

1 STUDY PURPOSE/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Under an agreement with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) maintains a year round trout fishery in Piru Creek between Pyramid Dam and Frenchman's Flat, located in the Angeles National Forest. To implement this agreement, the California Department of Fish and Game releases a total of 3,000 pounds of hatchery-raised fish into Piru Creek at Frenchman's Flat between November and May. Trout reproduce naturally upstream of Frenchman's Flat and portions of the stream in this location are considered a catch and release area.

The purpose of this study is to conduct four mid-week and four weekend creel census surveys on randomly selected dates at middle Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat from October 2003 through September 2004. Creel census surveys were undertaken to determine angler usage of the area and quantify the number and species of fish caught at each location. Surveys were conducted in the middle section of Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat, which are located approximately two miles downstream of Pyramid Dam.

2 SURVEY DATES AND CENSUS PERSONNEL

Creel census surveys were scheduled on the following dates during August 2004. Four mid-week surveys were scheduled on August 6th, 9th, 10th, and 20th, and four weekend and or holiday dates were scheduled on August 7th, 14th, 15th, and 28th. However, one mid-week day, August 10th, was missed due to an illness. To replace the lost census day, an additional mid-week survey shall be incorporated into the September census dates. Aspen biologists conducted creel census training with the CDFG prior to deploying to the field. Field data were recorded for each angler present during the survey dates and included information including the type and number of fish caught, length and mass of the fish if not released, angler satisfaction, and age demographics. Creel census surveys in Piru Creek were conducted during the month of August 2004 by Lynn Stafford, Chris Huntley, and Christopher Meyer of Aspen Environmental Group, a DWR contractor.

3 SUMMARY

Angler use of both Frenchman's Flat and Piru Creek continued to decline during the month of August with only twenty-nine (29) anglers identified during the survey period. To date, the August survey period recorded the lowest number of total anglers since the commencement of creel surveys in October 2003. This figure is down approximately 41% from the previous month and continues a general trend toward reduced angler presence on Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat. Similar to the July survey period, angler usage was highest in the catch and release area with approximately 55% of all anglers working that section of the creek. Weekday angling remained the prime time for fishing activities at Frenchman's Flat, whereas few anglers were observed during the weekend in this area. At Piru Creek, however, angling was higher during the weekend (11 anglers) than during the week (5 anglers) as anglers moved away from large crowds of swimmers and campers. Primary activities observed during the survey period included picnicking, mountain biking, overnight camping, swimming, hiking, and miscellaneous day use. During weekends, large numbers of campers continue to utilize the area and may limit fishing opportunities in this Frenchman's Flat.

Male anglers remain the largest group of recreational fishermen utilizing both Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat. However, during the August period approximately 45 % of all anglers were female. Typically female anglers comprise a small percentage of the total number of anglers identified on both Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat. In addition, two solo female anglers were identified during the

August survey period, one during the weekend and one during the mid-week. In general few solo female anglers appear to utilize this recreational area.

During the August survey period, 75% of anglers indicated they were satisfied with their overall fishing experience, approximately 3% less than anglers surveyed during the month of July. This is the lowest overall satisfaction value recorded in during the 2004 survey period (October 2003 remains the lowest recorded to date). Interestingly, although all of the 11 anglers surveyed at Piru Creek during the weekend period indicated they were satisfied with their fishing experience, only 18% were satisfied with the size and number of fish caught. Of the 29 anglers surveyed at Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat, 37% were satisfied with the size of the fish and 25% were satisfied with the number of fish captured. During August, only 35 fish were captured, which represents a 79% decrease from the number of fish captured during the previous month (July 160 fish). In addition, despite where the angler fished, all 35 fish were released after capture.

Large numbers of crowds continue to dominate recreational activities during the weekend at both Frenchman's Flat and Piru Creek. Trash and waste remain an ongoing concern despite the efforts and presence of USFS personnel in the Frenchman's Flat area. Anglers continue to raise concerns about human waste and other refuse that litters the area after each weekend. Anglers have also indicated that large amounts of trash including diapers, food waste, and other debris are now present several miles downstream of Frenchman's Flat. After each weekend the creel monitor noted that USFS staff conducted clean up activities throughout the area.

Illegal campfires and poaching continue along Piru Creek although to a lesser extent than previous months. Likewise, foraging for firewood appears to have decreased during the August survey period. This may be the result of increased USFS fire patrols noted by the creel monitor. Additional comments received by anglers during the survey period include:

- Evidence of illegal fishing in catch and release area continues (bait jars and barbed fishing gear)
- Trash is very bad
- Area is trashed after every warm weekend
- Create new entrance gate and charge additional fee to provide for class clean up
- Pleased to see USFS Rangers ticketing illegal parking
- Provide additional stocking
- Great stream close to home
- Did not know stream was not stocked during the summer
- Too many people present during weekends

With the exception of one catfish and a largemouth bass, all fish targeted and caught during the survey period were rainbow trout. Some fishermen continue to utilize the creek for frog and crayfish hunting but would not respond to questions from the monitors. No measurements of fish were taken as all fish were caught and released by the anglers prior to inspection by the monitor. No fish were kept during the August period. A brief summary of the creel census survey results for each site is located below. Table 1 summarizes the creel census data for the month of August.

