



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

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Mr. Steve Kinsey
President
Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 329
San Rafael CA 94903

Subject: Support of Protection for Endangered Central Coast California Coho Salmon in Marin County

Dear Mr. Kinsey:

This letter for the public record is in support of protection and enhancement of Central California Coast (CCC) Coho salmon (Federally listed as Endangered) populations within Marin County. Coho salmon populations have undergone a ninety-percent (90%) decline in California since the 1940s. This decline has been due to loss of habitat, reduced water quality, and increases in non-native invasive species. The Lagunitas Creek Watershed provides habitat for 10-20% of the remaining population. Therefore, it is very important to conserve this watershed and its crucial riparian habitat areas.

The California-Nevada Chapter (Cal-Neva Chapter) of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) represents over 600 professional scientists in California and Nevada involved in fisheries research, management, and policy. We are the largest chapter in AFS, which is the oldest professional fisheries society in the United States. The mission of the Cal-Neva Chapter and the AFS is to use, and promote the use of the best available science to improve conservation and sustainable management of fish and their aquatic ecosystems. Since its establishment over 40 years ago, the Cal-Neva Chapter has provided technical analysis, interpretation, and policy recommendations on many regional fishery issues, including implementation of Endangered Species Act and Federal Power Act. Many of our members are engaged in aquatic habitat restoration, working in almost all river systems in California and Nevada to enhance, protect, and conserve fish populations for the benefit of the public.

Specifically, there are several actions that the Marin County Supervisors should take immediately:

- Thoroughly and fully enforce all existing habitat protection laws, regulations, and ordinances to help insure the continued existence of Coho salmon and other native species;

- Adopt an emergency moratorium on new construction in the County's 100-foot Stream Conservation Area (SCA) until such time as a Cumulative Impact Analysis and appropriate protection measures are identified, to inform County and other decision-makers on degradation thresholds and sound planning practices;
- Enact an emergency Native Riparian Forest Management Policy and Ordinance that prohibits removal of streamside native vegetation;
- Full enforcement of violations and illegal development in the 100-foot Stream Conservation Area;
- Require new development in Coho watersheds to meet a zero net increase in storm-water run-off;
- Modify all County-wide Plans to eliminate provisions that allow new construction in the SCA and increase protections for Coho salmon and the habitats that support them, and;
- Work with fisheries agencies at all levels and non-governmental organizations to begin a process to identify and acquire undeveloped land parcels before they are compromised by impervious surfaces, lost or degraded riparian habitats, declines in water quality, and other urban impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of this process to protect Coho salmon and other significant fisheries resources. If you or any of your staff would like to discuss this matter further or require additional information please contact me. Cal-Neva Chapter would be glad to provide additional information or technical assistance in support of this process to conserve one of the most important aquatic ecosystems on the California coast.

Sincerely,

signed on August 27, 2007

Russell J. Bellmer, Ph.D.
Past- President California/Nevada Chapter of American Fisheries Society

cc:
Mr. Charles McGlashan, Vice President
Mr. Harold C. Brown Jr., 2nd Vice President
Ms. Susan L. Adams
Ms. Judy Arnold

References:

Brown, L. R., P.B. Moyle, R.M. Yoshiyama (1994) Historical Decline and Current Status of Coho Salmon in California. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. vol. 14. no. 2 pp. 237-261.

Spence B. C., S. L. Harris, W. E. Jones, M. Goslin, A. Agrawal, and E. Mora1 (2005) Historical Occurrence of Coho Salmon in Streams of the Central California Coast Coho Salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit. NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC-383, p. 88

Good, T.P., R.S. Waples, and P. Adams (editors) (2005) Updated Status of Federally Listed ESUs of West Coast Salmon and Steelhead. U.S. Dept. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-NWFSC-66, p. 598