



Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

Director's Report – April 24, 2012

- **DOT Budget (FY 12/13) Preparations:** On Wednesday, April 18, 2012 MCDOT transmitted our General Fund budgets BU3050, 3060, 3080 and 3090 (Airports); BU4510 (MSWMA Contract) and BU4511 (Landfill Closure); along with preliminary Road Fund budgets – BU3010 (General Maintenance), BU3941 (Capital Improvements) and BU3030 (Storm Damage) to the CEO's office for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget climate for the upcoming fiscal year is about the same pain level as the current year (FY 11/12) and the Department is once again faced with tough decisions. We have to decide how to most effectively use the inadequate funding available for maintaining and repairing County Maintained Road System features and conducting other aspects of MCDOT's mission.
- **Road Division Activities:** With the good weather, MCDOT Road Division personnel are performing the normal spring maintenance activities of mowing and grading. The spring storms brought heavy rains that aggravated some of last year's 2011 slides and slip outs Countywide. This produced spoils of earth and vegetation which will have to be moved to permanent sites. Also, other 2011 temporary repairs will need to be made permanent. The impact of the storms will affect the Road Division workload for a long time to come.
- **Drainage and Habitat Conservation Efforts Update:** MCDOT has expended considerable resources in the last twelve years on Habitat Conservation efforts. Our department has endorsed the 5C (5 Counties - Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte, and Siskiyou) "Water Quality and Stream Habitat Protection Manual for County Road Maintenance in Northwestern California Watersheds" which has been incorporated into the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 4(d), incidental take limits for listed salmonids.

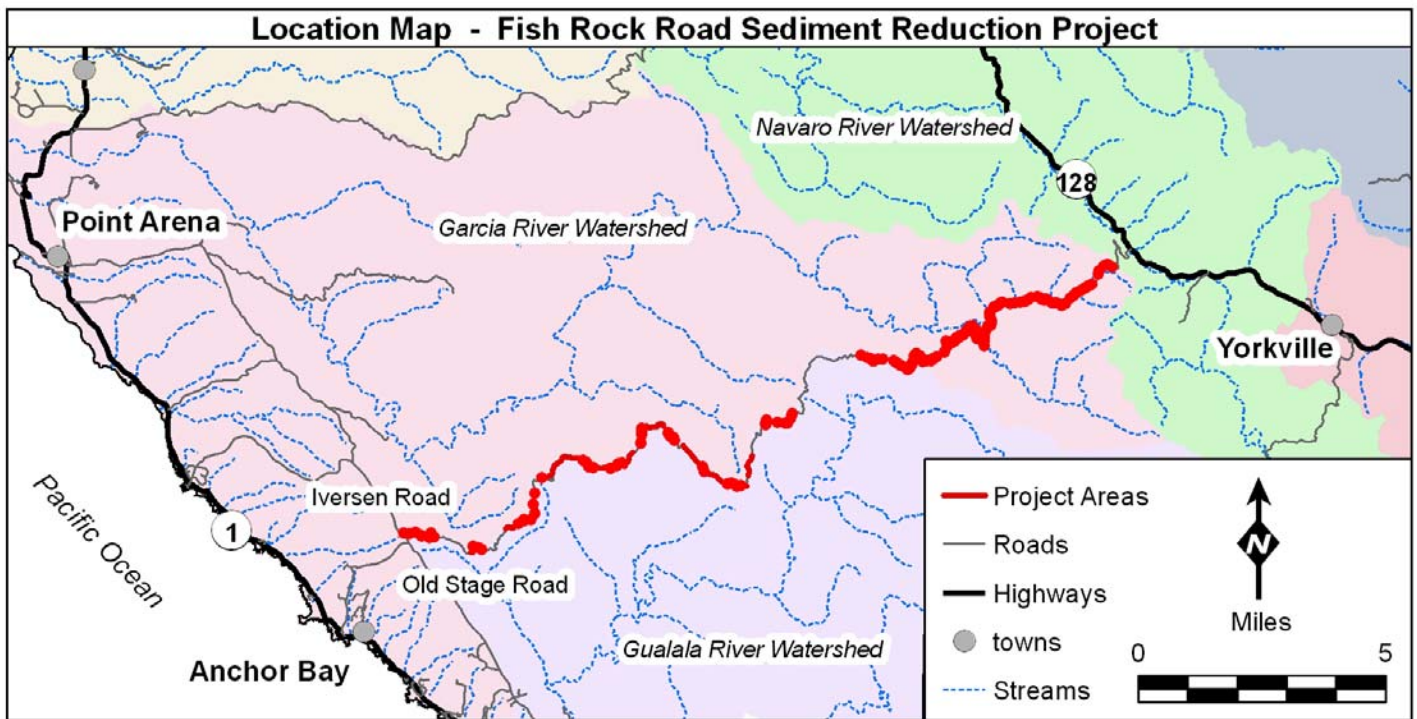
The following projects addressed erosion and sedimentation reduction: Ten Mile Road, Fort Bragg Sherwood Road - Phase I, Cave Creek - vented low water crossing, and Usal Road - Phase I at Waterfall Gulch. The following projects addressed fish passage: Windem Creek, Taylor Creek, and Bear Creek with baffles; Deer Creek, Digger Creek, Johnson Creek, Albion River, Marsh Creek, Ancestor Creek, and Ryan Creek with full replacement of concrete arch structures.

