
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

July 27, 2018

Ms. Melissa Van Scoyoc
Salmon River Restoration Council
PO Box 1089
Salmon River, CA 96027
habitat@srrec.org

Dear Ms. Van Scoyoc:

I am writing in support of the Kelly Bar Habitat Enhancement Project. The project will increase the amount of available off-channel rearing habitat and high-flow refugia for juvenile salmonids in the North Fork Salmon River. Creation of the Willow Pond will offer high flow off-channel habitat in winter and groundwater-fed thermal refugia in summer and the large wood habitat structures and brush baffles will increase habitat complexity and bank stabilization. Additionally, the project will also benefit other species beyond anadromous salmonids, such as the foothill yellow-legged frogs and Pacific lamprey.

The Salmon River is one of the most biologically intact large tributaries of the Klamath River and hosts all the native anadromous fish runs present in the Klamath River watershed, including coho, spring and fall Chinook, summer and winter steelhead, Pacific lamprey, and green sturgeon. In the Salmon River, like most North Coast rivers, coho salmon and other fish are impacted by migratory barriers, a lack of large woody debris, high levels of anthropogenic sediment and insufficient spawning gravels, large wildfires, reduced riparian corridors, and temperature impairments. Restoration project that increasing the amount of available off-channel rearing habitat and providing high-flow and thermal refugia are vital to address these impacts.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board supports the implementation of projects that are designed to restore, protect and enhance waters of the state. In January 2015, the North Coast Water Board adopted the *Policy in Support of Restoration in the North Coast Region – Resolution No. R1-2015-0001*. The Restoration Policy is primarily a narrative expressing support for restoration and similar type projects. The Policy describes in detail: 1) the importance of restoration projects for the protection, enhancement and recovery of beneficial uses, 2) the obstacles that slow or preclude restoration actions, 3)

the legal and procedural requirements for permitting restoration projects, 4) the ongoing Regional Water Board effort to provide support towards the implementation of restoration projects, and 5) direction to staff to continue to support restoration in the future. Additionally, the Kelly Bar Habitat Enhancement Project aligns with the guidance provided in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's *Habitat Restoration Manual*. The National Marine Fisheries Service's *Southern Oregon Northern California Coho Recovery Plan* (SONCC Coho Recovery Plan) states that summertime temperatures and a lack of winter rearing habitat are the greatest stressors for juvenile coho in the Salmon River. The SONCC Coho Recovery Plan states that the highest priority for recovery of coho on the Salmon River should be, "improving the quality and extent of rearing habitat and refugia for winter rearing, improving connectivity to existing off-channel habitat, and increasing the extent and quality of winter rearing areas".

Thank you for developing the Kelly Bar Enhancement Project. I look forward to offering any support possible as this and other Salmon River Restoration Council restoration projects continue forward.

Sincerely,

Jake Shannon