COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
January 29, 2004

COASTAL FISHERY HABITAT INVENTORY

File No. 03-167
Project Manager: Michael Bowen

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to $250,000 to the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration to prepare the Central and South Coast Fishery Habitat Inventory, a digital database of information pertaining to stream habitat conditions, presence of barriers to fish passage, and other data sources critical for use in the development of strategic salmonid recovery projects throughout the Central and South Coast regions, including the Counties of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego.

LOCATION: Coastal watersheds throughout the Central and South Coast Area

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Consistency with Specific County Local Coastal Program Policies

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) to the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration ("CEMAR") for the preparation of the Central and South Coast Fishery Habitat Inventory ("Inventory"), subject to the condition that prior to commencement of work, CEMAR shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program, schedule for completion and project budget, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in the preparation of the Inventory."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 6 (Sections 31251-31270) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding the enhancement of coastal resources.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 25, 2001.
3. The Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to $250,000 to the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration (CEMAR) to inventory, scan, and convert to readily accessible, electronic format information pertaining to stream habitat conditions, presence of barriers to fish passage, and other data critical to the development of strategic salmonid recovery projects throughout the Central and South Coast regions, including the Counties of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego. The end result of this process will be the Central and South Coast Fishery Habitat Inventory; an organized compilation and analysis of existing data from federal, state, and local sources.

The purpose of this authorization is to enable CEMAR to compile and make readily accessible for public review all known stream surveys, habitat typing reports, barrier inventories, and other sources of information critical to the strategic development of habitat improvement projects. Doing so will help CEMAR and its partners, including public and private sector organizations, to further refine with historical scientific information where land use practices or the inappropriate design and construction of road crossings has degraded habitat beyond its ability to support native anadromous salmonid populations at sustainable levels.

Much historic and current habitat data exists, but is stored in hard copy frequently in home or regional offices of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), NOAA Fisheries, academics, and local water and flood control districts. Despite the willingness of public agency staff to collaborate and share this data, staff resources and format of the data preclude the practical exchange of information between sister agencies or the general public. Moreover, accessible information is not archived in a fashion that ensures future availability.

Significant investments in the recovery of salmon and steelhead populations have been made by public and private organizations, often with great benefit to natural resources, but these investments would be better informed and of greater potential benefit to natural resources if based on historic and current stream habitat data, including inventories of barriers to fish passage. The ability of funders and local public entities to implement strategic fishery restoration projects has been somewhat limited by the unavailability of centrally and conveniently located data relating to watersheds targeted for restoration work. This proposal will provide funders and project proponents with a rich, comprehensible, and accessible information source that will assist the strategic selection of fishery habitat restoration projects.

If this authorization is approved, CEMAR will work collaboratively with public agencies such as NOAA Fisheries and DFG to identify key files, review documents for content, and convert the

documents and data to readily accessible electronic format. CEMAR staff will then, in cooperation with experts from NOAA Fisheries and DFG, analyze the data to provide an expert analysis of the historic status and current distribution of salmonids in the study region. Under the guidance of a technical advisory committee, CEMAR will develop and apply criteria to the analyzed data to identify watersheds of high priority for restoration.

CEMAR, a nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is the strategic restoration of aquatic and riparian habitat, has previously undertaken work of this type in the San Francisco Bay Area, where it launched a restoration prioritization process for Bay watersheds. CEMAR now proposes to extend that effort to the Central and South Coast regions.

Site Description: Data collection will be limited to coastal anadromous fish-bearing streams in the Central and South Coast regions.

Project History: Last year, in response to an appropriation from the Salmon Habitat Restoration Program, sponsored by Senator Byron Sher (Palo Alto), the Conservancy conducted an extensive review of existing fish passage barrier data for coastal California. In this report, primarily conducted through environmental services contracts, the Conservancy identified a number of known barriers to fish passage in the Central and South Coast regions.

