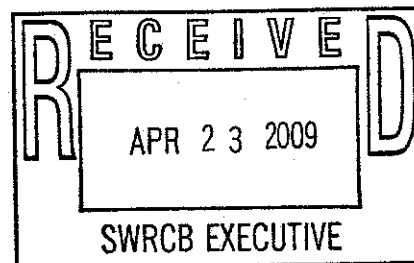


Public Comment TUC
Sonoma Co. Water Agency
Deadline: 4/24/09 by 5:00 p.m

From: Jonathan Weston <jonathanpweston@gmail.com>
To: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov
Date: Thu, Apr 23, 2009 3:48 PM
Subject: Russian River Low Flow

Thursday, April 23, 2009
Jeannie Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Randy Poole
General Manager/ Chief Engineer
Sonoma County Water Agency
PO Box 11628
Santa Rosa, CA 95406
(E-mail commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov & randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov)



RE: Comments for May 6th Workshop on Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my concern regarding impacts related to Order 2009-0027- DWR and modifications in permit terms that would reduce those impacts. The reduction in flows will cause severe impacts to water quality, recreation, community water systems, over-summering juvenile salmon and Steelhead as well as the lower River economy that depends on a healthy Russian River.

My wife and I built a new house on the river bank in Duncan's Mills a few years ago based on the tranquility and beauty of the lower reaches of the river -

We have seen how the past low water years of 2004 and 2007 caused the river to become filled with algae and warmer than a bathtub. Talking to friends in town their businesses suffered from less visitors because people were staying away due to the effective lack of a river. The ocean is generally too cold or too dangerous for swimming. The lower river economy depends on summer visitors to make it through each year and this flow reduction will harm local businesses; being able to Kayak and swim are of number one importance.

We would go so far as to state that flow reduction plans may devastate the long standing CERussian River Recreation Area - We feel along with many others that our already reduced real estate investments could be so impacted as to prompt a class action law suit against the agencies concerned.

In order to reduce the impacts from reduced flows under Order 2009-0027-DWR we urge you on May 6 to take action to protect water quality and beneficial uses in the Russian River.
Specifically we urge you to:

- Increase frequency of chemical water quality monitoring to every two weeks with results posted promptly on a public website to proactively prevent water quality problems such as algae blooms from increased nutrient concentrations

- Include new provisions in the order to require flow changes in response to violations in water quality standards or as needed to protect juvenile ESA listed fish over the summer, the water agency released water to protect grapes from frost on April 14 to 16th so we expect increases to protect water quality as well
- Installation of additional gauges as needed to ensure instantaneous flow compliance levels are maintained, in 2004 and 2007 compliance levels were violated under previous orders
- A minimum of 25% mandatory conservation for SCWA customers and all users downstream of Dry Creek to to help maintain flows and conserve water in case of multi-year drought.
- Mandatory conservation by all permitted water diversions upstream of Dry Creek including agricultural and rural residential diversions and streamside wells pumping underflow
- Additional prohibitions in the Order on diversions that are not permitted in critically dry conditions or if needed a separate order restraining those unpermitted diversions to protect water storage in Lake Mendocino and maintain higher flows
- Keep order prohibition on commercial turf irrigation in SCWA service area and expand to include all commercial turf using water from the Russian River

We believe that modifying the order to include these provisions will improve protection of water quality, juvenile endangered fish and likely result in somewhat higher flows due to reduced diversions. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Jonathan & Mari Weston
Freezeout Road