

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 September 2004. Four mid-week surveys were scheduled on September 7th, 10th, 13th, and 20th; and four weekend and or holiday dates were scheduled on September 19th, 20th, 25th, and 26th. 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 during the month of September was the lowest recorded during the twelve month survey period. Only fifteen (15) anglers were identified during the survey period. This represents a 50% reduction in use from the previous month and supports a general trend in declining usage after the cessation of trout stocking in May. Interestingly, most anglers (80% of all anglers) fished at Frenchman's Flat. This is contrast to the previous months where most angling pressure occurred in the catch and release area. One comment received from an angler interviewed during the survey was "the catch and release area has been fished out." Similarly, all fish captured during September were recorded from Frenchman's Flat or the area immediately downstream of the Flat. During September, most anglers were recorded during weekend periods (67% of all anglers) with most of the anglers consisting of family groups. During weekdays, one or two anglers would arrive, and in some cases remain for several hours. On one occasion two anglers, the only people present that weekday, captured thirty (30) fish in a single five (5) hour period. These represented most of the fish captured during the September survey period. During one weekday, a group of anglers were present but would not speak to the monitor, but apparently did not catch any fish. Other activities observed during the survey period included motorcycle riding, picnicking, mountain biking, overnight camping, swimming, hiking, and miscellaneous day use. During weekends, large numbers of campers continue to utilize the area.

Only male anglers were recorded during the September survey period. During the September survey period, 88% of anglers indicated they were satisfied with their overall fishing experience, up slightly from the previous month. It is noteworthy that although few fish were captured and most anglers were

displeased with the lack of fish, most anglers remained satisfied with their overall fishing experience. However, one angler did note that he was very disappointed in the general decline of the area and would not return unless the area is cleaned up and the poaching controlled. While most anglers remain satisfied with their general experience only 22% were satisfied with the size and number of fish caught. While this figure represents a slight increase from the August survey, the overall satisfaction value remains low. In fact many anglers did not catch any fish and with the exception of four anglers the remaining anglers were not satisfied with the size or number of fish captured. During September, only 33 fish were captured, which represents a slight reduction from the previous month and is the lowest recorded to date. Of these, all were released after capture.

Weekend day use and camping remains high 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. Clean up activities conducted by USFS and the California Department of Forestry was noted by the creel monitor. The major complaint received from anglers continues to focus on the amount of trash, and camping debris that litters the area after every weekend. Although overall usage appears to be declining, large numbers of people continue to use the area and appear to disregard the signs prohibiting campfires and littering. Likewise, despite the presence of numerous trash bins, waste continues to be left along the creek bank after every weekend. Additional comments received by anglers during the survey period include:

- Trash and plastic diapers litter the banks of the creek
- Crude music and use of motor bikes ruined fishing experience
- Excessive amount of broken bottles in creek
- Poaching in catch and release area
- Site is overused and under maintained
- Catch and release area is fished out
- Trash litters the creek downstream of Frenchman's Flat

With the exception of one largemouth bass, all fish targeted and caught during the survey period were rainbow trout. 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 September 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 September.

Table 1. Creel Census Data at Piru Creek and Frenchman's Flat September 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	4	<16	0	22	31	31	100%	50%	50%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	3 (m)						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Frenchman's Flat Weekend	8	<16	2 (m)	30	2	2	50%	37%	37%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	2 (m)						
		46-55	3 (m)						
		56-65	1 (m)						
>65	0								
Piru Creek Mid-week	1	<16	0	4	0	0	100%	0%	0%
		16-30	1 (m)						
		31-45	0						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	0						
>65	0								
Piru Creek Weekend	2	<16	0	10	0	0	100%	0%	0%
		16-30	0						
		31-45	2 (m)						
		46-55	0						
		56-65	0						
>65	0								
Totals*	15	<16	2 (m)	66	33	33	88%	22%	22%
		16-30	1 (m)						
		31-45	7 (m)						
		46-55	3 (m)						
		56-65	2 (m)						
>65	0								

*Total number of anglers combined for both areas.

