

**AG Creek Vegetation Management – Update for June 24, 2008**  
**Zone 1/1A Advisory Committee Meeting**  
Julie Thomas/CSLRCD

- The Coastal Commission Coastal Development Permit (CDP) waiver application was submitted on May 29, 2008. The project description and attachments are available on the RCD website at: [http://www.coastalrcd.org/2008\\_veg.html](http://www.coastalrcd.org/2008_veg.html).
- SLO County Department of Planning and Building completed the required Appendix B, “Local Agency Review Form”, of the CDP waiver application and submitted it to the Coastal Commission.
- A site meeting is scheduled for July 8 with CCCs to review vegetation work strategy.
- On June 18, two local biologists, Cindy Cleveland and Sue Christopher, provided a 1-day and night class to four members of the SLO and Santa Maria CCC crews so they can act as red-legged frog (RLF) monitors during vegetation work (Figure 1).



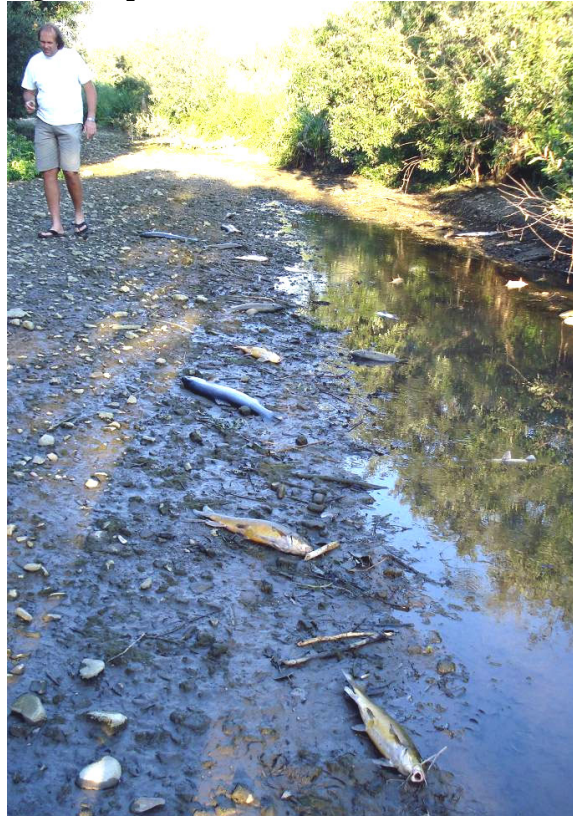
*Figure 1. Cindy Cleveland and California Conservation Corps crew members during RLF monitoring class for 2008 AG Creek vegetation maintenance.*

- During the evening field portion of the June 18 RLF class, several large steelhead trout were observed in a warm, shallow pond behind a beaver dam located between UPRR bridge and Creek Road; one of the steelhead was clearly distressed. Given the forecast hot weather for the coming days, Cindy notified me and the local CDFG District Biologist, Dennis Michniuk, of the situation (CDFG and NOAA permission is required to relocate any steelhead trout). I met Dennis at AG Creek on June 19 to show him the location of the distressed trout and consider possible relocation pools. We were joined by Doug Rischbeiter, State Parks Fishery Biologist.  
Unfortunately, water levels clearly had dropped significantly during the day (likely due to record heat leading to increased evapotranspiration and/or groundwater pumping), as was apparent by the still wet mud near the remaining ponded area. The increased temperatures and decreased water levels resulted in kill of all of the larger fish in the pond, and most of the young of the year (photos below). Dennis collected 7 dead steelhead trout, all approx 24" or longer. In addition, there were 20-30 dead suckers, plus hundreds and hundreds of dead young of the year.
- On Friday, June 20, Steph Wald (CCSE) joined State Parks biologists in their quarterly fish surveys of the lagoon and adjacent AG Creek. During this survey, the group:
  1. Seined several 10+ inch steelhead trout in the lagoon.
  2. E-fished one 101mm steelhead in the reach below Guiton's crossing.
  3. Went back to the site of the fish kill and found several more dead steelhead 25+ inch steelhead, as the pool had completely dried up; they were seen tucked under a bank/brushy area.

**AG Creek fish kill during heat spell - 6/19/08**



*Figure 2. Dead steelhead from AG Creek.*



*Figure 3. Stranded steelhead trout and sucker..*



*Figure 4. Recently deceased trout – note red color.*



*Figure 5. Dead steelhead with many dead young of year.*