2002 303(d) List Update
Reference #17

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15 May 2001

Matt St. John
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707--570-3762, Fax: 528-0135

Dear Matt St. John:

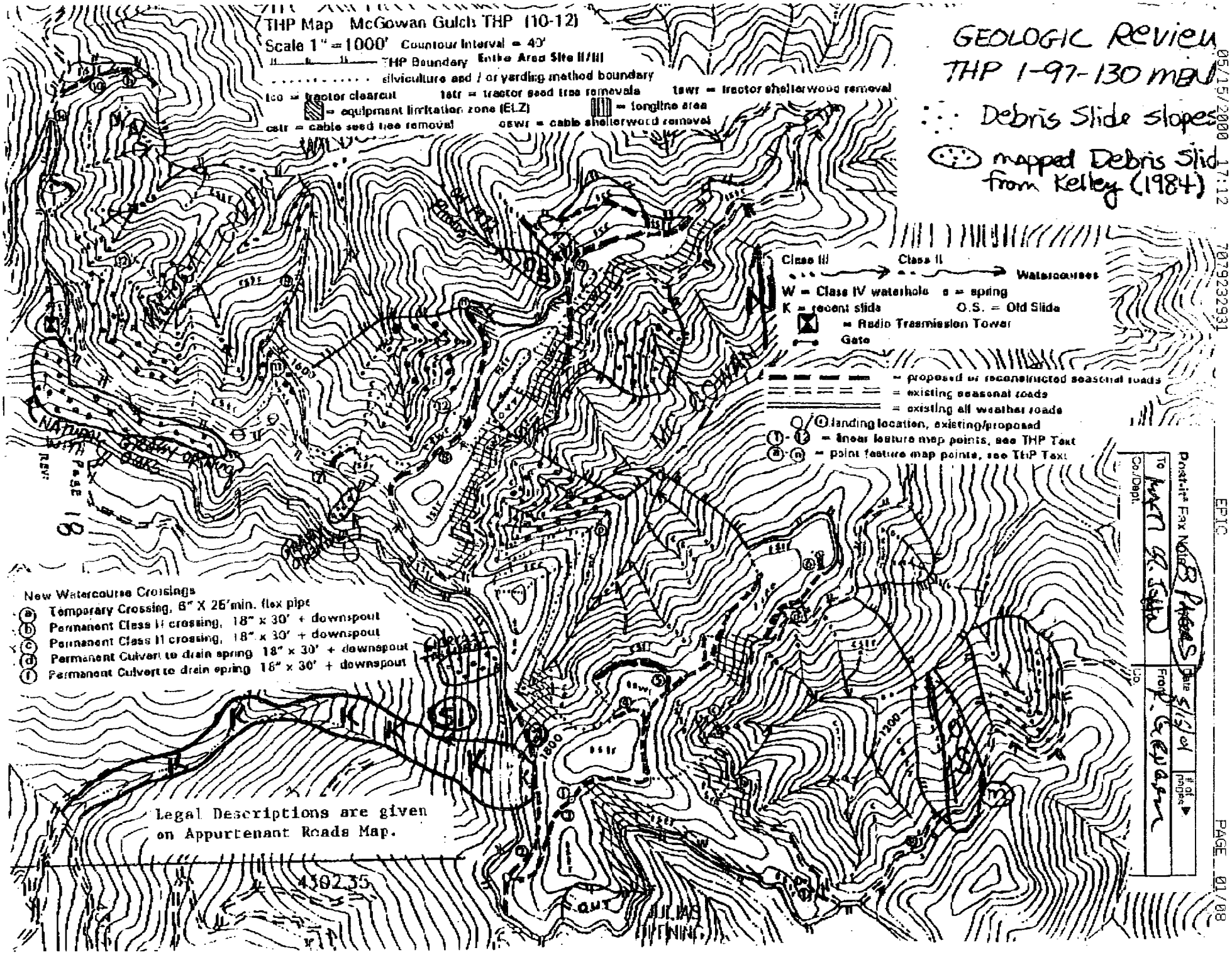
Once again, I am nominating Usal Creek in Northwest Mendocino County for addition to the list of waterbodies impaired by excessive sediment under Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act. Usal Creek has been well known for many years as having excessive fine sediments. It also has had a record of declining populations of Coho Salmon and Steelhead. Persons who could confirm this, and with documentation, include Weldon Jones (707-468-1368 – 'retired' DF&G), Jon Ambrose (707-575-6050 -- NMFS & former G-P Fisheries Biologist), and Gary Flosi (707-725-1072 – DF&G/CCC Restoration Expert).

I am attaching just a few documents that should confirm Usal's impaired status for excessive sediment. Included is a photo of the Soldier Creek Slide which overwhelmed Soldier Creek, the North Fork Usal Creek from the confluence of Soldier Creek to the confluence of the South Fork, and the Mainstem to the Pacific Ocean. Heavy tractor logging impacts from the last 50 years combine with earlier impacts, and current impacts, to give Usal Creek elevated levels of fine sediments significantly and adversely effecting the beneficial uses of water, especially listed salmonids.

During the public review and comment period I hope to have some exhaustive documentation of the extensive adverse Cumulative Watershed Effects in the Usal Creek Watershed. The condition of Usal Creek requires an effective and thorough recovery plan, and implementation of that plan, that meets the intent of the Clean Water Act and section 303(d).

Sincerely,

Richard Gienger


THP Map McGowan Gulch THP (10-12)
Scale 1" = 1000' Countour Interval = 40'
THP Boundary Entire Area Site II/III
silviculture and / or yarding method boundary
tco = tractor clearcut
tstr = tractor seed tree removals
tswr = tractor shelterwood removal
= equipment limitation zone (ELZ)
= longline area
cstr = cable seed tree removal
cswr = cable shelterwood removal
GEOLOGIC REVIEW
THP 1-97-130 MEN
Debris Slide slopes
mapped Debris Slid
from Kelley (1984)
Class III
Class II
Watercourses
W = Class IV waterhole
s = spring
K = recent slide
O.S. = Old Slide
= Radio Trasmission Tower
Gate
= proposed or reconstructed seasonal roads
= existing seasonal roads
= existing all weather roads
landing location, existing/proposed
= linear feature map points, see THP Text
= point feature map points, see THP Text
New Watercourse Crossings
Temporary Crossing, 6" X 25'min. flex pipe
Permanent Class II crossing, 18" x 30' + downspout
Permanent Class II crossing, 18" x 30' + downspout
Permanent Culvert to drain spring 18" x 30' + downspout
Permanent Culvert to drain spring 18" x 30' + downspout
Legal Descriptions are given
on Appurtenant Roads Map.
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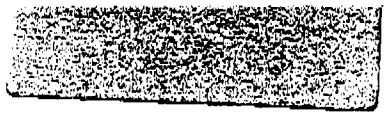


Debris slide slopes are noted within the headwall regions of drainages. These slopes are generally more than 65% and exhibit soil creep and past surficial mass wasting as debris slides. The debris slide slopes are within cable yarding units with either seed tree removal or shelterwood removal silvicultural prescriptions. The geologic maps by Kelley (1984) are included as part of the THP on pages 73-75.

