

# **STREAM INVENTORY REPORT**

## **Little North Fork Navarro River**

### INTRODUCTION

A stream inventory was conducted during the summer of 1994 on Little North Fork Navarro River to assess habitat conditions for anadromous salmonids. The inventory was conducted in two parts: habitat inventory and biological inventory. The objective of the habitat inventory was to document the habitat available to anadromous salmonids in Little North Fork Navarro River. The objective of the biological inventory was to document the salmonid species present and their distribution. After analysis of the information and data gathered, stream restoration and enhancement recommendations are presented.

There is no known record of adult spawning surveys having been conducted on Little North Fork Navarro River. The objective of this report is to document the current habitat conditions, and recommend options for the potential enhancement of habitat for Chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout.

### WATERSHED OVERVIEW

Little North Fork Navarro River is tributary to the North Branch North Fork Navarro River, tributary to the North Fork Navarro River, located in Mendocino County, California. Little North Fork Navarro River's legal description at the confluence with North Branch North Fork Navarro River is T16N R15W S33. Its location is 39°12'26" North latitude and 123°32'07" West longitude. Little North Fork Navarro River is a second order stream and has approximately 10.5 miles of blue line stream according to the USGS Bailey Ridge and Navarro 7.5 minute quadrangles. Little North Fork Navarro River drains a watershed of approximately 9.6 square miles. Summer base runoff is approximately 0.08 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the mouth. Elevations range from about 280 feet at the mouth of the creek to 1700 feet in the headwater areas. Redwood and Douglas fir forest dominates the watershed. The watershed is privately owned and is managed for timber production. Vehicle access exists via Masonite Road.

### METHODS

The habitat inventory conducted in Little North Fork Navarro River follows the methodology presented in the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual (Flosi and Reynolds, 1991 rev. 1994). The California Conservation Corps (CCC) Technical Advisors that conducted the inventory were trained in standardized habitat inventory methods by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Little North Fork Navarro River personnel were trained in June, 1994, by Gary Flosi and Scott Downie. This inventory was conducted by a two-person team.

## Little North Fork Navarro River

### HABITAT INVENTORY COMPONENTS

A standardized habitat inventory form has been developed for use in California stream surveys and can be found in the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual. This form was used in Little North Fork Navarro River to record measurements and observations. There are nine components to the inventory form.

#### 1. Flow:

Flow is measured in cubic feet per second (cfs) at the bottom of the stream survey reach using standard flow measuring equipment, if available. In some cases flows are estimated. Flows should also be measured or estimated at major tributary confluences.

#### 2. Channel Type:

Channel typing is conducted according to the classification system developed and revised by David Rosgen (1985 rev. 1994). This methodology is described in the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual. Channel typing is conducted simultaneously with habitat typing and follows a standard form to record measurements and observations. There are five measured parameters used to determine channel type: 1) water slope gradient, 2) entrenchment, 3) width/depth ratio, 4) substrate composition, and 5) sinuosity.

#### 3. Temperatures:

Both water and air temperatures are measured and recorded at each tenth unit typed. The time of the measurement is also recorded. Both temperatures are taken in degrees Fahrenheit at the middle of the habitat unit and within one foot of the water surface.

#### 4. Habitat Type:

Habitat typing uses the 24 habitat classification types defined by McCain and others (1988). Habitat units are numbered sequentially and assigned a type identification number selected from a standard list of 24 habitat types. Dewatered units are labeled "dry". Little North Fork Navarro River habitat typing used standard basin level measurement criteria. These parameters require that the minimum length of a described habitat unit must be equal to or greater than the stream's mean wetted width. Channel dimensions were measured using hip chains, range finders, tape measures, and stadia rods. Unit measurements included mean length, mean width, mean depth, and maximum depth. Pool tail crest depth at each pool unit was measured in the thalweg. All measurements were taken in feet to the nearest tenth.

#### 5. Embeddedness:

The depth of embeddedness of the cobbles in pool tail-out reaches is measured by the percent of the cobble that is surrounded or buried by fine sediment. In Little North Fork Navarro River, embeddedness was ocularly estimated. The values were recorded using the following ranges: 0 - 25% (value 1), 26 - 50% (value 2), 51 - 75% (value 3), 76 - 100% (value 4).

## Little North Fork Navarro River

### 6. Shelter Rating:

Instream shelter is composed of those elements within a stream channel that provide salmonids protection from predation, reduce water velocities so fish can rest and conserve energy, and allow separation of territorial units to reduce density related competition. The shelter rating is calculated for each habitat unit by multiplying shelter value and percent cover. Using an overhead view, a quantitative estimate of the percentage of the habitat unit covered is made. All cover is then classified according to a list of nine cover types. In Little North Fork Navarro River, a standard qualitative shelter value of 0 (none), 1 (low), 2 (medium), or 3 (high) was assigned according to the complexity of the cover. Thus, shelter ratings can range from 0-300, and are expressed as mean values by habitat types within a stream.

