



environmental  
DEFENSE CENTER

April 18, 2007

Ms. Nancy L. Rapp  
Parks & Recreation Director  
City of Santa Barbara  
620 Laguna Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Funding for Steelhead Recovery in Mission Creek

Dear Ms. Rapp:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of the Environmental Defense Center (EDC), I am pleased to announce that we have received a generous grant from the Annenberg Foundation to assist with the protection and recovery of endangered steelhead in Santa Barbara's Mission Creek.

As you know, the Southern California Steelhead population has plummeted to approximately one percent of its historic level. This precipitous decline was largely due to the construction of man-made barriers to migration in coastal creeks and rivers. Mission Creek is the former home and breeding ground for a significant population of Southern California Steelhead.

Despite the enormous challenges steelhead face in returning to their native waters, they still attempt the journey with some frequency. EDC members have observed and photographed steelhead attempting to migrate up Mission Creek in seven of the past eight years! Unfortunately, in every case, the fish were stymied by a man-made barrier in the creek and could not successfully reproduce.

There are several man-made steelhead passage impediments remaining on Mission Creek. The first, and most significant, is known as the "CalTrans channel." The CalTrans channel is a mile-long concrete channel constructed in sections during the 1930's and 1960's. Modifying the CalTrans channel for steelhead passage will help open up additional high quality spawning habitat in Mission Creek.

For several years, EDC has participated in a collaborative effort with the City and County of Santa Barbara, California Department of Fish and Game, United States Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, and several NGO partners to eliminate the CalTrans channel barrier. EDC's engineering consultants, Pacific Hydraulic Engineers and Scientists (PHES), have completed a feasibility study of a potential fish passage project along the CalTrans channel. The study analyzed various

alternatives for restoring fish passage while maintaining the CalTrans channel's flood protection capacity.

According to our engineers, the next step is to construct a physical hydrological model of the proposed fish passage project. This model is necessary for the project engineers, designers, and public decision makers to ensure the viability and effectiveness of the project, as well as the safety of Santa Barbara residents. The model will be designed, constructed, and tested by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants.

EDC understands that the City received a \$155,000 grant from the California Department of Fish and Game for work on the physical model portion of the project. Now EDC has received a grant from the Annenberg Foundation's "Blue Planet Initiative" that will cover the additional estimated cost to complete the physical model. Significantly, the Annenberg Foundation funding will also cover the engineer's cost estimate to complete the preliminary design work on the project.

EDC is prepared to transfer up to \$180,000 of the grant to the City of Santa Barbara for the purpose of paying the engineering consultant for the completion of the physical hydrological model and preliminary design work for the Mission Creek steelhead passage project. We anticipate making a \$45,000 payment to the City before the end of this year, with the remainder to be paid upon the consultant's completion of preliminary design work in 2008.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have. EDC looks forward to working with the City on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cameron Benson", written over a white background.

Cameron Benson  
Executive Director