



Beneath the Surface - CSPA Newsletter

Catching up with CSPA

November 2013

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Dear Jim,

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance has been so focused in fighting the many battles to protect fish and water quality in California that we simply dropped the ball in getting out regular newsletters. Now with Denise Zitnik joining our team as media consultant, we hope to resume regular outreach to our membership.

Of course we always encourage everyone to check out our website, Calsport.org, to keep current on our many efforts before state and federal agencies, enforcement of environmental laws and the continuing battles over protecting the Bay-Delta estuary and its tributary waterways. Our website is evolving and some great new features are on the horizon.

CSPA has been in the regulatory and legal trenches for more than 30 years, fighting not only for California's fish and water, but also for you - our members. Between now and the end of the year, we will be asking you to renew your support of CSPA with membership renewals and donations. Meanwhile, here are a few of the many issues we're busy working on.

Cheers!
Bill Jennings, Executive Director

Pivotal Battles over the Bay-Delta

CSPA is engaged in protecting fish and water quality from the North and South Coasts, throughout the Central Valley and into the myriad Sierra streams. However, the centerpiece of our activities presently resolves around efforts to prevent the "water buffaloes" from further depriving the Bay-Delta estuary of essential flows by diverting the Sacramento River under the Delta to irrigate the parched saline lands of the south valley. Fisheries that evolved over millennia are being destroyed by greed in mere decades. ***Over the next several years, we will either embark upon a path to restore the biological integrity of the Delta or begin to write its obituary.*** And, as the Delta goes so goes the great tributary rivers of the Central Valley - and their once magnificent fisheries.

The fight to save the Delta is being waged in administrative and legal proceedings before the [State Water Resource Control Board](#), [Delta Stewardship Council](#) and the misnamed [Bay Delta Conservation Plan](#) (BDCP). Each of these venues entails numerous meetings, workshops, voluminous documents, formal hearings and likely lawsuits. CSPA staff, expert consultants and attorneys are involved in every step of these extremely expensive time-intensive proceedings.

CSPA and its attorneys have already filed an [initial lawsuit](#) over the Steward Council's Delta Plan. The public review drafts of the BDCP and environmental documents are expected by mid-December. We have [reviewed more than 50,000 pages of administrative drafts](#) and will be fully engaged in the formal proceeding and inevitable litigation. The State Water Board's three-part revision of Bay-Delta standards, the change in the point of diversion of the export pumps, water quality certification and the Corps of Engineers dredging permit will follow over the next several years. **These proceedings will determine the future of the anadromous and pelagic fisheries of the Delta and tributary rivers. And CSPA will be there till the end.**

A more complete description of each of these proceedings is available behind the program buttons on CSPA's website at calsport.org.

Enforcement is Key

One of the less visible aspects of CSPA's program is our aggressive enforcement campaign. California's fisheries are largely suffering because state and federal agencies have failed, either through lack of resources or political will, to enforce the broad suit of environmental laws enacted to protect fisheries, habitat and water quality.

We maintain a rotating docket of between 35 and 45 legal actions to protect water and fish. These include actions against state and federal agencies, municipalities and businesses. For example, we're currently suing the Department of Water Resources, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, both the [State and Central Valley water boards](#), [Delta Stewardship Council](#), Westlands Water District and numerous polluters. Previous successful lawsuits have been filed against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, [EBMUD](#), various irrigation districts and the cities of Stockton, Sacramento, [Redding](#) and Modesto, among many others. We frequently intervene in lawsuits filed by others seeking to harm fisheries.

CSPA's enforcement efforts have achieved compliance with laws, protection of habitat and fisheries and the elimination of vast quantities of pollution. CSPA receives no economic benefit from enforcement actions. **However, our hundreds of successful cases have resulted in millions of dollars in mitigation payments, in lieu of penalties, being sent to foundations that have distributed those funds to other fishing and environmental organizations to restore habitat, prevent pollution and protect fisheries.**

Our [website blog](#) includes information on current enforcement actions.

Improving Flows and Habitat Through Hydropower Relicensing

During the last 4 years, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensings of hydropower projects on the Merced, Tuolumne and Yuba rivers have linked up the flow needs of Sierra watersheds and the flow needs of rivers below Central Valley rim

dams. CSPA has been a leader in each process, and has actively connected them with processes at the State Water Board to improve flows into the Delta. **CSPA was also the conservation group organizational lead on relicensing the DeSabra - Centerville Project on Butte Creek, whose outcome will culminate in a ten year fight to improve conditions for the *largest run of spring-run Chinook salmon in central California.***

At the same time, CSPA has been a leader in promoting reintroduction of spring-run Chinook into upper Sierra watersheds. CSPA has tirelessly advocated for flows and other conditions adequate to support reintroduction upstream of [Englebright Dam on the Yuba River](#), [Don Pedro Reservoir on the Tuolumne River](#), and [Shasta Reservoir on the Sacramento, McCloud and Pit rivers](#). By pushing FERC through relicensings and litigation, and through key roles in stakeholder processes such as the Yuba Salmon Forum, CSPA has promoted scientific and regulatory analysis of fish passage to upper watersheds.

Through participation in formal consultation groups to implement the conditions required in FERC licenses, CSPA has improved conditions in important west slope trout fisheries in the American and Feather River watersheds. ***Our advocacy over almost thirty years helped restore flows and habitat in numerous trout streams.*** Now we remain engaged to oversee the smart management of license requirements, and to be sure that unexpected circumstances and changing conditions maintain improvements for important recreational fisheries.

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