

JARED HUFFMAN
2ND DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0502

June 10, 2013

Douglas Bosco
Chairman, California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

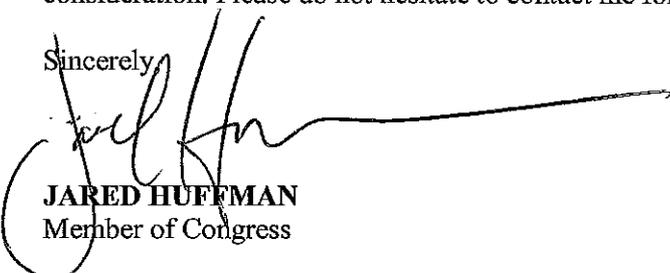
Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing to express my support for Ducks Unlimited's funding request of \$160,717 for the initial phase of the Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study in Humboldt County.

The Ocean Ranch Unit of the Eel River Wildlife Area is owned and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. It is located in the Eel River estuary, a significant coastal resource of statewide concern that provides valuable habitat for a myriad of fish, wildlife, and plant species including many federally and state-listed endangered species. I am supportive of improving fish and wildlife habitat and expanding opportunities for access on public land where appropriate on the North Coast. The proposed feasibility study will offer strategies to cost-effectively pursue restoration options on the Eel River Wildlife Area.

I urge the Coastal Conservancy Board to give Ducks Unlimited's funding request full and fair consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

SAN RAFAEL
999 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 290
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94901
PHONE: (415) 258-9657
FAX: (415) 258-9913

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PETALUMA, CA 94952
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FORT BRAGG, CA 95437
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EUREKA, CA 95501
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COMMITTEES

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINE, CHAIR
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND
AQUACULTURE, CHAIR
BUDGET
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #1
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HEALTH

Assembly
California Legislature



WESLEY CHESBRO
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SECOND DISTRICT

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SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0002
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UKIAH, CA 95482
(707) 463-5770
FAX (707) 463-5773

June 6, 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Re: Support for Eel River Wildlife Area – Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study, Phase 1 Grant Request

Dear Chairman Bosco: *Doug*

I am writing in support of the grant request submitted by Ducks Unlimited for the initial phase of the Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study in Humboldt County. As the state's fourth largest on the coast of California, the Eel River estuary is a significant coastal resource of statewide concern and provides valuable habitat for a myriad fish, wildlife, and plant species including many federally and state listed endangered species.

For decades, the Eel River estuary has experienced significant alterations that have ultimately reduced the size and quality of available habitat. This feasibility study would initiate a unique opportunity that has the potential to improve Eel River estuary tidal wetlands on California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) land while allowing for the possibility of experimentation and adaptive management.

I wholeheartedly support the funding request by Ducks Unlimited to the Coastal Conservancy for the proposed Study. The Study will offer strategies to cost-effectively pursue restoration options on public lands owned and managed by CDFW. Estuary fish and wildlife species would benefit from Ducks Unlimited's efforts, as well as my constituents who utilize the Eel River.

Thank you for your consideration of this most worthwhile project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

WESLEY CHESBRO
Assemblyman, 2nd District

WC:mh

Cc: Mark Wheatley, Staff Environmental Scientist, CDFW

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.





State of California – Natural Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
 Region 1 – Northern
 601 Locust Street
 Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



June 10, 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
 California State Coastal Conservancy
 1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
 Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Re: Eel River Wildlife Area – Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study, Phase 1

Dear Mr. Bosco:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) urges strong support for Ducks Unlimited's grant request of \$160,717 for the initial phase of the Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study in Humboldt County. The Eel River is the State's third largest river and the estuary ranks fourth largest along the coast of California. The estuary provides extremely valuable habitat for fish, wildlife, and plant species. CDFW recognizes the significance of this important coastal habitat restoration project and recently awarded \$162,302 from the CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to Ducks Unlimited to initiate this feasibility study.

For decades, the Eel River estuary has experienced significant alterations that have ultimately reduced the size and quality of available habitat. CDFW's primary goal in acquiring the Eel River Wildlife Area was to protect, manage and enhance wetlands. This feasibility study would initiate a unique opportunity that has the potential to improve Eel River estuary tidal wetlands entirely on CDFW land while allowing for the possibility of experimentation and adaptive management. Additional Eel River estuary restoration projects are being planned and the Salt River Unit improvements are under construction this summer. Collectively, these projects are complimentary and mutually beneficial for fish and wildlife species, as well as for the enjoyment of the public.

CDFW has worked with project partners to conduct initial studies and explore options to enhance the Ocean Ranch Unit for multiple fish and wildlife species. During recent McNulty Slough and Ocean Ranch Unit fish sampling, CDFW documented several Federal and State Endangered Species Act listed fish species as present near and within the area of the planned feasibility study including Chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead, tidewater goby, and longfin smelt. Researching the feasibility of increasing and improving estuary habitat for Eel River estuarine fish and wildlife species is critical for their continued survival and recovery.

CDFW's 2004 Recovery Strategy for California coho salmon identified a high priority specific task for restoring the Eel River estuary and associated wetlands that reads: *"In cooperation with agencies and landowners, plan to re-establish estuarine function, restore and maintain historical tidal areas, backwater channels and salt marsh."* In

Mr. Douglas Bosco
June 10, 2013
Page 2

In addition, CDFW's 2010 Coastal Watershed Assessment Program's Lower Eel River Watershed Assessment recommends estuary improvement activities that involve modifying or removing levees to increase tidal prism. The proposed study will research the feasibility of implementing these types of strategies to restore tidal flow, increase tidal prism, and expand connectivity to diversify habitat.

In summary, CDFW fully supports the funding request by Ducks Unlimited to the Coastal Conservancy for the proposed Feasibility Study. As you are aware, Ducks Unlimited has a solid record of success in partnership with both the Conservancy and CDFW on tidal wetland restoration projects within the Ocean Ranch Unit and other areas of the Eel River estuary. Ducks Unlimited has demonstrated experience in undertaking similar large-scale and complex coastal wetlands restoration projects from planning and design to implementing on-the-ground construction throughout California.

Please contact Staff Environmental Scientist, Mark Wheatley by phone at (707) 496-9038 or email Mark.Wheatley@wildlife.ca.gov or Environmental Scientist, Michelle Gilroy by phone at 707-441-5791 or email Michelle.Gilroy@wildlife.ca.gov of my staff with any further questions. Thank you for your consideration of this important coastal habitat restoration opportunity.

Sincerely,



NEIL MANJI, Regional Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Region 1-- Northern

cc: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

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JUN 12 2013

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 95521

Phone: (707) 822-7201 FAX: (707) 822-8411



In Reply Refer To:
AFWO

JUN 07 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Subject: Letter of Support for a proposal submitted by Ducks Unlimited to the California Coastal Conservancy-Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study

Dear Chairman Bosco:

We are writing in support of a proposal titled "Eel River Wildlife Area-Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study" submitted by the Ducks Unlimited. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Coastal Program supports the efforts of Ducks Unlimited and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to begin plans for restoring the function of the estuary within the Ocean Ranch Unit of the Eel River Wildlife Area.

Staff of the Service's Coastal Program have provided technical assistance through attendance at planning meetings, site visits, and phone calls to discuss potential alternatives for improving habitat at the Ocean Ranch Unit. Input of Coastal Program staff has focused on the importance of restoring estuarine function to support multiple species including anadromous fish. Due to the complexity of this type of restoration work, careful planning and design is necessary to ensure that activities provide connectivity of habitat adjacent to the Ocean Ranch Unit and are complimentary to land uses on adjacent properties.

The Service's Coastal Program recognizes the conservation value of restoring estuarine hydrologic function including tidal influence, and the resulting habitat that comes from restoring degraded physical functions of the landscape. These activities lead to rebuilding of a complex estuarine food web that supports not only habitat for anadromous fishes but also for migratory waterbirds and other life forms that require areas of transition from fresh to brackish and saltwater systems. Opportunities to provide this type of transitional habitat in the Eel River estuary are limited and therefore the work of this project is important for restoring many habitats and improving conditions for several species.

The Coastal Program is a national program within the Service focused on improving Federal trust resources through financial and technical assistance in coastal landscapes on both private and public lands. For the past 25 years, the Coastal Program has been one of the Service's most successful and effective cooperative conservation programs with a mission to protect and recover Federal Trust Species (threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, and inter-jurisdictional fish) by supporting voluntary restoration and enhancement of high-priority coastal habitats. California has four Coastal Programs including the Coastal Program here on the north coast covering an area from the Oregon border to the Mattole River with focal areas of Humboldt Bay and the Eel River estuary.

Exhibit 3: Project Letters

Funding support from the California Coastal Conservancy will help ensure that the resulting restoration project for the Eel River Wildlife Area-Ocean Ranch Unit will provide the complexity and transition of habitats needed to meet not only the habitat needs of the Federally listed Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon and Steelhead but also the Federally listed Tidewater Goby, other aquatic species, and migratory waterbirds. Careful planning and design will help ensure that resulting functions and habitats provided on the Ocean Ranch Unit will be diverse, connected and complimentary to adjacent landscapes, and be a value added to people as well as fish and wildlife.