REVIEW TEAM QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

4. Evaluate road construction in unstable areas. ANSWER: Two areas are described in the THP with road construction in unstable areas, Map Points "m" and Road segment 2. These two areas were evaluated.

Map Point "m" - The RPF describes an existing road with about one-quarter of the road width removed by an old slide and material has also slumped from the bank above. The old road was constructed across slopes inclined more than 85%. The spoils from this road construction were pushed off the edge of the full bench road segment. This perched sidecast failed as a debris slide removing all the vegetation on the slope and forming a pond in the Class II watercourse channel 1200 feet below the road. This debris slide is 120 feet wide below the road, however, sidecast failures that did not travel down the entire slope continue for another 180 feet. A total of 300 feet of old sidecast failed below this segment of road. The slide is visible on the 1972 aerial photographs as a bare slope, suggesting the road and slide are more than 25 years old. The 1993 color aerial photographs illustrate the depositional zone in the lower half the slide had revegetated but the upper portion remained bare. The upper slope only supports occasional Douglas fir seedlings and brush, because the soil was removed and only angular sandstone talus remains.

The 20 to 40-foot high cutbank exposes highly fractured hard sandstone that forms a talus that is covering about half the road bed. Presently, the road would be 12 to 14 feet wide if the cutbank talus is removed. An old berm is visible on the outside edge of the road along the entire 300 feet of road. Signs of surface erosion are not present along the road, indicating the sandstone bedrock is permeable and runoff drains through the road.

The RPF agreed to leave the berm on the outside edge of the road. Waterbreaks will be installed at either end of the 300-foot section of road. Talus sitting on the road will be endhauled or incorporated into the roadbed. This segment of road has been marked with special flagging.

Road Segment "2" (Also Know as Map Point 2) (THP pages 11 and 44) - A new road is proposed over the top of the slide for a linear distance of about 500 feet. This proposal is a modification to Option #2 in the geologic review of THP 1-95-486 MEN Amendment #3 (Bawcom, 1996). The road is proposed to pass over the top of the landslide above the break in the slope, roughly following an existing stable skidtrail opened for access in early 1997. The road gradient will vary between 10 and 14% with a road width of 18-feet plus 3 feet for an inside ditch.

During the field evaluation of the Soldier Creek Landslide in January 1997, DMG reviewed the idea of a new road crossing above the landslide. A verbal suggestion was made by DMG that the segment of road crossing directly above the scarp of the slide is daylighted rather than construct a through cut road segment. The road engineer completed a topographic survey of the area and provided a construction diagram and profile of the entire segment of proposed road. This construction diagram will be made part of the plan as Page 22.1 revised on 4-28-97 as recommended by DMG. The road engineer took DMG's suggestion, daylighting the fill slope where the road crossed about the center of the slide for a distance of 140 feet. The road was slope staked and again evaluated in the field with the road engineer and the logging supervisor during this PHI.

Stream [1] *Tributary* (RM=river mile)	Species / Run	Upper Limit of Run [2] (RM=river mile)	Sources References / Pers. comm.	Comments	Survey Dates [3]
Jackass Creek T23N, R19W, Sec. 1	COH	RM-?	Murphy	COH and SH were present.	1948
	SH	RM-1.5	Grass	Personal observation juvenile SH were present.	1963-1570
			Jones 1983 & 1987	Personal observations: good habitat for SH was found. Electrofishing in 1983 &1987 found juvenile SH.	1983 1987
			Griffin, Salomone & Long	Stream Survey: juvenile SH were present.	1988
North Fork Jackass Creek T23N, R13W, Sec.6	SH	RM-2	Jones	Survey: Good habitat was found in the North Fork for salmonids. Appears ideal habitat for COH but found only juvenile SH.	1983
			Harris	Survey: faceplate snorkel survey found only juvenile SH. They were present in multiple year classes.	1998
East Branch North Fork Jackass Creek	SH	RM-?	Jones	Personal observations: juvenile SH were present in the mouth of the stream.	1933
Little Jackass Cr. T23N, R18W, Sec. 7	None	RM-	Jones 1985	Electrofished: but found no fish. This stream appears to have good fish habitat.	1985
Usal Creek 23N, 18W, Sec. 22	SH	RM-6.0	Cherr & Griffin 1979	Stream inventory: Cherr & Griffin reported SH present in the drainage.	1979
			Moore 1981	Memo: Moore reported to CDF, a barrier some 50 feet high, to anadromous fish life.	1981
		RM-6.8	Coyle, Mesman, Hickethier & Young	Electrofished: 9 sites, found juvenile SH 36,011 ft above the mouth.	1995

Stream \/*Tributary* (RM=river mile)	Species / Run	Upper Limit of Run [2] (RM=river mile)	Sources References / Pers. comm.	Comments	Survey Dates [3]
South Fork Usal Creek 23N, 18W, Sec.22	COH	up to Julias Creek RM-1.5	GP 1993	Electrofished: juvenile COH were present, (only one year class of the three was present).	1987, 1993
	SH	RM-3.0	Cherr & Griffin 1979	SH were present.	1979
			Jones 1987	Electrofished found juvenile SH.	1987
				Electrofished captured only juvenile SH, Young of year age size, yearling age size, and yearling + age size fish.	1993
			Mesman & Hickethier	Electrofished: 2 sites, found juvenile SH 9,194 feet upstream.	995?
Julias Creek T23N, 18W, Sec.24	SH	RM-1.0	Jones 1987	Electrofished: In 1987, caught juvenile SH; young of the year and yearling + age sized fish.	1987
			Mesman, & Young	Electrofished: found juvenile SH 4, 237 feet upstream.	1995
Soldier Creek T23N, R18W, Sec. 14	SH	RM-1.7	Mesman & Young	Electrofished: 2 sites, found juvenile SH up to 8,945 feet upstream.	1995
Little Bear Creek T23N, R18W, Sec. 11	SH	RM- 243 feet	Mesman & Young	Electrofished: 1 site, found juvenile SH 243 feet upstream	1995
Bear Creek T23N, R.18W, Sec. 11	SH	RM-559 feet	Mesman & Young	Electrofished: 1 site, found juvenile SH 559 feet upstream.	1995
Chimney Rock Creek T23N, R.18W, Sec. 4	SH	RM-1.0	Coyle & Young	Electrofished: 1 site, found juvenile SH present.	1995

SECTION IV - CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ASSESSMENT

1. The assessment areas of the various resources described in item 4 below that may be affected by the proposed harvest contain the following past (up to ten years old), present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. All THPs listed are in Mendocino County.

