



Robles Fish Passage Facility- Project Summary

What is a Fish Passage?

The planned Fish Passage Facility at the Robles water diversion facility is a state-of-the-art fish ladder being constructed by the Casitas Municipal Water District. It will allow the endangered Southern California Steelhead to travel upstream of the Robles facility to prime spawning areas, which presently prevents upstream fish migration. It will also let fish swim downstream to the ocean. This federally mandated project is a collaborative effort by multiple agencies and community organizations.

Agencies and organizations supportive of the fish ladder project currently include the Association of California Water Agencies, Coastal Conservancy, Friends of the River, Matilija Coalition, Ventura County Watershed Protection Area, City of Ojai, Bureau of Reclamation, NOAA Fisheries, Association of California Water Agencies, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Why is the Fish Passage Needed?

The federal National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) has identified less than 200 of the endangered steelhead trout remaining in their Biological Opinion (BO). Steelhead trout depend on getting to better spawning sites that are no longer accessible to them due to many obstructions built in streams and rivers throughout the California coastline. Upstream of the Robles Water Diversion Dam on the Ventura River are located exceptional steelhead spawning areas. The fish ladder proposed at the Robles Diversion Dam will provide access to these spawning areas that have not been accessible for over fifty years.

Fish Passage – Current Status?

- Casitas paid for the design and preparatory work for the fish ladder.
- A groundbreaking ceremony took place on August 25, 2003 with over a hundred supporters and multiple agencies and organizations in attendance.
- Construction continues and is anticipated to be Completed in late fall 2004.

What are the Fish Passage Benefits?

- The fish passage will support the recovery of the endangered Steelhead trout.
 - It will also begin the process of renewing the Ventura River habitat.
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Fish Passage Supporters

The fish passage has support from many agencies, organizations, and community leaders. Attached to this document are several letters of support from the following community leaders:

- Hannah-Beth Jackson, California State Assembly Member
- Ray Di Guilo, Mayor City of Ventura
- Steve Bennett, Supervisor, First District Ventura County
- Joe De Vito, Mayor City of Ojai

Fish Passage - What Next?

Even though Casitas has begun construction of the fish passage and invested millions of dollars -- additional funds are needed. Casitas is now seeking funding requests from Congressional representatives.