

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FISH AND GAME
FIELD CORRESPONDENCE

MEMO - 348 f
Felix Creek
DIVISION OF FISH AND GAME
BUREAU OF FISH CONSERVATION
SEP 4 1947
REFER TO: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
REVIEW ACTION RECOMMENDATION
REPLY FILE SURVEY

FROM: Lark I Murphy
TO: Bureau of Fish Conservation

PLACE Box 182, The Report

DATE Sept. 3, 1947

SUBJECT: Hellman Dam on Felix Cr., Mendocino Co.

In response to your letter of Aug. 27, Felix Cr. was investigated Sept 1, 1947.

1. Importance of Felix Cr. as a steelhead spawning stream, as a fishing stream and as a contributor to the Russian River fishery.

It is difficult to assign an absolute value to the importance of Felix Creek as a spawning stream and contributor to the Russian River fishery. My own impression is that it is of middle importance to the river, i.e. not the best tributary, but certainly of importance. The people who live on the creek describe the runs as fairly large on a normal water year. Last year fewer fish than usual ascended the creek.

From information gathered from wardens last winter and local observation I judge there are app. 14.5 linear miles of steelhead spawning grounds above the damsite, as follows:

1. Main Felix Cr. --- 8.5 mi
2. Middle Trb., Felix Cr. -- 1.0 mi
3. Mac. small trib., allowing
1/2 mi for each --- 5.0 mi.

The quality of most of these grounds is not known. The first two miles above the damsite are excellent.

Since the Hellman Ranch (Brittendor Ranch on Hopland Quail) blocks access to the creek, little summer fishing is carried out. The foreman reported a few catches of trout were made by guests this spring.

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2. Amount of live water above the damsite in summer in which juvenile steelhead can survive.

Immediately above the damsite for 100 yards there was water in fair abundance. Flow was estimated at 30 GPM, water 50°F, air 85°F at 10 AM. Several large pools (shallow) exist there containing suckers, numerous minnows and a few RT of the year. Above this water there was a dry stretch for 1 1/2 mi., due to deep gravels. Above this dry stretch the stream enters a canyon, where there is a flow of live water (40 ± 20 GPM at max penetration). Few RT were seen at the maximum point of penetration but the foreman reports trout in abundance farther upstream.

It must be remembered that conditions for the summer of 54 were probably extreme on Sept 1. A normal water year would probably provide much more favorable habitat.

3. Presence of falls or barriers - - - etc. This item is answered under #1.

I believe that provision should be made to allow steelhead to pass this dam, unless it is felt they can pass unharmed. Personally I feel that, though some might get over, the bulk of the run would be stopped below the dam.

Though there is no surface flow from a point just below the dam to the mouth, I believe a small release should be made during the months of June, July, Aug. & Sept, the amount to be the surface flow entering the dam, or 20-30 GPM,

3
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whichever is greatest. The 20-30 CPM is a fair request since that amount was passing the damsite on Sept 1, and would otherwise be impounded. Though this is not enough to produce a surface flow in the lower reaches of the stream at present, it may keep pools gouged out by winter floods alive. There are no pools of consequence this year, but as Ed Sachs points out, the rainfall regime this year tended to obliterate old holes and failed to gouge new ones.

Recommendations

1. That provision be made for the passage of SH over the projected Hellman Dam.
2. That a minimum release during the months of June, July, Aug. & Sept of the amount of surface flow entering the impoundment or 20-30 CPM whichever is greater be required.

cc Leo Shapovalov

Geeth S. Murphy
Junior Aquatic Biol.