






Yuba River restoration project could increase populations

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The lower Yuba River off Highway 20 and Hallwood Boulevard is the site of a proposed habitat restoration project, according to the South Yuba River Citizens League.

Funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the proposed \$2 million "Hallwood Restoration Project" would help increase populations of Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, which are considered threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"The lower Yuba is an important spawning and rearing location for Central Valley salmon and steelhead," USFWS biologist Beth Campbell said in a press release. "The Hallwood Project has the potential to significantly expand this habitat by reconnecting the river to part of its historical floodplain."

According to SYRCL outreach coordinator Chris Friedell, between now and project implementation, they are awaiting formal agreements with the two land owners (Teichert Materials and Western Aggregates) — both of whom Friedel said are supportive of the project — and several environmental analyses required under the California Environmental Quality Act.

The environmental impact report will be presented for public review and comment within the next couple months, Friedel said. After that, the county can issue the permit to move forward.

The main manager for the project is consulting firm cbec eco engineering, with SYRCL and Cramer Fish Sciences acting as project partners.

"We have the potential to enhance or create up to 170 acres of seasonally-inundated floodplain habitats, and miles of new side channels," Chris Hammersmark, co-owner of cbec eco engineering, said in the press release. "These will be critical habitats for juvenile fish before they migrate to the ocean."

An informational meeting covering the project's goals, design concepts and public involvement will be from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Hallwood Women's Club, 2629 Highway 20.