

Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team
(Funding for Improved Salmonid Habitat)

Purpose and Procedures

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team is to work with federal, state, and local agencies and non-governmental groups to

- secure funding in support of salmonid recovery and habitat enhancement,
- improve information about restoration and recovery activities, and
- enhance public understanding and support for such actions

in the tri-county area. To succeed at this goal, the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team will coordinate with local groups to develop a regional approach. This will result in a Regional Restoration Projects Plan for the tri-county area (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties).

2. REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

For a number of years, state and federal funding for salmonid restoration has been focussed on north-central and northern California. In these areas, local entities have formed regional groups (FishNet4C and the 5 Northern Counties) to speak on behalf of local funding needs and projects. State and Federal agencies work with these regional groups more frequently than the many, smaller, local agencies and groups. Prior to the formation of the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team, there were no corresponding regional groups to the south with a similar purpose. The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team incorporates three coastal counties (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura) into such a regional group.

The purpose of the F.I.S.H. Team is to act as a regional voice to draw state and federal resources to the tri-county area in support of fishery restoration projects, to improve information about restoration activities, and to enhance public understanding of fishery issues. The tri-county area has federally listed threatened (south central coast steelhead) and endangered (southern California steelhead) salmonid species. In order to facilitate the restoration and recovery of these species and other species and their habitat, the F.I.S.H. Team will coordinate local restoration efforts at a regional level (the tri-county area). The F.I.S.H. Team understands that restoration will occur at a local level, and that a regional voice will provide weight to funding and assistance requests to support these efforts. The F.I.S.H. Team also recognizes that fishery enhancement projects do not stop at the county lines. To this end, the F.I.S.H. Team will collaborate with the other local, regional, state and federal groups and agencies, as needed to facilitate fishery restoration actions.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has conducted a statewide assessment of the steelhead populations. According to the *Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California* (McEwan & Jackson, 1996), "southern steelhead stocks are the most jeopardized of all of California's steelhead populations" [note that here "southern steelhead" refers to those occurring south of San Francisco Bay]. According to this DFG document, of the steelhead streams south of San Francisco, 47% have reduced production from historical levels and 33% no longer have steelhead populations. Restoration of these populations should be a high priority.

A number of needs for successful fish restoration efforts have been identified within the tri-county area that includes San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Needs in the tri-county area include (but are not limited to) the following:

- (1) identification and coordination of local restoration and enhancement efforts,
- (2) additional funding resources for restoration efforts;
- (3) creation of a resource for sharing information among restoration/ recovery agencies and organizations,
- (4) increased public awareness and support for fishery restoration,
- (5) organization of scientific information on the fishery and on restoration project success, and
- (6) development a recovery plan for the salmonid species in the area.

The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team will attempt to address some of these needs and will be a resource in the region to the DFG and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as they address these items. Finally, the F.I.S.H. Team acknowledges the efforts of DFG, NMFS, and the California Resources Agency in establishing priorities for funding and will work closely with them to ensure that regional projects fit these priorities.

3. ORGANIZATION PROCEDURES

The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team is open to all in the tri-county area interested in participating. Participation of agencies and groups that develop and implement restoration plans and projects is especially desired because it will provide the F.I.S.H. Team with the most complete picture of the actions that are occurring within the region. The meetings of the F.I.S.H. Team are open to the public and any interested parties. The F.I.S.H. Team has created an Executive Committee to provide guidance and direction for the group's activities; a Technical Review Committee to review regional restoration proposals; and holds meetings to which all participants and the public are invited (Public Forum). The F.I.S.H. Team, through a grant with the California Resources Agency, has hired consultants to provide coordination and technical assistance to the F.I.S.H. Team.

An MOU formally establishing the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team is in progress and will cite this document as describing the operating procedures of the group. Finally, attached is a schematic diagram of the organization structure for the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team.

Executive Committee

Responsibilities

An Executive Committee has been established to provide guidance and direction for the F.I.S.H. Team's activities. The Executive Committee will work within the budget established under the funding provisions outlined in the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team MOU. Their responsibilities are to:

- Determine the need for F.I.S.H. Team meetings and set dates/times;
- Establish meeting topics and agenda items;
- Review and provide comment on consultant deliverables as needed;
- Provide direction to the Technical Review Committee;
- Compose letters to federal and state agencies in support of projects;
- Guide the development of the Regional Restoration Projects Plan and updates to the plan;
- Review the Purpose and Procedures document annually and make changes as appropriate;
- Seek additional funding for the activities of the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team;
- Work to ensure that fishery restoration grant monies continue to be available;
- Develop additional work plans as needed;
- Work with contractors to provide the necessary organizational and technical support for the F.I.S.H. Team;
- Review, comment, and forward deliverables to the F.I.S.H. Team for discussion; and
- Provide the final vote on group actions where consensus can not be reached in the F.I.S.H. Team.