Table 1 Creel Census Data at Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat August 2004

Creel Census Location	Number of Anglers Per Site	Sex/Age Distribution of Anglers		Hours Fished Per Location	Number of Fish Caught	Number of Fish Released	Percent of Anglers Satisfied with Experience		
							Fishing Experience	Size of Fish	Number of Fish
Frenchman's Flat Mid-week	8*	<16	1 (f) 1 (m)	28.5	6	6	100%	29%	0%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	1 (f) 3 (m)						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	1 (m)								
Frenchman's Flat Weekend	5*	<16	1 (f) 1 (m)	7.5	1	1	100%	40%	40%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	2 (f) 1 (m)						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	0						
>65	0								
Piru Creek Mid-week	5*	<16	0	12	13	13	0%	60%	40%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	1 (f) 3 (m)						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Piru Creek Weekend	11*	<16	1 (m)	41.5	15	15	100%	18%	18%
		16-30	1 (m)						
		31-45	1 (f) 3 (m)						
		46-55	4 (m)						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Totals	29	<16	2 (f) 3 (m)	89.5	35	35	75%**	37%**	25%**
		16-30	1 (m)						
		31-45	5 (f) 10 (m)						
		46-55	4 (m)						
		56-65	3 (m)						
>65	1 (m)								

*Some anglers fished at two locations.

**Total number of anglers combined for both areas.

4. SURVEY RESULTS FRENCHMAN'S FLAT

Frenchman's Flat Mid-Week

- A total of eight (8) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Six (6) fish were caught and all were released by anglers during the midweek census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All eight anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Two (2) of eight (8) anglers (29%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- No anglers were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Two (2) of eight anglers (25%) were female
- Two (2) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, four (4) were between 31-45, zero (0) were between 46-55, one (1) was between 56-65, and one (1) was over 65 years of age.

Frenchman's Flat Weekend

- A total of five (5) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- One (1) fish was caught and released during the weekend census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All five (5) anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Two (2) of (5) anglers (40%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Two (2) of (5) anglers (40%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- Three (3) of the five (5) anglers (60% of anglers) were female
- Two (2) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, three (3) were between 31-45, zero (0) were between 46-55, zero (0) were between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

5. SURVEY RESULTS PIRU CREEK

Piru Creek Mid-Week

- A total of five (5) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- Thirteen (13) fish were caught and all were released during the midweek census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All five (5) anglers (100%) were not satisfied with their fishing experience
- Three (3) of five (5) anglers (60%) were satisfied with the size of fish caught
- Two (2) of five (5) anglers (40%) were satisfied with the number of the fish caught
- One (1) female anglers was identified during the census period
- Zero (0) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, four (4) anglers were between 31-45, zero (0) were between 46-55, one (1) was between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

Piru Creek Weekend

- A total of eleven (11) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- Fifteen (15) fish were caught and all released during the weekend census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All eleven (11) anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Two (2) of eleven (11) anglers (18%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Two (2) of eleven (11) anglers (18%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- One (1) female angler was identified during the census period
- One (1) angler was less than sixteen years old, one (1) angler was between 16-30, four (4) were between 31-45, four (4) were between 46-55, one (1) was between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

Figure 1 Angler Satisfaction for Piru Creek Oct 2003- Aug 2004

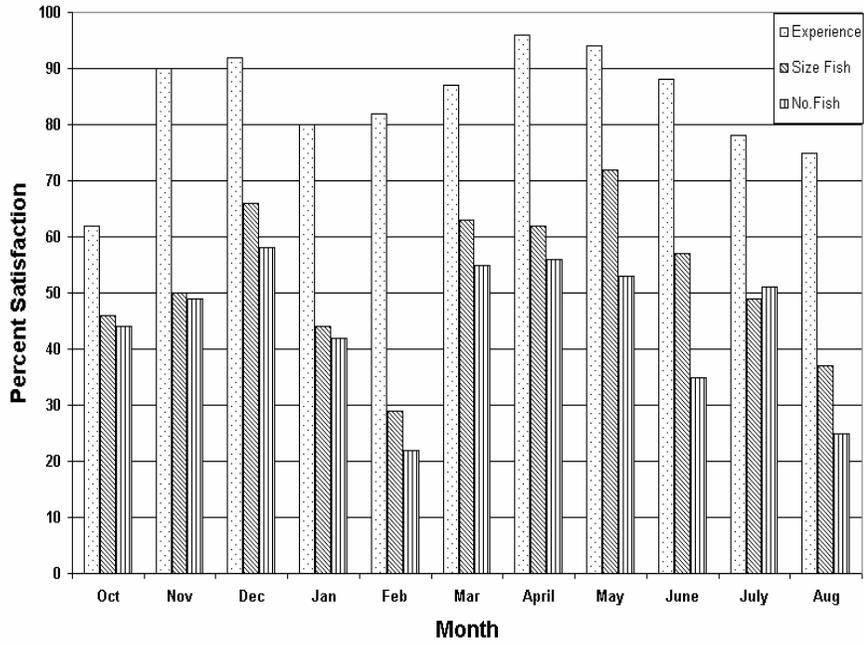


Figure 2 Total Number of Fish Captured and Released
Total Number of Anglers Oct 2003- Aug 2004

