STREAM INVENTORY REPORT

Pullen Creek

INTRODUCTION

A stream inventory was conducted during the summer of 1997 on Pullen Creek beginning at the confluence with Bear River, and an unnamed tributary to Pullen Creek. The inventory was conducted in two parts: habitat inventory and biological inventory. The objective of the habitat inventory was to document the habitat available to anadromous salmonids in Pullen Creek. The objective of the biological inventory was to document the presence and distribution of juvenile salmonid species.

The objective of this report is to document the current habitat conditions, and recommend options for the potential enhancement of habitat for chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout. Recommendations for habitat improvement activities are based upon target habitat values suitable for salmonids in California's north coast streams.

WATERSHED OVERVIEW

Pullen Creek is tributary to the Bear River, tributary to the Pacific Ocean, located in Humboldt County, California (Map 1). Pullen Creek's legal description at the confluence with Bear River is T01S R01E. Its location is 40°23′03″ north latitude and 124°04′29″ west longitude. Pullen Creek is a 1st order stream and has approximately 2.1 miles of blue line stream according to the USGS Scotia 7.5 minute quadrangle. Pullen Creek drains a watershed of approximately 2.7 square miles. Elevations range from about 1320 feet at the mouth of the creek to 1800 feet in the headwater areas. Douglas fir and grass dominates the watershed. The watershed is entirely privately owned and is managed for timber production. Vehicle access exists via Monument Ridge Road.

METHODS

The habitat inventory conducted in Pullen Creek follows the methodology presented in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual* (Flosi and Reynolds, 1991 rev. 1994). The California Conservation Corps (CCC) Technical Advisors and Watershed Stewards Project/AmeriCorps (WSP/AmeriCorps) Members that conducted the inventory were trained in standardized habitat inventory methods by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). This inventory was conducted by a two-person team.

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SAMPLING STRATEGY

The inventory uses a method that samples approximately 10% of the habitat units within the survey reach (Hopelain, 1994). All habitat units included in the survey are classified according to habitat type and their lengths are measured. All pool units are measured for maximum depth, depth of pool tail crest, dominant substrate composing the pool tail crest, and embeddedness. Habitat unit types encountered for the first time are further measured for all the parameters and characteristics on the field form. Additionally, from the ten habitat units on each field form page, one is randomly selected for complete measurement.

HABITAT INVENTORY COMPONENTS

A standardized habitat inventory form has been developed for use in California stream surveys and can be found in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*. This form was used in Pullen Creek to record measurements and observations. There are nine components to the inventory form.

1. Flow:

Flow is measured in cubic feet per second (cfs) at the bottom of the stream survey reach using standard flow measuring equipment, if available. In some cases flows are estimated.

2. Channel Type:

Channel typing is conducted according to the classification system developed and revised by David Rosgen (1985 rev. 1994). This methodology is described in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*. Channel typing is conducted simultaneously with habitat typing and follows a standard form to record measurements and observations. There are five measured parameters used to determine channel type: 1) water slope gradient, 2) entrenchment, 3) width/depth ratio, 4) substrate composition, and 5) sinuosity.

3. Temperatures:

Both water and air temperatures are measured and recorded at every tenth habitat unit. The time of the measurement is also recorded. Both temperatures are taken in degrees Fahrenheit at the middle of the habitat unit and within one foot of the water surface.

4. Habitat Type:

Habitat typing uses the 24 habitat classification types defined by McCain and others (1988). Habitat units are numbered sequentially and assigned a type identification number selected from a standard list of 24 habitat types. Dewatered units are labeled "dry". Pullen Creek habitat typing used

standard basin level measurement criteria. These parameters require that the minimum length of a described habitat unit must be equal to or greater than the stream's mean wetted width. Channel dimensions were measured using hip chains, range finders, tape measures, and stadia rods. All units were measured for mean length; additionally, the first occurrence of each unit type and a randomly selected 10% subset of all units were sampled for all features on the sampling form. Pool tail crest depth at each pool unit was measured in the thalweg. All measurements were in feet to the nearest tenth.

5. Embeddedness:

The depth of embeddedness of the cobbles in pool tail-out reaches is measured by the percent of the cobble that is surrounded or buried by fine sediment. In Pullen Creek, embeddedness was ocularly estimated. The values were recorded using the following ranges: 0 - 25% (value 1), 26 - 50% (value 2), 51 - 75% (value 3) and 76 - 100% (value 4). Additionally, a value of 5 was assigned to tail-outs deemed unsuited for spawning due to inappropriate substrate particle size, having a bedrock tail-out, or other considerations.

