

Russian River Coho Drought Resiliency Planning and Implementation Program

SONOMA RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



COMPLETION DATE

August 31, 2020

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent years have shown the effect that the drought has had on streamflow, particularly in the tributaries of the Russian River that provide critical spawning and rearing habitat for endangered coho salmon. Finding a balance between the water needs of humans and wildlife is critical to ensuring the recovery of coho salmon and the continued success of our agricultural community.

PROJECT GOALS

- Increased instream flow to improve salmonid habitat
- Improved water supply reliability for agricultural uses
- Increased community capacity to respond to challenges associated with climate change

THE SOLUTION

Sonoma RCD is partnering with Gold Ridge RCD to develop and implement comprehensive water conservation plans for landowners along key reaches of the five tributaries of the Russian River that have been identified as critical to coho salmon. The plans will include a suite of recommendations: rainwater catchment to replace stream withdrawals and enhance agricultural water supply reliability, off-channel storage development, use of soil and plant monitoring devices to decrease irrigation, irrigation efficiency upgrades, and stormwater management/groundwater recharge. Participating properties comprise a variety of land uses including vineyards, rangelands, orchards, crop farms, and private environmental centers/camps. The project will also implement a demonstration rainwater catchment project at an elementary school located on one of the streams. Additional catchment projects identified during water conservation plan development will be submitted for implementation funding as they are designed and funding becomes available.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Project construction and implementation has been ongoing since Spring 2016 and completion is expected by September 2019.

PROJECT BUDGET

IRWM funds:	\$ 343,800
Leveraged funds:	\$ 117,343
TOTAL	\$ 461,143

BENEFITS

Economic benefits

- An estimated \$1,200 per year in benefits associated with increased instream flow
- Approximately \$4,200 per year in benefits associated with increased agricultural water supply

Water Supply

- Increased instream flow of about 0.3 cubic feet per second

Habitat and Ecosystem function benefits

- Species protection of coho, steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) due to enhanced streamflow

Cultural benefits

- Community resiliency to climate change impacts through water supply diversification, demand reduction, and water conservation education

Jobs and Local Economic Benefits

- Approximately \$460,000 spent locally using local supplies and labor when possible
- About 2 jobs created/maintained

NEXT STEPS

The Sonoma RCD will continue to engage willing landowners to protect working lands, agriculture, and the wildlife in the Russian River watershed.

CONTACT

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NORTH COAST RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP