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Subject: San Geronimo Valley Salmon Enhancement Plan (SEP)



February 8, 2010

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Supervisors:

Marin Conservation League recommends that the Board accept the SEP and authorize funds to continue the work of implementing SEP recommendations. This note follows our letter of January 29, in which we commented on the accomplishments of the San Geronimo Valley Salmon Enhancement Plan. As a *guidance document*, the SEP contains recommendations and implementation actions that will be useful as a road map for voluntary actions by the community and will assist the Department of Public Works, the County Open Space District, and other county agencies to serve as role-models as they apply “best practices” to public works projects, maintenance, and land management activities that affect San Geronimo Creek and watershed.

The SEP provides many useful tools, but further steps must be taken to derive full benefit from the large investment the SEP represents. We urge you to accept the Plan with the understanding that the County’s work is not complete. The County has two basic obligations:

- Voluntary efforts need to be supported by enforceable standards. In particular, a Riparian Habitat Ordinance needs to provide clear requirements for vegetation, setbacks, and permitted uses in new development and redevelopment within SCAs. The recommended 35-foot riparian setback is an absolute minimum, and wherever possible should be expanded to two or three times that width, using incentives as feasible. Similarly, standards for on-site storm water retention (e.g., zero increase in peak off-site runoff) should be established and enforced for new development and redevelopment throughout the watershed as one means of managing both water quality and quantity in creek habitats.
- The County must provide funding to continue implementation of the SEP’s Recommendations. How the SEP moves forward will depend in part on the ability of the community to cohere around a plan, and, in part, on the County’s ability to fund technical support and financial incentives. Our view is that, without the County’s continued leadership, the local community’s efforts will be uncoordinated and dependent on the willingness of

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relatively few committed individuals to carry out. Members of the community may feel otherwise – that leadership should come from within the community. In either case, the SEP recommends a Community Process to Guide Implementation, and this will require leadership. Investing in continued technical and political support will be an essential “next step” for the County.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely yours,

Nona Dennis
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