Composition

The Executive Committee is composed of one local government representative, one local sponsoring agency representative, and one public representative from each of the three counties (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura) represented by the regional group (9 total). The local government representative may come from any division that deals in some way with fishery issues within city or county government. The 'sponsoring agencies' are local agencies with existing fisheries and habitat improvement interests. The public member can be anyone that participates in fishery restoration and recovery activities within that county.

The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team has established a coordinator to organize and conduct meetings. The coordinator and Executive Committee members may attend additional functions as necessary to provide information to the F.I.S.H. Team. The coordinator also attends Executive Committee meetings.

Other people can be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings as deemed necessary by the Committee.

Election

During the early formation of the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team, representatives were appointed by the group participants in the individual counties to fill each of the three positions for each county.

In the future, county representatives to fill the categories described above will be elected by a vote of the group participants from each county and category. For example, nominations for the Local Government Representative from Ventura County will be taken from people who work for Ventura Local Governments and participate in the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team. Those that get to vote on the nominees for this category fit the same description, namely they are participants in the F.I.S.H. Team who also work for Local Governments in Ventura County.

Each organization/agency that has participated in at least half of the F.I.S.H. Team meetings throughout the previous year and has signed the MOU will be eligible to nominate a person to fill a representative position and will receive one vote to elect the representative from among the nominees. The positions will come up for a vote at the first F.I.S.H. Team meeting held in the fourth quarter (i.e. October through December).

Decision Making

Wherever possible, decisions within the Executive Committee will be made via consensus. However, where consensus can not be reached, then the voting procedures are as follows:

- Only the 9 county representatives (3 from each county, one in each of the following categories: Local Government Agency, Local Sponsoring Agency, and Public Member) are voting members of the Executive Committee.
- At least 2 representatives from each of the 3 counties must vote for the action item in order for it to pass.

The Executive Committee provides a balanced forum in which to provide final approval for deliverables. The Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team includes any and all who wish to participate in the process. Because of this nature, the larger group is unlikely to have balanced participation between the three counties. As with the all of the decisions to be made by the F.I.S.H. Team and its Committees, all attempts will be made to work by consensus. Where consensus can not be reached, the Executive Committee will have the final vote after a full opportunity for comment, review, and revision has been made in the F.I.S.H. Team forum. Administrative decisions regarding the Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team's budget will be made as noted in the MOU and the Executive Committee will work within the budget provided for under the MOU.

Technical Review Committee

Responsibilities

The Technical Review Committee (TRC) is tasked with technical review of the proposed projects. This committee will evaluate projects for (1) technical merit, (2) feasibility, and (3) benefit to the fish. The purpose of this committee is to provide an independent body to conduct the prioritization of the proposed projects. The results of the committee's technical prioritization will provide the foundation for the Regional Restoration Projects Plan that will be developed under the direction of the Executive Committee, and future updates to the plan.

Composition & Selection

All of the committee members must have a technical background that will allow them to critically review the proposed projects. Selections for the TRC will be made by the same 9 groups that are eligible to elect the Executive Committee county representatives: the Local Government Agencies, the Local Sponsoring Agencies, and the Public Members from each of the three counties. The difference for the TRC, is that the person selected by those in the county/category group to represent them does not have to come from that county/category. For example, the group participants that are Local Governments from Ventura County can select a fisheries biologist who works in the Central Valley (or anywhere else) to be their representative if they so choose. Selection for the county participants in the TRC will occur annually at the same time that the Executive Committee representatives are elected.

In addition to the 9 representatives selected to represent the three counties, state and federal agencies will be invited to provide technical expertise. Participation from the California Resources Agency (e.g. DFG), NMFS, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be sought. More than one representative from each agency may participate in order to provide representation familiar with the different geographic areas covered by the Regional Group.

The committee can request additional technical expertise as necessary for their review.

Voting representatives from the Executive Committee can not sit on the Technical Review Committee.

Decision Making

The TRC will work by consensus. The TRC will develop proposed methods for technical prioritization of projects working with existing prioritization methods employed by various granting entities. The TRC will forward to the Executive Committee and F.I.S.H. Team a description of the proposed prioritization methods for review and comment. Once the methods have been approved by the Executive Committee, the prioritization will be applied to the Regional Restoration Projects List and the TRC will forward to the

F.I.S.H. Team a list of technically sound projects. Updates to the Restoration Projects plan will be made as needed based on new information and projects.

