

Zuber Family
P.O. Box 97
Orick, CA 95555

February 17, 2021

Humboldt County Supervisors
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Subject: CAP 1135 New Start for Redwood Creek Estuary

Board of Supervisors:

Our family owns the land adjacent to the South Slough of Redwood Creek. The land is a working ranch, cattle have been raised here generation after generation from Conrad Zuber to Albert Zuber to Lawrence Zuber, to Marla Zuber-Mora and with great hope in the future to Levi and Trey Mora. Our family intends to keep it a working ranch and to continue making a living supplying quality beef to your local co-ops, stores and to national chains.

As part of keeping this working ranch in the family and to continue feeding people we need to protect our property. We have been sitting in on levee meetings for 20+ years, the last four years of being part of the Stakeholder Group and discussing the estuary changes our family feels we need to start the process to getting something done. The South Slough has had a dramatic change in the last year for the worst. With no maintenance, no one following through on opening and closing the flow gates, the South Slough has completely closed on both ends causing no fish access to allow protection from the main channel, along with water backing up to highway 101 and continues to put more usable land under water on both sides of Redwood Creek.

It is our hope that you can help us with your vote to get the process started with the CAP 1135 New Start application to find a solution that everyone involved is pleased with that will benefit land owners on both sides, the fisheries, and government agencies involved, but to do this we need to get the process rolling to look for viable projects that can be agreed upon.

Thank you for taking the time at your meeting to consider our situation.

Sincerely,

The Zuber Family



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),

Joseph Hufford

Donna Hufford (73),

Donna Hufford

Kimberly Frick (46),

Kimberly Frick

Byron Frick (51),

Byron Frick

Kristina Hufford (44),

Kristina Hufford

Kaitlyn Combs(22),

Kaitlyn Combs

Taylor Combs(20),

Taylor Combs

Gregory Hufford, PE (40)

Gregory Hufford

William Hufford (13),

William Hufford

Myrsadies Hufford (12),

Myrsadies Hufford

Braxton Hufford (9),

Braxton Hufford



United States Department of the Interior
Redwood National Park
1111 Second Street
Crescent City, California 95531

September 17, 2021

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

Honorable Humboldt County Supervisors:

Two years ago, a landowner led, agency-supported Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholders Group convened to produce a statement of consensus regarding on-going chronic issues at the Redwood Creek estuary in Orick. The estuary and four miles of lower Redwood Creek are confined by a 1968 US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Flood Control Project (levee system) that was installed to provide flood protection to Orick. The levee system has successfully reduced flooding in the town of Orick, but it has also created long-term unintended environmental consequences and increasingly undesirable conditions for agricultural land use operations, public safety, and salmonid habitat at the estuary. The historically productive estuary, sloughs, freshwater mainstem, riverine floodplain, and tributaries that once connected to a broad and deep embayment are now disconnected, and the embayment does not function ecologically. The Stakeholders Group recently identified the USACE Continuing Authorizations Program Section 1135 (CAP 1135), for submission of a 'new start' to study the feasibility and long-term sustainability of a restoration project at the Redwood Creek estuary to address these chronic issues.

The 'new start' under CAP 1135 is a mechanism to address environmental issues within a Flood Control Project. The primary objectives of this 'new start' would be to restore degraded estuarine salmonid habitat and address flood conditions on lands adjacent to the Redwood Creek estuary. 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 alternatives, plan for environmental compliance, and consider operations and maintenance costs associated with the project. The Stakeholder Group will work closely with USACE-approved tools and mechanisms to ensure efforts in 2021 can be utilized in a Feasibility Study.

The National Park Service (NPS) is an active participant in the Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholders Group, contributing staff time and expertise towards improving resource conditions at the estuary. These efforts align with the overall restoration and stewardship goals of the NPS and are additive to restoration projects that the NPS is implementing with other partners in the Redwood Creek watershed. As a member of the Stakeholders Group and as land management agency charged with protecting the resources of our public lands, we look forward to working with County staff to better understand and consider the opportunities presented by the CAP 1135 program to support recovery of the salmon and steelhead populations of Redwood Creek.

Sincerely,

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MIETZ
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Steven N. Mietz
Superintendent



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 95521
(707) 822-7201, FAX (707) 822-8411



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

February 18, 2021

Subject: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Arcata Fish & Wildlife Office Support for Redwood Creek Estuary Restoration

Dear Humboldt County Supervisors:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Arcata, California Fish and Wildlife Office is working with local landowners and other federal agencies to restore the Redwood Creek Estuary. The project objectives are to restore the estuary's lost aquatic habitat, address chronic sedimentation and water quality issues, and improve diminished agricultural productivity in the lower estuary.

