

## **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 April 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 January 2004. Four mid-week surveys were scheduled on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and five weekend dates were scheduled on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. One additional weekend day was added to the January survey schedule to partially replace survey days delayed as a result of forest closures during the October brush fires. 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 January 2004 by Lynn Stafford of Aspen Environmental Group, a DWR contractor.

## **3 SUMMARY**

Male anglers continue to comprise the majority of anglers fishing at both Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat. Of the one hundred forty-two anglers identified during the survey period, only eight women were noted fishing in the project area. Three of the women were children fishing with older relatives and no unaccompanied female anglers were observed during the survey period. Of the anglers interviewed, 80% indicated they were satisfied with their fishing experience, 44% were satisfied with the size of the fish caught and only 42% indicated they were satisfied with the number of fish captured. These values are lower than observed in December where over 90% of the anglers indicated they were satisfied with their fishing experience. Likewise, angler satisfaction was down approximately 20 percentage points, despite record high numbers of captured fish (317 total), for both the size and number of fish caught. However, while overall angler satisfaction was down for January, larger numbers of anglers were interviewed and angler satisfaction does not appear to be significantly lower than previous months. See Figure 1 at the end of this report to compare angler satisfaction responses for creel census surveys conducted from October 2003 to January 2004.

Most of the anglers utilizing both Frenchman's Flat and Piru Creek upstream of Frenchman's Flat were fly fishermen and released fish caught in both areas. During the January survey period approximately two hundred sixty-seven fish were released by anglers (approximately 84% of all fish captured during the survey period), most of which were captured and released from the upper Piru Creek area. Larger numbers of anglers continue to utilize the project area on weekends by a factor of two to one. Day use

appears to fluctuate with many mid-week anglers using the site during lunch hours and early evening periods. Morning use appears to be increasing and may be the result of slightly warmer temperatures.

Litter and refuse continue to be the main source of angler concern and is a common complaint addressed to the census monitor. Several anglers complained that excessive litter and trash dumping are ruining the “best fly fishing site in Los Angeles County”. Gang activity was sited by a number of anglers as a growing concern and tagging (spray painting on rocks and structures) occurs on a regular basis.

Many anglers requested additional flow in Piru Creek and removal of the rock weirs placed in several locations at Frenchman’s Flat. Additional comments received by anglers during the survey period include:

- Illegal and un-licensed fishing occurring in catch and release areas on a regular basis
- Overnight camping occurring at Frenchman’s Flat
- Concern over where to purchase a USFS Adventure Pass
- Provide additional enforcement of CDFG game laws and maintain law enforcement presence to reduce gang activity
- Request larger fish be stocked in the creek
- Stocking of creek does not occur frequently enough
- Provide additional waste receptacles near creek
- Maintain staff or place Kiosk at Frenchman’s Flat during weekend periods

Rainbow trout were the primary species sought by all the anglers surveyed and were the only fish species caught and kept during the January survey period. Of the 317 fish captured, measurements were obtained for only 54 fish. No hatchery marks were identified by the monitor and all fish observed had intact adipose fins. In addition, most fish were caught and released by the anglers prior to inspection by the monitor. A brief summary of the creel census survey results for each site is located below. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the creel census data, including statistics on measured fish, for the month of January 2004.

**Table 1 Creel Census Data at Piru Creek and Frenchman’s Flat January 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	21	<16	2 (m)	72	47	20	86%	52%	48%
		16-30	2 (m)						
		31-45	10 (m) 2 (f)						
		46-55	2 (m)						
		56-65	2 (m)						
>65	1 (m)								
Frenchman’s Flat Weekend	32*	<16	2 (f) 2 (m)	98	24	11	63%	22%	19%
		16-30	10 (m)						
		31-45	11 (m)						
		46-55	3 (m)						
		56-65	3 (m)						
>65									

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							Fishing Experience	Size of Fish	Number of Fish
Piru Creek Mid-week	27*	<16		83	58	48	88%	60%	60%
		16-30	2 (m)						
		31-45	10 (m)						
		46-55	3 (m)						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	2 (m)								
Piru Creek Weekend	62	<16	1 (f) 3 (m)	199.5	188	188	84%	40%	39%
		16-30	10 (m)						
		31-45	21 (m)						
		46-55	2 (f) 15 (m)						
		56-65	10 (m)						
>65									
Totals	142	<16	7 (m) 3 (f)	452.5	317	267	80%**	44%**	42%**
		16-30	24 (m)						
		31-45	52 (m)						
		46-55	23 (m) 2 (f)						
		56-65	16 (m)						
>65	3 (m)								

\*Some anglers fished at two locations.