### 7. Substrate Composition:

Substrate composition ranges from silt/clay sized particles to boulders and bedrock elements. In all habitat units, dominant and sub-dominant substrate elements were ocularly estimated using a list of seven size classes and recorded as a one and two respectively.

### 8. Canopy:

Stream canopy is estimated using handheld spherical densiometers and is a measure of the water surface shaded during periods of high sun. In Little North Fork Navarro River, an estimate of the percentage of the habitat unit covered by canopy was made from the center of each unit. The area of canopy was further analyzed to estimate its percentages of coniferous or deciduous trees, and the results recorded.

### 9. Bank Composition and Vegetation:

Bank composition elements range from bedrock to bare soil. However, the stream banks are usually covered with grass, brush, or trees. These factors influence the ability of stream banks to withstand winter flows. In Little North Fork Navarro River, the dominant composition type and the dominant vegetation type of both the right and left banks were selected from the habitat inventory form. Additionally, the percent of each bank covered by vegetation was estimated and recorded.

## BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Biological sampling during stream inventory is used to determine fish species and their distribution in the stream. Biological inventory is conducted using one or more of three basic methods: 1) stream bank observation, 2) underwater observation, 3) electrofishing. These sampling techniques are discussed in the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual.

## **Little North Fork Navarro River**

Biological inventory was conducted in Little North Fork Navarro River to document the fish species composition and distribution. One site was electrofished in Little North Fork Navarro River using one Smith-Root Model 12 electrofisher. The site was end-blocked with nets to contain the fish within the sample reach. Fish from the site were counted by species, measured, and returned to the stream.

### DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the habitat inventory form are entered into Habitat, a dBASE 4.2 data entry program developed by Tim Curtis, Inland Fisheries Division, California Department of Fish and Game. This program processes and summarizes the data, and produces the following six tables:

- Riffle, flatwater, and pool habitat types
- Habitat types and measured parameters
- Pool types
- Maximum pool depths by habitat types
- Dominant substrates by habitat types
- Mean percent shelter by habitat types

Graphics are produced from the tables using Lotus 1,2,3. Graphics developed for Little North Fork Navarro River include:

- Riffle, flatwater, pool habitats by percent occurrence
- Riffle, flatwater, pool habitats by total length
- Total habitat types by percent occurrence
- Pool types by percent occurrence
- Total pools by maximum depths
- Embeddedness
- Pool cover by cover type
- Dominant substrate in low gradient riffles
- Percent canopy
- Bank composition by composition type
- Bank vegetation by vegetation type

### HABITAT INVENTORY RESULTS

The habitat inventory of July 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, and 27, and August 1, 3, and 4, 1994, was conducted by Chris Bysshe and Jeff Strayer (CCC). The total length of the stream surveyed was 34,733 feet with an additional 636 feet of side channel.

Flow was estimated to be 0.08 cfs during the survey period.

Little North Fork Navarro River is a B3 channel type for the entire 34,733 feet of stream reach surveyed. B-type channels are moderately entrenched, moderate gradient, riffle-dominated

## Little North Fork Navarro River

channels with infrequently spaced pools, very stable plan and profile, and stable banks. Water temperatures ranged from 57 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Air temperatures ranged from 62 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

Table 1 summarizes the Level II riffle, flatwater, and pool habitat types. By percent **occurrence**, flatwater made up 45%, riffles 35%, and pools 19% (Graph 1). Flatwater habitat types made up 59% of the total survey **length**, riffles 25%, and pools 12% (Graph 2).

Five Level IV habitat types were identified. The data are summarized in Table 2. The most frequent habitat types by percent **occurrence** were low gradient riffles, 35%; step runs, 25%; and runs, 19% (Graph 3). By percent total **length**, step runs made up 45%, low gradient riffles 25%, and runs 13%.

One-hundred-thirty-five pools were identified (Table 3). All the pools were classified as main channel pools (Graph 4).

Table 4 is a summary of maximum pool depths by pool habitat types. Depth is an indicator of pool quality. Eighty-two of the 135 pools (61%) had a depth of two feet or greater (Graph 5).

The depth of cobble embeddedness was estimated at pool tail-outs. Of the 134 pool tail-outs measured, 61 had a value of 1 (45%); 60 had a value of 2 (45%); 13 had a value of 3 (10%); and none had a value of 4 (0%). On this scale, a value of one is the best for fisheries (Graph 6).

