



Board of Supervisors  
Humboldt County  
825 5th Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

February 19, 2021

Re: Support for a USACE CAP 1135 'new start' request for Redwood Creek Estuary Restoration

Dear Humboldt County Supervisors,

On behalf of California Trout, I would like to express my strong support for Humboldt County to submit the Redwood Creek Estuary Restoration project as a USACE CAP 1135 'new start.' The 'new start' will initiate a Feasibility Study Phase in lower Redwood Creek, near the town of Orick, Humboldt County, CA, which has been adversely affected by the 1968 Redwood Creek Flood Control Project.

The Redwood Creek watershed hosts Redwood National and State Parks, working agricultural and timber lands, the town of Orick, and populations of threatened salmon and steelhead. The estuary and four miles of lower Redwood Creek are confined by a 1968 Army Corps levee system. The levees reduced flooding of adjacent floodplains but have presented long-term unintended environmental consequences and increasingly undesirable conditions for agricultural land use operations, public safety, and habitat. The historic productive estuary, sloughs, freshwater mainstem, riverine floodplain, and tributaries that once connected to a broad and deep embayment are greatly diminished and disconnected. The CAP 1135 is a mechanism to address environmental issues within a Federal Flood Control Project. The primary objectives of this CAP 1135 project are to restore critical estuarine salmonid habitat and address damaging flood conditions in the Redwood Creek estuary.

A Stakeholder Group, convened upon request by the landowners in 2017, has expressed unanimous support for the CAP 1135 'new start' request. The Stakeholder Group's efforts are ongoing and demonstrate the commitment to the project with in-kind staff time to define and analyze a feasible project. During the year or more that it will take for the USACE to approve the new start, the Stakeholder Group will continue to define and analyze a suite of actions, plan for environmental compliance, and develop the understanding of easements, liability, and operations and maintenance responsibilities associated with the project. The Stakeholder Group's work will be closely aligned with USACE process using approved tools and mechanisms to best leverage the ongoing work.

Addressing impairment to salmonid habitat in the Redwood Creek estuary has been a long-term interest of CalTrout and will be necessary to achieve meaningful population recovery of salmonids. We recognize the complex set of circumstances and regulatory challenges resulting from the flood control project, and we believe the time is right, with support and momentum from our Stakeholder Group, to push forward toward a solution for the estuary that all interested parties can support. As a member of the Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholder Group, CalTrout is in full support of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to approve a letter requesting the USACE CAP 1135 'new start' for this important project to improve estuarine habitat, public safety, and agricultural land use operations in the community of Orick.

Please contact me for any additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darren Mierau".

Darren Mierau, California Trout North Coast Regional Director