

RCWD
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Comments to the Humboldt County Planning Commission on the Water Resources Element of the Humboldt County General Plan Update.

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Hello, my name is Keytra Meyer. I am a board member of the Salmonid Restoration Federation and I live in Eureka in the Elk River watershed, and work in the salmon restoration field in the Mattole River watershed.

I am here to respectfully ask the Planning Commission to support healthy watersheds and help us restore flows and salmon populations in Humboldt County.

As you may be aware, our watersheds and salmon populations are not once they once were. Steelhead and Chinook salmon are both listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act south of Redwood Creek. Coho Salmon are listed as threatened under both the Federal and state Endangered Species Act in all rivers in Humboldt County. Coho salmon have been listed since 1997, for 14 years, and most populations are at high risk of extirpation, putting coho salmon in all of Humboldt county at a very high risk of extinction. In the Mattole watershed, where I work, we had 5 adult coho return this year. This is in a watershed that once had 20,000 adults return every year. The Journal cover story a couple of weeks ago highlighted the current plight of our endangered coho salmon in their article: "Last Call for Coho".

NOAA Fisheries identifies "urbanization, water demands exceeding availability, and water pollution" as three of the major threats impacting salmon and steelhead populations in Humboldt county. They also list the following as Priority Recovery Actions (www.no:

-"improve county and city planning, regulations, and county road maintenance programs," and

-"balance water supply and allocation with fisheries needs through a water rights program, designate fully appropriated watersheds, develop passive diversion devices or off stream storage, eliminate illegal water diversions, and improve criteria for water drafting and dam operations."

The Klamath, Trinity, Eel, Mad, and Mattole Rivers are also listed as Sediment and Temperature impaired and all have issues with flows due to water diversions. In the Mattole River, 9 out of the last 12 years have been the lowest flows on the 50 year record, and our salmon populations can not withstand the impacts. With past land use practices, climate change impacts, and population growth, we must regulate how much water is diverted and exported within and from Humboldt County.

I ask that the Planning Commission adopt the Healthy Watersheds Working Groups' recommendation on the Water Resources Element of the General Plan. Although I support all of the recommendations, I ask the Planning Commission to specifically consider the following policy recommendations:

WR-P6 - Demonstration of Sufficient Water Supply

WR-Px1- Requirements for Water Storage in Temp Impaired Watersheds and Critical Watershed Areas

WR-P7- Cumulative Impacts of Subdivision

WR-Px5 - Important Groundwater Recharge Areas

WR-P17- Watershed Planning

WR-P23- Conservation and Re-use Strategy

WR-P24- Restoration of Flow Rates

WR-P25- Compliance with Water Code Export Law

WR-P33- Restoration Projects

Thank you for your consideration and your help in restoring watersheds and salmon populations.