



File Code: \*2200/1920

Date: \*March 31, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

The Monterey District of the Los Padres National Forest is planning to relocate the trough which currently exists at Mud Spring (UTMs: 10S E626350E, N4019041 – see attached map) within the Miller Canyon Allotment, approximately 100 feet to the west of its present location (UTMs 10S E626350, N4019031), and to install a fence measuring approximately 10ft X 10ft around the spring source for resource protection. This letter is being sent to potentially interested and affected members of the public to solicit comments regarding the proposed action to assist us with the environmental analysis process.

The existing trough at Mud Spring is rusted and no longer functions. When it properly functioned in the past, however, water flowed directly into the trough and the overflow spilled into an ephemeral stream channel less than 3m away. It appears that some natural seepage occurs around the trough adjacent to the Miller Canyon Trail as well. Cattle hooves within this mud damage the trail and may cause sediment to enter the ephemeral stream channel which feeds into the Miller Fork of the Carmel River, occupied California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) and South Central Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) habitat.

Relocation of the trough and fencing of the spring source will prevent cattle-induced damage to this area and may improve water quality in the ephemeral stream channel and Carmel River Miller Fork.

The project will require the installation of:

- ✓ a small spring box measuring approximately 1ft X 1ft, as a catchment basin
- ✓ up to 125 feet of 1 inch inside diameter poly pipe, approximately 6 inches underground
- ✓ a new 2ft X 2ft X 6ft poly trough, the base of which must rest above ground
- ✓ up to 1 dozen 6 to 7 foot high t-posts with 4 strands of barbed wire
- ✓ a wildlife ramp and a float
- ✓ a check dam below the seep, utilizing onsite timbers

The District has identified and addressed the following issues related to this project:

- ***Ground disturbance associated with the installation of the poly pipe and t-posts may adversely affect cultural resources:***
  - The project area was surveyed for historic property standards in accordance with the standards in Stipulation III(B)(2) of the 1966 Programmatic Agreement for Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Undertakings on the National Forests of the Pacific Southwest Region. No heritage resources were found within the area of potential effect.



- Tribal consultation was completed approximately at the time of inventory. Field surveys addressed Native American concerns.
- ***The project may affect the federally-threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), South Central Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), or its proposed critical habitat:***
  - A biological assessment, written specifically for this project, resulted in a no effect determination for these two species, as well as South Central Coast steelhead proposed critical habitat, because the proposed area of disturbance is 90m from the Carmel River and is extremely small in comparison to the size of the watershed; work will be performed after winter/early spring rains; and only hand tools will be utilized. In addition, the trough relocation, along with the check dam, fencing and float should enhance water quality by reducing the amount of sedimentation currently reaching the Carmel River.
- ***The project may adversely affect the Miller Canyon Trail and recreational use of the trail which is adjacent to Mud Spring:***
  - Internal scoping with Manuel Madrigal, District Recreation Officer, led to the finding that the project, as specified above, should benefit the Miller Canyon Trail by eliminating water flow onto it.
  - This project conforms to the Los Padres Land Management Plan (LMP):
    - Rangeland desired condition: livestock grazing opportunities are maintained and are managed for sustainable, healthy rangelands that contribute to improving watershed conditions towards a fully functional and productive condition.
    - Ventana Place desired condition: through improved trail maintenance and by resolving conflict between users and resources.

Please contact Katherine Malengo, Assistant Resource Officer, for any questions or comments you may have regarding this project: 406 South Mildred, King City, CA 93930; (831) 385-5434 (phone); (831) 385-0628 (fax); or email: [kmalengo@fs.fed.us](mailto:kmalengo@fs.fed.us). In order for your comments to be considered, they must be received in this office by April 30, 2006. Identified issues, which are outside of the scope of this project, will not be addressed as part of this planning effort. Thank you for your input!

Sincerely,



JOHN S. BRADFORD  
District Ranger