THP number	Yarding Method	Silviculture	Completion and stocking status
94-150	Tractor	Shelterwood removal cut, Clearcut	Harvest operations completed, stocking report not yet filed.
91-322	Tractor-Cable	Clearcut	Completed
91-234	Tractor	Selection, Alternative, Shelterwood removal cut	Completed
90-536	Tractor	Overstory removal, Thinning	Completed
90-123	Tractor -Cable	Shelterwood removal cut	Completed
86-449	Tractor -Cable	Shelterwood removal cut, Clearcut	Completed

Planning is underway to correct erosion damage and reduce potential future adverse impacts to the watershed resource by rerouting a segment of the main haul road off of a slide at the top of the Soldier Creek watershed (the "WRF" Road in the southeast quarter of section one, township 23 north, range 18 west, MDB&M).

A small portion of the watershed west of the county road is held by the Trust for Public Land and is managed for recreational and wilderness values.

Instream habitat improvements initiated in 1986 are present in Soldier Creek within the harvest area. Pools have formed from artificial placements of large woody debris.

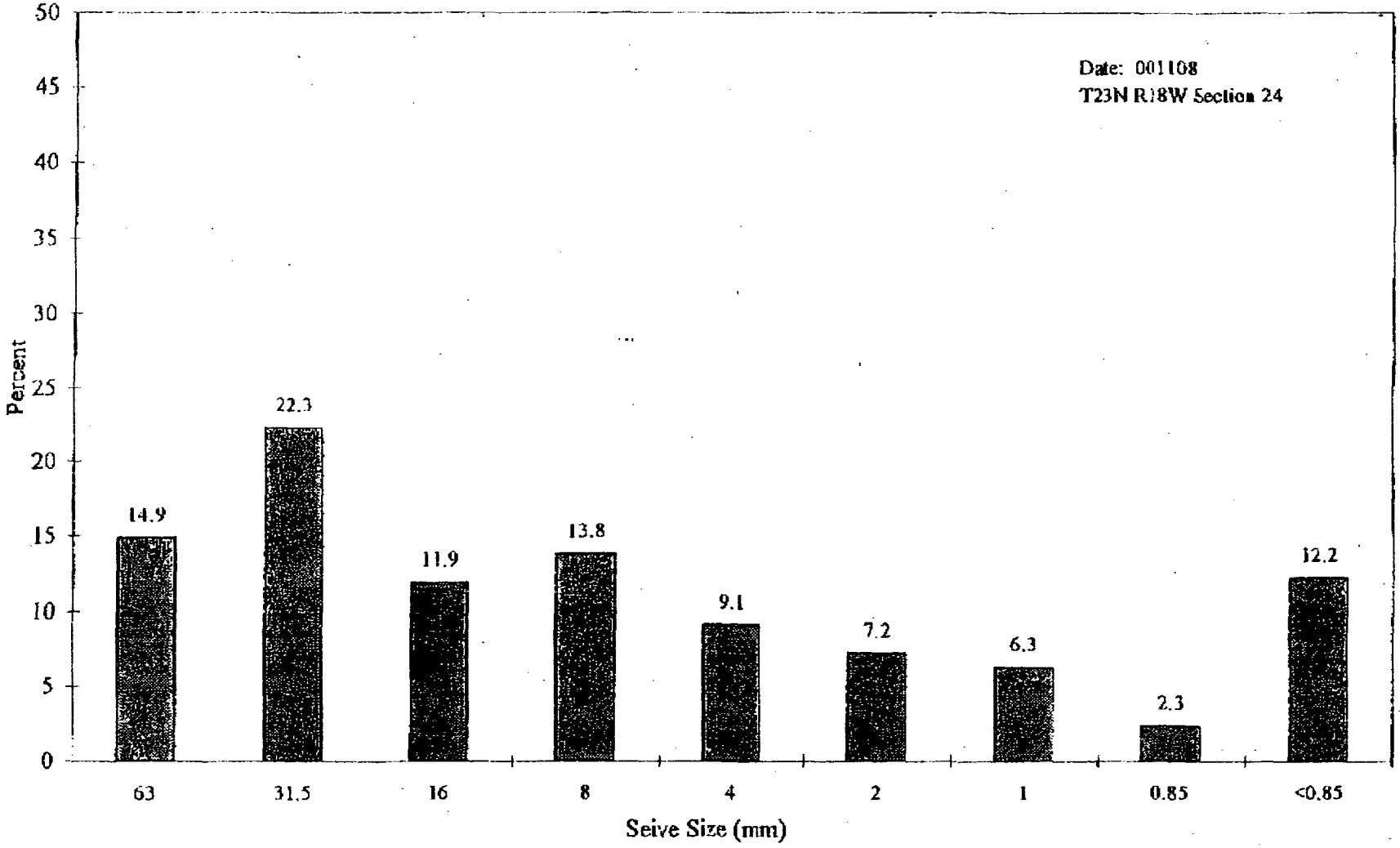
2. Yes, there are continuing, significant adverse impacts from past land use activities that may add to the impacts of the proposed harvest.

This area was adversely impacted by logging activities that occurred prior to the implementation of the Forest Practice Act of 1973. This was an era noted for a much higher level of environmental impacts than occur under current rules. During that time, much of the landscape was impacted, first by the removal of most of the large old trees in the lower portion of the watershed in the 1890 to 1910 period followed by slash burning. Most of the large old trees in the remainder of the watershed were removed in the 1950s and 1960s using large tractors on steep slopes. Field observations reveal that large amounts of soil and debris were deposited into the watercourses by these activities. Most of the remaining large trees throughout the watershed and younger trees in the southern part of the watershed were removed in the 1970s and 1980s using cable yarding techniques in the steeper areas. There is potential for continuing effects on the watershed and biological resources.

