

February 18, 2021

Humboldt County Supervisors
825 5th St.
Eureka, CA 95501

Subject: Redwood Creek Estuary CAP 1135 New Start Request Sponsorship

Dear Supervisors,

Family History:

The Hufford Family has resided adjacent to the Redwood Creek estuary since the 1880's, with three generations currently living, working, and recreating on our family land. The youngest generation will represent the 6th generation to have lived, grown up, worked, and enjoyed life alongside the Redwood Creek estuary.

Joseph Hufford, currently the oldest living generation is the only one living who has ever had the chance to attempt to catch a fish in what was once part of the estuary system. There is a small creek called Sand Cache Creek which traverses our property. This creek used to freely flow into the Redwood Creek estuary and was a vital part of the estuary habitat. This creek was once fished from boats, or from the wooden bridge that once crossed it, and from the two docks which housed row boats. Joseph's father, Elmer, used to hire out his rowing services to folks looking to catch the biggest salmon around.

Estuary History, by the Hufford's:

The last time a row boat was in Sand Cache Creek and was able to freely move through a portion of the channel, not even able to make it into the mainstem of Redwood Creek, was the late 1980's. Since then the connection of the tributary creek into Redwood Creek has been increasingly cut off by a sand and driftwood dam and has been choked out by reed canary grass. Today if you wished to traverse Sand Cache Creek from where Elmer's boat dock was to the mouth all you would need is some waterproof hiking boots. The reed canary grass is so thick you can literally walk on it.

The degradation of Sand Cache Creek and the whole of the Redwood Creek estuary started shortly after the completion of the Redwood Creek Levee system in the early 1970's. Over the last 50 years there have been several government agency led attempts at bringing about a restoration project to restore the Redwood Creek estuary. None of those attempts have led to any reasonable solutions or physical restoration work.

Current Working Group History:

In October 2016 Gregory Hufford, PE started working with California Trout to form a Stakeholder Group who could pursue a restoration project. The goal of this Stakeholder Group was to bring to the table all the affected landowners, local regulators, and restoration experts to formulate ideas, options, and identify a path to a successful project. After 4 years and 2 months the group has determined that the

best way forward is to use a program with the Army Corps of Engineers called Continuing Authorizations Program (CAP 1135) and requires a partnership between the Army Corps of Engineers and the owners of the Redwood Creek Levee System. As the County of Humboldt owns and maintains the Redwood Creek Levee the County's support of the group's efforts, to request for a new start under CAP 1135, are required.

Requested County Support:

It is the hope of the Hufford Family that the Board of Supervisors will submit a letter as the local sponsor to request Army Corps of Engineers to begin a CAP 1135 process. It is our understanding that it will take up to 1 year for just the acceptance portion of this process. The deadline for this application is March 10th 2021, and the next opportunity will not come around again until March of 2022. The County's role as local sponsor for the CAP 1135 new start is paramount to its success.

In the time between submitting the New Start request and the time when financial support for this project is needed it is our understanding that the Stakeholder Group will advance our understanding of the system and define a feasible funding strategy to ensure the completion of this project. With all the past studies and current work of the Stakeholder Group members, the involvement of the immediately affected private landowners, and the extreme high ranking of the Redwood Creek estuary as a system needing restoration, there is little risk to the County and a lot of benefit to enter into this process.

Based on our understanding of the CAP 1135 process the first portion is a Feasibility Phase with costs of up to \$100,000. If the study costs more than \$100,000 the sponsor and the Corps cost share 50/50 the overage. It is also our understanding that all the work completed by the Stakeholder Group and work they will continue to complete can be counted towards cost sharing amounts. It is also our understanding that it would be approximately two years from the date of submitting the request that any potential cost sharing costs would start to incur.

It is the hope of the Hufford family that the current Stakeholder Group continues to lead this effort when a new start is approved with the Army Corps. Based on previous experiences of attempts to create a viable restoration project people who are not vested in the surrounding lands cannot arrive at reasonable solutions. The Hufford family believes the current Stakeholder Group has a good understanding of the constraints, works well together, and has the greatest chance of success.

Conclusion:

This is a great opportunity for the restoration of the Redwood Creek Estuary including its tributaries known as Sand Cache Creek and Strawberry Creek. The goal is to relieve annual flooding on private agriculture land, it will also alleviate seasonal flooding of a County maintained road, and most importantly it help reverse the last fifty years of estuary degradation. This pathway is an opportunity for the County of Humboldt to address long-standing ecological and infrastructure disfunction through a USACE process that brings millions of dollars of Federal funds to the solution.

This decision must not be delayed, postponed or turned down. With the current time table it could be five years before the first portions of any restoration project begin to break ground. This project will be a multiyear project of several years. Delaying will just keep pushing that out one more year at a time. It is the Hufford Family's hope that our oldest living Generation will once again get a chance to enjoy a row boat ride down Sand Cache Creek across the Redwood Creek Estuary and visit Strawberry Creek with his children, grandchildren, and possibly by the time this project is complete great-grandchildren.

Be the support that the Redwood Creek Estuary needs and Vote YES!!

Respectfully,

Joseph Hufford (74),

Donna Hufford (73),

Kimberly Frick (46),

Byron Frick (51),

Kristina Hufford (44),

Kaitlyn Combs(22),

Taylor Combs(20),

Gregory Hufford, PE (40)

William Hufford (13),

Myrsadies Hufford (12),

Braxton Hufford (9),