



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

West Coast Region

From Regulatory Relationship to Partnership

Instream gravel mining and salmon habitat restoration on the Mad River, North Coast of California



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Phase One – Regulatory Relationship

Three ESA-listed salmonid species in the lower Mad River:

- SONCC coho salmon
- CC Chinook salmon
- NC steelhead



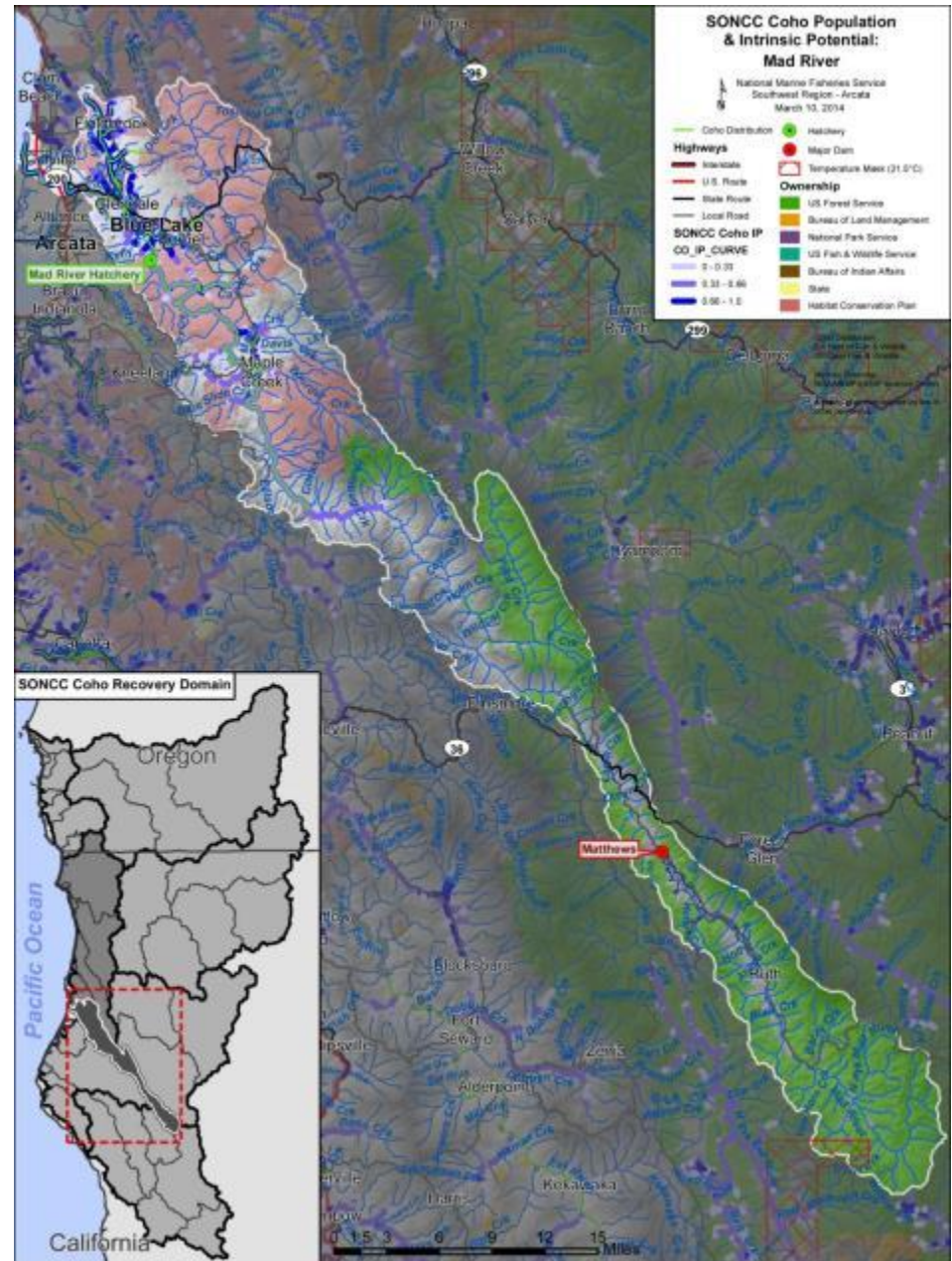
Plus, sensitive spawning and rearing habitat:





