9/2 Bd Workshop
Cal-AM
Deadline: 8/26/09 by 12 noon

Carmel River Steelhead Association

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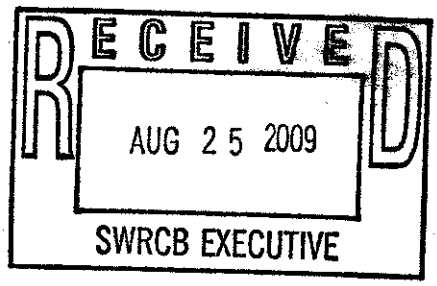

Att: Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board

August 23, 2009

Subject: Comment letter: Cal Am CDO Hearing Workshop

Dear Board Members:

The Carmel River Steelhead Association (CRSA) supports the Draft Conclusion and Order as written, provided the order is enforced this year and all reductions of pumping occur in the months of June, July, and August. Although we believe that larger reductions could and should be made, we feel this order is fair, practical and achievable.

While as stated above, we believe larger reductions should be made, we also realize that it is far more important to start the process now rather than delay it any more as it has been delayed for the last 14 years. The total return of adult steelhead counted last winter over San Clemente Dam was 95 fish. Biologists believe that 50% of adult fish spawn below San Clemente which would make the total returning population only 190 adult fish. Fish rescues also confirm that Carmel River Steelhead are at a crisis point. CRSA, knowing the critical importance of preserving fish this year, made extra efforts in rescuing fish. The efforts of added rescues only resulted in 5,687 fish (mostly young of the year) being saved by CRSA this year compared to over 24,000 last year. It is important to note that only a very small percentage of young-of-the year steelhead survive to return from the ocean as adults, that percentage of returning adults could be is as low as 1%. The Carmel River Steelhead are at a tipping point and without more water we could loose this valuable and genetically unique resource.

There are many who will state that the prescribed reductions will have incredible detrimental effects on the community. This is not supported in the "Order" as it is written. In the "Order," the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has actually only reduced the amount of water to the consumer by 5% or 549 afa. The remaining reductions in Carmel River pumping comes from requiring "new" water (Sand City desalt, ASR, reduced system losses, and retrofit programs) not be used for further hookups, as was done in the past, but be used to reduce Carmel River over drafting. There is a component of the "Order" that could affect the consumer in that, if 121 afa are not achieved by reducing systems losses and retrofit programs, then it must be achieved by reducing outdoor irrigation. When CRSA receives complaints that one retirement community will not let its members put in native plant gardens because the community

must "use as much water as possible" and when anyone driving past September Ranch can witnesses the Ranch watering their weed field to preserve their water rights, it is hard to argue that outdoor watering cannot be lessened.

The cities will complain that there will now be a moratorium on water hookups for which they have been given an allocation . This allocation was given for water where there was no legal right and should not have been given in the first place and cannot now be granted. One must be concerned with the habitat conservation concerns of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) when they issue a press release encouraging people to immediately obtain their "will serve" letter from Cal Am so the moratorium will not affect them.

The voters using Carmel River water have twice turned down proposals that could have reduced pumping from the Carmel River. CRSA firmly believes that as long as residents can turn on the water as they have in the past, any new proposal that will cost them more money will not be accepted. Only when they are under mandated cutbacks will they accept changes.

CRSA further requests that the SWRCB prohibits MPWMD from granting permits for new wells in the Carmel Valley Watershed until only the legal amount of water is pumped from the Carmel River by Cal Am. It is counter productive to reduce water from one source then grant it to another.

CRSA congratulates the SWRCB in coming up with a plan that, while not popular with any party, is a middle ground for all and hopes that the announced plan will be implemented this water year.

Respectfully

Brian LeNeve
CRSA Board of Directors