However, it is important to bear in mind that significant changes occurring with the passage of time have mitigated the impacts of these earlier previous harvests to a large extent. These areas have become reforested. Stream restoration and enhancement work has resulted in improved spawning access and enhancement of rearing habitat.

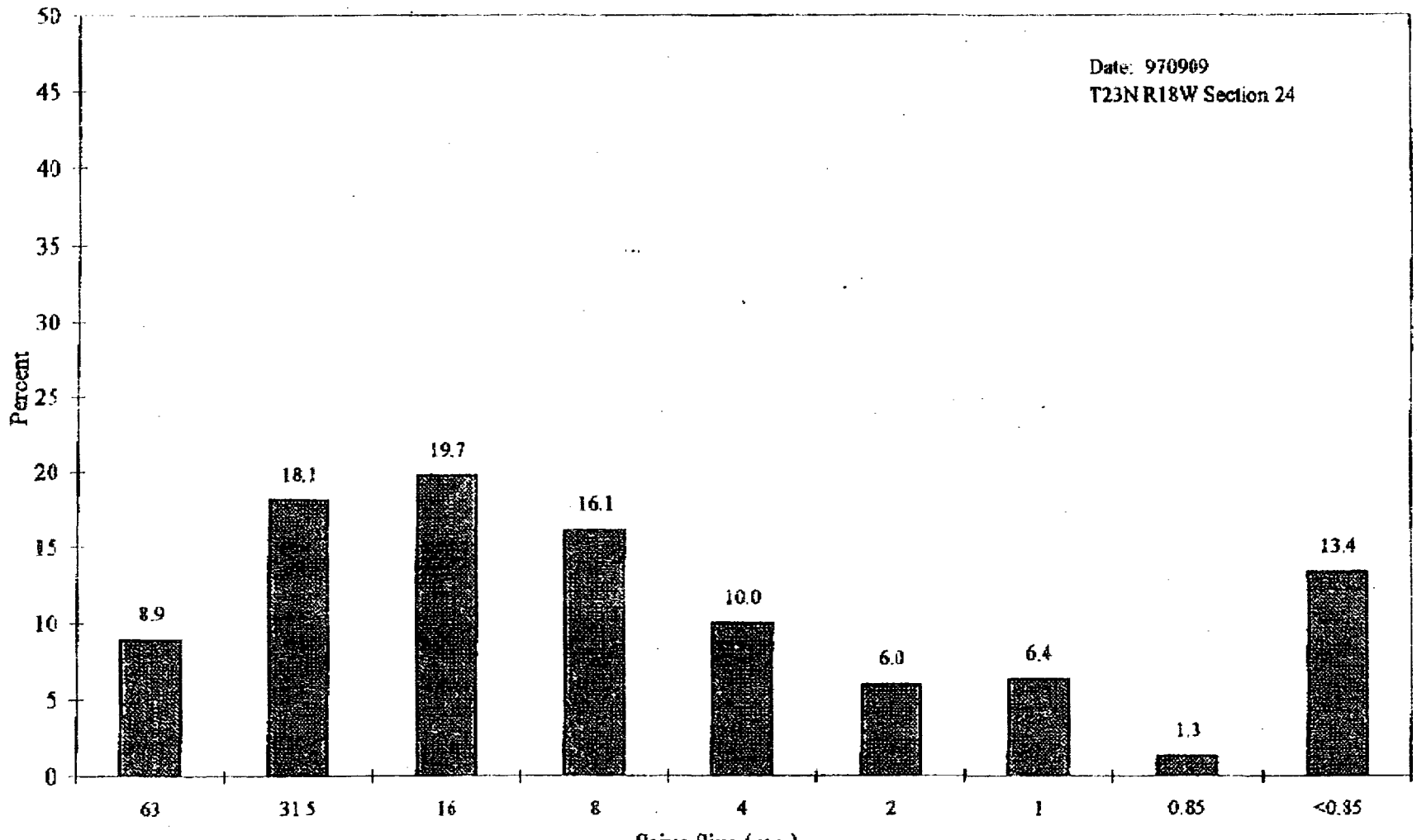
Average McNeil Sediment Samples (eight samples)
Campbell Timberland Management, Fort Bragg, CA

Sample Location: South Fork Usal Creek-Usa1



Average McNail Sediment Samples (eight samples)
Georgia-Pacific West, Inc. Fort Bragg, CA

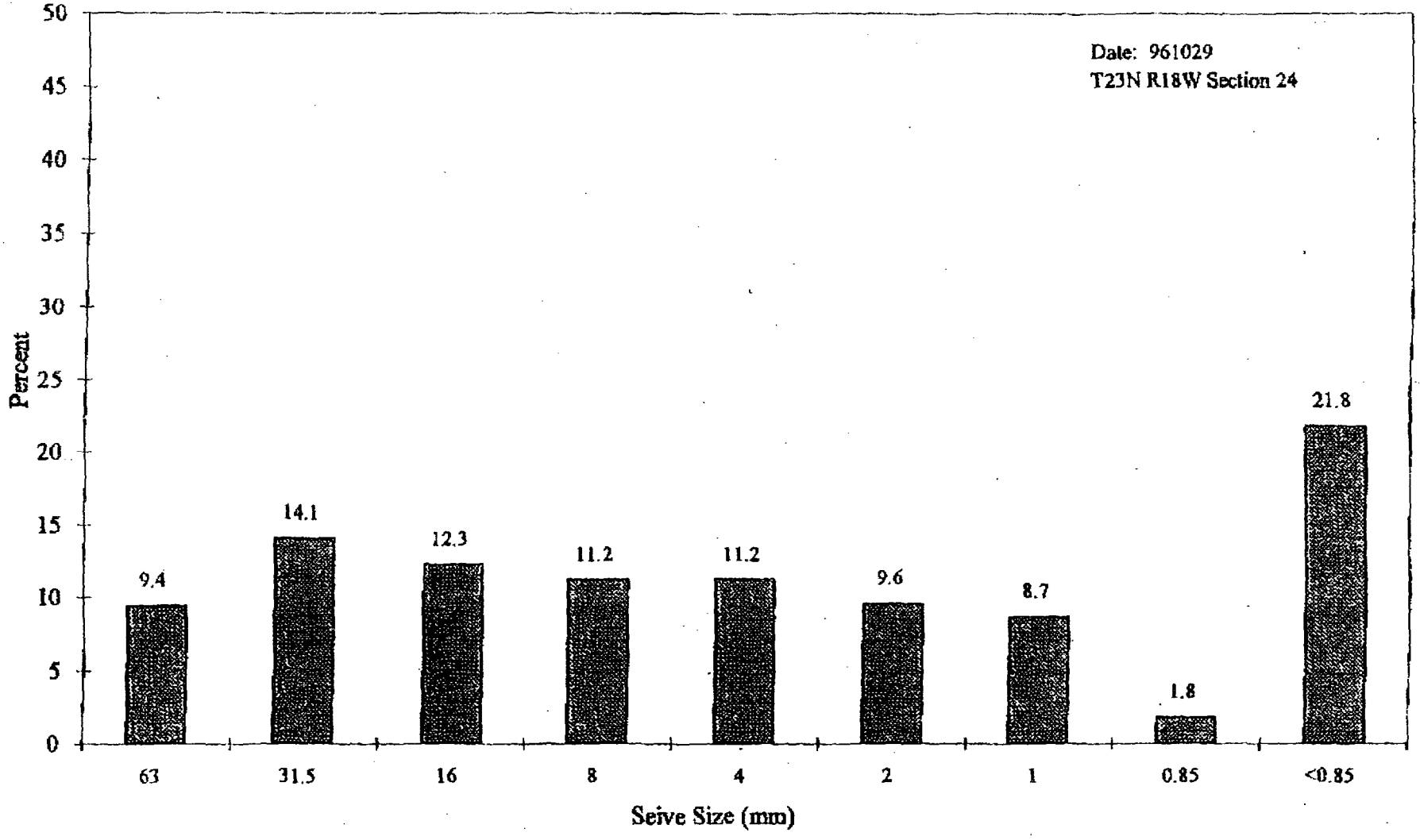
Sample Location; South Fork Usal Creek (USA1)



