

Lower American River Salmonid Spawning Gravel Augmentation Program

On Monday, Sept. 10, the Bureau of Reclamation, in partnership with the Water Forum, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Game and Sacramento County Regional Parks, began Phase 5 of the Lower American River Salmonid Spawning Gravel Augmentation Program. The Program helps to meet the requirements of the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act, Section 3406 (b)(13), to restore and replenish spawning gravel and rearing habitat.

Improving spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead trout and Chinook salmon in the Lower American River is a science-based program that has proven to be successful.

Work is planned to increase spawning and rearing habitats for at least one more year. The existing spawning habitat needing improvement consists of large rocks and fine sediment that reduces the ability for fish to construct redds (nests) and may reduce the number of eggs surviving and emerging from the redds as juvenile fish. The amount of juvenile rearing habitat in the upper river limits the number of juveniles that can rear and grow in the spawning reach.



Spawning gravel being placed in the Lower American River



Sorting gravel for placement in the Lower American River

Department of Fish and Game crew and a City of Sacramento crew is sorting the gravel and delivering it to the river placement site. For their safety, the public should pay attention to the informational signage located throughout the Sailor Bar Recreation area and especially near the work site. The initial work to prepare the site began Monday, Aug. 27. All work is expected to be completed by Friday, Sept. 30. Work hours are Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. All work is within the confines of the Sailor Bar Recreation Area, just downstream from Hazel Avenue in Fair Oaks, Calif.

During this phase of the Program, approximately 14,000 tons of gravel is being placed in the river. The gravel comes in three sizes, large, medium and small, and will be deposited in a patch-quilt pattern to test which gravel the fish prefer to build their nest and test egg-to-fry survival in the different sized gravel mixtures. A side channel for juvenile rearing is being constructed in the floodplain adjacent to the gravel placement site.

The gravel, initially dredged during the gold rush, is currently piled on the north side of the Lower American River downstream of the Sailor Bar Recreation Area and is being processed and deposited 1 mile downstream of the Hazel Avenue Bridge. Front-end loaders and bulldozers are being used to distribute the spawning gravel in the river. In-river equipment is being operated by a California

To learn more about the Program, please review the Aug. 2008 Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, as amended, which are available at

http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=3202. For additional information, please contact Louis Moore, 916-978-5106 (TTY 916-978 5608) or email wmoore@usbr.gov. ([Click here for project photos.](#))