



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

NOAA Restoration Center
Southwest Region
777 Sonoma Ave. Rm. 219
Santa Rosa, CA. 95409

September 9, 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



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 NOAA Restoration Center enthusiastically supports Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation's (SMBRF) and California Department of Parks and Recreation's ("California State Parks") proposals to remove in-stream barriers on Arroyo Sequit Creek to benefit federally endangered Southern California steelhead trout (*Ocorhynchus mykiss*).

In the 2009 Draft Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan, NOAA identified Arroyo Sequit as part of a set of key watersheds that will help form the foundation of the recovery of Southern California steelhead from Santa Barbara to San Diego counties. "Physically modifying road crossings [and other barriers]... to allow unimpeded migration of steelhead to upstream spawning and rearing habitats" was listed as the top priority for steelhead recovery actions in the Arroyo Sequit watershed. The replacement of two Arizona crossings and modification of a check dam on Arroyo Sequit Creek will directly address NOAA's highest priority recovery action in this stream, providing access to an additional 4.5 linear miles of important habitat for steelhead. Secondary benefits include reduced stream channel erosion, improved water quality, decreased maintenance costs, and improved safety and access for the public, park staff, and emergency personnel.

In addition to NOAA, a number of other organizations and agencies have identified the restoration of Arroyo Sequit Creek in general, and this project in particular, as priorities. California Trout's 2006 *Santa Monica Steelhead Habitat Assessment Report*, which assessed watersheds for habitat value and existing in-stream migration barriers, ranked Arroyo Sequit as a high priority. Both California State Parks and the National Park Service have identified this specific project as a priority in their General Plan documents.



Created in 1991, the NOAA Restoration Center provides funding and technical assistance for projects that work to restore the nation's coastal, marine, and migratory fish habitat. Through our partnership with American Rivers, we were pleased to award \$75,000 to California State Parks earlier this year to fund work to complete the engineering and design of this project. We fully support the SMBRF and California State Park's plan to remove these barriers and urge you to consider funding this important project.

Sincerely,



Patrick Rutten
Regional Supervisor
NOAA Restoration Center, Southwest Region