(USA1)

Average McNeil Sediment Samples (eight samples)
Georgia-Pacific West, Inc. Fort Bragg, CA

Sample Location: South Fork Usal Creek



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To MATT ST. JOHN | From RICHARDS GOLDSMITH
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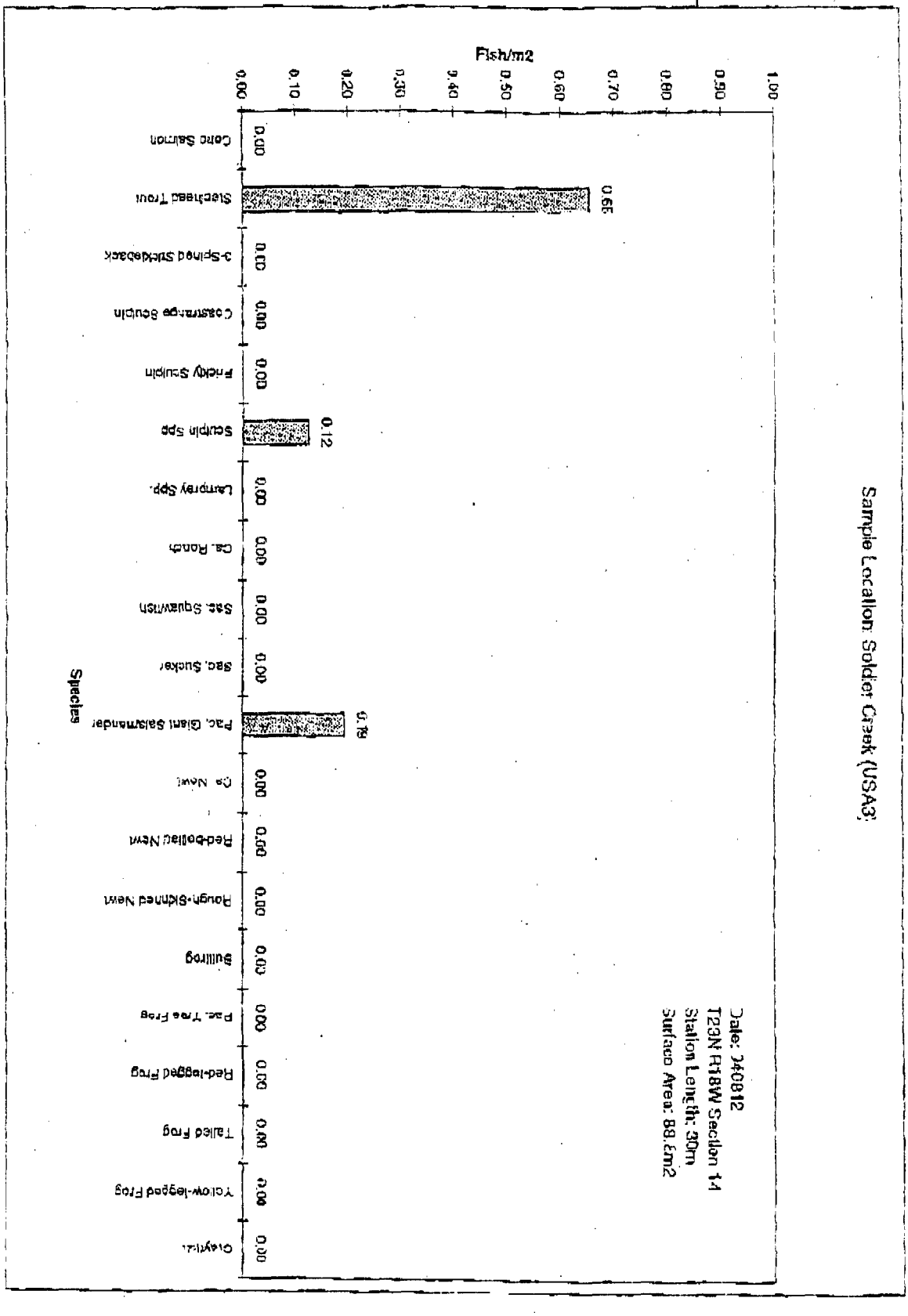
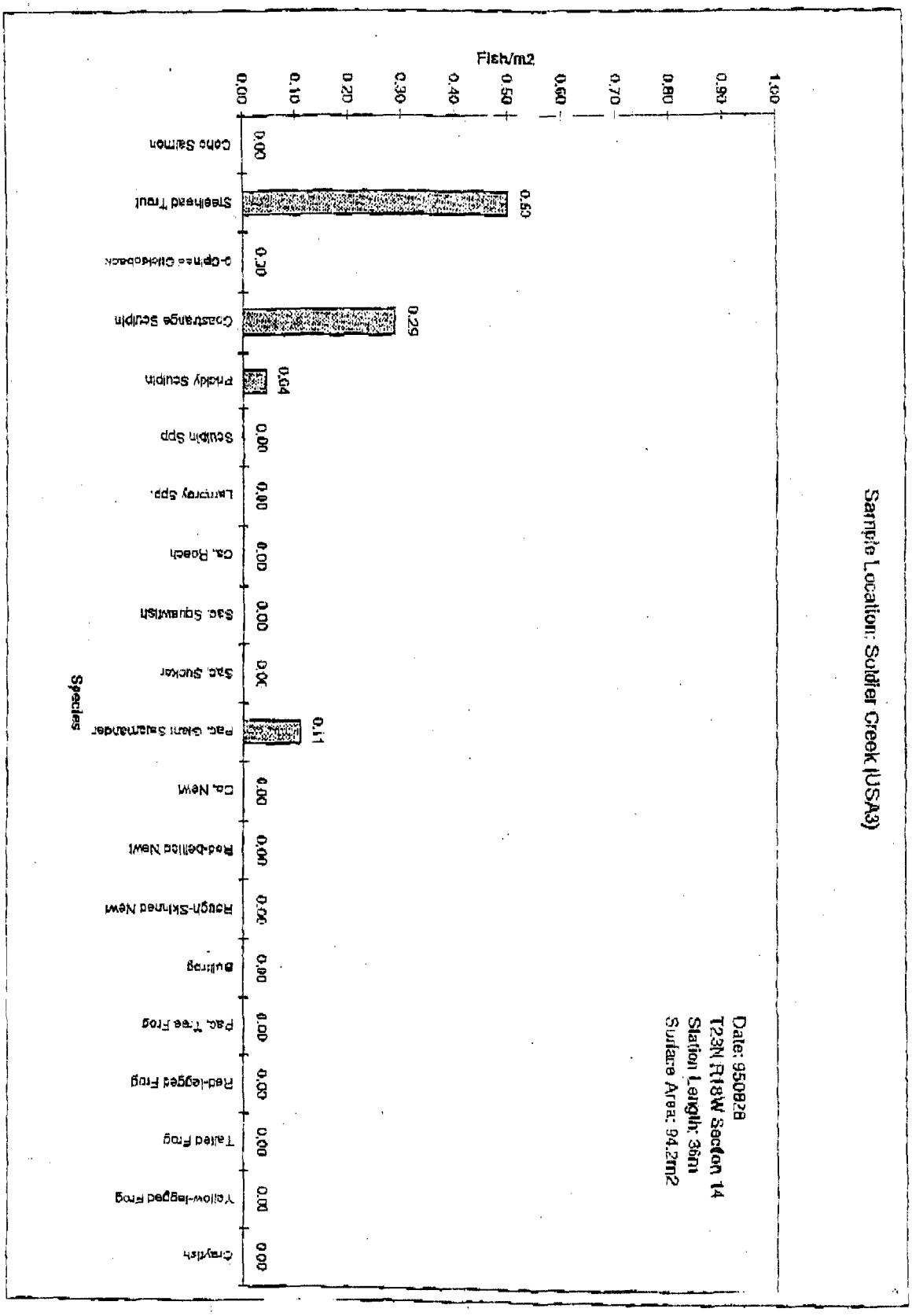


