



COVID has taken a toll on all of us and most chapter events were put on hold for the last 3 years. But, we have been working behind the scenes at state and chapter levels on several exciting initiatives. This is the first, of hopefully, a quarterly chapter newsletter.



So, just a few happenings in the past year:

Searching for genetically pure Kern River Rainbows

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) asked the Central Sierra Chapter to lead a backpacking trip to the upper Kern River watershed within Sequoia National Park looking for pure populations of Kern River Rainbows (KRR). It was a long grueling trip as three of us backpacked in over thirty miles to sample two isolated trips. We had lots of hiccups along the way but we got the samples (85 to be exact)! We collected the fish by fly fishing, quickly placed them in buckets, measured and photographed them, clipped off a 1/4" sample of their caudal fin and quickly returned them to their home pool. Kern River Rainbows have been hybridized with Golden trout and Coastal rainbow trout throughout their native range over the past 100 years. CDFW would like to find a source of pure Kern River Rainbows so they might eventually replace non native coastal rainbows in their hatchery programs in Southern Sierra drainages. The fin clip samples will be genetically analyzed by the CDFW lab in Sacramento.



CA State Council Meeting - November 2022

After a two year hiatus due to COVID, the CA Council once again had an in person annual meeting in Woodland, CA in November 2022. Those attending heard an array of excellent presentations - including the latest in fisheries research and habitat management, policy updates and ideas on how to improve chapter communications (which helped to incite this email newsletter)

Flood Plain Fatties

The opening Friday evening presentation was a fascinating presentation by Dr. Carson Jeffres of UC Davis on his latest research about using flooded after harvest rice fields for tremendously enhancing growth rates for Chinook Salmon smolts. Smolts allowed to migrate into these flood plains from the Sacramento River far outgrow those smolts that remain in the river. AND, more importantly, by analyzing sulfur isotopes levels in the fisheye lenses of outgoing smolts and returning adult salmon, they can determine where the salmon were raised as smolts (river, canal or floodplain). Relatively few of the outgoing salmon smolts were raised on the floodplains but the vast majority of the returning adults were floodplain smolts. The greatly increased size of the outgoing flood plain smolts helped them to survive the gauntlet of San Francisco Bay and ocean predation. The bottom line - the flooded after harvest rice fields mimic the natural flood plains along the Sacramento River of 100 years ago. This has the potential to drastically increase the return rates of adult Chinook salmon to both the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds.

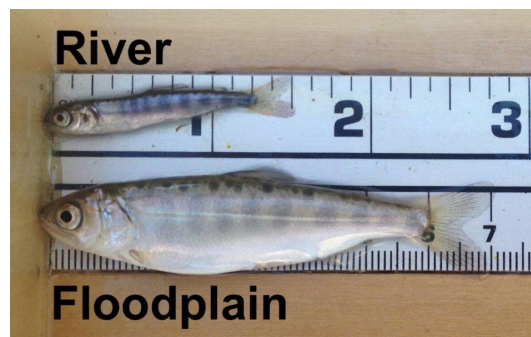


Photo by Dr. Carson Jeffres

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has given final approval for the removal of the four lower Klamath River dams.

Trout Unlimited, CalTrout, the Yurok Tribe and many other conservation organizations have been working for twenty long years to remove the four lower dams on the lower Klamath river and provide an additional one hundred miles of salmon and steelhead spawning ares in the river and its tributaries. On November 17th, FERC signed off on transferring these four dams to the states of California and Oregon and The Klamath River Renewal Project. Preliminary work will start in 2023 and all four dams should come out in 2024!



Final Comments:

Hopefully, through these quarterly newsletters, we can keep you updated about happenings throughout California and especially within our Central Sierra Region (which extends from Stockton south to Bakersfield and Ridgecrest and east to the Sierra crest. One of our main goals is to promote volunteer opportunities for river cleanups, trail maintenance, stream and habitat restoration and fishery projects. If you know of a river event that needs volunteers or promotion, please notify us well in advance of the event so we can include it in this newsletter.

We would like to hear about your aspirations, hopes and concerns for the the fisheries and fishery habitat within the Central Sierra Region.
As your Central Sierra Chapter president, I relish hearing from you about your specific concerns. Please email, text or call me.
If you do not want to receive these emails, just hit the unsubscribe link.

Thank you and looking forward to hearing from you,

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