



Big Creek Bridge Restoration Santa Cruz, California

Civil Engineering
Structural Engineering

Since 1976, the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project has worked to protect and recover the native Coho salmon, Chinook and Steelhead trout populations of the Monterey Bay region.

The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fire burned fish hatchery tanks and multiple homes at the hatchery and destroyed the main access bridge timber deck and foundations.



MME Civil + Structural Engineering was retained to develop structural repair designs for a 60-foot bridge, with the primary objective of restoring vehicular access and ensuring the structure could safely accommodate emergency response vehicles, including a 25-ton fire truck, in full compliance with the Santa Cruz County Fire Code.

The bridge replacement included new reinforced concrete abutments supported on drilled pier foundations, together with a complete replacement of the timber deck system. To minimize both project cost and construction duration, the existing steel railcar superstructure was evaluated, deemed suitable for continued service, and incorporated into the final design.

Following completion, the rehabilitated bridge now provides safe, dependable access for hatchery personnel and volunteers, while also accommodating regular outbound shipments of juvenile fish by specialized water truck for release into streams throughout the region, supporting broader aquatic restoration and stocking initiatives.

Client Reference and Project Info:

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Completed Bridge Fall 2025



California's 19th Congressional District Representative, Jimmy Paneta, assessing the CZU Fire damage

Construction Cost: \$1.06 M
Funding: California Wildlife Conservation Board Grant
Contract Date: 3/10/2021
MME Project Manager: Bob Riley
Completion Date: Fall 2025