CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

STREAM SURVEY

FILE FORM No.....

NAME..... Little North Fork .....COUNTY..... Mendocino .....

STREAM SECTION.....FROM..... Headwater .....TO..... Mouth .....LENGTH..... 6 miles .....

TRIBUTARY TO..... Big River .....Twp..... 17N .....R..... 17W .....Sec.....

OTHER NAMES..... None Known. .....RIVER SYSTEM..... Big River .....

SOURCES OF DATA..... Personal observations. Local residents. .....

EXTENT OF OBSERVATION
Include Name of Surveyor, Date, Etc.
LOCATION
RELATION TO OTHER WATERS
GENERAL DESCRIPTION
Watershed
Immediate Drainage Basin
Altitude (Range)
Gradient
Width
Depth
Flow (Range)
Velocity
Bottom
Spawning Areas
Pools
Shelter
Barriers
Diversions
Temperatures
Food
Aquatic Plants
Winter Conditions
Pollution
Springs
FISHES PRESENT AND SUCCESS
OTHER VERTEBRATES
FISHING INTENSITY
OTHER RECREATIONAL USE
ACCESSIBILITY
OWNERSHIP
POSTED OR OPEN
IMPROVEMENTS
PAST STOCKING
GENERAL ESTIMATE
RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT
SKETCH MAP
REFERENCES AND MAPS

On March 8, 1959, I walked out the Little North Fork, Tributary of Big River, Mendocino County. It required seven (7) hours for this survey.

I entered the stream from Highway # 20, at the junction with Parlin Fork, Conservation Camp, Road. I walked down- stream to the mouth. Surveyor: James Morehouse.

This stream rises on the, North- Coastal, Mountains about .75 of a mile South of Highway #20 near Old Camp 19, and flows West and South to its confluence with Big River.

This stream is a major tributary of the Big River. The Big River is an important river system on our North Coast for anadromous salmonids.

This stream has an overall very slight gradient. The stream bed is for the most part through a relatively wide, level canyon. The above characteristics render this water relatively mild, non-scouring type stream. Very extensive logging damage in the form of log-jams, and one Beaver Dam, have encouraged the natural tendency of this stream to flood. This has resulted in a series of lake like marshes in the upper 1/3 of the stream. This condition is again encountered near the mouth of this tributary. The remainder of the stream is well adopted to the requirements of anadromous salmonids.

The entire watershed is typical North Coast, redwood and Douglas Fir, forest.

A considerable portion of the drainage has been logged over, and is second growth forest. Railroad construction and road building, has affected the immediate drainage basin.
Willows and Alders are the principle riparian growth in the upper stream, with Redwood forest becoming dominant cover near the mouth. California Bay, Douglas Fir and True Firs occur throughout the length of the stream. In several swamp-like areas, Cutgrass, Bullrush and Horsetail are dominant.

Altitude: Not known.

The gradient is very slight throughout, and nowhere can be called steep.

2 feet to 60 feet: Average 6-10 feet.

4 inches to 1 plus feet: Average 6-8 inches.

0.8 C.F.S. to 6 C.F.S. Average 4 C.F.S.

The flow was not perceptible in flooded areas, but was otherwise rapid.

The extreme upper stream bottom is poor to fair gravel. Most of the lower stream is medium

to good gravel. The remainder of the stream bottom was silted or was not visable due to extensive log-jams and flooding.

The lower stream has several miles of very good spawning gravels. The upper stream might be of some value if it were cleaned up.

Pools are common and abundant.

Shelter is common throughout. Mostly pools, logs and undercut banks. There are very few large boulders and very little low-growing riparian growth.

Although there are many extensive log-jams, I don't feel any of them are barriers because of the tendency of the stream to flood around them. At the mouth of the tributary #2 there is a large alluvial fan, composed of mud and small gravel. This seems to be the factor impounding the first and largest lake-like swamp. This erosion mud plain is a by product of Stae Highway #20 construction. There is a low concrete dam, (see sketch map) and below this is several large logs embedded in the stream. All of these are old logging, stream crossings. They amount to stream improvement devises. Near the stream's mouth there is a Beaver dam across the main channel. This is diverting the stream into three or more channels, and is flooding the large, park-like canyon.

The Mendocino Woodlands Camp Association maintains a fairly extensive summer camp along the lower 2-3 miles of the stream. This camp draws water from the above mentioned, concrete dam, to fill a swimming pool. They do not draw water from the Little North Fork for domestic purposes, according to the caretaker. The caretaker, who resides on the site year-round is Mr. N.G. Gabbert. No other diversions were seen.

46º F. to 52º F. Average 48º F.

Food is common.

No aquatic plants, other than algae.

Winter conditions are not severe. There is no evidence that the average winter flows are excessively high. However, there must be considerable flooding due to the slight gradient, and the relatively wide, level, canyon this stream flows through.

