

Iron Horse Fish Screen Implementation Project – Permitting

Organization: Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Project Period: November 2021 – December 2022

Amount: \$34,906.89

Location: Green Valley Creek, Sonoma County

Project Description

This project will complete permitting for an already-funded fish screen installation project for a currently unscreened irrigation diversion intake at Iron Horse Vineyard, along the mainstem of Green Valley Creek, in Sonoma County. The reach of Green Valley Creek adjacent to Iron Horse Vineyards is considered a critical rearing area for coho salmon and steelhead trout, as it is hydrologically connected to its floodplain, contains low-gradient habitat and is located downstream of the confluence with Atascadero Creek. Lower Atascadero Creek is dominated by wetlands and is thought to be a critical source of invertebrates for rearing fish in the Iron Horse reach. The fish screen is being installed to protect juvenile coho salmon and steelhead trout. Implementation of the fish screen project has been funded through the CDFW Fish Restoration Grant Program, but the implementation grant did not fund two required permits. To fulfill the identified gap in successfully completing this project, the funding provided will be used to secure a Clean Water Act Section 404 dredge/fill permit and a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification to allow project implementation.

Project Progress

Since project funding, the RCD has submitted application for a CWA Section 404 permit with the US Army Corps of Engineers. They have completed biological assessments and have consulted with relevant agencies for an Endangered Species Act consultation to develop a Biological Opinion for the project. The RCD has also prepared an application for the CWA Section 401 Water Certification, which will be submitted once the Biological Opinion is done. A CDFW Streambed Alteration Agreement Notification has also been started. Remaining permitting activities are expected to be completed during the coming winter and spring and they are on track to have all permitting complete for project implementation in the late summer/fall of 2023.