



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
Acting Field Supervisor
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office