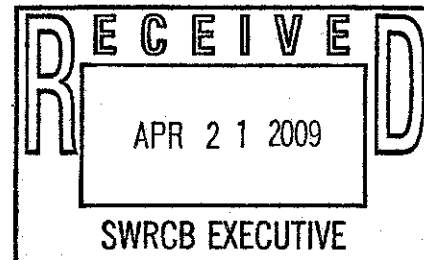


commentletters - Modification of Russian River Low Flow Order

From: "Frances E. Werner" <franceswerner@att.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2009 12:24 PM
Subject: Modification of Russian River Low Flow Order
CC: <randy.pool@scwa.ca.gov>

April 21, 2009

Jeannie Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



Randy Poole
General Manager/ Chief Engineer
Sonoma County Water Agency
PO Box 11628
Santa Rosa, CA 95406
(E-mail commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov & randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov)

RE: Comments for May 6th Workshop on Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my concern regarding impacts related to Order 2009-0027- DWR and modifications in permit terms that would reduce those impacts. The reduction in flows will cause severe impacts to water quality, recreation, community water systems, over-summering juvenile salmon and Steelhead as well as the lower River economy that depends on a healthy Russian River.

In 1978, my husband and I bought a cabin on Northern Avenue in Guerneville, where we spent many glorious weekends with children and then grandchildren swimming and canoeing in the Russian River. In 1994, we fulfilled our dream and moved here full-time to a house in Monte Rio across from Cassini's Campground, remaining connected to the River.

I also opened a business on Main Street in Guerneville – a bookstore called River Reader, Inc. – in 1995, which I operated until I sold it 12 years later. I understand the personal and economic impacts that the proposed very low River flows will have. Very simply, the lower River's economy cannot sustain itself without adequate flows for recreational use. As a former business owner, I was absolutely dependent on the tourist trade to survive. If swimming and boating are impaired this summer, as they most surely will be if the flows fall to the allowed 35 cfs, the local economy will be devastated.

As an avid River kayaker, I am very concerned about the overall health of the River, which the Sonoma County Water Agency's myopic approach threatens. Last summer's low flows, not as extreme as the ones allowed under the current Order, produced massive algae blooms. If the health of the River were really paramount, more water conservation would be required, and all aspects of River health would be measured and protected.

In order to reduce the impacts from reduced flows under Order 2009-0027-DWR I urge you on May 6 to take the

actions to protect water quality and beneficial uses in the Russian River as recommended by the Russian Riverkeeper, an organization whose sole concern is the preservation and protection of the Russian River.

Specifically we urge you to:

- Increase frequency of chemical water quality monitoring to every two weeks with results posted promptly on a public website to proactively prevent water quality problems such as algae blooms from increased nutrient concentrations
- Include new provisions in the order to require flow changes in response to violations in water quality standards or as needed to protect juvenile ESA listed fish over the summer, the water agency released water to protect grapes from frost on April 14 to 16th so we expect increases to protect water quality as well
- Installation of additional gauges as needed to ensure instantaneous flow compliance levels are maintained, in 2004 and 2007 compliance levels were violated under previous orders
- A minimum of 25% mandatory conservation for SCWA customers and all users downstream of Dry Creek to help maintain flows and conserve water in case of multi-year drought.
- Mandatory conservation by all permitted water diversions upstream of Dry Creek including agricultural and rural residential diversions and streamside wells pumping underflow
- Additional prohibitions in the Order on diversions that are not permitted in critically dry conditions or if needed a separate order restraining those unpermitted diversions to protect water storage in Lake Mendocino and maintain higher flows
- Keep order prohibition on commercial turf irrigation in SCWA service area and expand to include all commercial turf using water from the Russian River

We believe that modifying the order to include these provisions will improve protection of water quality, juvenile endangered fish and likely result in somewhat higher flows due to reduced diversions.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Frances E. Werner
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Monte Rio, CA 95462