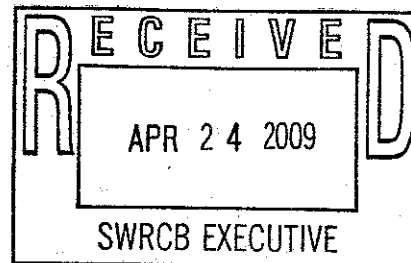


Public Comment TUC
Sonoma Co. Water Agency
Deadline: 4/24/09 by 5:00 p.m.

From: Vesta Copestakes <vesta@sonic.net>
To: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov
Date: Fri, Apr 24, 2009 12:41 AM
Subject: Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

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



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.

I publish a monthly newspaper, the West County Gazette, that is distributed by mail to towns in the lower Russian River communities - and placed on newsstands from Santa Rosa to the coast. The nature of my newspaper is to keep our communities connected as well as informed. It's written by readers, so I get articles on subjects that are near and dear to the hearts of our residents.

The most common topic of concern in my newspaper is our environment. The river and our water systems are immensely important to our residents. Yes, economics plays a large part in their concern because tourism is a huge part of our local economy and the river is a large draw for guests from across the planet.

But that's only part of the story. This is our HOME, and the health of our home is vital to all of us.

In addition to the 600,000 residents who rely on water from our watershed, we have entire communities who get their water from wells below the Russian River. In addition, that river is the recipient of both treated effluent for local water treatment plants as well as the downhill recipient of wastewater from septic systems and cesspools from hundreds of homes that line the hills above the river. Earth is a wonderful filter, but for homes along the riverbank, the distance from the cesspool and septic is minimum. Those of us who enjoy recreating in that river like to think that the flow is sufficient to minimize any negative impacts from the close proximity that wastewater has to our fresh water!

We also have a serious Ludwigia problem that stems from high levels of nutrients in our tributaries. This weed is choking the Laguna de Santa Rosa which flows directly into the Russian River, carrying tiny plants right along with it. Ludwigia has become an increasing problem in the river as the flows slow and the temperature rises.

Ultimately we are seeking a compromise that serves both the fish and the humans, but most importantly, serves the life-blood of our home, our Russian River.

In order to reduce the impacts from reduced flows under Order 2009-0027-DWR we urge you on May 6 to take action to protect water quality and beneficial uses in 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. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

-

Vesta Copestakes, Publisher, etc.

West County Gazette
Written by Readers
<http://www.westcountygazette.com/>
VESTA Publishing, LLC
6490 Front Street #300
Forestville, CA 95436
707-887-0253
FAX 707-887-0249
EM: vesta@sonic.net

24,000 copies printed! The West County Gazette is FREE for readers seeking Local Community News, Issues, Opinion & Calendars. 13,000 copies are mailed to Forestville, Graton, Sebastopol, Occidental, Guerneville, Monte Rio and Rio Nido. More than 11,000 copies a month are also distributed via newsstands from Santa Rosa to Bodega Bay, including Healdsburg, Windsor, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol & Graton - the Russian River towns of Forestville, Rio Nido, Guerneville, Monte Rio, Duncans Mills, Cazadero & Jenner - to Bodega Bay, Bodega, Freestone & Valley Ford - more than 200 Sonoma County locations! The Gazette is also published on the web at <http://www.westcountygazette.com/> and on-line Sonoma County Calendar. On the WEB all-month-long: CLICK on WCG EXTRA! <http://www.westcountygazette.com/blog/index.html>
LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT TO BE REMOVED FROM THIS LIST!
P Please consider the environment before printing this email

CC: randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov