

## Chapter 6: SITE VISITS

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One of the primary purposes and benefits of IWRP is to ensure that Project Leads receive input from the permitting agencies at an early stage so that there will be few issues by the time permits are submitted. By being on the same page from the outset, both Project Lead and agency staff time is reduced and costly re-designs are avoided. Site visits will serve as the principal forum for obtaining this early guidance and feedback from the resource and permitting agencies on IWRP projects. In some cases, engineers from the California Department of Fish and Game and NOAA Fisheries will visit the site and provide design recommendations to the Project Leads and consultants.

Site visits will be conducted based on the interest and need expressed by the permitting agencies, primarily those members of the D/P TAC.

1. *Purpose:* As discussed above, the purpose of the project site visits is to allow resource experts from the permitting agencies to be involved at the earliest planning stage when designs are primarily in the conceptual stages. As described in the Design & Permitting Coordination Process document, this field visit is the principal forum for obtaining early feedback from the permitting agencies. We developed this process in coordination with the permitting agencies represented in the D/P TAC. At the site visit, not only will the engineers from the resource agencies have the opportunity to discuss the preferred design options with the Project Leads, resource experts from the permitting agencies will also be able to assess which analyses and reports will be required for that particular project (biotic assessments, hydrology reports, etc.). The hope is that this will save time and money for Project Leads by asking, “what do the agencies need?” at the earliest stages of the project.
2. *Determining when needed:* Members of the D/P TAC determine when site visits are needed. When D/P TAC members are sent the Project Design & Permit Plans (PDPPs) for a particular batch of projects, they determine which sites they need to see based on the potential presence of sensitive resources and the nature of the activities proposed. In addition, CDFG and NOAA Fisheries engineers determine which sites they need to see (based on the level of engineering review that will be required).
3. *Who should attend:* Members of the D/P TAC (and potentially other staff from their agency who will be assisting them on the permitting of the project), engineers from the CDFG and NOAA Fisheries (for certain projects), Project Leads, designers (either contractors or in-house), and the D/P Coordinator will attend these site visits.
4. *How to schedule (with landowner permission):* Once the D/P Coordinator has determined which agencies need to see which sites, site visits will be scheduled. Because of the extreme limitations on the time of the engineers from CDFG and NOAA Fisheries, the site visits will be scheduled around their availability. Site visits will be combined so that the resource experts from the permitting agencies will be looking at a site at the same time the engineers are providing feedback to Project Leads on the conceptual design ideas. Once some potential dates for site visits have been identified by the resource agencies, the Project Leads will be contacted to coordinate scheduling these site visits and obtaining permission from the landowners to see the sites. This will require that Project Leads be somewhat flexible since the dates of the site visits will be driven primarily by the availability of the permitting agency staff.

5. *Outcomes (recorded in PDPP)*: As a result of these site visits, Project Leads will obtain feedback on the projects at the earliest stages of project design from both the agency (DFG and NOAA Fisheries) engineers and those resource experts who will be involved in permitting the projects. While in the field, the D/P Coordinator will record feedback from the engineers and the resource experts, documenting this feedback in the PDPP for each project. The PDPPs will then be provided to both the Project Leads and the resource agency engineers so that everyone maintains a record of what was said/agreed to at the site visit. The Project Leads will utilize the information gathered at the site visit to proceed in developing the designs for their projects. The Project Leads will also utilize the PDPPs to determine what analyses and studies (biological surveys, hydraulic analyses, etc.) will be required from the permitting agencies. The PDPP will also accompany the submittal of the 90% designs to the DFG and NOAA engineers for review so they have the record of why a particular design detail was pursued.

Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) for Santa Cruz County  
IWRP Design & Permitting Coordination Process Guidelines Manual