

## Fish & Game Defends Garcia Report

# Fishermen, Loggers, CDF, F&G Agree On Stream Cooperation

An often heated meeting of Salmon Unlimited in Ukiah Sunday produced a breakthrough agreement to form a working group with state agencies and timber companies to explore fisheries problems on the Garcia River.

Representatives of State Fish & Game, the California Department of Forestry, Louisiana-Pacific Corp., and Longview Fiber Co., agreed to work with a four-person delegation appointed by Salmon Unlimited to see what can be done about damaged fish habitat on the Garcia.

Nat Bingham, president of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), hailed the agreement as "salutary" because it brought together often-warring fishermen, timber companies, state agencies and environmentalists in the common cause of stream protection.

Bingham suggested that the next possible step could be a "streamkeeper" approach for each watershed on the coast.

"We're probably nearing the end of an era of resource extraction and entering an era of resource protection," Bingham said. "None of us separately can get the job done; together we can."

Don Bradley, chairman of Salmon Unlimited, appointed Bingham, Bob Hayden of United Anglers, Gail Lucas of the Sierra Club and commercial fisherman Bill Maahs to the group. Representatives of the state agencies and logging companies will be named later by their home offices.

Prior to the agreement, fishermen put Regional Fish & Game representatives on the defensive over their controversial September report in which they said the Garcia had "healed itself from logging operations, a position characterized by the fishermen as wildly

(sic) optimistic.

The report, which found large numbers of juvenile steelhead in nine upstream tests made by Fish & Game biologists, was prepared in response to complaints by Mendocino County officials about poor conditions on the river for salmon propagation due to logging operations.

County Supervisor Norman de Vall asked State Sen. Barry Keene for help in determining the cause of loss of salmon and steelhead stocks on the river, citing the closure of Save Our Salmon (SOS) rearing ponds on the Garcia due to a dwindling water supply and the threat of more siltation from a Louisiana-Pacific clearcut upstream.

Ted Wooster, regional environmental

services supervisor for Fish & Game, told the fishermen on Sunday that all the problems in Hutton Gulch where the SOS ponds were located stemmed from poor logging practices before and up to the 1960s and were not caused by recent logging.

"L-P's logging has not put one iota of dirt into the stream," Wooster said. He did not address the question of how the project had survived for 12 previous years in the same location.

Chris Rowney, L-P chief forester, said it was company policy to assist community fish-rearing projects and that he would be happy to help SOS find another suitable location and provide other basic help to the group.

The fishermen were concerned that the Fish & Game study found only six juvenile coho (silver salmon) in the study, all on the south fork. Maahs, newly appointed fisheries biologist for the PCFFA, said the study pointed out "the serious question... as to whether a coho population can exist" on the Garcia due to high water temperatures attributed to the loss of tree canopy.

Bill Maahs said water temperatures of 73 to 75 degrees found by Fish & Game on the river in August "are near lethal for Coho salmon," comparing the latest study with another in 1968, when biologists recorded 68-degree water on the Garcia.

Wooster retorted that "if a fish likes steak, but there is only hamburger, maybe they'll take that."

Wooster backed down when confronted with a passage in another Fish & Game study on coho salmon which stated that "growth is slowed considerably at 64 and ceases at 68 degrees."

"I don't think coho spawn in the main stem of the Garcia," Wooster said. "But if they do spawn (there], I agree they wouldn't survive because of high temperatures."

Maahs said a Fish & Game study in the early 60's estimated a returning adult population of 2,000 coho on the Garcia.

Mike Moreford, an independent fisheries consultant referred to a 1986 Fish and Game study which says "Coho occupied all but the smallest coastal streams in Mendocino County as late as the mid 50's. However they no longer occur in many of these streams and their numbers are greatly reduced in others."

Wendy Jones, Fish & Game fisheries biologist, said he had conducted recent studies on 87 streams and only 25 percent contained coho.