6. Shelter Rating:

Instream shelter is composed of those elements within a stream channel that provide salmonids protection from predation, reduce water velocities so fish can rest and conserve energy, and allow separation of territorial units to reduce density related competition. The shelter rating is calculated for each fully-described habitat unit by multiplying shelter value and percent cover. Using an overhead view, a quantitative estimate of the percentage of the habitat unit covered is made. All cover is then classified according to a list of nine cover types. In Pullen Creek, a standard qualitative shelter value of 0 (none), 1 (low), 2 (medium), or 3 (high) was assigned according to the complexity of the cover. Thus, shelter ratings can range from 0-300 and are expressed as mean values by habitat types within a stream.

7. Substrate Composition:

Substrate composition ranges from silt/clay sized particles to boulders and bedrock elements. In all fully-described habitat units, dominant and sub-dominant substrate elements were ocularly estimated using a list of seven size classes and recorded as a one and two respectively. In addition the dominant substrate composing the pool tail outs is recorded for each pool.

8. Canopy:

Stream canopy density was estimated using modified handheld spherical densiometers as described in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*. Canopy density relates to the amount of stream shaded from the sun. In Pullen Creek, an estimate of the percentage of the habitat unit covered by canopy was made from the center of approximately every third unit in addition to every fully-described unit, giving an approximate 30% sub-sample. In addition, the area of canopy

was estimated ocularly into percentages of coniferous or deciduous trees.

9. Bank Composition and Vegetation:

Bank composition elements range from bedrock to bare soil. However, the stream banks are usually covered with grass, brush, or trees. These factors influence the ability of stream banks to withstand winter flows. In Pullen Creek, the dominant composition type and the dominant vegetation type of both the right and left banks for each fully-described unit were selected from the habitat inventory form. Additionally, the percent of each bank covered by vegetation was estimated and recorded.

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Biological sampling during stream inventory is used to determine fish species and their distribution in the stream. In Pullen Creek fish presence was observed from the stream banks, and one site was electrofished using a Smith-Root Model 12 electrofisher. These sampling techniques are discussed in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the habitat inventory form are entered into Habitat, a dBASE 4.2 data entry program developed by Tim Curtis, Inland Fisheries Division, California Department of Fish and Game. This program processes and summarizes the data, and produces the following six tables:

- Riffle, flatwater, and pool habitat types
- Habitat types and measured parameters
- Pool types
- Maximum pool depths by habitat types
- Dominant substrates by habitat types
- Mean percent shelter by habitat types

Graphics are produced from the tables using Quattro Pro. Graphics developed for Pullen Creek include:

- Riffle, flatwater, pool habitats by percent occurrence
- Riffle, flatwater, pool habitats by total length
- Total habitat types by percent occurrence
- Pool types by percent occurrence
- Total pools by maximum depths
- Embeddedness
- Pool cover by cover type
- Dominant substrate in the pool tail-outs

- Percent canopy
- Bank composition by composition type
- Bank vegetation by vegetation type

HABITAT INVENTORY RESULTS

* ALL TABLES AND GRAPHS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THE REPORT *

The following results and discussion are for the main stem Pullen Creek. Results and discussion for the unnamed tributary are presented as a subsection following the main body of this report.

The habitat inventory of June 17 and 18, 1997, and June 30, 1997, was conducted by David Jones and Bill Malinowski (WSP/AmeriCorps). The total length of the stream surveyed was 6,189 feet with an additional 91 feet of side channel.

Flow was measured at the bottom of the survey reach with a Marsh-McBirney Model 2000 flowmeter at 3.04 cfs on June 30, 1997.

Pullen Creek is an B4 channel type for the entire 6,189 feet of stream reach surveyed. B4 channels are moderately entrenched, moderate gradient, riffle dominated channel, with infrequently spaced pools; very stable plan and profile; stable banks; gravel channel.

Water temperatures taken during the survey period ranged from 52 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit. Air temperatures ranged from 55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Table 1 summarizes the Level II riffle, flatwater, and pool habitat types. Based on frequency of **occurrence** there were 25% riffle units, 33% flatwater units, and 42% pool units (Graph 1). Based on total **length** of Level II habitat types there were 29% riffle units, 56% flatwater units, and 15% pool units (Graph 2).

Thirteen Level IV habitat types were identified (Table 2). The most frequent habitat types by percent **occurrence** were step runs, 33%; low gradient riffles, 23%; and mid-channel pools, 20% (Graph 3). Based on percent total **length**, step runs made up 56%, and low gradient riffles made up 29%.

A total of 40 pools were identified (Table 3). Main channel pools were most frequently encountered at 58% and comprised 71% of the total length of all pools (Graph 4).