4. SURVEY RESULTS FRENCHMAN'S FLAT

Frenchman's Flat Mid-Week

- A total of four (4) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Thirty-one (31) fish were caught and all were released by anglers during the midweek census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- All four anglers (100%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Two (2) of four (4) anglers (50%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- Two (2) of four (4) anglers (50%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- All the anglers that participated in the survey were males
- Zero (0) 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, one (1) was between 56-65, and zero (0) were over 65 years of age.

Frenchman's Flat Weekend

- A total of eight (8) anglers were identified fishing at Frenchman's Flat
- Two (2) fish were caught and released during the weekend census period
- No fish were measured during the census period
- Four (4) anglers (50%) were satisfied with their fishing experience
- Three (3) of 8 anglers (37%) were satisfied with the number of fish caught
- Three (3) of 8 anglers (37%) were satisfied with the size of the fish caught
- All the anglers that participated in the survey were males
- Two (2) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, two (2) were between 31-45, three (3) were 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 one (1) angler was identified fishing in Piru Creek
- The one angler (100%) was satisfied with their fishing experience
- Zero (0) fish were caught during the midweek census period
- Zero (0) female anglers was identified during the census period
- Zero (0) anglers were less than sixteen years old, one (1) angler was between 16-30, zero (0) anglers 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.

Piru Creek Weekend

- A total of two (2) anglers were identified fishing in Piru Creek
- The two (2) anglers (100%) were satisfied with their overall fishing experience
- Zero (0) fish were caught
- Zero (0) female anglers was identified during the census period
- Zero (0) anglers were less than sixteen years old, zero (0) anglers were between 16-30, two (2) 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.

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

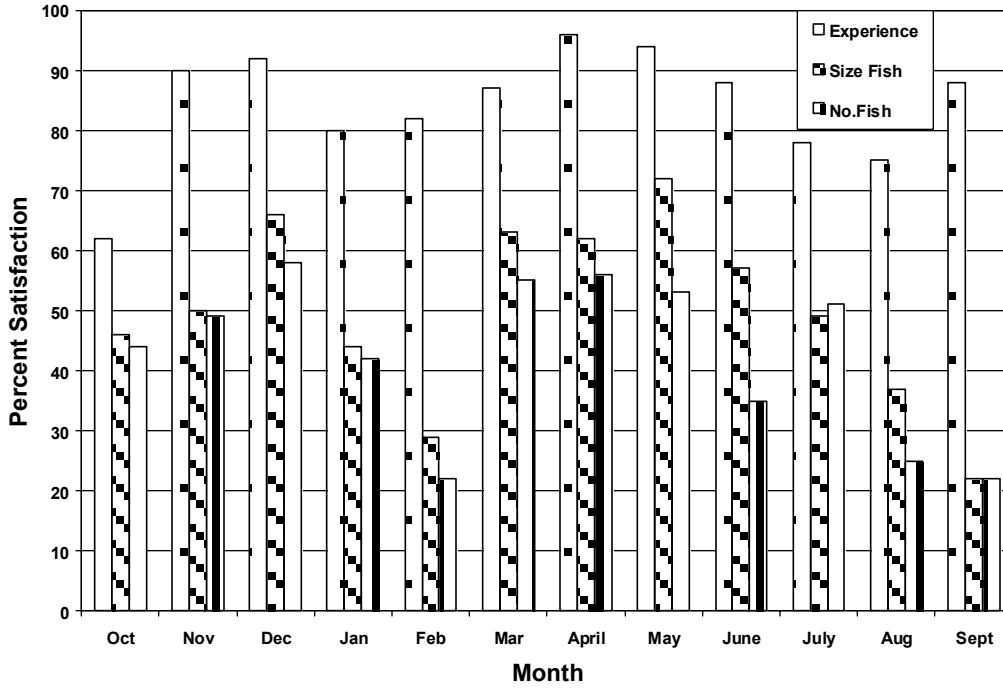


Figure 2 Total Number of Fish Captured and Released
 Total Numbers of Anglers
 Oct 2003-Sept 2004