With a high potential for recovery:

- Note that the low gradient habitat is in the lower Mad River
- High intrinsic potential for coho salmon recovery within the area dominated by private lands and within the 7 mile gravel mining reach



And, an instream gravel mining industry:



Gravel bar skimming





Equals section 7 consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers and gravel mining applicants:

- Regulated industry at the Federal, State and local levels
- Naturally high sediment yield river and a renewable resource if managed properly
- NOAA gravel mining guidelines discourage mining in spawning habitat
- Intensive mining on the Mad River due to its location near Arcata and Eureka

And results in a contentious consultation setting:

- Two draft jeopardy and adverse modification biological opinions
- Miners feel that they've been working to reduce their impacts and now feel overly regulated
- NOAA frustrated with reactive approach to reducing impacts associated with mining and “the death of a thousand cuts” of listed salmon and steelhead
- Relationships are negatively affected and compromises and solutions seem difficult to find...



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Have you been in a similar situation?

What stories can you share about trust breaking down?

How did you re-build trust after it was broken?

Did your partnership survive or dissolve?

How did you move forward when compromise and solutions seemed difficult to find?

Phase Two – Regulatory Relationship and Developing Partnership

- With encouragement from NOAA, gravel miners include habitat restoration as part of their proposed action
- NOAA can now include the benefits of habitat restoration in our gravel mining biological opinion effects analysis
- Proposed restoration, along with reduced quantities of gravel removed and new mining methods, equals a non-jeopardy biological opinion and a path forward

Setting the stage:

- Habitat restoration now included in the Corps mining permit, NOAA BO, and State mining permits (CDFW and Water Board)
- Miners and agencies begin to work together on habitat restoration projects
- Recovery plans published and help guide efforts
- NOAA Restoration Center included in new partnerships
- Early restoration projects are small scale, low cost with direct funding and miner's match of materials and heavy equipment
- NOAA staff help design and implement large wood structures in the Mad River







North Fork Mad River Confluence, Before Structure





Growing our partnership:

- Begin restoration work on three important tributaries to improve fish passage and restore spawning and rearing habitat
- NOAA contributes preliminary restoration designs for fish passage and habitat improvement
- NOAA helps miners write and apply for grants
- Miners work with neighbors to gain access and permission to implement projects
- Miners contribute more heavy equipment, materials and time
- Other partners begin to join the effort

Leggit Creek Project

- Floodplain and tributary project
- Non-profit organizations join partnership
- First successful grant application and funding helps us grow and promotes good working relationships



Phase Three – Partnership Relationship

- Established partnership attracts new members
- Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe joins partnership
- Many more successful applications for grant funding
- Includes funding from CA Coastal Conservancy, American Rivers, FishAmerica, NRCS and USFWS
- Projects grow in scope, complexity and recovery potential
- Fall 2016 implementation on two important tributary projects

Powers Creek Fish Passage Project

- Important for fish and for developing BLR Tribe's capacity for habitat restoration in the lower Mad River
- Larger and expanded partnership increases complexity of relationships



Quarry Creek Project

- NRCS funds implementation
- Increased landowner involvement



Lessons Learned

- Partnerships with resource extraction industries and private landowners don't just happen, they are made.
- NOAA's entry into partnerships can take many forms, in this case we entered into the partnership through our section 7 regulatory relationship.
- Trust is critical, and had to be re-built after our bruising regulatory experience.



Lessons Learned, continued

How can NOAA Fisheries contribute to the partnership?

- Streamline environmental compliance and permitting
- Help identify and apply for grant funding, money talks!
- Provide designs, technical assistance and leadership
- Jump in and help, be willing to roll up our sleeves and remember that the time we dedicate to the partnership increases trust, our credibility, and our ability to recover listed species