If you have further questions, please contact Paula Golightly, of my staff, at 707-822-7201.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Hetrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nick Hetrick
Acting Field Supervisor

Exhibit 3: Project Letters



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, CA 95521-4573

JUN 07 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-2530

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing to express NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) strong support of for Ducks Unlimited grant request of \$160,717 for the initial phase of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study and Initial Design. NMFS Protected Resources Division (PRD) is currently developing recovery plans for Southern Oregon/Northern California (SONCC) coho salmon, California Coastal (CC) Chinook salmon and Northern California (NC) Steelhead, which are federally-listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Implementation of recovery actions in the lower Eel River, such as removing and setting back levees and reconnecting tidal channels with McNulty Slough, are critical to recovery of these species. Because restoration of the lower Eel River estuary is important for conservation and recovery of species under NMFS jurisdiction, NMFS PRD supported the Ocean Ranch Feasibility Study during interagency proposal review for the CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. As a result, CDFW recently awarded \$162,302 from the CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to Ducks Unlimited to initiate this feasibility study to restore this important coastal habitat. To further demonstrate support of this project, NMFS PRD has also participated in interagency coordination to facilitate permitting for implementation of this project.

Please contact Ms. Diane Ashton at 707-825-5185, or by e-mail at diane.ashton@noaa.gov, if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration of this important coastal habitat restoration opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Irma Lagomarsino".

Irma Lagomarsino
Northern California Office Supervisor





Humboldt County Resource Conservation District

5630 South Broadway Eureka, CA 95503

Phone (707) 444-9708 ext. 117 Fax (707) 442-7514

hered@yahoo.com

June 6, 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

**Re: Eel River Wildlife Area – Ocean Ranch Unit
Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study, Phase 1**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Board of Directors of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (RCD) wishes to express its support for the funding request submitted by Ducks Unlimited to work on the initial phase of the Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study. Ducks Unlimited is requesting \$160,717 in match funds from the Conservancy to help fund this work.

The Eel River estuary is a significant coastal resource of statewide concern and provides valuable habitat for a myriad fish, wildlife, and plant species including many federally and state listed endangered species. As you know, the Humboldt County RCD is currently working with the Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other project partners to construct the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project; located on the southwest portion of the estuary. The Salt River restoration project includes substantial tidal marsh restoration that will enhance the function of the Eel River estuary. The Eel River Wildlife Area's Ocean Ranch Unit (ORU), is located on the northwest portion of the Eel River estuary. The RCD Board views the feasibility project proposed by Ducks Unlimited as a complimentary regional effort to restore and conserve this important natural resource.

The Humboldt County RCD is involved with a number of ongoing restoration efforts between public and private partners to conserve natural resources throughout the north coast region. Involvement of local landowners in every step of the process and clear and honest communication is crucial to the success of any private-public restoration effort. We urge the Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited to assure the involvement of private landowners within the vicinity of the proposed project. This involvement would benefit the proposed project by accessing landowner's first-hand knowledge of the area and by encouraging open discussion of concerns and issues early in the project's development.

On behalf of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors, I encourage the Conservancy Board to support the proposed funding request for this important coastal project. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Chambers".

Donna Chambers
Executive Director



June 6, 2013

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Re: Eel River Wildlife Area – Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study, Phase 1

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing to urge support for Ducks Unlimited's funding request of \$160,717 for the initial phase of the Eel River Wildlife Area - Ocean Ranch Unit Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study in Humboldt County.

The Eel River estuary is a significant coastal resource of statewide concern and provides valuable habitat for a myriad fish, wildlife, and plant species including many Federally and state listed endangered species.

As you are aware, Ducks Unlimited is working with the Humboldt County RCD and other project partners to construct the Salt River restoration project this summer. DU is also supporting other restoration efforts between public and private partners to improve habitat conditions and expand opportunities for public access throughout the north coast region.

For 40 years, CalTrout has been dedicated to protecting and restoring wild trout, steelhead, salmon and their waters throughout California. We address these challenges at the local, regional, and statewide level simultaneously. CalTrout recently convened the Eel River Forum, a coalition of 22 local, state, and federal agencies, tribes and conservation groups. The Forum is currently evaluating primary issues constraining salmonids in the Eel River, with the estuary being a central focus.

CalTrout supports development of the proposed feasibility study and recognizes that it will offer feasible strategies to cost-effectively pursue restoration options on public lands owned and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Therefore, we urge the Conservancy Board to fully support the proposed funding request for this important coastal project. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DM", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Darren Mierau
North Coast Region Manager