

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE  
CACHUMA PROJECT BIOLOGICAL OPINION AND  
THE LOWER SANTA YNEZ RIVER FISH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Written Testimony of Kate Rees  
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I am the Manager of the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (CCRB), which is comprised of the Goleta Water District, the City of Santa Barbara, the Montecito Water District, and the Carpinteria Valley Water District. CCRB and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (ID No. 1) are the Cachuma Project Member Units. My areas of responsibility include management of all water rights related activities for the Member Units, and implementation of the steelhead/rainbow trout habitat enhancement and restoration management actions specified in the Cachuma Project Biological Opinion and Lower Santa Ynez River Fish Management Plan.

I also serve as Project Manager for CCRB/ID No. 1. In this capacity I provide administrative services and support for the Santa Ynez River Fisheries MOU activities and the Biological Opinion Adaptive Management Committee. I am responsible for managing the long-term fisheries monitoring program on the lower Santa Ynez River, planning and construction management of the steelhead enhancement projects, permitting requirements, CEQA environmental compliance related to the fisheries projects, and funding the projects through grants to supplement the Cachuma Project Renewal Fund and Warren Act Trust Fund. In addition, I participated in all studies required by the SWRCB Order WR 94-05, including preparation of the Cachuma Project Contract Renewal EIS/EIR, Santa Ynez River Vegetation Monitoring Study, and Lompoc Groundwater Basin water quality studies. I hold a Bachelors Degree in Geology from California State University at Northridge, and a Masters Degree in Hydrology/Geography from the University of California at Los Angeles.

The Cachuma Member Units have been part of the cooperative fisheries program since 1992, and were instrumental in developing the original Fisheries Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as well as subsequent MOUs, culminating in the 2000 MOU which focuses on implementing the terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion and Fish Management Plan. From the beginning, the Member Units decided on a pro-active approach to the SWRCB's request to find a reasonable balance between water supply needs and protection of public trust resources. And in my opinion, they have succeeded.

The Member Units fully supported and funded the initial hydrologic and biologic investigations, data collection, studies, and analyses, and actively participated on the Consensus Committee and Santa Ynez River Technical Advisory Committee (SYRTAC). In 1993, the Member Units voluntarily agreed to set aside 2000 acre feet per year in a fish management account, and began making releases to provide over-summering, spawning, and rearing habitat for the fishery downstream under the direction of the SYRTAC Biologic Subcommittee. These releases continued until the Biological Opinion was issued in September 2000, at which time releases

were increased to achieve specified target flows. For 10 years, the Member Units have incurred a significant impact to their water supply in order to implement this fisheries program. Fortunately, the last decade was extremely wet, however, there has been virtually no runoff into Lake Cachuma for the last two years.

A full time Project Biologist and a part-time Biologist Assistant were hired in 1993, to work with our fisheries and hydrologic consultants, in order to collect, synthesize, and analyze data on hydrology, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, fish habitat, and fisheries resources downstream of Bradbury Dam. Years were spent developing many flow and non-flow alternatives that might be effective in improving or restoring steelhead habitat, especially for over-summering, spawning and rearing. Those alternatives that had the best chance of success were refined and incorporated into the Lower Santa Ynez River Fish Management Plan, and the Plan became the basis for the Biological Assessment provided by the Bureau of Reclamation to NOAA Fisheries.

Member Unit staff and consultants have been active participants on the Fisheries MOU Consensus Committee, the SYRTAC Biologic and Hydrologic subcommittees, the Biologic Opinion Adaptive Management Committee, and the Tri-County Fish Team and its Executive Committee. I also serve as the Member Unit representative on the Cachuma Project Renewal Fund and Warren Act Trust Fund Committee, and have been successful each year in designating nearly the total fund amount to the fisheries program. The Member Units provided the Project Biologist to assist Reclamation in developing the Biological Assessment, and funded all consulting work needed by Reclamation and NOAA Fisheries in developing the Biological Opinion. They have furnished the services of one of the Member Unit attorneys who successfully lobbied for and facilitated salmon and steelhead restoration funding legislation in Washington D.C. and Sacramento. Without this effort, very little restoration funding would be available through grants.

The Member Units have also been extremely pro-active and successful in securing grant funding for nearly all of the habitat enhancement projects. Grants have been awarded from the Governor's Budget appropriation for Proposition 12 administered through the State Coastal Conservancy, the State Water Resources Control Board's Non-Point Source Pollution program, the Department of Fish and Game's Salmon/Steelhead Restoration program, the Department of Transportation's EEM grant program, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and through Reclamation from the Federal Safety of Dams program. Implementation of the fisheries program has experienced some delay due a number of factors, such as legal challenges, environmental compliance complexity, and regulatory permitting issues, which caused us to lose several grants. However, new grant proposals were submitted and approved, suggesting both awareness of and agreement with the importance of our program.

We have completed two enhancement projects and are currently working on several more. In December 1999, a Fish Management Plan ribbon-cutting ceremony highlighted the first phase of the construction of the Hilton Creek Watering system. Water is now provided year-round from Lake Cachuma into Hilton Creek, which has become a viable and valuable steelhead habitat. The final phase of the project, expected to be completed by the end of the year, is to install a pumping system so that cooler water from deeper in the lake can be delivered when lake

elevations are low. The overall cost of this project is more than \$2 million. In addition, a fish passage enhancement on Salsipuedes Creek was completed in 2001, and now allows fish to pass over a concrete bridge apron at low flows. Two fish passage enhancement projects are also planned for completion this year, one on Quiota Creek and another on Salsipuedes Creek. Further, a streambank stabilization project will be completed on private land on El Jaro Creek.

With the exception of the Hilton Creek watering system, for which 85% of the cost is funded from the Federal Safety of Dams program, all of this work is being completely funded and carried out by the Cachuma Member Units. Since 1993, we have spent more than \$6 million and an enormous amount of staff time in implementing this program. The Member Units have always been, and continue to be, committed to achieving a reasonable balance in the allocation of Santa Ynez River water between public trust resources and consumptive use. Through cooperation, dedication, and hard work, consensus on how to accomplish that goal has been reached among all parties to the Fisheries MOU.

It is our strong belief that implementing the Biological Opinion and Fish Management Plan actions not only prevents jeopardy to the endangered steelhead, but also goes a long way toward restoration of the species. We intend to fully comply with the Biological Opinion and Fish Management Plan, and believe that is all the Board should require us to do at this time.

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