Table 4 is a summary of maximum pool depths by pool habitat types. Pool quality for salmonids increases with depth. Fifteen of the 40 pools (37.5%) had a depth of two feet or greater (Graph 5).

The depth of cobble embeddedness was estimated at pool tail-outs. Of the 40 pool tail-outs

measured, 8 had a value of 1 (20%); 23 had a value of 2 (58%); 5 had a value of 3 (13%); 2 had a value of 4 (5%) and 2 had a value of 5 (40%) (Graph 6). On this scale, a value of 1 indicates the highest quality of spawning substrate and a value of 5 indicates the tail-out is not suitable for spawning. In Pullen Creek, the 2 pool tail-outs which were valued at 5 were unsuitable for spawning due to the tail-outs being comprised of large cobble, boulder, bedrock or wood.

A shelter rating was calculated for each habitat unit and expressed as a mean value for each habitat type within the survey using a scale of 0-300. Riffle habitat types had a mean shelter rating of 48, flatwater habitat types had a mean shelter rating of 28, and pool habitats had a mean shelter rating of 84 (Table 1). Of the pool types, the scour pools had the highest mean shelter rating at 103. Main channel pools had a mean shelter rating of 94 (Table 3).

Table 5 summarizes mean percent cover by habitat type. Boulders are the dominant cover type in Pullen Creek. Small and large woody debris are lacking in nearly all habitat types. Graph 7 describes the pool cover in Pullen Creek.

Table 6 summarizes the dominant substrate by habitat type. Of the 4 low gradient riffles fully measured two had small cobble and one had gravel as the dominant substrate. Small cobble was the dominant substrate observed in 22 of the 39 pool tail-outs measured (56.4%). Gravel was the next most frequently observed dominant substrate type and occurred in 30.8% of the pool tail-outs (Graph 8).

The mean percent canopy density for the stream reach surveyed was 80%. The mean percentages of deciduous and coniferous trees were 73% and 27%, respectively. Graph 9 describes the canopy in Pullen Creek.

For the stream reach surveyed, the mean percent right bank vegetated was 74.1%. The mean percent left bank vegetated was 64.3%. The dominant elements composing the structure of the stream banks consisted of 16.7% bedrock, 7.1% boulder, 50% cobble/gravel, and 26.2% sand/silt/clay (Graph 10). Deciduous tree was the dominant vegetation type observed in 59.5% of the units surveyed. Additionally, 30.1% of the units surveyed had coniferous trees as the dominant vegetation type. (Graph 11).

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY RESULTS

One site was electrofished on June 6, 1997, in Pullen Creek. The site was sampled by Ruth Goodfield (DFG) and Jessie Robertson (WSP/AmeriCorps).

The site sampled included habitat units 0004-0005, a pool approximately 283 feet from the confluence with Bear River. The site yielded 24 steelhead.

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DISCUSSION

Pullen Creek is a B4 channel type for the entire 6,189 feet of stream surveyed. The suitability of B4 channel types for fish habitat improvement structures is as follows: excellent for plunge weirs, boulder clusters, bank placed boulders, single and opposing wing-deflectors and log cover.

The water temperatures recorded on the survey days June 17, 1997 to June 30, 1997 and ranged from 52 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit. Air temperatures ranged from 55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. This is a good water temperature range for salmonids. To make any further conclusions, temperatures would need to be monitored throughout the warm summer months, and more extensive biological sampling would need to be conducted.

Flatwater habitat types comprised 56% of the total **length** of this survey, riffles 29%, and pools 15%. The pools are relatively shallow, with only 15 of the 40 (37.5%) pools having a maximum depth greater than 2 feet. In general, pool enhancement projects are considered when primary pools comprise less than 40% of the length of total stream habitat. In first and second order streams, a primary pool is defined to have a maximum depth of at least two feet, occupy at least half the width of the low flow channel, and be as long as the low flow channel width. Installing structures that will increase or deepen pool habitat is recommended.

Eight of the 40 pool tail-outs measured had an embeddedness rating of 1. Thirty of the pool tail-outs had embeddedness ratings of 2, 3 or 4. Two of the pool tail-outs had a rating of 5 or were considered unsuitable for spawning. Cobble embeddedness measured to be 25% or less, a rating of 1, is considered to indicate good quality spawning substrate for salmon and steelhead.

The mean shelter rating for pools was 84. The shelter rating in the flatwater habitats was 28. A pool shelter rating of approximately 100 is desirable. The cover that now exists is being provided primarily by boulders in all habitat types. Additionally, large woody debris contribute a small amount. Log and root wad cover structures in the pool and flatwater habitats are needed to improve both summer and winter salmonid habitat. Log cover structure provides rearing fry with protection from predation, rest from water velocity, and also divides territorial units to reduce density related competition.

Thirty-four of the 39 pool tail-outs measured had gravel or small cobble as the dominant substrate. This is generally considered good for spawning salmonids.

The mean percent canopy density for the stream was 80%. In general, revegetation projects are considered when canopy density is less than 80%.

The percentage of right and left bank covered with vegetation was low at 74.1% and 64.3%, respectively. In areas of stream bank erosion or where bank vegetation is not at acceptable levels, planting endemic species of coniferous and deciduous trees, in conjunction with bank stabilization, is recommended.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Pullen Creek should be managed as an anadromous, natural production stream.

2) The limited water temperature data available suggest that maximum temperatures are within the acceptable range for juvenile salmonids. To establish more complete and meaningful temperature regime information, 24-hour monitoring during the July and August temperature extreme period should be performed for 3 to 5 years.

3) Where feasible, design and engineer pool enhancement structures to increase the number of pools. This must be done where the banks are stable or in conjunction with stream bank armor to prevent erosion.

4) Increase woody cover in the pools and flatwater habitat units. Most of the existing cover is from boulders. Adding high quality complexity with woody cover is desirable.

COMMENTS AND LANDMARKS

The following landmarks and possible problem sites were noted. All distances are approximate and taken from the beginning of the survey reach.

0'	Begin survey at confluence with Bear River. Channel type is B4.
551'	Right bank dry tributary.
1,448'	Left bank erosion.
2,349'	Left bank tributary, accessible to anadromous fish (see subsection report).
2,397'	Log debris accumulation (LDA).
2,422'	Ten foot jump.
2,425'	LDA, 30' long x 40' wide x 10' high, not a barrier.
2,551'	LDA, 17' long x 23' wide x 6' high.
3,221'	Right bank erosion, 40' long x 20' high.
3,493'	LDA, 14' long x 30' wide x 4' high.

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3,568' LDA, 40' long x 30' wide x 6' high.

3,926' Steelhead observed.

4,120' LDA, 39' long x 23' wide x 7' high.

4,582' Right bank dry tributary.

4,797' Right bank erosion, 43' long x 50' high.

5,389' LDA, 32' long x 41' wide x 5' high.

5,558' LDA, 33' long x 45' wide x 5' high, retaining 4' gravel.

5,790' Right bank tributary, high gradient, not accessible to anadromous salmonids, minimal flow, 52 degrees F.

5,821' LDA, 32' long x 21' wide x 6' high.

5,896' Left bank dry tributary.

6,189' End of survey. Step run through downed trees that does not appear to be passible. Just upstream is a plunge pool with a 5' jump that is dry. No fish observed above this area.

REFERENCES

Flosi, G., and F. Reynolds. 1994. California salmonid stream habitat restoration manual, 2nd edition. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California.

Hopelain, J. 1995. Sampling levels for fish habitat inventory, unpublished manuscript. California Department of Fish and Game, Inland Fisheries Division, Sacramento, California.

LEVEL III and LEVEL IV HABITAT TYPE KEY

HABITAT TYPE	LETTER	NUMBER
RIFFLE		
Low Gradient Riffle	[LGR]	1.1
High Gradient Riffle	[HGR]	1.2
CASCADE		
Cascade	[CAS]	2.1
Bedrock Sheet	[BRS]	2.2
FLATWATER		
Pocket Water	[POW]	3.1
Glide	[GLD]	3.2
Run	[RUN]	3.3
Step Run	[SRN]	3.4
Edgewater	[EDW]	3.5
MAIN CHANNEL POOLS		
Trench Pool	[TRP]	4.1
Mid-Channel Pool	[MCP]	4.2
Channel Confluence Pool	[CCP]	4.3
Step Pool	[STP]	4.4
SCOUR POOLS		
Corner Pool	[CRP]	5.1
Lateral Scour Pool - Log Enhanced	[LSL]	5.2
Lateral Scour Pool - Root Wad Enhanced	[LSR]	5.3
Lateral Scour Pool - Bedrock Formed	[LSBk]	5.4
Lateral Scour Pool - Boulder Formed	[LSBo]	5.5
Plunge Pool	[PLP]	5.6
BACKWATER POOLS		
Secondary Channel Pool	[SCP]	6.1
Backwater Pool - Boulder Formed	[BPB]	6.2
Backwater Pool - Root Wad Formed	[BPR]	6.3
Backwater Pool - Log Formed	[BPL]	6.4
Dammed Pool	[DPL]	6.5