ITEM: INFORMATIONAL ITEM/STAFF REPORT

15. CARMEL RIVER FISHERY REPORT FOR JULY 2021

Meeting Date:	August 16, 2021	Budgeted:	N/A
From:	David J. Stoldt, General Manager	Program/ Line Item No.:	N/A
Prepared By:	Beverly Chaney	Cost Estimate:	N/A

General Counsel Review: N/A Committee Recommendation: N/A CEQA Compliance: This action does not constitute a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15378.

AQUATIC HABITAT AND FLOW CONDITIONS: In July flow releases from Los Padres Reservoir were reduced to 5 cubic-feet-per-second (cfs). By month's end, much of the lower valley was dry or had isolated pools resulting in poor rearing conditions for juvenile steelhead throughout the watershed.

July's mean daily streamflow at the Sleepy Hollow Weir fell from 5.5 to 3.1 cfs (monthly mean 4.24 cfs) resulting in 261 acre-feet (AF) of runoff, while flow at the Highway 1 gage fell from 0.27 to 0 cfs (on July 27) (monthly mean 0.10 cfs) resulting in 6.4 AF of runoff.

There were 0.00 inches of rainfall in July as recorded at the San Clemente gauge. Since January there have only been 1.41 inches of rain. The rainfall total for WY 2021 (which started on October 1, 2020) is 10.85 inches, or 52% of the long-term year-to-date average of 20.96 inches.

CARMEL RIVER LAGOON: During July, the lagoon mouth remained closed. The water surface elevation (WSE) continued to drop from approximately 8.2 to 6.5 feet (North American Vertical Datum of 1988; NAVD 88) (See graph below).

Water quality depth-profiles were conducted at five sites on July 23, 2021, while the lagoon mouth was closed, water surface elevation was 7.0 feet, and river inflow was 0.25 cfs. Steelhead rearing conditions were generally "fair to good", especially in the upper 1.5 meters of the water column. Salinity was low, ranging from 1 - 10 ppt, dissolved oxygen (DO) levels were variable, ranging from 0 - 13 mg/l, while water temperatures ranged from 64 - 75 degrees F.

CARMEL RIVER MAINSTEM STEELHEAD RESCUES: Mainstem rescues began on May 27, 2021. In July, Staff completed 19 days of fish rescues in the lower river, primarily in the Schulte and River Meadows reaches, plus isolated pools throughout the river. By the end of July, a total of 7,121 steelhead had been rescued including: 6,127 young-of-the-year (yoy), 957 age 1+ fish, 10 kelts, with 27 mortalities (0.4%). Most juvenile fish were transported to the Sleepy Hollow Steelhead Rearing Facility while the adult kelts were released in the ocean at Stewart's Cove.

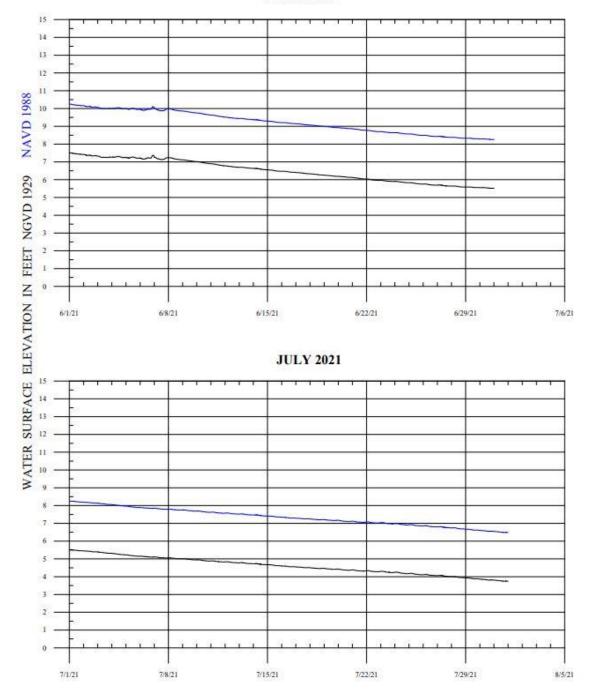
SLEEPY HOLLOW STEELHEAD REARING FACILITY: The first rescued fish were brought to the facility on May 27, 2021. Due to the very small size of many of the fish, fry/yoy are being quarantined and held in the rectangular "rearing troughs" until they are large and healthy enough to be transferred to the rearing channel.

By the end of July 5,386 fish had been stocked in the rearing channel, including 4,453 yoy fish (small/medium size) and 933 age 1+ fish. The survival rate has remained high at 96%, indicating the new upgrades to the Facility, along with the modified stocking and handling protocols are working.

Carmel River Lagoon Plot:

CARMEL RIVER LAGOON

JUNE 2021



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