

From: "Colleen Fernald" <colleenferald@earthlink.net>{PRIVATE }
To: "Vicky Whitney" <VWHITNEY@waterboards.ca.gov>, <flowpolicy@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Fri, Aug 25, 2006 6:17 PM
Subject: A voice of the No. Coast Water Rights Working Group

Greetings,

I have been a member of the Water Rights Working Group as a representative for the Russian River Watershed Council. As it is that the Council elected not to have a vote, my comments are my own.

I support the efforts of the group and I see the facilitator as a benefit to this process. The group has a good balance of stakeholders who seem to be intent on doing their best. I support the spirit of their position statement below.

I strongly support this order of priorities in determining solutions:

#1 Protection for watersheds and all natural resources

#2 Protection of property rights

#3 Support for local economic interests

I believe watershed stewardship is a benefit to climate protection; those who rise to, and surpass best management practices, deserve a sliding scale eco-credit.

I support the State Water Resources Control Board in doing what it takes to ensure there is enough clean water available for the current population, and for the future generations of endangered species to flourish. I think we have met, maybe surpassed, our ability to meet demand for water in this region. It's time for everyone to face that fact, and learn how to sustain our economy without further sprawl, and degradation to our natural resources.

The Russian River Watershed Council is looking at ways of working with the Sonoma County Water Agency to help facilitate the results of the Water Rights process with landowners. Perhaps this can be a model for other regions.

Everyone on a well, every water rate payer, and every fish depends on you to act with wisdom. I appreciate you rising to this very big challenge.

Best regards,

Colleen Fernald
PO Box 30 Sebastopol, CA 95473
707.876.9610

Associated with:

Graton Community Projects
www.graton.info

Russian River Watershed Council
www.rrwc.net
www.russianriverwatershed.net

Sonoma County Water Coalition
www.scwatercoalition.org

Links for optimal living:

Climate Protection Campaign
www.climateprotectioncampaign.org

Green Mary
www.green-mary.com

U.S. Green Building Council - Redwood Empire Chapter
www.usgbc.org/chapters/redwoodempire

ICLEI Cities for Climate Protection Campaign
ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
www.iclei.org/us

Ecological Footprint
www.myfootprint.org
www.redefiningprogress.org

Cities for Progress
www.citiesforprogress.org

Find out your body's burden at:
www.insidebayarea.com/bodyburden

Sent: 8/25/2006 12:20:40 PM
Subject: Notice of Prep. of Substitute Env. Doc. for North Coast In-stream
Flow Policy

August 25, 2006

VIA ELECTRONIC AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Karen Niiya
Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812
KYNiiya@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Notice of Preparation of Substitute Environmental Document for
North Coast Instream Flow Policy

Dear Ms. Niiya:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Water Board*s NOP for the North Coast Instream Flow Policy SED.

As described at the State Board*s July 19 Meeting, a diverse group of stakeholders has been meeting for almost a year to develop recommendations for improving the water rights permitting process so that it better benefits both fishery habitat and landowner interests. The stakeholder group includes representatives of agricultural and urban water users (including trade associations, engineers, and attorneys); conservation organizations; state and federal agencies and counties (see list below). A substantial majority of participants in this stakeholder group has approved submittal of this letter. The group has benefited greatly from the contributions made by Vicky Whitney, State Board Division Chief, Division of Water Rights.

This fall, we expect to provide recommendations for consideration as part of the Board*s proposed North Coast Instream Flow Policy. First, we are preparing a package of recommended improvements to the existing water rights system. The recommendations we are considering include suggestions for improving the water rights noticing process, with a goal of involving all interested parties at an earlier date; early coordination of permit proceedings involving the State Board and other interested permitting and trustee agencies; and improvements to the environmental review and protest resolution process. We are also discussing new approaches to substantive water rights standards, and compliance and enforcement. For example, we are reviewing mechanisms for encouraging development of offstream storage projects to replace existing onstream projects; the fishery benefits of

such a program could be significant.

We have also been discussing and developing proposals for approaches/alternatives based on a collaborative effort that could meet water users* needs, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, and provide key data necessary for managing resources. The goal of this collaborative effort would be to take advantages of opportunities within a watershed, such as cost sharing, that may not be available in the traditional arena. Under this *watershed approach*, diverters could join together to develop local physical solutions to their watershed specific problems. For example, they could share costs associated with developing data and monitoring conditions and could work together on projects that improved habitat at the most significant locations in the watershed, rather than only on their individual properties. Although this idea is still in its formative stages, it would require instream flow protection provisions for the watershed and a *critical mass* of landowners to be implemented,

We appreciate the willingness expressed by the Board at its July 19 meeting to consider our suggestions. Many of the issues we have been discussing could be part of a State Board North Coast Instream Flow Policy. We look forward to providing you with specific recommendations by the end of September.

Sincerely,

Andrew Black
Consultant and Facilitator
No.Coast Water Rights Working Group

Stakeholder List

National Marine Fisheries Service
California Department of Fish and Game
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mendocino County
Sonoma County
Sonoma County Water Agency
Mendocino County Water Agency
Agricultural Water User Representatives
California Farm Bureau Federation
National Heritage Institute
Trout Unlimited
Peregrine Audobon Society
Redwood Chapter Sierra Club

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