A shelter rating was calculated for each habitat unit and expressed as a mean value for each habitat type within the survey using a scale of 0-300. Pool habitat types had the highest shelter rating at 117. Flatwater habitats followed with a rating of 90 (Table 1).

Table 5 summarizes mean percent cover by habitat type. Aquatic vegetation is the dominant cover type in Little North Fork Navarro River and is extensive. Large and small woody debris are lacking in nearly all habitat types. Graph 7 describes the pool cover in Little North Fork Navarro River.

Table 6 summarizes the dominant substrate by habitat type. Small cobble was the dominant substrate observed in 174 of the 250 low gradient riffles (70%). Gravel was the next most frequently observed dominant substrate type and occurred in 23% of the low gradient riffles (Graph 8).

Thirty-four percent of the survey reach lacked shade canopy. Of the 66% of the stream covered with canopy, 37% was composed of deciduous trees, and 63% was composed of coniferous trees. Graph 9 describes the canopy in Little North Fork Navarro River.

Table 2 summarizes the mean percentage of the right and left stream banks covered with vegetation by habitat type. For the stream reach surveyed, the mean percent right bank vegetated was 67%. The mean percent left bank vegetated was 62%. The dominant elements composing the structure of the stream banks consisted of 4% bedrock, 0% boulder, 35% cobble/gravel, and 61% sand/silt/clay (Graph 10). Coniferous trees, including down trees, logs, and root wads,

## **Little North Fork Navarro River**

were the dominant vegetation type observed in 57% of the units surveyed. Additionally, 37% of the units surveyed had deciduous trees as the dominant vegetation type (Graph 11).

### BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY RESULTS

One site was electrofished on August 2, 1994, in Little North Fork Navarro River. The unit was sampled by Weldon Jones (DFG), Chris Bysshe and Jeff Strayer (CCC). All measurements are fork lengths unless noted otherwise.

The site sampled was habitat units 244-246, a run / mid-channel pool / step run combination approximately 15,559 feet from the confluence with North Branch North Fork Navarro River. This site had an area of 996 sq ft and a volume of 398 cu ft. The unit yielded 39 steelhead between 37 and 148 mm, 15 sculpin between 51 and 71 mm, eight three-spine stickleback between 26 and 52 mm, seven California roach between 53 and 85 mm, three Pacific lamprey ammocete, and one Pacific giant salamander.

### DISCUSSION

Little North Fork Navarro River is a B3 channel type for the entire stream reach surveyed. The B3 channel type is considered excellent for low-stage weirs, random boulder placement, bank-placed boulders, single and opposing wing deflectors, channel constrictors, bank cover, and log cover structures; and good for medium-stage weirs.

The water temperatures recorded on the survey days July 18 through August 4, 1994, ranged from 57 to 72° Fahrenheit. Air temperatures ranged from 62 to 86° Fahrenheit. This is a fair water temperature range for salmonids. However, 72° Fahrenheit, if sustained, is near the threshold stress level for salmonids. To make any further conclusions, temperatures would need to be monitored throughout the warm summer months, and more extensive biological sampling would need to be conducted.

Flatwater habitat types comprised 59% of the total **length** of this survey, riffles 25%, and pools 12%. The pools are relatively deep, with 82 of the 135 pools having a maximum depth greater than 2 feet. In coastal coho and steelhead streams, it is generally desirable to have primary pools comprise approximately 50% of total habitat. In first and second order streams, a primary pool is defined to have a maximum depth of at least two feet, occupy at least half the width of the low flow channel, and be as long as the low flow channel width. Installing structures that will increase or deepen pool habitat is recommended for locations where their installation will not be threatened by high stream energy, or where their installation will not conflict with the modification of the log debris accumulations (LDA's) in the stream. Gravel retention features may need to be developed prior to any LDA modification.

Thirteen of the 134 pool tail-outs measured had embeddedness ratings of 3 or 4. Sixty-one had a 1 rating. Cobble embeddedness measured to be 25% or less, a rating of 1, is considered best for the needs of salmon and steelhead.

## **Little North Fork Navarro River**

The mean shelter rating for pools was high with a rating of 117. The shelter rating in the flatwater habitats was slightly lower at 90. A pool shelter rating of approximately 100 is desirable. The relatively large amount of cover that now exists is being provided primarily by aquatic vegetation in all habitat types. Additionally, undercut banks contribute a small amount. Log and root wad cover structures in the pool and flatwater habitats are needed to improve both summer and winter salmonid habitat. Log cover structure provides rearing fry with protection from predation, rest from water velocity, and also divides territorial units to reduce density related competition.

Two-hundred-thirty-two of the 250 low gradient riffles had gravel or small cobble as the dominant substrate. This is generally considered good for spawning salmonids.

The mean percent canopy for the stream was 66%. This is a relatively moderate percentage of canopy, since 80 percent is generally considered optimum in these north coast streams.

