There is pleasure in the pathless woods, there is rapture in the lonely shore, there is society where none intrudes, by the deep sea, and music in its roar; I love not Man the less, but Nature more

----- Lord Byron

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20:16/01. CALIFORNIA SENATOR FEINSTEIN TO RELEASE DROUGHT BILL BEFORE AUGUST RECESS: Senator Diane Feinstein is finally announcing the release of her long-anticipated drought relief legislation. Feinstein suggested that the bill could come as soon as next week, and will certainly arrive before the August congressional recess. She said that the bill does not weaken environmental protections, and takes elements from other drought relief bills authored by Representative Jared Huffman (D-California), Representative David Valadao (R-California), and an older bill by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California). IFR and PCFFA support the bill by Huffman, which provides for water recycling and reuse programs, and stands strong on salmon protections. We oppose the bill by Valadao, which rolls back the Endangered Species Act and provides for increased water diversions in California’s Central Valley at the expense of salmon. Valadao’s bill passed the House last week on a largely partisan vote; once the Feinstein bill is announced, discrepancies between the two bills will be negotiated in committee.

For more information, see this 24 July Greenwire article.
20:16/02. REVISED BDCP COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED; RALLY STILL SET FOR 28 JULY: As reported in Sublegals 20:15/XX, the comment period for the revised/recirculated Environmental Impact Statement and Report for California Governor Jerry Brown’s legacy project, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (recently renamed Cal Water Fix and Cal EcoRestore, but which we’ve taken to calling the Tunnel Plan), has been extended to 30 October 2015. The revised reports come in at a voluminous 48,000 pages, which led a coalition of environmental groups to request the extension.

Despite the extension, only two opportunities for a live public forum on the revised plans are in the works, with one still set for Tuesday, 28 July in Sacramento. The “open house” format will permit only minimal opportunities for public comment. However, opponents of the Tunnel Plan, including representatives of the environmental, fishing and farming communities, are set to hold a public rally outside the open house to protest this boondoggle of a project that will harm fish and will fail to deliver the environmental benefits the Brown administration has promised, at a projected expense of $13 billion to taxpayers. Please contact tsloane@ifrfish.org if you would like to attend the rally in solidarity with the fishing community.

For more information, see this 22 July press release from the State Water Resources Control Board, available from Maven’s Notebook.

To submit written comments, address them to BDCP/WaterFix Comments, P.O. Box 1919, Sacramento, CA 95812 or email to BDCPComments@icfi.com. Due 30 October.

To attend the Tunnel Opposition Rally, follow up with tsloane@ifrfish.org, or see the Restore the Delta website.

20:16/03. FISH HATCHERIES SUFFER FROM HEAT WAVE, LOW SNOWPACK: Federal and state biologists in Washington and Oregon are taking unprecedented steps to save fish hatcheries in peril. The hatcheries have been struggling due to the low snowpack, hot weather, and lack of rain. Juvenile salmon are being trucked around the Pacific Northwest to cooler waters, like the Little White Salmon Fish Hatchery in the Columbia River Gorge. Sublegals has previously reported on the high river temperatures, which are reaching the mid-70s Fahrenheit, creating a breeding ground for disease, stress, and death. The hatcheries are attempting to cool down surface water in their ponds and add oxygen to the water; however, hatcheries cannot control the hot temperatures of water coming in, such as the water from Soos Creek flowing into the Soos Creek Fish Hatchery in Washington, another hatchery that has begun trucking their fish to cooler waters.

In response to the warmer water, wildlife managers in the Pacific Northwest have started restricting fishing to certain times on the struggling rivers, and closing some rivers altogether. Fishing stores have been seeing a quiet season, as “nobody’s been fishing,” says Wally Butler, a worker at Swain’s General Store in Port Angeles, Washington, where sales are down 50%. Biologists recently found that 72% of rivers in Washington, Oregon, and California have temperatures that are lethal to salmon. In an attempt to hide from the hot temperatures, many fish are getting lost on the rivers while looking for shadier waters. Wild fish and hatchery fish only have so many places to go, and warm waters are spelling disaster for both.