In addition to identifying more than 16,000 potential barriers to fish passage, the authors of the report learned that a great wealth of data relating to fish habitat conditions, including the presence of previously unknown barriers to fish passage, existed in DFG files, and elsewhere, but remained relatively inaccessible due to the data format and location. This obstacle makes data consolidation and watershed restoration project prioritization most difficult. Moreover, due to drastic staff curtailments and office transitions at DFG and elsewhere, much of the data is in danger of being made even less accessible, by virtue of its being boxed and shipped to a remote warehouse for storage and possible disposal. If approved, this authorization would enable CEMAR to permanently archive and make available data for watershed analysis, project prioritization, and implementation of strategic recovery projects.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	$250,000
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation	185,000
N.O.A.A. Fisheries	10,000
Total Project Cost	**$445,000**

Funding for the proposed project is expected to come from the Conservancy's FY 2001/02 appropriation from the Safe Neighborhood, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12) designated for salmon habitat recovery. The proposed project is consistent with this funding source and with Proposition 12 because it will further the restoration of salmonid habitat in central and southern California.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 6 of Division 21, Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code, as follows:

In general, under §31111, the Conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations to prepare plans and feasibility studies. The proposed project, which involves the compilation of data for watershed enhancement projects, is the first, necessary step in preparing a credible enhancement plan for these regions.

Pursuant to §31251, the Conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of enhancement of coastal resources which, because of human-induced events, or incompatible land uses, have suffered loss of natural and scenic values. Consistent with this Section, the proposed project provides funds to CEMAR to conduct data collection necessary to prepare enhancement plans for coastal fishery resources disturbed by human activities and incompatible land uses.

Section 31251.2 (a) provides that "[i]n order to enhance the natural or scenic character of coastal resources within the coastal zone, the Conservancy may undertake a project or award a grant…to enhance a watershed resource that is partly outside of the coastal zone. . . ." Consistent with this Section, the proposed project will serve to forward enhancement of salmonid habitat in locales that may be located outside the coastal zone. Nonetheless, the proposed project as a whole will expedite restoration of coastal zone resources and that will benefit the anadromous fish that rely on both the coastal and upstream habitats for their survival.

As required by §31252 the proposed project will focus on coastal anadromous salmonid habitat specifically identified in the pertinent certified local coastal plans as being in need of enhancement and restoration. Moreover, the project as a whole is consistent with those local plans, as discussed in detail in Exhibit 1.

Finally, pursuant to §31253, "(the) Conservancy may provide up to the total of the cost of any coastal resource enhancement project. . . ." and the amount of the Conservancy contribution shall be determined only after an assessment of funding generally available and other factors. The proposed contribution by the Conservancy was determined based on application of priority criteria and after taking into account other available resources and the matching contributions to the project by other funding sources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 6 Objective A** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, the proposed project will contribute to the development of approximately 70 plans and projects that will preserve and restore coastal watersheds and create river parkways.