The percentage of right and left bank covered with vegetation was moderate at 67% and 62%, respectively. In areas of stream bank erosion or where bank vegetation is not at acceptable levels, planting endemic species of coniferous and deciduous trees, in conjunction with bank stabilization, is recommended.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Little North Fork Navarro River should be managed as an anadromous, natural production stream.
- 2) Temperatures in this section of Little North Fork Navarro River, as well as upstream, should be monitored to determine if they are having a deleterious effect upon juvenile salmonids. To achieve this, biological sampling is also required.
- 3) Increase the canopy on Little North Fork Navarro River by planting willow, alder, redwood, and Douglas fir along the stream where shade canopy is not at acceptable levels. The reaches above this survey section should be inventoried and treated as well, since the water flowing here is effected from upstream. In many cases, planting will need to be coordinated to follow bank stabilization or upslope erosion control projects.
- 4) Increase woody cover in the pools and flatwater habitat units. Most of the existing cover is from aquatic vegetation. Adding high quality complexity with woody cover is desirable and in some areas the material is at hand.
- 5) Where feasible, design and engineer pool enhancement structures to increase the number of pools. This must be done where the banks are stable or in conjunction with stream bank armor to prevent erosion.
- 6) There are several log debris accumulations present on Little North Fork Navarro River. The modification of these debris accumulations is desirable, but must be done carefully,

## Little North Fork Navarro River

over time, to avoid excessive sediment loading in downstream reaches.

### PROBLEM SITES AND LANDMARKS

The following landmarks and possible problem sites were noted. All the distances are approximate and taken from the beginning of the survey reach.

Position

(ft):        Comments:

---

0'	Begin survey at confluence with North Branch North Fork Navarro River. Channel type is B3.
2846'	Log and debris accumulation (LDA) 5' high x 20' wide x 38' long. Not a barrier.
11375'	Right bank road contributing fines to channel.
11482'	Culvert 15' diameter x 130' long.
11873'	Big Gulch enters right bank.
13324'	Redwood Creek enters left bank.
16588'	LDA 7' high x 25' wide x 10' long.
17406'	Bridge 20' long x 30' wide.
21922'	Bridge 30' long x 28' wide.
21961'	Bottom Creek enters right bank.
22107'	Bridge 10' long x 25' wide.
23642'	Road crossing.
27349'	Road crossing.
29332'	LDA 15' high x 70' wide x 60' long.
29917'	LDA 7' high x 40' wide x 12' long.
30406'	LDA 5' high x 25' wide x 15' long.
31619'	LDA 5' high x 15' wide x 26' long.



### **Little North Fork Navarro River**

31770' LDA 5' high x 17' wide x 20' long.

31814' LDA 5' high x 25' wide x 20' long.

32265' LDA 6' high x 30' wide x 9' long.

32419' LDA 6' high x 7' wide x 24' long.

32934' LDA 3' high x 20' wide x 15' long. Not a barrier.

34773' LDA 7' high x 20' wide x 12' long. Channel is dry above this point. End of survey.

## Little North Fork Navarro River

### LEVEL III and LEVEL IV HABITAT TYPE KEY

HABITAT TYPE	LETTER	NUMBER
<b>RIFFLE</b>		
Low Gradient Riffle	[LGR]	1.1
High Gradient Riffle	[HGR]	1.2
<b>CASCADE</b>		
Cascade	[CAS]	2.1
Bedrock Sheet	[BRS]	2.2
<b>FLATWATER</b>		
Pocket Water	[POW]	3.1
Glide	[GLD]	3.2
Run	[RUN]	3.3
Step Run	[SRN]	3.4
Edgewater	[EDW]	3.5
<b>MAIN CHANNEL POOLS</b>		
Trench Pool	[TRP]	4.1
Mid-Channel Pool	[MCP]	4.2
Channel Confluence Pool	[CCP]	4.3
Step Pool	[STP]	4.4
<b>SCOUR POOLS</b>		
Corner Pool	[CRP]	5.1
Lateral Scour Pool - Log Enhanced	[LSL]	5.2
Lateral Scour Pool - Root Wad Enhanced	[LSR]	5.3
Lateral Scour Pool - Bedrock Formed	[LSBk]	5.4
Lateral Scour Pool - Boulder Formed	[LSBo]	5.5
Plunge Pool	[PLP]	5.6
<b>BACKWATER POOLS</b>		
Secondary Channel Pool	[SCP]	6.1
Backwater Pool - Boulder Formed	[BPB]	6.2
Backwater Pool - Root Wad Formed	[BPR]	6.3
Backwater Pool - Log Formed	[BPL]	6.4
Dammed Pool	[DPL]	6.5