



9/19/11 Bd Mtg. Item 13
Santa Monica Bay Restoration
Deadline: 9/15/11 by 12:00 noon
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A California Public
Benefit Corporation
To Preserve, Protect and
Enhance the Natural
Resources of the
Santa Monica Mountains

September 8, 2011

Mr. Charles R. Hoppin, Chairman
State Water Resources Control Board
C/O Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor [95814]
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



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RE: Comment Letter: Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation and California State Park Proposals: Phase 1 (Planning/Design/Engineering) & 2 (Implementation) - Arroyo Sequit Steelhead Barrier Removal Project, Leo Carrillo State Park, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Mr. Hoppin:

The Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) strongly supports Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation's (SMBRF) and California Department of Parks and Recreation's ("California State Parks") proposals to remove three in-stream barriers on Arroyo Sequit Creek. The proposed project will remove two Arizona crossings and a check dam. Free span bridges will be installed at the Arizona crossing locations. Project implementation will provide access to an additional 4.5 linear miles of habitat to the federally endangered Southern California steelhead trout (*Ocorhynchus mykiss*), and improve water quality by reducing stream channel erosion and instream sediment loading problems created by the existing structures.

MRT works in partnership with the community and park agencies to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains. MRT has worked with California State Parks for over 25 years restoring habitat, removing invasive non-native plants, controlling *Anodo donax* (giant cane) in Malibu Creek, another steelhead stream. Most recently from September II through October 28, 2010, MRT placed 417 approved minnow traps in Malibu Creek and Las Virgenes Creek resulting in the capture of 1,983 red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkia*). Research at Pepperdine University had demonstrated the increase of native amphibians and fish populations by removing the armored, invasive, non-native crayfish. MRT is continuing the project this year, again working with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and California Department of Fish and Game to reduce another threat to the steelhead trout.

This project has been outlined by many agencies as a priority. California Trout's 2006 *Santa Monica Steelhead Habitat Assessment Report* assessed 23 watersheds within the Santa Monica Mountains for habitat value and existing in-stream migration barriers. Arroyo Sequit was identified as a high priority for restoration. The National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Game have also identified removal of steelhead barriers in the Arroyo Sequit watershed as a high priority. Both California State Parks and the National Park Service have identified this project as a priority in their General Plan documents.

The MRT supports SMBRF and California State Park's plan to remove these barriers and strongly urges you approve funding for this important project.

Sincerely,

Jo Kitz
Associate Director