

Low Flow Action Needed: Deadline extended to March 10

Dear friends of Villa Grande,

Sonoma County Water Agency is pushing to implement a plan to permanently reduce summer Russian River water flows by up to 50%.

If the low flow draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is accepted, it could mean summer after summer of toxic blue-green algae, impacting our community's economy, health and way of life. Our beaches at Patterson Point could disappear all summer long, eliminating any kind of recreation we now enjoy there.

TAKE ACTION

The Water Agency is accepting public comments on its draft EIR until March 10, 2017. It's important that we get as many comments on file as possible, to show that the community opposes this plan and wants alternatives that don't do so much harm to our water quality and ability to recreate on the river.

Send your comments to Jennifer.Dick-McFadden@waterboards.ca.gov And a copy to fishflow-eir@scwa.ca.gov or Todd.Schram@scwa.ca.gov

You need to cite:

"PROTEST REGARDING: NOTICE OF SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY (SCWA) PETITIONS FOR CHANGE AND PETIONS FOR EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PERMITS 12947A 12949, 12950, AND 16596 (APPLICATIONS 12919A, 15436, 15734, AND 19351"

If you don't have time to write your own comment, just copy and paste or modify the letter below.

Thanks for your support,
Andrea Buffa and the FoVG Riverwatch Committee

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Sonoma County Water Agency 404 Aviation
Blvd Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Attn: Todd Schram (Todd.Schram@scwa.ca.gov),

PROTEST REGARDING: NOTICE OF SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY (SCWA) PETITIONS FOR CHANGE AND PETIONS FOR EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PERMITS 12947A 12949, 12950, AND 16596 (APPLICATIONS 12919A, 15436, 15734, AND 19351

I'm writing to express my concerns about and opposition to your plan to permanently reduce the water flows in the Russian River.

Water Quality

According to the agency's Fish Habitat Flows and Water Rights Project Draft Environmental Impact Report, the plan to reduce water flows "could result in a violation of water quality standards of waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade water quality relating to biostimulatory substances in the Russian River."

This means that we could see toxic blue green algae in the river more and more frequently, like we did in 2015 and 2016. The toxic algae causes severe health impacts to dogs and is dangerous to small children and people who eat fish from the river.

It is unacceptable to propose a project that will cause human health impacts and cause poisoning of people's pets, wildlife and possibly fish and aquatic mammals as well. This issue has broad impacts to recreation, fishing, boating and swimming that have not been thoroughly addressed in the EIR. If the low flow plan results in more summers of a river tainted by toxic algae, our Russian River communities will be negatively impacted in several ways:

We would need to be concerned about the health of our children and pets when they are around the river.

And our way of life, which includes spending time swimming, kayaking, and wading on the river's shores could be dramatically altered.

Recreation

The Environmental Impact Review incorrectly states that the impacts to recreation on the lower Russian River will be "less than significant."

During the long periods of low flow proposed by the project, the river mouth will remain closed for extended periods, which will cause beaches like those at Patterson Point Preserve to become fully inundated, terminating all recreational use of the Preserve's beaches.

This plan will result in serious, unmitigated impacts to residents of the lower Russian River and to the recreational, biotic and scenic resources of the area. We urge that it not be implemented and we ask that the water agency explore alternatives that will mitigate the current plan's negative impacts.

Signature

Date

Address

Copy: State Water Resources Control Board

Division of Water Rights

Attn: Jennifer Dick-McFadden

P.O. Box 2000 Sacramento, CA Email: Jennifer.Dick-McFaden@waterboards.ca.gov

