

**Local Watershed Stewardship: Steelhead Trout Plan
Corte Madera Creek Watershed, Marin County, California**
submitted by
Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed

Part II: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Project Title and Applicant Name: Local Watershed Stewardship: Steelhead Trout Plan, Corte Madera Creek Watershed, Marin County, California, submitted by Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed (*Friends*).

b. Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives: The purpose of this project is to develop a steelhead trout plan, one component of a comprehensive watershed plan to improve water quality, fishery resources, and native vegetation and wildlife in the Corte Madera Creek Watershed. The steelhead trout plan will be based on the proposed study to identify the factors limiting viability of the steelhead trout population, formulate corrective actions, and monitor the success of those actions. Preparation of the plan will be an integral part of the watershed planning process, which begins in October with an erosion and sedimentation study of the watershed funded by a State Water Resources Control Board 205 (j) grant. The proposed fishery study/assessment will provide essential information (which is lacking at this time) about creek biota. Implementation of the plan will improve habitat for and population levels of steelhead trout.

c. Approach / Tasks / Schedule: The steelhead plan will focus on identifying limiting factors and formulating a practical restoration plan that will enjoy local support. To that end, an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from local government, federal and state agencies, community groups, and business groups will review documents and guide formulation of the restoration plan. The proposed effort will occur concurrently with the erosion/sedimentation planning. The schedule assumes funding begins February 1999:

Task 1:	Review and analysis of existing information	Feb - Mar 1999
Tasks 2/3:	Fish habitat and population surveys	Summer 1999
Task 4:	Thermograph installation and operation	Apr - Oct 1999
Task 5:	Analysis and report of results	Sep - Nov 1999
Task 6:	Restoration plan to address limiting factors	Nov 1999 - Jul 2000
Task 7:	Monitoring plan	Jan - Jul 2000

d. Justification for the Project and funding by CALFED: Corte Madera Creek and its tributaries are among the few streams flowing to San Francisco Bay that retain a steelhead trout population. Although population studies are not available, anecdotal information suggests that steelhead populations have declined in the last few decades. Stressors may include hydrograph changes, streambed changes, loss of riparian habitat, land use and human impacts, increased water temperature, and water quality degradation. However, in spite of these problems, Corte Madera Creek Watershed has been identified by Robert Leidy, EPA biologist, as one of the watersheds that should be targeted for protection.

Although this study targets steelhead trout, habitat improvements in the riparian corridors will also benefit riverine aquatic habitat and the neotropical migratory bird guild that uses the

riparian corridor. Similarly, improvements in water quality and water flows likely will benefit saline emergent wetlands habitats in the lower reaches of the watershed that may support splittail and striped bass. San Francisco Bay will also benefit from improvements in water quality, flow, and temperature. These benefits are all goals of the CALFED Project.

e. Budget Costs and Third-Party Impacts: Estimated cost for the seven tasks is \$47,500. The proposed information gathering and planning effort itself will have no third-party impacts. However, benefits to the environment of implementation of the resulting restoration plan will apply to the community at large. Potential negative impacts to individual property owners include decreased use of stream diversions for landscape irrigation and increased responsibility for private property owners to abate erosion on their land. Marin County Open Space District and Marin Municipal Water District could also incur some costs for plan implementation on their lands for which outside funding might not be available. There is also a potential for conflicts between flood prevention and the need to provide shelter for fish, for example, by providing woody debris in the streams.

f. Applicant Qualifications: *Friends* is a non-profit organization that has been active in the watershed since 1993 and has been successful at planning and implementing several projects. Board members have been active in environmental efforts for many years in Marin County and are committed to this effort. Although many *Friends*' projects focus on implementation, the organization realizes the need to develop a comprehensive watershed plan. The funding provided by this grant will enable the hiring of the essential technical expertise that *Friends* and the other cooperating agencies cannot supply.

Sandra Guldman, a board member of *Friends*, will serve as project manager for this grant. She has 11 years' experience managing conservation planning efforts, including supervision of biologists, and has set aside adequate time for this task. A. A. Rich has over 25 years of technical in a wide range of fisheries-related projects. Her professional experience encompasses work as a fisheries consultant, fisheries biologist, fish physiologist, analytical chemist, and university lecturer. She is a recognized expert in fishery resources habitat needs and fish physiology and has been called upon as an expert witness on the impacts of water temperature, water quality, water diversions, migration barriers, timber harvest practices, and catch-and-release fishing on fishery resources.

g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation: Provisions for plan revision and adaptive management will be included in the plan. Technical experts on the Advisory Committee will provide peer review for all phases of the data gathering, analysis, and planning efforts.

h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives: As part of a comprehensive watershed planning effort that includes this proposed effort as well as other components, *Friends* has developed a working relationship with a wide range of local groups and regulators, most of whom have agreed to serve on the Advisory Committee. *Friends* also maintains outreach programs with community groups, neighborhood associations, and local schools to improve water quality and habitat values in the watershed. These efforts are consistent with CALFED objectives to improve Bay - Delta environments.