Consistent with **Goal 6 Objective A**, the proposed project will leverage the results of the recently completed study of barriers to fish passage, through the implementation of projects to improve habitat for anadromous fish. The proposed authorization will enable the grantee and other organizations to prepare plans to increase and improve available habitat for aquatic species, notably salmon, by removing instream barriers to their free migration. By employing the Conservancy's recently completed report, "An Inventory of Barriers to Fish Passage in California's Coastal Watersheds," as well as the expertise of the grantee, the Conservancy will ensure measurable increases in available habitat and, presumably, measurable increases in anadromous fish populations within and above the project areas.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Supporters of this project include N.O.A.A. Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Game, The Nature Conservancy, California Trout, Trout Unlimited, and others. Letters of support are included in Exhibit 2.
4. **Location:** The proposed project will include data review and assimilation for projects within and outside of the coastal zone. In either case, the proposed project will provide the information needed for strategic habitat improvement efforts within coastal watersheds for anadromous fish and other aquatic resources, and thereby benefit species that rely on both coastal and upstream habitats for their survival.
5. **Need:** The Central and South Coast regions, while not especially rich in anadromous fish resources, contain remnant populations of the endangered Coho salmon and steelhead, now listed in the South Coast as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act, and threatened in the Central Coast. Habitat limitations, such as barriers to fish passage, inadequate riparian canopy, embeddedness of stream bottoms, inadequate instream flows, and other factors obstruct recovery within the full geographic range of species either listed or potentially listed under the federal and State endangered species acts. The authorization will help prepare for the improvement of instream habitat and will substantially increase recovery efforts for these important fishery resources by preparing information and analysis necessary to the development of projects to provide anadromous salmonids and other aquatic organisms with access to high quality spawning and rearing sites throughout priority watersheds.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The public-trust value of California's salmon and steelhead populations is of great interest to all, and is a natural legacy too precious to lose. Moreover, the historic economic contributions from sport and commercial fishing can and must be recovered for the overall economic benefit of the State of California.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** Recovery of salmon and steelhead populations listed under the federal or State Endangered Species Acts will only occur if the concerted and strategic improvement of instream habitat, and subsequent recolonization of historic range, proceeds expeditiously. Extensive information regarding the historic and current condition of the habitat and range of species for anadromous salmonids exists, but is difficult to access and analyze for the purpose of recovery planning. Moreover, much of this information, frequently on file at home office locations and elsewhere, is, due to the current budget crisis, at risk of being transferred

to remote locations for long-term storage, and possible eventual disposal. CEMAR will work quickly and efficiently in order to adequately archive this information, thereby making it accessible for informed regional recovery planning and habitat enhancement efforts. Lastly, as populations of anadromous salmonids decline statewide, the need is urgent to recover populations by widening the available range of the species by restoring historically accessible habitat. Given extremely low levels of coho populations, perhaps as low as 2,000 adults statewide, there is an urgent demand for projects such as this.

9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.

11. **Innovation:** This novel approach to data analysis and distribution is cost effective, and utilizes already collected, but relatively unavailable data, thereby precluding the need for high additional expenses associated with conducting new habitat surveys, watershed assessments, or other field examinations.

12. **Readiness:** The project applicant has demonstrated that it has the agency support and technical expertise necessary to commence and complete the project planning in a timely fashion. The work is expected to be completed within one year.

13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** The Conservancy's completion of the report "Assessment of Barriers to Fish Passage in California's Coastal Watersheds" signals the agency's strategic focus on and commitment to the improvement of fish passage in coastal watersheds. However, that report also acknowledges both the need to further assess coastal watersheds, and the urgency of reviewing barrier data in the context of stream habitat quality and quantity. This proposal provides a rationale and cost-effective methodology for accomplishing both of these goals simultaneously.

15. **Cooperation:** State and federal agencies, as well as numerous project proponents, have all expressed support for and a willingness to cooperate with the grantee in accomplishing the project. The DFG in particular has expressed support in the form of access to files, and the provision of office space for the temporary housing of the subcontractors associated with this undertaking.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

This data collection and analysis effort targets watersheds within and outside of the coastal zone boundary in an effort to establish historic and current habitat quality and quantity for purposes of anadromous fish restoration. As such, adherence to the Coastal Act, as well as Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), is necessary. Since the proposed project will involve all areas covered by LCPs, and since all LCPs must be certified by the Coastal Commission, it is most essential that the proposed project is consistent with the Coastal Act.

The proposed project will collect baseline data essential to the strategic restoration of coastal watersheds, and the species such as anadromous fish resources that depend upon those watersheds for their survival. The proposed project is therefore consistent with the Coastal Act, Section 30231, which states that "(t)he biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained, and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of groundwater supplies and substantial

interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams."

In addition to this general consistency, many Local Coastal Programs include specific provisions worth considering for further consistency with the proposed project. These specific provisions are listed in detail in Exhibit 1.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Preparation of the project involves only data gathering, planning, and feasibility analyses for possible future actions and is thus statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15262. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval.

EXHIBIT 1

Consistency with Specific County Local Coastal Program Policies

SANTA CRUZ

The General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP) for the County of Santa Cruz was effectively certified December 19, 1994. This LCP includes numerous provisions for the protection and enhancement of coastal streams and the aquatic resources found within them.

The principal objective for the Biological Resources section of the LCP is "(t)o maintain the biological diversity of the County through an integrated program of open space acquisition and protection, identification and protection of plant habitat and wildlife corridors and habitats, low-intensity and resource compatible land uses in sensitive habitats and mitigations on projects and resource extraction to reduce impacts on plant and animal life" (LCP Chpt. 5).

The LCP sets criteria for establishing funding priorities among restoration projects. In particular, the first criteria is ". . . the biological significance of the habitat, including productivity, diversity, uniqueness of area, presence of rare, endangered or unique species, or regional importance (*e.g.*, waterfowl resting areas, etc.)" (LCP 5.1.15, p. 5-7).

Inasmuch as the goal of the proposed project is to provide sufficient baseline information and strategic planning necessary to improve habitat within central and south coast streams for the endangered southern California steelhead, and other species, the proposed project is therefore consistent with this LCP. By collecting, archiving, and analyzing all available stream habitat and fishery survey data available within the project area, the proposed project will meet the objective listed above, and help to satisfy several of the priorities listed in the LCP. These include a variety of objectives and programs, as described below, to protect Sensitive Habitats, which include riparian corridors and areas that provide habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species.

Objective 5.2 Riparian Corridors and Wetlands: To preserve, protect and restore all riparian corridor and wetlands for the protection of wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, erosion control, open space, aesthetic and recreational values and the conveyance and storage of flood waters (p. 5-9).

Objective 5.4 Monterey Bay and Coastal Water Quality: To improve the water quality of Monterey Bay and other Santa Cruz County coastal waters by supporting and/or requiring the best management practices for the control and treatment of urban run-off and wastewater discharges in order to maintain local, state, and national water quality standards, protect county residents from health hazards of water pollution, protect the County's sensitive marine habitats and prevent the degradation of the scenic character of the region (p. 5-14).

Program A: Continue to coordinate with federal, state, and other local agencies, including NOAA, the Coastal Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and AMBAG, to manage and protect the resources of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (p. 5-16).

Program H: Evaluate those Sensitive Habitats [which include riparian corridors], which are affected by agricultural activities to determine their biological importance relative to the importance of the agricultural use and develop programs to resolve conflicts between resource use and protection (p. 5-6).

MONTEREY

The Monterey County LCPs also contain numerous provisions for the protection and enhancement of streams and rivers throughout the County, as well as for the enhancement of species that depend on the habitats provided within such watersheds.

The Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan for the Land Use Plan (LUP), certified by the Coastal Commission January 12, 1988, includes numerous development standards for actions that might effect environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The intent of this section is to provide development standards that allow for the protection, maintenance, and, where possible, enhancement and restoration of North County environmentally sensitive habitats (LUP Chapter 20-144-040, p. NC-21). Additionally, the County adopted a watershed Restoration Program that "encourages the long range restoration of watersheds experiencing excessive erosion. . . ." (LUP 2.5.3 (C)(7), p. 24) The proposed project is consistent with this LUP in that it will provide essential baseline information to determine the status of environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the North County, and provide for their protection and enhancement.

The Monterey County LCP for the Carmel Area specifically speaks to the Carmel River, and San Jose, Gibson, Wildcat, and Malpaso creeks. The Key Policy of the Carmel Area LCP is that "(t)he water quality of the Carmel Area's coastal streams . . . shall be protected and maintained." In particular, the LCP states, "(i)nstream flows should be protected in order to maintain the natural plant community and fish and wildlife. In general, the County will require adherence to the best watershed planning principles, including: stream setbacks, stream flow maintenance, performance controls for development, site features, maintenance of safe and good water quality, protection of natural vegetation along streams, and careful control of grading to minimize erosion and sedimentation." (LCP 2.4.2, pp. 25-26) The proposed project is consistent with this section in that it will provide the County with sufficient information with which to achieve this policy.

