

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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September 9, 2011



Charles R. Hoppin, Chairman
State Water Resources Control Board
C/O Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor [95814]
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, California 95812-0100

**Comment Letter: Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation and California State
Park Proposals: Phase 1 (Planning/Design/Engineering) & 2 (Implementation) -
Arroyo Sequit Steelhead Barrier Removal Project, Leo Carrillo State Park,
Los Angeles County, California**

Dear Mr. Hoppin:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) strongly supports Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation's (SMBRF) and California Department of Parks and Recreation's ("California State Parks") proposals to remove three in-stream barriers on Arroyo Sequit Creek. The proposed project will remove two Arizona crossings and a check dam. Free span bridges will be installed at the Arizona crossing locations. Implementation of this project will provide access to an additional 4.5 linear miles of habitat to the federally endangered Southern California steelhead trout (*Ocorhynchus mykiss*), and improve water quality by reducing stream channel erosion and instream sediment loading problems created by the existing structures.

In 1999, the governing board of the SMMC authorized membership in the Southern California Steelhead Recovery Coalition. The SMMC is one of the founding members of the Coalition and barrier removal is one of the issues the Coalition addressed. The single greatest cause of the population crash of the southern steelhead in the Santa Monica Mountains is the loss of access to freshwater habitat due to the construction of migration barriers and flood control structures. Enhancing wildlife habitat for the federally endangered steelhead and improving public access in the Santa Monica Mountains directly implement the mission of this agency.

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This project has been outlined by many other agencies as a priority. California Trout's 2006 Santa Monica Steelhead Habitat Assessment Report assessed 23 watersheds within the Santa Monica Mountains for habitat value and existing in-stream migration barriers. Arroyo Sequit was identified as a high priority for restoration. The National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Game have also identified removal of steelhead barriers in the Arroyo Sequit watershed as a high priority. Both California State Parks and the National Park Service have identified this project as a priority in their General Plan documents.

The SMMC strongly supports this project and urges you to approve funding for this important project. If you have any questions, please contact me at (310) 589-3200, ext. 128, or via email at edelman@smmc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



PAUL EDELMAN
Deputy Director
Natural Resources and Planning