



March 20, 2009

Matt St. John
No. Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa CA 95403

RE: Comments For the 2008 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments

Dear North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board:

The Friends of the Mark West Watershed (FMWW) is a community of neighbors, landowners and supporters working to protect, restore and sustain the Upper Mark West Watershed in Sonoma County California (www.markwestwatershed.org). Our Watershed continues to provide spawning and rearing habitat for Coho Salmon and Steelhead Trout. We make our decisions by consensus.

We have carefully reviewed the Staff Report and it's recommendations. We have agreed by consensus that the 2019 date for implementation of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) be changed to "IMMEDIATE" action required.

We are sure your office is well aware of the major fish "kills" in Mark West Creek. When the original "listing" was completed by the Water Board, Mark West Creek's 28 miles had low summertime flows of 2 cfs in the headwaters to 6 cfs at Slusser Road (near your offices). California Dept. of Fish & Game data indicates the numbers varied insignificantly even during drought years.

Data now being collected by agencies and private individuals shows water volumes are in free fall. Historical flows of approximately 2 cfs (CDFG) started to drop in the early part of this decade and reached an "incredible" .06 cfs on September 3, 2008 (Community Clean Water Institute (CCWI). Temperatures, of course, are rising each year and in the summer of 2008 all fry died. Temperatures were measured by CDFG, CCWI, Sotoyome RCD and private citizens. Historically, CDFG data shows Mark West Creek with excellent volumes, low temperature, excellent pools (CDFG 1996 pool inventory = 34% were 3 ft. or more) and lots of fry. NCRWQCB documents indicate most pools are now filled in by sediment. This is verified by other professionals and our members. Local residents contributed \$60,000 as a 10% match for CDFG's funded \$600,000 for private road upgrade projects to reduce sediment discharge to Mark West Creek. This is being offset by others.

For the vast volume of supporting data, please go to our website at www.markwestwatershed.org or those of the agencies' data collectors.

The Friends of Mark West Watershed want every conceivable action be taken to save the remaining steelhead and coho. We will assist you in any way we can.

Harriet Buckwalter
6985 St. Helena Road
Santa Rosa CA 95404
Co-Chair

Linda Sartor
Co-Chair

Cc: Congressman Mike Thompson