Estimated Aquatic Vertebrate Populations, Georgia-Pacific West, Inc., Fort Bragg, CA



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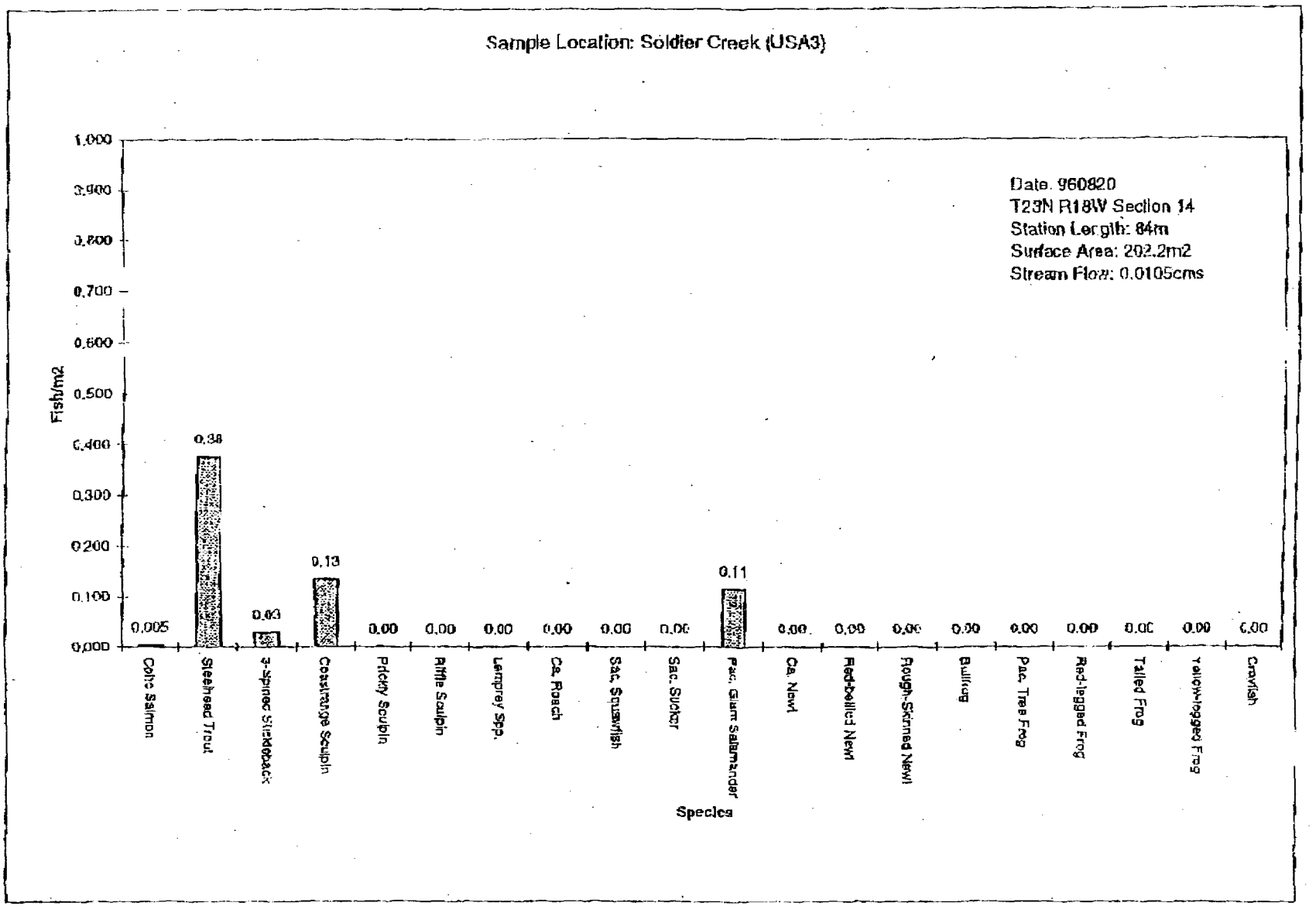
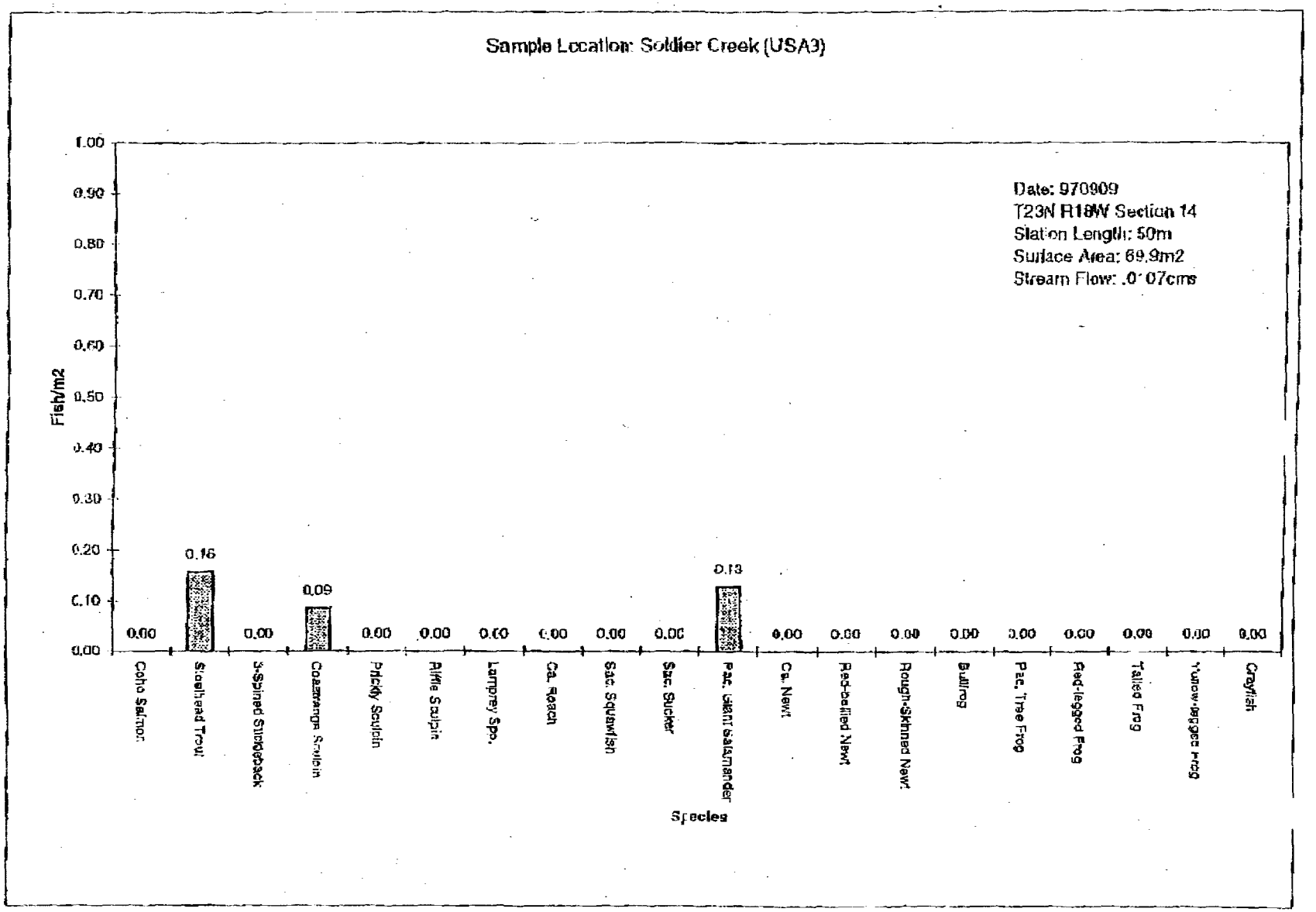
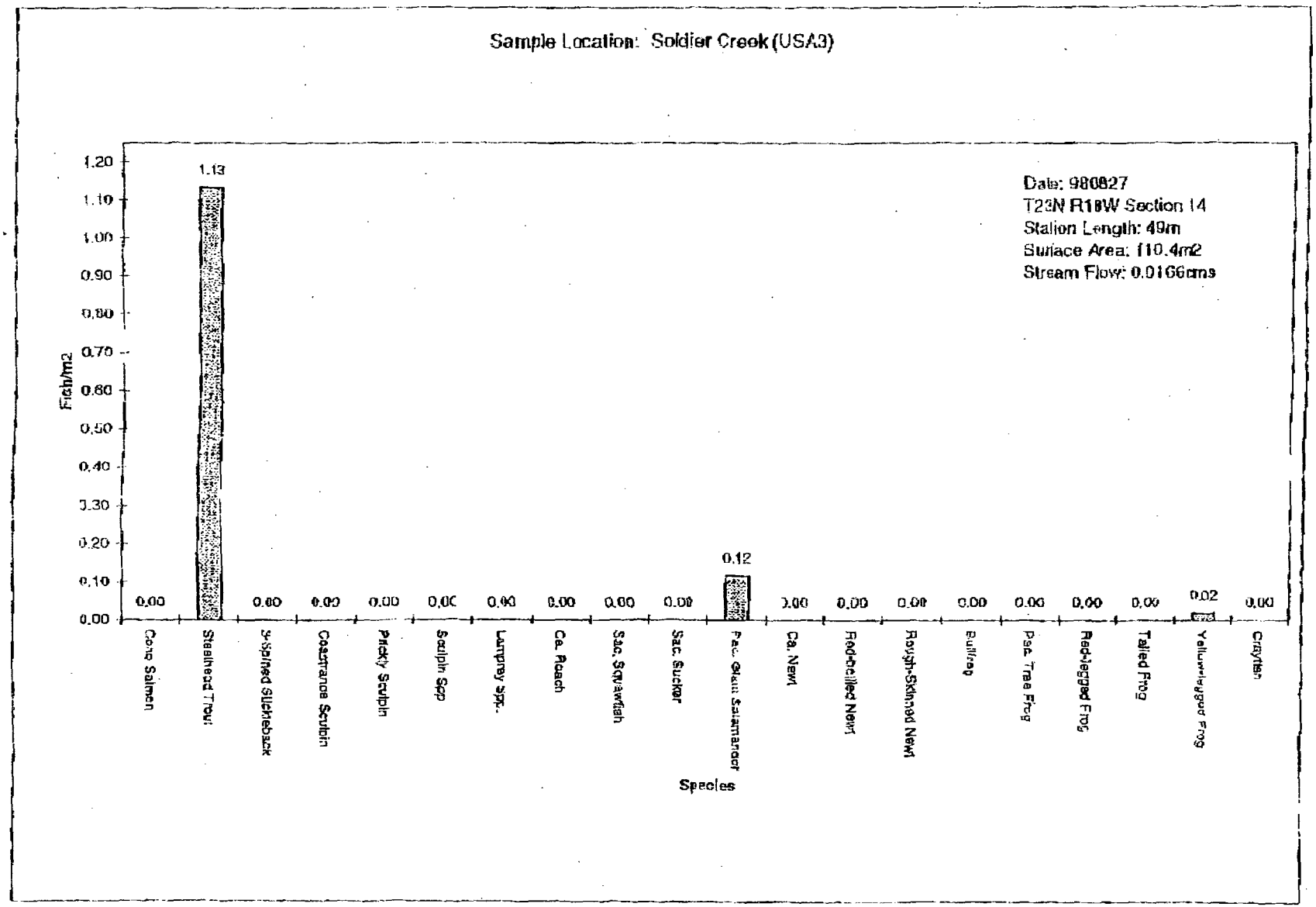