Coordination & Technical Assistance

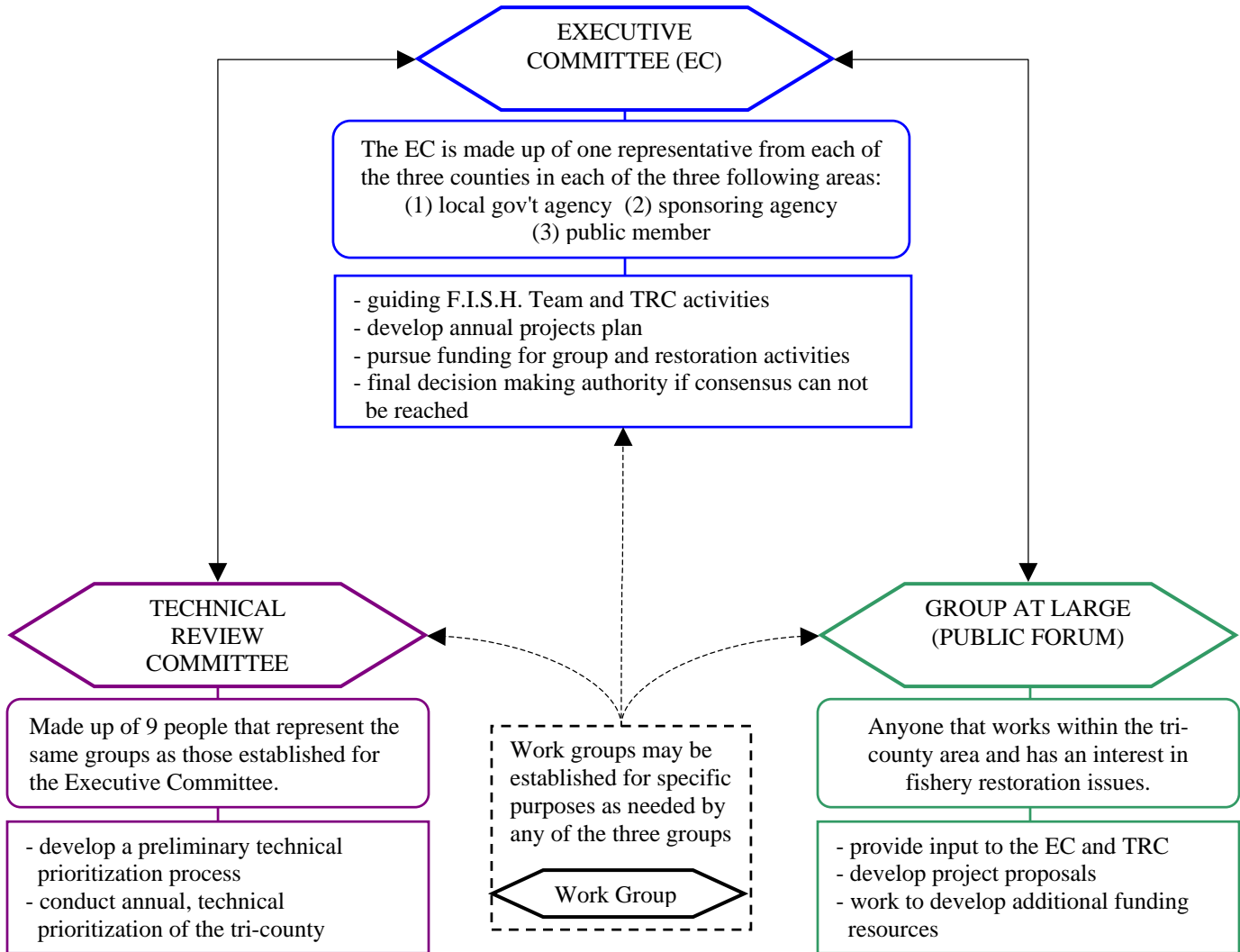
Currently, ENTRIX, Inc. is under contract to the City of Santa Barbara and the California Resources Agency to assist the Executive Committee and the F.I.S.H. Team in the development of the first Regional Restoration Projects Plan.

4. TRI-COUNTY F.I.S.H. TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the F.I.S.H. Team include the following:

- To work with other regional groups, federal and state agencies, and other organizations to (1) secure funding for salmonid recovery and habitat enhancement projects in the tri-county area, (2) to improve information about restoration and recovery activities, and (3) to enhance public understanding and support for restoration actions/projects.
- To coordinate with the local entities and groups which develop and implement restoration projects. The F.I.S.H. Team will be responsible for outreach to these local entities and to develop a F.I.S.H. Team that can appropriately develop a regional projects plan.
- To use the region's needs and this coordinated, regional effort to create additional funding opportunities at the local, state, and federal level.
- To work with the appropriate entities to direct more state and federal funding to the southern part of the state. This will include providing input to granting agencies on changes needed to re-balance the historical Northern California bias in the funding processes.

Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team
(Funding for Improvement of Salmonid Habitat)
Organization Structure



Legend

