

## **Santa Ana Sucker Task Force**

Background on the Santa Ana Sucker Task Force:

- The Task Force organized in early 2010 in response to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's announcement in December of 2009 that it would re-visit the Critical Habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker, a fish that is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.
- At the time, the USFWS gave no scientific or economic rationale for revisiting the designation, which alarmed many local leaders.
- Membership of the Task Force includes cities, water districts and other agencies who provide critical services in the region and are undertaking projects to improve the quality of life for all Southern Californians.
- Throughout the USFWS process, the Task Force presented scientific and economic information to the agency and participated at every available opportunity.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a harmful and poorly-advised decision:

- In early December, the USFWS released their Final Designation of Critical Habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker.
- As the Task Force had feared, the decision disregards the scientific and economic realities which should have been central to the agency's decision.
- Many critical projects for local water supplies, flood control and transportation are jeopardized by the designation, and the quality of life in the region will suffer.

Next steps for the Task Force:

- The Task Force is undertaking a thorough review of the designation from all standpoints and assessing the legal, economic and environmental impact that the updated Critical Habitat will cause on the region.
- After that review is completed, the Task Force will file a formal notice with the Service outlining the deficiencies in their decision.
- From the point of that filing, the USFWS will have 60 days to either make changes to the Critical Habitat designation or leave it the same.
- The Task Force remains hopeful that the agency will consider all of the relevant scientific and economic information during this next phase of the process.

Request for Members of Congress:

- The Santa Ana Sucker Task Force remains committed to the preservation of the Santa Ana Sucker, the Task Force Members ask their Congressional delegation to remain engaged with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- We will be asking for your support in communicating our concerns to the USFWS during the 60 day period described above.