Estimated Aquatic Vertebrate Populations. Georgia-Pacific West, Inc. Fort Bragg, CA

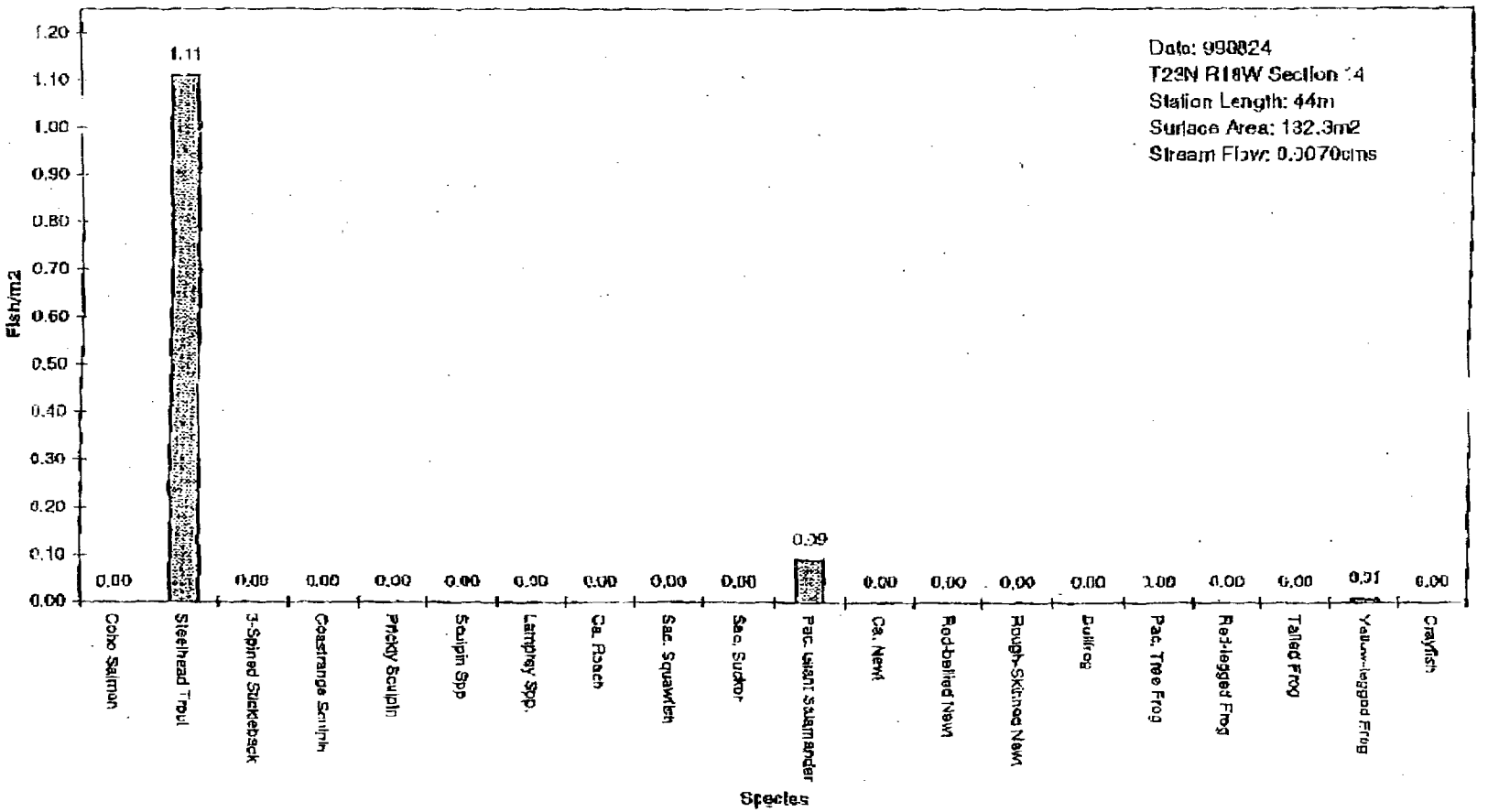


Estimated Aquatic Vertebrate Populations. Georgia-Pacific West, Inc. Fort Bragg CA



Estimated Aquatic Vertebrate Populations. The Timber Company. Fort Bragg, CA

Sample Location: Soldier Creek (USA 3)



Estimated Aquatic Vertebrate Populations, Campbell Timberland Mgt., Fort Bragg, CA

Sample Location: Soldier Creek (USA 3)