The Carmel LCP also specifically recommends that "(a) fish ladder should be constructed at the diversion dam on San Jose Creek to facilitate migration of steelhead for spawning upstream. Funding for this ladder should be requested from the State Department of Water Resources through its Stream Enhancement Program." (LCP 2.3.5, p. 22) The proposed project will help determine the history and status of this recommended action, and is therefore consistent with the LCP in this regard.

The Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (LUP) was effectively certified April 9, 1986. Its basic goal is "(t)o preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur county, its special cultural and natural resources. . . . (t)o this end, all development must harmonize with and be subordinate to the wild and natural character of the land." (LUP 2.1, p. 6) The County's basic policy is "to take a strong and active role in the stewardship and safeguarding of Big Sur's irreplaceable natural resources. Where there are conflicts, protection of these national resources is the primary objective with definite precedence over land use development." (LUP 2.2, p. 7)

In recognition that "(w)ater is the lifeblood of both the natural ecosystem and all of the domestic uses on the Big Sur Coast" (LUP 3.4, p. 24), the LUP enumerates many policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of Big Sur's coastal watersheds. In particular, "(w)ater quality, adequate year-round flows, and stream bed gravel conditions shall be protected in streams supporting rainbow and steelhead trout. These streams include: Garrapata Creek, Rocky Creek, Bixby Creek, Little Sur River, Big Sur River, Partington Creek, Anderson Creek, Hot Springs Creek,

Vicente Creek, Big Creek, and Limekiln Creek." (LUP 3.4.3 (B)(3), p. 27) Further, the LUP states that "(t)he State Department of Fish and Game, or other appropriate agencies should undertake studies to determine instream flow requirements to maintain the natural environment on all of Big Sur's streams that support resident or anadromous fish populations. Such studies should enlist the cooperation, participation, and guidance of local residents. The Department of Fish and Game should file for necessary water rights to protect the fishery resource." (LUP 3.4.4, pp. 30-31)

SAN LUIS OBISPO

The San Luis Obispo LCP, certified by the Coastal Commission on April 12, 1984, includes specific provisions for the protection and enhancement of coastal streams and the environmentally sensitive habitat they provide. The LCP states "(c)oastal streams directly affect the coastal environment" and "significantly influence flooding, natural ecosystems, sediment transport, agricultural water supply, and groundwater recharge within the coastal zone." (LCP (1)(C), pp. 6-14 to 6-18) The LCP lists nine specific policies adopted by the County which provide for the protection and enhancement of coastal stream habitats in San Luis Obispo County. In particular, Policy 25 states "(s)tream diversion structures . . . shall be sited and designed to not impede up and downstream movement of native fish or to reduce stream flows to a level which would significantly affect the biological productivity of the fish and other stream organisms." (LCP policy 25, p. 6-17) The proposed project is consistent with this LCP in that it will provide important baseline information to help protect and enhance coastal stream habitat consistent with existing LCP policies.

The San Luis Obispo County Estero Area Local Coastal Plan identifies Morro Bay as the most important wetland resource on the central coast, and calls for the development of a watershed management program by the County and other agencies to support the continued viability of all estuarine activities in Morro Bay. The proposed project will contribute information essential to future activities intended to protect the downstream water quality and health of the riparian, wetland and aquatic habitats of Estero tributaries and the estuary, an important rearing area for juvenile salmonids.

SANTA BARBARA

The proposed project is consistent with the certified LCP of Santa Barbara County. Section 3.9.2 of the County's LCP defines environmentally sensitive habitats as including those areas in which plant or animal life or their habitats are rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem. Section 3.9.2 specifically identifies as environmentally sensitive "rare and endangered species habitats" and "specialized wildlife habitats which are vital to species survival." Such habitats are to be preserved and protected. Further, Section 3.9.5 states, "Public action is needed to restore South Coast streams that have been interrupted or altered by culverts along Highway 101." Consistent with these sections, the goal of the proposed project is to provide sufficient baseline information and strategic planning necessary to improve habitat within south coast streams for the endangered southern California steelhead.

