

## **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 August 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 June 2004. Four mid-week surveys were scheduled on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and four weekend dates were scheduled on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. 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 June 2004 by Lynn Stafford, Chris Huntley, Carolina Morgan, Kathleen Robertson, 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 June with only sixty-six (66) anglers identified during the survey period. With the exception of the October 2003 survey, which to date represented the lowest angler usage (52), only sixty-six (66) anglers were recorded utilizing Piru Creek during the month of June. This is an approximate 40% reduction from the previous month. As summer stocking of rainbow trout in Frenchman's Flat does not occur between May and October, angler usage is likely to continue to decline. In addition, day use including camping, picnicking, and swimming activities at both upper Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat continue to increase. As summarized below, weekend angler usage continues to decline as competition between anglers and swimmers increases. For example, at Frenchman's Flat only nine anglers were identified during the weekend survey period. Even in upstream reaches of Piru Creek, competition between swimmers and bathers continues to occur, and overall usage was substantially reduced from previous months.

Although male anglers continue to comprise the majority of fisherman at both Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat several families with young female children were observed fishing during the June creel survey. Of the sixty-six (66) anglers identified during the survey period, nine women (ca. 14% of all anglers) were noted fishing in the project area. No single female anglers were identified during the June survey period.

Overall, most anglers (88%) remained satisfied with their general fishing experience during the June survey period. In addition, most anglers indicated they were aware that fish are not stocked during the summer months in Piru Creek. Therefore, most anglers focused their efforts on catch and release area,

although approximately 20% of fish were captured in Frenchman's Flat. Overall, approximately 53% of the anglers were satisfied with the size of the fish caught, however only 35% indicated they were satisfied with the number of fish captured. Compared to the previous month, where six hundred and twenty-two (622) fish were captured, only two hundred and nine (209) fish were captured in June. With the exception of February, in which heavy precipitation limited fishing success, June represents the lowest satisfaction level for total numbers of fish captured to date. See Figure 1 and 2 at the end of this report to compare angler satisfaction responses for creel census surveys conducted from October 2003 to June 2004.

During the month of June, fly and lure fisherman appeared to comprise the majority of anglers utilizing both Frenchman's Flat and Piru Creek. In addition, anglers focused their fishing efforts in and near the catch and release area. Of the two hundred and nine (209) fish captured during June, all fish were released back into the creek. Midweek usage was not significantly different for Frenchman's Flat, however substantially more anglers fished at upper Piru Creek during the weekend. Reports from the creel monitors continue to indicate that increased summer use of the area by non-anglers may limit the fishing opportunities along Piru Creek. In addition, interviews with anglers indicated that many fisherman move to other areas (High Sierra's, San Gabriel Mountains, etc.) during the summer months.

Litter and refuse continue to dominate the majority of complaints received from both anglers and hikers. Recent comments from anglers have also included the presence of numerous illegal campfires throughout the area, and reports that some fishermen cook their catch along the creek channel. In addition, poaching remains a significant concern and is repeatedly reported to the creel monitor. In fact, many anglers have commented that few large fish remain in the catch and release area.

Additional comments received by anglers during the survey period include:

- Recreational shooting occurring too close to anglers
- Stock larger fish
- Trash is horrible
- Illegal campfires common
- Site would benefit from a full time Ranger
- Where is agency enforcement
- Not enough water
- Too windy to fly fish
- Anglers worried about increased summer water temperatures
- Place additional signs identifying catch and release area
- Only small fish now occur in the catch and release area
- Surprised that fishing was so bad in June
- Violations continue in catch and release areas on a regular basis

Rainbow trout remained the primary species sought by anglers and were the only fish reported captured during the survey period. In addition, anglers notified the monitor that several large Koi were observed in the catch and release area. 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 June 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 June 2004.

**Table 1 Creel Census Data at Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat June 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 (m)	22	20	20	100%	50%	50%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	5 (m)						
		46-55	1 (f) 2 (m)						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Frenchman's Flat Weekend	9*	<16	2 (f)	19	15	15	90%	67%	10%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	5 (m)						
		46-55	1 (m)						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Piru Creek Mid-week	12*	<16	0	37.5	60	60	100%	42%	42%
		16-30	2 (m)						
		31-45	5 (m)						
		46-55	2 (m)						
		56-65	2 (m)						
>65	1 (m)								
Piru Creek Weekend	37*	<16	2 (f)	122	114	114	61%	53%	39%
		16-30	5 (m)						
		31-45	11 (m)						
		46-55	1 (f) 4 (m)						
		56-65	1 (f) 1 (m)						
>65	0								
Totals	66	<16	0	200.5	209	209	88%**	53%**	35%**
		16-30	15 (m)						
		31-45	3 (f) 43 (m)						
		46-55	1 (f) 20 (m)						
		56-65	17 (m)						
>65	8 (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 ten (10) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Twenty (20) fish were caught and all released by anglers during the midweek census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All ten (10) anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Five (5) of ten (10) anglers (50%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Five (5) of ten (10) anglers (50%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of one (1) female angler (10% of anglers), all anglers were male
- One (1) angler was less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, five (5) were between 31-45, three (3) was between 46-55, one (1) were between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

