



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

825 5TH STREET, ROOM 111  
EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501    PHONE: (707) 476-2390

April 2, 2019

Darren Mierau  
North Coast Director  
California Trout  
1380 Ninth Street  
Arcata, CA 95521

Subject:        Statement of Interest for Membership in Eel River Forum

Dear Mr. Mierau:

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors requests that Humboldt County be accepted as a member of the Eel River Forum to support cooperative management, strategic planning, and recover of the Eel River ecosystem and its native fish populations. This letter provides Humboldt County's statement of interest for joining the Forum and motivation for supporting the coalition's mission:

*The mission of the Eel River Forum is to coordinate and integrate conservation and recovery efforts in the Eel River watershed to conserve its ecological resilience, restore its native fish populations, and protect other watershed beneficial uses. These actions are also intended to enhance the economic vitality and sustainability of human communities in the Eel River basin.*

**Statement of Interest**

The main stem of the Eel River flows through Humboldt County for approximately 81 river miles before discharging into the Pacific Ocean near the cities of Ferndale and Fortuna. The ecosystem services and beneficial uses of the Eel River are a vital part of Humboldt County's core community values. Humboldt County is a political subdivision of California with jurisdiction for land use policy within the unincorporated areas of the county. The Water Resources Element of the Humboldt County General Plan includes the following goals which directly align with the Eel River Forum's mission:

**WR-G1. Water Supply, Quality, and Beneficial Uses.** High quality and abundant surface and groundwater water resources that satisfy the water quality objectives and beneficial uses identified in the Water Quality Control Basin Plan for the North Coast Region.

**WR-G2. Water Resource Habitat.** River and stream habitat supporting the recovery and continued viability of wild, native salmonid and other abundant coldwater fish populations supporting a thriving commercial, sport, and tribal fishery.

**WR-G3. Planning, Coordination, and Advocacy.** A system of local coordination and intra-regional cooperation to advance local, regional, and state water management priorities and objectives.

**WR-G4. Watershed Planning Framework.** Land use decision making that makes use of watersheds as a planning, management, and coordinating framework to cooperatively manage water and natural resources with local communities, neighboring counties, and state and federal agencies.

**WR-G5. Watershed Management.** A system of water resource management that recognizes watersheds as natural systems producing multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits that can be sustained in perpetuity and optimized with education, sound data, cooperative public processes, adaptive management, and science based leadership.

**WR-G8. Restoration of Impacted River Flows.** Restoration of water flow regimes in the Trinity, Klamath, Eel, and other river systems impacted by out of basin water diversions to meet all beneficial uses, including salmon and steelhead recovery plans, recreational activities, and the economic needs of river dependent communities with no additional watershed exports from rivers flowing through the County that are detrimental to beneficial uses.

Humboldt County is a member of the Eel-Russian River Commission, which is a joint powers authority established in 1978 to support coordinated conservation and development within the two watersheds. Supervisor Estelle Fennell currently serves as Chair of the Eel-Russian River Commission and Humboldt County performs administrative duties on behalf of the commission.

Humboldt County is a member of the North Coast Resource Partnership, which is a regional collaboration with the counties of Del Norte, Mendocino, Modoc, Siskiyou, Sonoma, and Trinity and the tribal governments within these seven counties. The North Coast Resource Partnership coordinates the planning and implementation of projects throughout the region related to water and wastewater infrastructure, watersheds, public health, and economic vitality, with emphasis on benefiting economically disadvantaged communities. Since 2006, Humboldt County has served as the regional administrating agency on behalf of the partnership.

Humboldt County convened the Eel River Valley Groundwater Working Group in October 2015 to organize the regional response to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for the Eel River Valley groundwater basin. Humboldt County completed a geologic and hydrogeologic investigation and submitted a Groundwater Sustainability Plan Alternative to the California Department of Water Resources in December 2016.

On June 5, 2018, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 18-56 which states Humboldt County's position regarding the future of the Potter Valley Project on the Eel River. Humboldt County actively participates in the ad hoc committee convened by Congressman Jared Huffman to work toward a "Two-Basin Solution" for the Potter Valley Project that would encompass interests in both the Eel River and Russian River basins.

Humboldt County operates and maintains the Sandy Prairie Flood Control Project, a levee system constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in phases starting in 1958 along the right bank of

the Eel River near Fortuna. Humboldt County extracts gravel from permitted extraction sites along the Eel and Van Duzen Rivers for aggregate materials to support road maintenance. Humboldt County operates various recreational access points to the Eel River and its tributaries. Humboldt County is a collaborative partner supporting the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District in the implementation of the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project, a major effort to address sediment, fish passage, flooding, and drainage in a sub-watershed discharging to the Eel River Delta. Humboldt County coordinates with local scientists and various public agencies to understand flood hazards and reduce flood risks in the Eel River Delta, for both current conditions and future climate scenarios.

Humboldt County is committed to protecting and restoring the natural resources within county boundaries. Our primary motivation in requesting membership to the Eel River Forum is to support the collaborative efforts of public agencies, Indian tribes, conservation partners, and other stakeholders in improving the environmental stewardship of the Eel River. Our primary interests are improving Eel River flow conditions and water quality, protecting fisheries, and supporting the prosperity, safety, and health of Eel River communities. We appreciate the consideration of the Eel River Forum members for inviting Humboldt County to join the membership and we look forward to helping address the issues identified by the forum.

The primary contacts for Humboldt County will be:

- Supervisor Estelle Fennell ([efennell@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:efennell@co.humboldt.ca.us))
- Hank Seemann, Public Works Deputy Director ([hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us))
- Craig Tucker, Water Resources Consultant ([craig@suitsandsigns.com](mailto:craig@suitsandsigns.com))

Sincerely,



Rex Bohn, Chair  
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors