



Ancil Hoffman Salmonid Habitat Project

Overview

The Ancil Hoffman Salmonid Habitat Project (Project) enhances spawning and rearing areas for salmon and steelhead trout in the lower American River near Ancil Hoffman Park. This park is adjacent to the American River, halfway between Folsom Dam and downtown Sacramento



Alcove construction

Background

The Central Valley Project Improvement Act directs the Department of Interior to develop and implement a continuing program for the purpose of restoring and replenishing, as needed, salmonid spawning gravel lost due to the construction and operation of Central Valley Project dams, bank protection projects, and other actions that have reduced the availability of spawning gravel and rearing habitat in the lower American River downstream from Nimbus Dam.

The lower American River is home to 43 fish species, including Central Valley steelhead (listed as threatened by the federal Endangered Species Act) and fall-run Chinook salmon. The river is a major water supply source for about 2 million people.

Fall-run Chinook salmon migrate to the lower American

River as adults spawn from October to December. In the egg-laying process, females create a nest called a redd in loose gravel in flowing water, depositing their

eggs and then covering them up with more gravel. Once hatched, young salmon move to the river's shallow, slower moving side channels to find protection from predators and grow before swimming back out to the Pacific Ocean.

Nimbus and Folsom dams block upstream sediment sources that would otherwise replenish downstream habitat quality. The dams also block salmonids from reaching historic spawning areas. The Ancil Hoffman area of the river is an area ripe for enhancement of rearing and spawning habitat.



Chinook salmon

The Project Before



The Project recreates spawning and rearing areas by constructing new gravel beds in the river and carving a new alcove to protect juvenile fish. About 5,800 cubic yards of rock and gravel was excavated from an existing bar to create the alcove. The excavated material was cleaned and sorted into the optimum size for salmon and steelhead spawning.

Woody material incorporated into the alcove and willow plantings will create places for young fish to feed, grow, and hide from predators. About 16,000 cubic yards of clean rock were added to the river. The alcove provides incrementally inundated rearing habitat to provide juvenile fish a place to rear under a range of river flows.

Partners include: National Marine Fisheries Service, Sacramento County, American River Water Forum, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Benefits

Native fish have shown a remarkable ability to quickly access and take advantage of projects that rehabilitate or create new spawning and rearing habitat. Previous improvement projects have shown measurable results, including surges in redds in areas where there were very few before restoration. Steelhead spawn in this location with great frequency and juvenile salmonids rear in the side channel.

The Project After



The light-colored areas in the river are salmon redds (nests) in December 2023.

Additional Information

Visit the Central Valley Project Improvement Act web page to learn about other projects here: <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvpia/>