\*\*Total number of anglers combined for both areas.

**Table 2 Summary of Fish Size and Length by Area for Frenchman's Flat and Upper Piru Creek.**

Creel Census Location	Number of Fish Caught	Number of Fish Measured	Average Length mm	Standard Deviation	Range mm	Average Mass grams	Standard Deviation	Range grams	Hatchery Marks
Frenchman's Flat Mid-week	47	30	272	33	(200-330)	337	61	(225-450)	Not observed
Frenchman's Flat Weekend	24	16	258	29	(230-305)	296	54	(250-400)	Not observed
Piru Creek Mid-week	58	8	211	26	(175-250)	254	34	(225-300)	Not observed
Piru Creek Weekend	188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not observed

#### 4. SURVEY RESULTS FRENCHMAN'S FLAT

##### Frenchman's Flat Mid-Week

- A total of twenty-one (21) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Forty-seven (47) fish were caught and twenty-seven (27) fish were kept by anglers during the midweek census period
- Average size of trout was 272 mm with a mass of 337 g
- Of the twenty-one (21) anglers, eighteen (18) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Eleven (11) of twenty-one (21) anglers were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Ten (10) of twenty-one (21) anglers were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of two (2) women between 31-45 years of age, all other anglers were male

- Two (2) anglers were under 16 years of age, two (2) were between 16-30, twelve (12) anglers were between 31-45 years of age, two (2) were between 46-55, two (2) were between 56-65, and one (1) was over 65 years of age.

### **Frenchman's Flat Weekend**

A brief summary of creel census survey results is located below:

- A total of thirty-two (32) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Twenty-four (24) fish were caught and thirteen (13) fish were kept during the weekend census period
- Average size of trout was 258 mm with a mass of 295 g
- Twenty (20) of thirty-two (32) anglers polled were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Seven (7) of thirty-two (32) anglers were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Six (6) of thirty-two (32) anglers were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of two (2) female children under the age of 16 all other anglers were male
- Five (5) anglers were under sixteen years of age, ten (10) were between 16-30, eleven (11) anglers were between 31-45 years of age, three (3) anglers were between 46-55 years of age, and three (3) were between 56-65 years of age.

## **5. SURVEY RESULTS PIRU CREEK**

### **Piru Creek Mid-Week**

- A total of twenty-seven (27) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- Fifty-eight (58) fish were caught and forty-eight (48) released during the midweek census period
- Average size of trout was 249 mm with a mass of 261 g
- All the anglers polled were satisfied with their experience
- Fourteen (14) of twenty-seven (27) anglers were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Twelve (12) of twenty-seven (27) anglers were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- All anglers were male
- Two (2) anglers were between 16-30 years of age, ten (10) were between 31-45 years of age, three (3) were between 46-55 years of age, one (1) was between 56-65 years of age, and two (2) were over 65 years of age.

### **Piru Creek Weekend**

- A total of sixty-two (62) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- One hundred and eighty-eight (188) fish were caught and all fish were released during the weekend census period
- No size or mass information was obtained (catch and release area)
- Fifty-two (52) of sixty-two (62) anglers were satisfied with their experience
- Twenty-five (25) of sixty-two (62) anglers were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Twenty-four (24) of sixty-two (62) anglers were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of one (1) female less than 16 years of age and two (2) females between 45-55 years of age, all other anglers were male
- Four (4) anglers were less than 16 years of age, ten (10) anglers were between 16-30 years of age, twenty-one (21) anglers were between 31-45, seventeen (17) were between 46-55, and ten (10) anglers were between 56-65 years of age.

Figure 1. Angler Satisfaction (%) and Total Number Fish Caught/Number of Anglers Present from October 2003 to January 2004

