



FRIENDS OF THE EEL RIVER

Working for the recovery of our Wild & Scenic River, its fisheries and communities.

December 8, 2021

Humboldt County Planning Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Submitted via email to planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us

Re: Friends of the Eel River Support for Proposed Marshall Ranch Streamflow Enhancement Project

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Friends of the Eel River advocates for the protection and recovery of native fisheries in the Eel River watershed. Redwood Creek is one of several subwatersheds of the South Fork Eel River which are critical to the survival and recovery of coho salmon on the North Coast of California.

We have been deeply concerned by the continuing decline of steelhead and coho populations in Redwood Creek. Particularly troubling is the evidence that poorly planned and often unpermitted development and diversions in this critical basin have compounded the impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures and diminished precipitation are huge challenges to the survival and recovery of salmonids in the Eel River. Our steelhead and coho are incredibly tough, resilient animals, but they need cold, clean water to thrive.

As the Salmonid Restoration Federation has documented over the last decade, Redwood Creek is subject to chronic low flows in the late summer and early fall. As pools disconnect and water temperatures rise, conditions become lethal for juvenile salmonids.

The proposed Marshall Ranch Streamflow Enhancement Project is an important step toward creating conditions favorable for future generations of salmonids and other aquatic life in Redwood Creek. The Project aims to improve dry season conditions by capturing winter flows in off-channel storage and then slowly releasing up to 10-million-gallons of cold, clean water via passive gravity systems during the dry season.

The potential for irreparable loss of coho and steelhead in these streams led the California Water Action Plan to rank the South Fork Eel as one of the top five priorities for flow enhancement projects in California. This is the context in which we must consider the proposed Marshall Ranch Streamflow Enhancement Project.

Friends of the Eel River respectfully encourages your support of the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Alicia Hamann
Executive Director

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