



MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO HOST “NORTH COAST INSTREAM FLOW POLICY WORKSHOP” APRIL 22, 2008

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors will host a “North Coast Instream Flow Policy Workshop” on Tuesday afternoon, April 22, 2008 to facilitate dialogue between Mendocino water users and the State Water Resources Control Board staff involved with the development of the draft North Coast Instream Flow Policy. The Workshop will begin at 3:00 PM in the Board of Supervisors chambers at 501 Low Gap Road in Ukiah.

Board Chair Jim Wattenburger said, “The Board of Supervisors felt very strongly that discussion of critical water policy proposals needs to happen in-person, in the County, with the responsible State agency. We’re pleased that the State Water Resources Control Board is coming here, and encourage all interested people to attend.”

The Workshop will include a presentation by State Water Resources Control Board staff, followed by a “question and answer” session in which State Water Resources Control Board staff will have the opportunity to respond to questions from Board members and the public.

The North Coast Instream Flow Policy, also commonly identified as the “AB 2121 Policy”, has been drafted by the State Water Resources Control Board staff pursuant to Assembly Bill 2121, which was passed by the State Legislature and signed into law in 2004. The draft policy establishes principles and guidelines for maintaining instream flows for the protection of fishery resources, most notably endangered salmonid species, and more specifically, prescribes protective measures regarding the season of diversion, minimum bypass flows, and maximum cumulative diversions of water in Northern California coastal streams located between the Mattole River in Humboldt County and San Francisco Bay. Roughly half of Mendocino County – the entire Russian River drainage and all of the County’s coastal drainages – is within the geographic area encompassed by the draft Policy.

Implementation of the draft Policy will place additional restrictions on the amount of water diverted from streams and rivers, and in turn, potentially restrict the ability of landowners and municipalities to develop new water supplies in Mendocino County.

“While we support the protection and restoration of endangered salmonid fisheries, the draft Policy, as written, could have the unintended consequence of unnecessarily restricting water development in Mendocino County”, said Chair Wattenburger. “Many of the individuals who could be affected by the Policy are simply unaware that additional restrictions on water diversions are under consideration, and that the draft Policy could be adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board later this year,” he added. “It’s very important for citizens who have existing water diversion permits and ideas of acquiring future permits to attend this meeting with State Water Resources and be heard.”

The State Water Resources Control Board is accepting public comments on the draft North Coast Instream Flow Policy – comments must be received by noon on May 1, 2008. Additional information on draft North Coast Instream Flow Policy is available on the State Water Resources Control Board's website at: http://www.waterrights.ca.gov/HTML/instreamflow_nccs.html.

Released by: Tom Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer