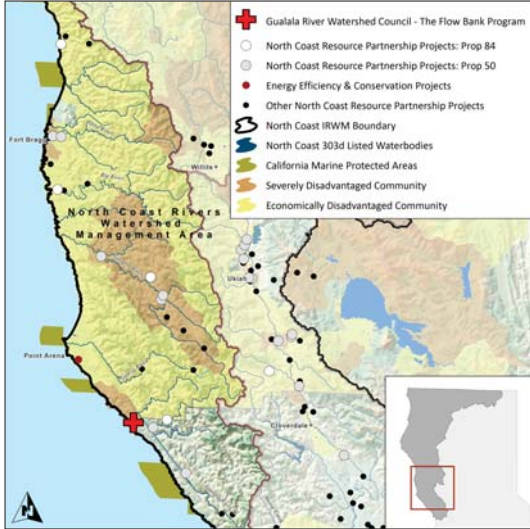


The Flow Bank — Protecting Stream Flow in the Gualala River

GUALALA RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL



COMPLETION DATE

June 1, 2017

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A pattern of low flows in the Gualala River system has caused areas of both main stem and tributary reaches to dry up, leaving disconnected channels and poor water quality in the remaining reaches. Since the onset of the drought, creeks are not meeting winter and summer minimum bypass flow requirements, severely impacting local water companies and triggering increased costs to water consumers.

PROJECT GOALS

- Protect critical surface flows and instream cool water infusion from springs to enhance salmonid rearing habitat
- Provide the watershed community with the knowledge and tools for adapting to an increasingly unstable water future
- Improve the economic vitality in the Gualala River watershed

THE SOLUTION

The GRWC will install fifty-five 5,000 gallon residential and commercial rain water catchments and five 55,000 gallon systems to catch winter rains for use during summer low flow periods. This project will save 550,000 gallons of water per year – over 16 million gallons of water over the life of the tanks – which would normally be pumped from diversions, surface springs, and shallow wells.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project is now in the construction phase and landowner workshops and compliance monitoring are in progress.

PROJECT BUDGET

IRWM funds:	\$ 594,226
Leveraged funds:	\$ 194,798
TOTAL	\$ 789,024

BENEFITS

Economic benefits

- Approximately \$162 per year in increased instream flow for environmental purposes
- An estimated \$2,138 yearly in increased water supply reliability
- About \$60,000 per year in avoided water supply purchases
- Approximately \$12,500 per year in avoided electric costs due to not needing to pump water
- About \$54,000 per year from riparian habitat restoration

Water Quality

- Increased instream flow will improve summer instream water quality

Water Supply

- Increased water supply reliability

Habitat and Ecosystem function benefits

- Improved instream and riparian habitat

Cultural benefits

- Improved community understanding of the impacts of low summer instream flow and methods to alleviate it

Jobs and Local Economic Benefits

- Over ¾ of a million dollars spent locally using local supplies and labor.
- About 7 jobs created/maintained

NEXT STEPS

The Gualala River Watershed Council will continue to work towards improving salmonid habitat in the Gualala River watershed and towards climate resiliency for people in the Gualala community.

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