As documented above MCDOT, in conjunction with 5C, has contributed thousands of dollars in effort to the recovery of salmon stocks. The 5C program has been very successful in allowing the regulatory agencies to inform the counties about the laws they enforce and their agencies' environmental policy. In 2007, 5C achieved a HUGE accomplishment in that NOAA Fisheries/NMFS has completed the consultation process for the roads manual. The approved manual has activities for incidental take for threatened anadromous species under Limit 10 of Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act. In other words, with implementation of the manual, the County has both regulatory certainty and stability from NOAA for County road and facility maintenance activities. Our road maintenance crews have been trained in BMP's through our involvement in the Garcia TMDL Basin Plan and through the NPDES II permit our County has signed.

MCDOT's ongoing 5C North Coast region projects are summarized below:

Fish Rock Road Sediment Reduction Project - Garcia River Watershed Sediment TMDL:

The Garcia River Watershed is listed as water quality impaired due to sediment on the 303(d) list. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan into the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) in order to address sedimentation that is affecting the beneficial uses of the watershed. On October 4, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board approved the MCDOT's Erosion Control Plan (ECP) and Site Specific Management Plan (SSMP) to satisfy the requirements of the TMDL Action Plan. This project implements the County SSMP and ECP towards compliance with the Action Plan for the Garcia River Watershed Sediment TMDL through implementation of sediment reduction treatments on Fish Rock Road within the Garcia River Watershed, or those portions of road that are hydrologically connected to the Garcia Watershed. Sediment reduction treatments focus on: replacement of undersized and corroded culverts, installation of new culverts, energy dissipaters at culvert outlets, outside berm removal, installation of over-side drains, reshaping of dirt roads for improved drainage and rock surfacing. A public informational meeting was held Friday, April 13, 2012 at the Boonville Fairgrounds. The CEQA hearing will be before the Board May 22, 2012 in Ukiah.



Location of Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration: A copy of the Initial Study with mitigation measures in support of the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for public review at the Mendocino County Library in Ukiah (105 North Main St.), Coast Community Branch Library in Point Arena (255 Main St.), the County Department of Transportation in Ukiah (340 Lake Mendocino Dr.) and available on the internet at <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/dot> under the environmental documents tab.

FishNet: 4C (Central California Coast Counties) was initiated in 1998 by County Supervisors in Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties in response to the Federal ESA listing of coho salmon (1996) and steelhead trout (1997).

Coho salmon within the Central Coast region share a similar genetic make-up, and thus are listed collectively in what is known as the Central California Coastal Evolutionarily Significant Unit (CCCESU).

Mendocino is only slightly in the Central Region (the Russian River Watershed) and therefore participates more actively in the Five Counties Salmonid Conservation Program because our northern coastal watersheds have been more competitive for habitat restoration funding when compared to warmer inland Russian River tributaries. That being said, Mendocino County does have some ongoing projects in the Russian River Watershed that will be completed between 2012 to 2016, which we look forward to adding to the Fishnet 4C list in coming years. The following projects are:

1) **Feliz Creek Dam Removal** (2012): MCDOT has been working together with the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) on the Feliz Creek Fish Barrier Removal Project for the purpose of performing a meaningful environmental mitigation project in lieu of additional actions at the County's Mill Creek County Park, pursuant to the 2004 sediment release. The project opens 27,000 acres of watershed - some 9 miles of main stem stream - of that, 6 miles is considered prime steelhead habitat. The project is budgeted at \$200,000 and is expected to be completed in 2012.

2) **Reeves Canyon Road Bridge over Mill Creek** (2013): MCDOT has been working together with MCRCD on the Mill Creek Bridge improvements at M.P. 2.52 on Reeves Canyon Road which is presently a wet water ford. This unimproved stream crossing has been identified as a controllable source of vehicular induced sediment to Mill Creek by installing a new bridge. The project is budgeted at \$1.2 million and is expected to be completed in 2013.

3) **Ackerman Creek Bridge Replacement** (2015 -16): The existing bridge was constructed in 1965 after the previous structure was washed out during a high flow event. Immediately downstream of the existing bridge is a 6' to 8' check dam with a Denil-type fish ladder. This was required due to long term degradation and head cutting in Ackerman Creek caused by downstream gravel extraction activities in the Russian River. This head cutting was a threat to the stability of the previous bridge, which was founded on shallow foundations. This check dam was a noted barrier to nine miles of fish spawning habitat. In 1983, a Denil fish ladder was installed under contract with DFG to aid in fish passage. Later the ladder was reinforced to provide low flow access again under contract with DFG. There is currently an upstream restoration project sponsored by the Pomo Indian Tribe to enhance fish habitat while revegetating and stabilizing the eroding banks. The County's bridge replacement project will provide either a roughened channel OR pool and chute design fish passage improvement. Cost is estimated at \$100,000.