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 that was installed to provide flood protection to the community of Orick. The levee system reduced flood risk but created long-term, unintended environmental consequences and increasingly undesirable conditions for agricultural land use operations, public safety, and salmonid habitat. The complex systems of tidal sloughs, extensive seasonal lagoon, and freshwater wetlands have been greatly simplified and diminished. Adjacent agricultural lands have lost significant productivity due to impaired drainage and sedimentation.

The Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholder Group was formed in 2016 at the behest of local landowners. The Stakeholder Group consists of local landowners and technical experts from CalTrout, NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Redwood National Park. The Stakeholder Group's efforts are ongoing and demonstrate the commitment to support the project with in-kind staff time to define and analyze a feasible project. The Stakeholder Group will continue to develop a suite of restoration actions, plan for environmental compliance, and develop the understanding of easements and liability associated with the project.

Our office, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program, is a committed partner and member of Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholder Group. The mission of the Coastal Program is to protect and recover threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, and inter-jurisdictional fish by supporting voluntary restoration and enhancement of high-priority coastal habitats. The Coastal Program works cooperatively with numerous public and private stakeholders and partners to conserve and protect our trust resources along the North Coast of

California. The Coastal Program is providing technical assistance to Redwood Creek Estuary Stakeholder Group in the areas of stream assessment, hydraulic modeling, concept design development, and engineering design for estuary restoration and habitat improvement projects. We anticipate that our technical assistance will establish the groundwork for a concept estuary restoration plan and will directly support work to implement the project.

If you have further questions, regarding our support or technical assistance on this project please contact Dr. Conor Shea, Coastal Program Geomorphologist and Hydrologist by phone at (707) 499-6479.

Sincerely,

**JENNY
ERICSON**

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JENNY ERICSON
Date: 2021.02.18
13:30:51 -08'00'

Jenny Ericson
Acting Field Supervisor
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office



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



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 95521-4573

February 24, 2021

Refer to NMFS No: 0012WCR2021AR00040

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

Re: NOAA Fisheries Support to Restore the Redwood Creek Estuary through with a Corps CAP 1135 'New Start' Request

Dear Humboldt County Supervisors:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) offers our support for restoring the Redwood Creek estuary through a Continuing Authorities Program Section 1135 (CAP 1135) 'new start' request to the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The 'new start' will initiate a Feasibility Study Phase in lower Redwood Creek and its estuary, which has been adversely affecting salmon, steelhead, and adjacent landowners since the 1968 Redwood Creek Flood Control Project was built.

Since 2017, representatives from NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region and Restoration Center have participated in a landowner led, agency-supported Redwood Creek estuary stakeholder group (Stakeholder Group). With management from the non-profit California Trout, the Stakeholder Group has agreed on a conceptual approach to restore salmon and steelhead habitat in the estuary, and to improve agricultural function, and reduce flooding of surrounding lands. The Stakeholder Group recently identified the CAP 1135 process as a path forward to study the feasibility and long-term sustainability of an estuary restoration project to address these issues.

The Redwood Creek watershed contains populations of threatened salmon and steelhead that are critical to recovery of those species. The estuary and four miles of lower Redwood Creek have been confined by Corps levees since 1968. 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 fish habitat. The historic productive estuary, sloughs, freshwater mainstem creek, 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 without needing additional Congressional approval. The primary objectives of this CAP 1135 project are to restore critical estuarine fish habitat and address damaging flood conditions adjacent to the Redwood Creek estuary.



NOAA Fisheries will continue to support this effort with staff time and expertise to define and analyze a feasible project with the Stakeholder Group. In addition, NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region plans to fund California Trout to increase project management capacity and to sub-contract for environmental studies in spring 2021. While the Corps decides whether to pursue this new start project, 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 Corps process, using approved tools and mechanisms to best leverage the ongoing work.

Restoration of the Redwood Creek estuary is a very high priority recovery action in our coho salmon, Chinook salmon and steelhead recovery plans, and critical to recovery of these listed species. In addition, this effort aligns with other restoration efforts that we are involved in and/or funding within the Redwood Creek watershed. As members of the Redwood Creek estuary stakeholder group, NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region and Restoration Center support the pursuit of a CAP 1135 new start, and look forward to working with Humboldt County on the opportunities offered by the CAP 1135 to help recover salmon and steelhead populations in the Redwood Creek watershed.

Please contact Leslie Wolff of the West Coast Region at 707-601-5455, or Bob Pagliuco of the Restoration Center at 707-834-2215 for more information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin Ly", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Justin Ly
North Coast Branch Chief
Northern California Office

cc: Joél Flannery, US Army Corps of Engineers, Joel.R.Flannery@usace.army.mil
Thomas Kendall, US Army Corps of Engineers, Thomas.R.Kendall@usace.army.mil