

Oral Comment by Geoff Malloway  
Addressed to the  
Monterey Peninsula Water Management District  
Board of Directors

1/31/02

Good evening Directors.

My name is Geoff Malloway. I am the coordinator for the Carmel River Steelhead Association's Steelhead Rescues, which are conducted every spring and summer in tributaries of the Carmel River Watershed.

I would like to draw your attention to an unusual event that I encountered on Garzas Creek on June 8, 2001. I had performed a steelhead rescue on Garzas Creek on May 25<sup>th</sup> with Dave Dettman of your agency. At that time, stream flow was low but enough to feed pools downstream of West Garzas Road. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, I check the stream flow again and noticed that the flow had subsided considerably. On June 8<sup>th</sup>, I surveyed Garzas Creek upstream of West Garzas Road just after 10:00 a.m. and noticed that the flow through the Condon property had subsided significantly from my previous visit on May 30<sup>th</sup>. A pool formed by Condon's dam had dried to a diameter of about 10 feet (down from a diameter of about 30 feet), trapping a significant number of steelhead and other fishes. I notified a Special Agent for the National Marine Fisheries Service. He checked the site that day and called me just after 4:00 p.m., requesting that I perform a rescue that afternoon, believing that the pool's drying was imminent. I returned to Garzas Creek with a crew about one hour later. In that time span, the creek flow had increased significantly and pool had returned to about its normal size. My crew conducted a rescue as instructed, capturing 286 juvenile steelhead.

I returned to Garzas Creek at 10:00 a.m. the next day, only to find that the creek flow and the pool level had once again diminished to about the same level discovered the previous morning. This section of the creek dried completely on June 19<sup>th</sup>. I reported my findings to the Department of Fish & Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service and provided photo documentation.

This cycle of low stream flow in the morning and increasing stream flow in the afternoon is in direct contrast with a normal flow cycle where stream flows are at their peak in the early morning and diminish as the day progresses. This cycle, known as evapotranspiration, is the result of the evaporation of water into the atmosphere and the transpiration of water through the leaf surfaces of riparian vegetation.

I lack a concrete explanation for this usual phenomenon, but it poses a major problem for the steelhead and other aquatic organisms of Garzas Creek. I suspect it is due to human activity in the Garzas Creek watershed. For example, on July 31, 1998, I checked Garzas Creek with Department of Fish & Game Fishery Biologist Pat Coulston in preparation for a fish rescue and discovered that the creek had dried abruptly since my last visit on July 29th, killing numerous fish, including steelhead. The cessation of flow must have occurred only hours before as indicated by the presence of fish still flopping on the stream bottom and the lack of any avian predators. Subsequent investigation by the Department of Fish & Game indicated that the reduced flow was most likely attributed to Rancho San Carlos Partnership's effective curtailment of the stream flow from Moore's Lake into Garzas Creek.

I ask the Board to wage an intensive examination of the human activities taking place within the Garzas Creek watershed and an aggressive campaign to help eliminate those activities that endanger our aquatic resources.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Malloway  
Coordinator, CRSA Steelhead Capture & Relocation Program