



PRESS STATEMENT

Planning and Conservation League
Sierra Club
California Trout

About Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Date: March 9, 2009

Related Event:

Assembly Water Parks & Wildlife Hearing
CALIFORNIA'S SALMON CRISIS: Understanding the Severity of the Crisis and the State's Role in Recovery
Tuesday, March 10, 2009
State Capitol, Room 437
9:00 a.m.
[See full agenda at bottom of statement]

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND FISHING COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT ON SALMON CRISIS

California's anadromous salmon and steelhead fisheries face a number of serious challenges. Degraded water quality, dysfunctional management of the Delta, insufficient instream flow, poor ocean conditions, and degraded inland habitat all conspire to drive these iconic fish towards extinction.

"The fish don't lie," said Peter Moyle, PhD, author of a January 2008 report¹ commissioned by California Trout on the status of California's native salmon, steelhead and trout populations. "The story they tell is that California's environment is unraveling. Their demise is symptomatic of a much larger water crisis that, unless addressed, will severely impact every Californian."

In recognition of the seriousness of a decline that may shut down the salmon fishery for the second year in a row, the California State Assembly's Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife is holding an informational hearing on California's Salmon Crisis Tuesday, March 10th, at 9am in Room 437 of the State Capitol (see full agenda below). Representatives of the environmental and fishing communities will testify at the hearing and will also be available to the press after the hearing.

IMPACTS ON FISHING INDUSTRIES

"The collapse of salmonid fisheries has led to a corresponding depression in the recreational fishing industry," said California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) Executive Director Bill Jennings. "The number of anglers declined from 2.7 million in 1996 to 1.7 million in 2006. The economic consequences of last year's closure of the salmon fishing season in the Central Valley was \$255 million, along with the loss of 2,263 jobs," he said. Jennings added that "It makes no sense to sacrifice California's historic fishing industry in order to supply subsidized water to grow subsidized non-food crops on impaired desert lands that by design discharge toxic wastes back to Central Valley waterways."

California's freshwater recreational fishery generates \$1.5 billion in retail sales, \$2.5 billion in trip related expenses and almost 27,000 jobs. The marine recreational fishery, as opposed to the commercial fishery, generates \$3.7 billion in retail sales, \$1.9 billion in value-added impacts and almost 23,000 jobs.

"There are a myriad of problems facing salmon, but what has to be done before anything else, and above all else - is restoring water flows in the Delta and our coastal streams," said Zeke Grader of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations which represents commercial fishing men and women. "It's critical the state not get lost in the weeds trying to restore salmon; water flow and water quality are at the foundation of rebuilding our salmon fishery. Fish gotta swim."

WORKING TOWARD SOLUTIONS

Most of California's salmon live and reproduce in forested areas. Unfortunately California's logging rules continue to allow this critical habitat to be degraded by poor logging practices. The state's Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is currently revising the salmon protection rules, but industry interests continue to stonewall any progress.

"For over a decade, state and federal agencies have been calling for changes to the state's logging rules to stop habitat destruction," notes Sierra Club California's Deputy Director, Paul Mason. "As salmon drift closer to extinction, it's time for the Board of Forestry to stop stalling and make these changes when they revise the rules this summer".

In addition to improvements in habitat and water quality, improvements in California's water management and aggressive development of locally based water supplies are an important way to alleviate pressure on our imperiled salmon. As Mindy McIntyre of the Planning and Conservation League explains, "We can save our California salmon by being more reasonable and innovative with our water use. Certainly salmon are more integrally a part of California than our lawns, and we shouldn't be sacrificing California's salmon legacy when we can be smarter about water use. The salmon decline is a call to action to quickly develop recycled water, increase water use efficiency and clean up streams and waterways."

¹A copy of the 2008 report, *Salmon, steelhead, and trout in California: status of an emblematic fauna*, is posted online at California Trout's website, www.caltrout.org.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WATER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

JARED HUFFMAN, Chair

INFORMATIONAL HEARING CALIFORNIA'S SALMON CRISIS:

Understanding the Severity of the Crisis and the State's Role in Recovery

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

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A G E N D A

I. OPENING COMMENTS

II. DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE CRISIS

- ⌚ Dr. Peter Moyle, UC Davis, Department of Wildlife, Fish and Conservation Biology, Center for Watershed Sciences
- ⌚ Rick Frank and Holly Doremus, UC Berkley School of Law, and Center for Environmental Law & Policy
- ⌚ Dick Poole, American Sportfishing Association

III. STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY PRESENTATIONS

- ⌚ Don Koch, Director, Carl Wilcox, Chief, Water Branch, Neil Manji, Chief, Fisheries Programs Branch, Department of Fish and Game
- ⌚ Russ Strach, Assistant Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Charlotte Ambrose, North and Central Coast Salmon Recovery Coordinator
- ⌚ Vicky Whitney, Deputy Director, Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board

IV. STAKEHOLDER PANELISTS

- ⌚ Doug Obegi, Staff Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council
- ⌚ Roger Patterson, Assistant General Manager for Strategic Water Initiatives, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- ⌚ Tom Weseloh, North Coast Program Manager, CalTrout
- ⌚ Grant Davis, Sonoma County Water Agency
- ⌚ Dave Vogel, Consulting Fisheries Biologist, Northern California Water Association
- ⌚ Leaf Hillman, Vice Chairman, Karuk Tribe of California
- ⌚ Zeke Grader, Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
- ⌚ Paul Mason, Deputy Director, Sierra Club

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

About The Planning and Conservation League: The Planning and Conservation League (PCL) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit advocacy organization, working in the State Legislature and at the administrative level in state government to enact and implement policies to protect and restore the California environment. PCL's sister organization, the PCL Foundation, provides public policy research and expertise and empowers citizens to participate in their local and state environmental decision-making processes.

About Sierra Club: The Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Inspired by nature, we are 1.3 million of your friends and neighbors, working together to protect our communities and the planet.

About California Trout: Founded in 1971, California Trout was the first statewide conservation group to focus on securing protections for California's unparalleled wild and native trout diversity. Working with local communities, business, partners and government agencies, California Trout employs conservation science, education, and advocacy to craft effective policy for California's water resources and fisheries. Its key accomplishments include leading the legal effort to restore Mono Lake, establishing the state's Wild and Native Trout program, and sponsoring legislation to create California's Hatchery and Inland Fisheries Fund.

About Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations: The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA) is by far the largest and most politically active trade association of commercial fishermen on the west coast. For nearly the last 30 years, PCFFA has been leading the industry in assuring the rights of individual fishermen and fighting for the long-term survival of commercial fishing as a productive livelihood and way of life.

About California Sportfishing Protection Alliance: Founded in 1983, the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) was formed to protect, restore and enhance the state's fishery resources and the aquatic ecosystems they depend on to ensure this renewable public resource is conserved for the public's use and that of future generations.