For more information see this 22 July KOMO News article and 22 July Northwest Public Radio article.
20:16/04. OSU RESEARCHERS FIND ALGAE BLOOMS HAVE ABILITY TO TRAVEL IN RUNNING WATER: Oregon State University (OSU) researchers found that toxic blue-green algae blooms – which usually grow in still water like lakes and reservoirs – have the ability to travel through rivers to the ocean. Researchers suggest that this ability may be behind the mysterious otter deaths in California. Toxic algae blooms are much more likely to grow and spread in hot weather conditions, such as the recent heat and drought in California. Even when blooms are invisible, the microorganism responsible for producing the toxin – cyanobacteria – may still be passing through. Toxins can even survive passing through hydroelectric turbines over hundreds of miles of rivers. As the toxins pass through estuaries, freshwater mussels accumulate more than 100 times the normal level of toxins, while filtering the water. Otters are likely affected by the toxins when eating the affected mussels. OSU found the frequency and duration of blue-green toxic algae blooms have begun increasing, likely due to warmer temperatures, higher carbon dioxide levels, extreme temperature, and urban and agricultural run-off.

For more information see the 17 June Corvallis Gazette-Times article.

20:16/05. GROUPS SUE OVER LEAVENWORTH FEDERAL FISH HATCHERY: Two conservation groups are threatening to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over a claim that a fish hatchery near Leavensworth, Washington, is violating federal clean water rules. The groups in question – the Wild Fish Conservancy and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy – filed a 60 day notice of intent to sue on 21 July. The groups are accusing the hatchery of discharging pollutants into Icicle Creek without a permit. The hatchery in question has allegedly not had a permit for 35 years and is accused of discharging chemicals, phosphorus, and other pollutants. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has confirmed receiving the notice, but is declining to comment.

For more information see this 21 July Seattle Times article.

20:16/06. EEL RIVER RECOVERY PROJECT, IFR STAFF OFFERING WORKSHOPS ON BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MARIJUANA GROWERS: The State Water Resources Control Board is funding temperature monitoring and Best Management Practices workshops for pollution abatement and water conservation in the Eel River Basin. The Eel River Recovery Project, working through the Institute for Fisheries Resources, is conducting the workshops in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties to connect landowners, gardeners and cultivators with expert consultants on sediment reduction, permaculture, graywater systems, rainwater catchment, groundwater recharge, compost/waste reduction, and water storage versus using less water. Additional speakers cover your water rights, and the water quality regulations for cannabis cultivation being proposed by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Board. The State Board will vote on the regulations at its 13 August meeting.

Free, confidential consultations on improving your roads and water systems are available for those living within the Eel River Basin. See the Eel River Recovery Project homepage for details of upcoming workshops or to download a Best Management Practices brochure. Or call about free consulting services on the Eel, in Mendocino (707) 972-9503, in Humboldt (707) 633-5403. To volunteer for temperature monitoring or fish count dives, call (707) 223-7200. The next workshop is at the Willits Little Lake Grange, 291 School St., Willits, July 18, 10 AM to 2 AM. The Salmon Awareness Festival will take place 17-18 October in Covelo/ Round Valley, co-sponsored by the Eel River Recovery Project and the Round Valley Indian Tribes.
Additionally, the Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) is giving a North Coast Water Rights workshop 11 August, at the Willits Community Center, 6-8:30 PM. An Erosion and Sediment Control Best Management Practices will be held on September 16, 2015, at the Piercy Community Center from 9 AM to 5 PM. The SRF technical education events are funded by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Restoration Grants Program.

20:16/07. NORTH COAST SALMON REMAIN UNPREDICTABLE: Salmon fishing in and around Eureka continued to be unpredictable this week. Despite winds blowing cooler water towards shore, salmon remained in large groups off Cape Mendocino, with fishermen who made the journey out limiting quickly. Conditions are forecast to be about the same throughout the weekend, with winds coming from the north.

For more information see this 22 July Times Standard article on water conditions and news for the week.