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

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

- A total of nine (9) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Nineteen (19) fish were caught and all were released during the weekend census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- Eight (8) of nine (9) anglers (90%) polled were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Six (6) of nine (9) anglers (67%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Only one (1) of nine (9) anglers (10%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of two (2) female children accompanied by parents (22% of anglers), all other anglers were male
- Two (2) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, five (5) were between 31-45, one (1) was between 46-55, one (1) was between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

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

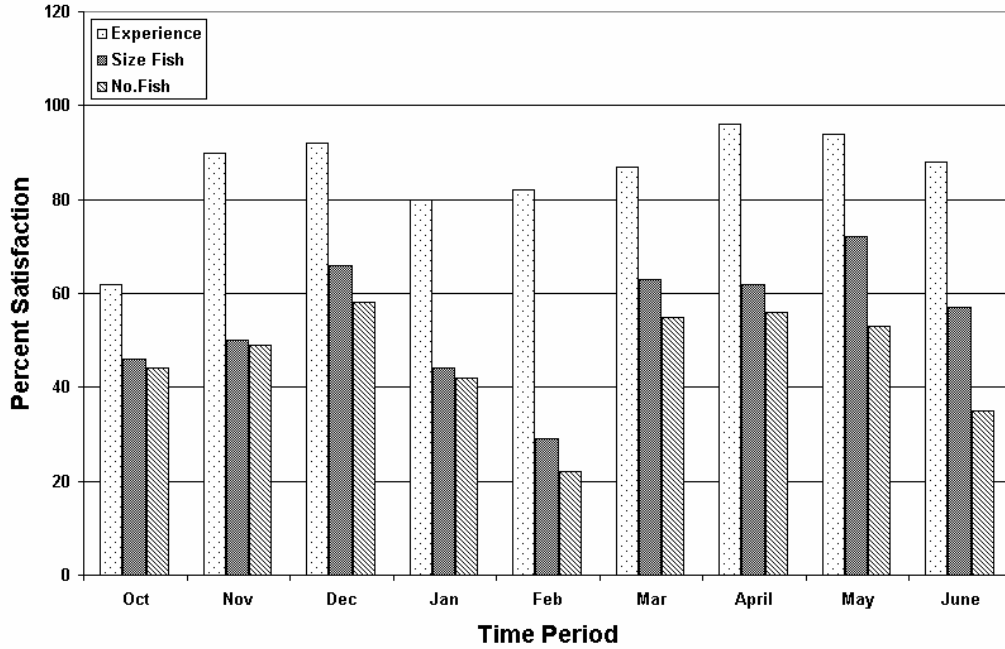
### **Piru Creek Mid-Week**

- A total of twelve (12) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- Sixty (60) fish were caught and all were released during the midweek census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All twelve (12) anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Five (5) of twelve (12) anglers (42%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Five (5) of twelve (12) anglers (42%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- No female anglers were identified during the census period
- Zero (0) anglers were less than sixteen years old, two (2) anglers were between 16-30, five (5) were between 31-45, two (2) were between 46-55, two (2) were between 56-65, and one (1) was over 65 years of age.

### **Piru Creek Weekend**

- A total of thirty-seven (37) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- One hundred and fourteen (114) fish were caught and released during the weekend census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- Twenty-two (22) of thirty-seven (37) anglers (61%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Nineteen (19) of thirty-seven (37) anglers (53%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Fourteen (14) of thirty-seven (37) anglers (39%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- With the exception of four (4) female anglers (10% of anglers), all other anglers were male
- Two (2) anglers were less than sixteen years old, five (5) anglers were between 16-30, eleven (11) were between 31-45, five (5) were between 46-55, two (2) were between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

**Figure 1. Angler Satisfaction for Piru Creek  
 Oct 2003 - June 2004**



**Figure 2. Total Number of Fish Captured and Released / Total Number of  
 Anglers  
 Oct 2003 - June 2004**