No pollution seen, other than logging and road building.

There are several springs in the small tributaries.

Two small Salmonids were seen. One in the headwaters near Station#1, and one at the mouth of Rocky Gulch. The remains of an adult Salmonid, and the backbone and skin of a adult Silver Salmon were found between Stations #4 and #5. On March 10, 1959, I returned with a net and sampled a section of the stream near the mouth of Rocky Gulch. I found many 1 to 1 ½ inch sticklebacks and one 2 ½ inch Silver Salmon. The character of this area of the stream indicates better success than I found.

Lots of Beaver sign, and deer and Coon tracks.

Fishing intensity must be very light. The egress is difficult from up-stream, and fishing is prohibited in the lower, Woodlands Camp area.

Other recreational uses are, swimming, camping, and hikeing.

A dirt road is maintained through the Woodlands Camp area. From about a mile above the mouth to Thompson Gulch. This road gives good access to about 2 miles of the stream. The only access above or below this point is by foot. An old Railroad Bed

parallels the upper ¾ of the stream. However, in areas where the Railroad bed is overgrown or washed out, the access is difficult.

The majority of this stream is within the Jackson State Forest.

The area not in Jackson State Forest is not posted.(see sketch map)

None that are intentional. (Beavers are improving it for water fowl.)

Past stocking: not known.

The upper 1/3 of this stream is of no great value, even if it were rehabilitated. However, it is at present scourse of silt and debris for the lower stream. The lower stream has at least 4 miles of excellent spawning and nursery area. This tributary could be important Salmon and Steelhead producing section of the River System.

It is difficult to recommend a management program for the upper area of this stream. I would like to see the log-jams taken out, and possibly a program of re-planting on the large erosion areas on the slopes of Highway # 20. However, this expense would certainly not be justified by the area potential. The lower stream has a high potential, and requires less extensive rehabilitation. Here, the expense would be justified. There are several log-jams that would benefit the stream by their removal. One in particular at the mouth of the stream. The present limiting factor of this stream is a Beaver dam located below Cook House Gulch in a wide, level, park-like section of the canyon. This dam, except for seepage, has closed the main stream channel. This has forced the water into at least four separate meandering channels, and is flooding the canyon. The resultant Cutgrass and Cattails make it difficult to see that there is more than a swamp here. Anadromous fish must find this a difficult egress. Many down stream migrants must be lost in drying pools and side streams. I would suggest that this dam be taken out, and a small amount of hand work be done on the main channel. When the surrounding area is suitably dried out a small cat or tractor can provide for a more stabilized main channel. I don’t believe a Beaver control will be necessary. In a more channelized stream bed, and in the absense of log-jams; I don’t believe a Beaver could build a permanent dam (I am not a good judge of a Beaver’s capabilities and may easily be very wrong as to the above assumption.) Other than above, only normal Salmon-Steelhead management is required for this stream.

The sketch maps and maps references are taken from the State Division of Forestry Map; South half-Mendocino County, 1948.

Notes on the tributaries of the Little North Fork of Big River. See sketch map locations.

Tributary #1 was either so inconsequential that it was overlooked, or I did not go far enough up-stream to reach it. I feel the former is more probable.

Tributary #2 is relatively extensive in length and wad likely used by spawning Salmonids prior to Highway #20 construction. This stream receives large amounts of silt from extensive, denuded slopes along Highway # 20 road-bed. This excessive silting renders the stream of dubious value for fish. This silt is also creating a large, impounding, mud plain at the confluence with the Little North Fork. Probably this stream is sufficiently scowring to reclaim it self when plant growth reclaims the denuded slopes of Highway # 20.

Flow: 0.2 C.F.S.

Berry Gulch was insignificant at its mouth. The flow was negligible. I don't believe this trib. Is of sufficient value to justify a survey.

Tributary #3 was not located. I don't believe it can be of any consequence.

Tributary #4 showed considerable promise at its mouth. Time did not asllow for this survey. The flow was about 1 C.F.S.

