancas, SAWPA

### **Introductions and Announcement:**

The Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team (Conservation Team) meeting was called to order at 9:02 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.

### **Meeting Summary Approval:**

Meeting notes are deemed acceptable by the Conservation Team.

### **Critical Habitat Litigation and Other meeting topics:**

No updates were provided for the critical habitat litigation.

### **Compsopogon Coeruleus in the Santa Ana River - Kai Palenscar**

Kai Palenscar reported on the RIX exotic fish removal effort done on February 13, 2014. USFWS, USFS, CDFW, RCRC, SBVMWD and RIX personnel participated. A total of two largemouth bass, 14 black bullhead catfish and one green sunfish were removed. No sucker fish were seen during the event.

Mr. Palenscar went on to explain that freshwater red algae were found in the RIX discharge pool during the event, and was confirmed to be *Compsopogon Coeruleus* by MWD/DWR and Dr. Robert Sheath (CSU San Marcos) shortly afterwards. The algae have been spotted past the 60 freeway. The longest alga found was 13 feet long. This species is normally found in tropics where there is warmer water and fast flowing streams. It does not travel upstream. It is possible that the species was introduced by someone who dumped their aquarium water into the river.

135 Santa Ana sucker fish (80-150 mm) were observed from Riverside Avenue to the RIX discharge pool during the USFWS sucker fish snorkel survey on February 25, 2014. Sucker fish were sighted near the algae, but not in it. USFWS would like to test to see if the fish will eat or spawn in the algae, as of now they assume the fish does not.

Drying the algae could result in its eradication. Mr. Palenscar is working with other agencies on several ways to manage the algae. One includes altering the flow from RIX to dry out the

portions with algae in June. This will allow for drying to occur until the first rains of the season. Another option is to apply chemicals to eradicate the algae.

### **Restoration Project Updates**

#### **Sunnyslope Creek:**

Bonnie Johnson gave a brief update on the cleaning efforts at Sunnyslope Creek. Recent winds have dropped a large amount of tree debris, which are creating blockages. Some Cattail plants were removed from the site. Ms. Johnson stated that the habitat is not doing as well as it could; no fish were found in the Nature Center area.

#### **The Conservation Team Budget and Priority Studies**

Ian Achimore provided a list of the research areas, developed by Conservation Team in June, 2013, that the Team could work on in the next fiscal year. The Conservation Team was encouraged to provide comments on the list. Total revenue for FY 14-15, which runs from July 2014 to June 2015, is \$41,000.00. The Conservation Team agreed to discuss the research areas at the next meeting.

The Draft Sucker Habitat Survey was discussed. The Team requested more time to review the Survey.

#### **Next Meeting and Adjournment:**

The scheduling of the next Conservation Team meeting will be determined at a later time.