20:16/08. RUSSIA, US AGREE TO ARCTIC FISHING BAN DUE TO MELTING POLAR ICE: The US, Russia, and other Arctic nations have agreed to ban their fishing fleets from the central Arctic Ocean due to melting polar ice. The region currently has no commercial fish stocks but as polar ice melts, it might draw fish north. The deal also calls for more research in the central Arctic, an area about which little is known. The deal was originally planned to be signed in June 2014, but Canada and the US boycotted the meeting due to Russia’s annexation of the Crimea.

For more information see this 17 July Planet Ark article on the accord.

20:16/09. AMERICA “DOWNGRADING” WILD SALMON BY SHIPPING OVERSEAS: In a recent interview with NPR, author Paul Greenberg discussed why so much of our fresh-caught fish is being shipped overseas instead of being sold on the domestic market. In the interview, Greenberg brings up the fact that 91% of the fish we eat is imported, while one-third of American-caught seafood is shipped overseas. This is especially true of salmon, as Alaskan fishermen ship millions of tons of wild-caught salmon to Asia and import farmed fish back. The result of this is that Americans consume lower-quality fish, and energy is wasted transporting fish from America to China and back to America.

For more information see this 17 July transcript of the NPR interview.

20:16/10. ADVOCACY GROUPS SUE NMFS OVER LACK OF PLAN FOR OREGON COHO: Two advocacy groups are suing the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for failing to protect endangered Oregon coho salmon. Despite the fact that Oregon coast coho have been on the endangered species list since 2008, and that in 2011 the NMFS found that they were not adequately protected by the government, there is still no federal recovery plan in place. While there is a state plan in place, the groups behind the suit say that it has not been sufficient to restore salmon levels, which the groups estimated at ten percent of their historic levels.

For more information see this 16 July Oregonian article on the lawsuit.

20:15/11. COHO RETURN TO MENDOCINO WATERSHED: Amid California’s historic drought, biologists in Mendocino County are reporting that coho salmon have returned to spawn in creeks. After a 50-year absence from the area, Mendocino Redwood Co., which owns about 60% of the watershed, has reported finding 60 to 70 juvenile coho in an eight-mile stretch of
river. Now that salmon are officially back, the watershed is now eligible for government programs to restore habitat,

For more information see this 17 July Press-Democrat article.

20:16/12. CALIFORNIA DROUGHT BREEDS A SPIKE IN WATER CONSERVATION JOBS: As grass turns brown in California, job possibilities in the water conservation business have a less dreary outlook. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps alone has recently hired 50 young adults to transform the grounds of their West Valley center into a drought-friendly garden. The 50 workers will be part of a $200,000 project that will reduce irrigated lands by 40%. Although approximately 18,000 people have lost their jobs due to the drought, the Pacific Institute found that 136 different types of jobs will be added to the economy to conserve water, such as plumbers, landscapers, engineers, and irrigation specialists. Just 37 of these job types are projected to each add around 100,000 jobs around the country by 2020. It was also found that the short term economic impact caused by the drought in California will not be significant, partially due to the fact that California’s farming is only a modest portion of the state’s gross domestic product and employment. In the mean time, start up companies like The Climate Corporation and mOasis Inc. have been popping up around the state, with sales rising every year. With the World Bank estimating water scarcity will be faced by half of the world by 2030, these small start ups will have a high chance of growing big.

For more information see this 22 July Aljazeera America article.

YOUR NEWS, COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS: Submit your news items, comments or any corrections to Editor at: tsloane@ifrfish.org, or call the IFR/PCFFA office with the news and a source at either: (415) 561-FISH (Southwest Office) or (541) 689-2000 (Northwest Office). If you have any trouble subscribing or unsubscribing, contact IFR/PCFFA directly at: tsloane@ifrfish.org. Sublegals is a weekly fisheries news bulletin service of Fishlink. “Fishlink” and “Sublegals” are registered trademarks of the Institute for Fisheries Resources. All rights to the use of these trademarks are reserved to IFR. All photos are by IFR unless otherwise accredited. This publication, however, may be freely reproduced and circulated without copyright restriction. Articles taken from Fishlink Sublegals may be freely reposted or reprinted with attribution to “Fishlink Sublegals.” If you are receiving this as a subscriber, please feel free to pass it on to your colleagues.

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