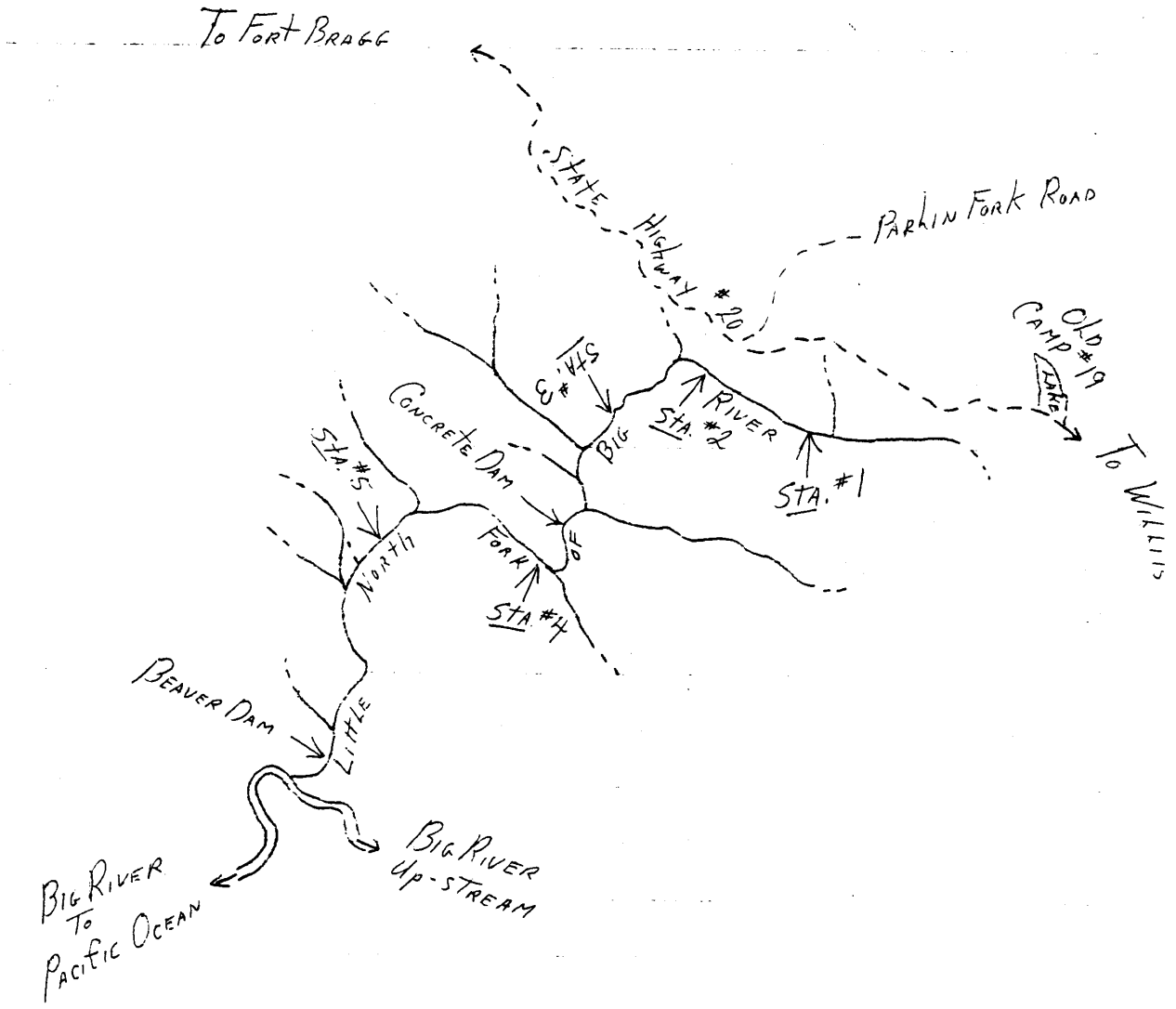
Tributary #5 (see #3 above)

Thompson Gulch may provide some spawning near its mouth. About 100 yards up-dstream there is a falls approximately 3 feet high. I walked up stream from these falls for about 1/10 of a mile. I don't feel this trib. Will justify a further survey or removing the falls. Flow was about 0.25 C.F.S.

Manly Gulch is a trib. Of Rocky Gulch. It does not flow into the Little North Fork as shown on the map I consulted. This stream was not flowing at the mouth. Above the mouth the flow was perceptible, but insignificant. The stream bed was dry for several hundred feet in one area, The lower portion of this trib. Is mud-bottom, swampy, and probably dry during the summer. Small frogs abound. I walked up this stream for about ¼ of a mile. I don't believe it is of any value to salmonids.

Rocky Gulch was not flowing at its mouth, although, a small pool results. I found one juvenile salmonid in this pool. This stream may have been a good, small, spawning trib. And may still provide some spawning near its mouth. However, it has been destroyed by gravel taking operations, a few hundred feet above the mouth.

Cook House Gulch did not seem to be of sufficient value to justify a survey. The mouth of this stream was not seen. This area was flooded with water impounded by the Beaver dam. The lake, created, here is covered with Water Lilies and Cat-tails. One Great Grey Heron, four Wood Ducks and several Mud Hens were seen on this lake.


To Fort Bragg
State Highway #20
Parlin Fork Road
Old #19 Camp
Lake
To Willits
Sta. #3
Big River
Sta. #2
Sta. #1
Concrete Dam
Sta. #5
North Fork
Sta. #4
Beaver Dam
Little
Big River To Pacific Ocean
Big River Up-stream