Section 3.3.4 of the County's LCP notes that watersheds "have potential for impacts on coastal streams, wetlands, [and] estuaries," and states that protection of watersheds is necessary to "insure continued biological productivity of coastal streams and wetlands." Although areas identified by this project as requiring action may lie outside the coastal zone, the project is consistent

with LCP policies calling for protection of entire watersheds because of their hydrologic and biologic links to coastal zone resources."

Projects selected for design and permitting under this authorization may include sites within the City of Santa Barbara. Policy 6.1 of the City's certified LCP provides that the City "shall protect, preserve, and, where feasible, restore the biotic communities designated in the City's Conservation Element of the General Plan." More specifically, Policy 6.8 of the City's LCP provides, "The riparian resources, biological productivity, and water quality of the City's coastal zone creeks shall be maintained, preserved, enhanced, and, where feasible, restored." The proposed project will provide access to information vital to the strategic and informed design of watershed enhancement projects for City creeks and would greatly facilitate the enhancement of these streams and help restore their steelhead runs. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the City's LCP.

VENTURA

The Ventura County LCP, certified June 17, 1982, classifies creek corridors as environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The LCP holds the objective of maintaining creek corridors in as natural a state as possible while still accommodating the needs of public health and safety. (LCP p. 28) The LCP states that "(a)ll projects on land either in a stream or creek corridor (buffer area) shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade riparian habitats, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitats. (LCP p. 28) The proposed project is consistent with this section of the LCP in that it will provide baseline biological information with which to assess the habitat quality and quantity of this region, and to provide recommendations for the enhancement of coastal watersheds and the aquatic resources found there.

Rincon Creek is the only perennial riparian creek corridor on the North Coast, however other streams and creeks are considered to be watercourses. South Coast streams are more numerous, and receive additional consideration and protection in the LCP, which states "(s)ubstantial alterations . . . to river, stream, or creek corridors are limited to . . . (d)evelopments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat," (LCP, p. 112, C(3)(c)) and "(t)he Coastal Commission's adopted 'Statewide Interpretive Guidelines for Wetlands and Other Environmentally Sensitive Habitats' will be used when evaluating new projects in creek corridors" (LCP p. 112, C(5)) The proposed project is consistent with this section in that it will provide necessary information for the evaluation of proposed projects and for the protection and enhancement of environmentally sensitive habitats.

The LCP concludes that "(t)he Santa Monica Mountains contain some of the most significant inland habitats in the County's coastal zone. Many of creeks and streams with their riparian corridors . . . can be found in the mountains.' The County objective "(t)o preserve and protect the upland habitats of the Santa Monica Mountains" (LCP pp. 112-113) is furthered by the policy adopted by the County to "update its inventory of upland habitats . . ." and prepare ". . . a map focusing on sensitive environmental habitats and their buffers. . . ." (LCP p. 113, D(2)) The proposed project is consistent with the aforementioned objective and policy in that it will provide additional information regarding the significant inland habitats, and will assist with the strategic conservation and enhancement of those resources.

Lastly, the proposed project is consistent with the Ventura County Local Coastal Program policy that requires the county to "work in close cooperation with other agencies and jurisdictions to

provide comprehensive and biologically sound management of coastal wetlands." The proposed project will have positive impacts on the water quality and biological productivity of Ventura County watersheds, including their wetland and riparian areas.

LOS ANGELES

Most, if not all of the fisheries habitat data for Los Angeles County pertains to streams draining the Santa Monica Mountains, particularly in Malibu and the nearshore waters of Santa Monica Bay. This project is consistent with the Malibu Local Coastal Program–Land Use Plan (LUP) adopted by the California Coastal Commission on September 13, 2002.

