



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Ecosystem Conservation Division/Water Branch
830 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95811
www.dfg.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN, Jr., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



December 18, 2012

Attention: Interested Parties

Subject: Implementation of an Instream Flow Study on Lower Butte Creek

Dear Interested Party:

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be conducting an instream flow study on Lower Butte Creek from Parrot-Phelan Diversion Dam downstream to the Western Canal Siphon. This study is mandated by the California State Legislature under the Delta Reform Act of 2009 (Senate Bill No. 1) (Stats. 2009 (7th Ex. Sess.) Ch 5, 39) to develop flow criteria for tributaries to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The study will begin in November 2012 and extend through 2015. Based on this study CDFG anticipates providing instream flow recommendations to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) in 2016 in accordance with Public Resource Code (PRC) 10000 - 10005.

Butte Creek has the largest self sustaining wild population of spring-run Chinook salmon in the Sacramento River watershed and is included in the CDFG priority streams list. The priority stream list developed under PRC 10001 identifies streams where instream flow criteria are needed to assure the continued viability of stream-related fish and wildlife. The priority stream list is available on the CDFG Instream Flow Program web page at: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/water/instream_flow.html. Butte Creek was also identified as a priority stream in the USFWS 2001 Final Restoration Plan for the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program: A Plan to Increase Natural Production of Anadromous Fish in the Central Valley of California; the NMFS 2009 Public Draft Recovery Plan for the Evolutionary Significant Units of Sacramento River Winter-Run Chinook Salmon and Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon and the Distinct Population Segments of the Central Valley Steelhead; the State Water Board 2010 Instream Flow Studies for the Protection of the Public Trust Resources: A Prioritized Schedule and Estimate of Cost; and the Delta Stewardship Council 2011 Fifth Staff Draft Delta Plan. USFWS completed an instream flow study in 2003 for spring-run Chinook salmon spawning habitat in Butte Creek upstream of Parrot-Phelan Diversion Dam. CDFG submitted instream flow recommendations to the State Water Board for upper Butte Creek in 2009.

An electronic version of this notice can be found at the CDFG web page, <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/news/pubnotice/>. The draft study implementation plan prepared by USFWS is available on the CDFG Instream Flow Program web page. Please visit the web page in the future for updated study plans and other study related information.

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The purpose of this study is to identify the instream flow requirements, measured in cubic feet per second (cfs), for upstream migrating Chinook salmon in Lower Butte Creek. Field work for this study will involve selecting study sites, collecting hydraulic data, installing stream temperature loggers, tagging adult Chinook salmon and installing tag receivers to monitor fish movement. CDFG and USFWS staff started preliminary study site selection in November 2012 by wading downstream from Parrot-Phelan Diversion Dam to Western Canal Siphon looking for critical passage sites that may impede fish migration. Dates and description of field activities are posted in Table 1. Staff will need to access the study sites on Lower Butte Creek during the course of the study. CDFG will give advanced notification to landowners near the study sites when field crews will be collecting data. Tracy McReynolds of the CDFG Chico office is the point of contact for landowners and stakeholders in Butte County.

Table 1. Estimated dates and field activities for Lower Butte Creek Instream Flow Study from Parrot-Phelan Diversion Dam to Western Canal Siphon.

Date	Field Activities
November – December 2012	Study site selection, preliminary data collection on critical riffles
December 2012 – September 2013	Hydraulic data collection
September 2013 – December 2014	Tagging and monitoring of Chinook salmon

If you have questions or concerns regarding the instream flow study please contact the Project Coordinator, William Cowan with the CDFG Water Branch Instream Flow Program at (916) 445-8560 or wcowan@dfg.ca.gov. For questions or concerns regarding property access or field activities please contact Tracy McReynolds at the CDFG Chico office at (530) 895-5111 or tmcreynolds@dfg.ca.gov

Sincerely,



Scott Cantrell
Chief, Water Branch