

RWA
7/21/11

My name is Don Allan; I'm a resident of Westhaven and president of the non-profit Salmonid Restoration Federation located in Redway. SRF supports watershed restoration and policies that protect and restore fisheries habitat in the interest of restoring salmon populations. I want to express SRF's support of the Healthy Watersheds Working Group recommendations.

One of the keys to protecting and restoring fish habitat is to ensure that our rivers and creeks have adequate flows to support habitat through the critical dry season and to provide the necessary winter high flows that create and maintain the river morphology and the habitat that supports salmonids. SRF supports WR-G8, Restoration of River Flows in the Trinity, Klamath and Eel rivers, and WR-P5, Critical Watershed Areas. We strongly support the GOAL of no new out-of-area water exports. With regard to the unique situation in the Mad River watershed, the County should adopt policies that prioritize local utilization of allocated waters for enhancement of instream flows and support of other in-County uses such as sustainable local agriculture, aquaculture, commercial and industrial uses.

We also encourage the County to ensure that the 50,000 acre feet of Trinity River water, allocated to Humboldt County, is used to maintain the fisheries habitat in the Trinity River. The Eel River is the third largest watershed entirely in California. Unfortunately much of the habitat in the upper river has been destroyed by the water diversion to the Russian River. The County should adopt policies in support of an Eel River restoration effort similar to that enacted on the Trinity River in order to restore flows that will support the fisheries habitat.

Having worked in watershed restoration for over 30 years, I have observed that one of the biggest contributors of sediment which degrades our creeks and rivers is road related erosion. I recommend adopting the working groups recommendation for WR-P6 to require formalized road associations for non-County maintained roads, funded by an assessment on all properties served by that road. Many road associations throughout the County, including my own road, rely on volunteer donations and are often financially or technically challenged to properly maintain roads. This often leads to culvert failures, road surface erosion, and road-related landslides. The sediment flows into our creeks and rivers, degrading water quality and destroying fish habitat.

The County should adopt best management practices (BMPs) as recommended in WR-P8, Erosion and Sediment Discharge and WR-P30, Natural Stormwater Drainage Courses. Requiring equipment operators to be trained in and follow BMPs can ensure that road related erosion is minimized and this will protect water quality, water supply, recreational uses, and fisheries habitat.

SRF also supports WR-P6, the working group's revised recommendation for Demonstration of Sufficient Water Supply, for both subdivisions and new development, and WR-P2, Protection for Existing Surface and Groundwater Uses. I served on the Board of the Westhaven Community Services District from 1988 – 92 and we had a number of homeowners, whose houses were built with County approved permits, request connection to the WCSD because their wells ran dry in late summer. Allowing new houses to be built in areas with limited water supply means that all water sources will be tapped and that water will not be available to support other beneficial uses, such as fish habitat. To ensure adequate water supply prior to approving any development, the County should require a dry-season-6-hour pump test of the water source, including observation of the recovery rate to prove adequate water supply.

Thankyou.

Don Allan
President,
Salmonid Restoration Federation