The LUP contains policies that protect the environmentally sensitive habitat areas in Malibu, including riparian corridors along streams and creeks. In addition, the LUP provides protection for marine resources, including kelp forests, intertidal areas, and near shore shallow water habitats. LUP Policy 3.1 designates riparian areas, streams and native woodlands as "Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas" (ESHAs) requiring conservation, and where possible, enhancement and restoration. LUP Policy 3.81 states that "efforts . . . to increase monitoring to assess the conditions of near shore species, water quality and kelp beds, and to rehabilitate or enhance areas that have been degraded by human activities shall be encouraged and allowed." The proposed project will provide access to information vital to the strategic and informed design of watershed enhancement projects for Santa Monica Mountain watersheds, and would greatly facilitate the enhancement of these streams and help restore their steelhead runs. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the aforementioned LUP.

ORANGE

Orange County has few known anadromous fish resources. However, the County LCP, submitted on July 22, 1981, and effectively certified on October 27, 1983, contains strong provisions for the protection and restoration of fish and their habitat. Enhancement of the environment is one of eight major land use policies of the Land Use Element. The LCP seeks to "guide development so that quality of the physical environment is advanced." (LCP III-11) Specific provisions of the LCP include the following:

"The County of Orange shall identify fish, wildlife and vegetation habitats throughout the County . . . and to preserve the fish, wildlife and vegetation species of the County." (LCP III-12, no. 12) Consistent with this section, the proposed project will identify historic fish and habitat populations and condition, and to facilitate the protection and enhancement of existing and historic populations.

"The County of Orange shall prevent the elimination of fish or wildlife species due to man's activities; ensure that fish and Wildlife populations do not drop below self-perpetuating levels; preserve, protect and enhance for future generations all animal communities. . . ." (LCP III-13, no. 12) Consistent with this section, the proposed project will identify historic fish and habitat populations and condition, and to facilitate the protection and enhancement of existing and historic populations.

SAN DIEGO

All known steelhead resources in San Diego County are located on federal land, particularly within the San Mateo Creek watershed. Therefore, there is no applicable Local Coastal Program;

however, the project will affect the coastal zone. Since the objective of the project is to restore streams such as San Mateo Creek and the native populations of fish that once made it their home, and since the collection, archiving and analysis of data pertinent to that watershed will facilitate such an effort, therefore the proposed project would be consistent with the planning and management policies contained in Section 30231 of the Public Resources Code, which states that "[t]he biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored. . . ."

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

CALIFORNIA TROUT

KEEPER OF THE STREAMS

January 21, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Coastal Fishery Habitat Inventory - Support

Dear Chairman Morabito:

Please accept California Trout's strong support for the proposed Coastal Fishery Habitat Inventory. California Trout is a non-profit conservation organization of more than 5,000 members statewide. Our mission is to protect and restore wild trout, native steelhead, and the habitat they live in.

This authorization will enable Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration ('CEMAR") to compile and make readily accessible for public review information critical to the strategic development of habitat improvement projects. Doing so will help CEMAR and its partners like California Trout precisely target and initiate the improvement of habitat and fish passage in streams where land use practices have degraded habitat beyond its ability to support native anadromous salmonid populations at sustainable levels. It will also help those who are providing support funds, such as the Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Game's Citizen Advisory Committee to the California Legislature on Salmon and Steelhead, upon which California Trout is represented, make better informed choices of potential restoration projects suitable for funding.

Much historic and current habitat data exists, but is stored in hard copy frequently in home or regional offices of the California Department of Fish and Game ("DFG") or other local or State agencies. Despite the willingness of public agency staff to collaborate and share this data, staff resources and format of the data preclude the practical exchange of information between sister agencies or the general public. Moreover, accessible information is not archived in a fashion that ensures future availability.

Significant investments in the recovery of salmon and steelhead populations have been made by public and private organizations, often with great benefit to natural resources, but these investments would be better informed and of greater potential benefit to natural

resources if based on historic and current stream habitat data, including inventories of barriers to fish passage and habitat conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of our support.

Sincerely,

CALIFORNIA TROUT, INC.

Jim Edmondson

Southern California Manager