

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

LYNN WOOLSEY  
6TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEES:

EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD,  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY  
AND ENVIRONMENT

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0506

March 26, 2012

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2263 RAYBURN BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5161

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
1101 COLLEGE AVENUE, SUITE 200  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404  
TELEPHONE: (707) 542-7182

1050 NORTHGATE DRIVE, SUITE 354  
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903  
TELEPHONE: (415) 507-9554

WEB PAGE AND E-MAIL:  
<http://www.woolsey.house.gov>

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing to offer my support for Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant application to the Coastal Conservancy for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

It is my understanding that funding for this project would be used to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study would address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months would provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat would be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

I support Endangered Habitats Conservancy and believe this project will greatly benefit the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. I urge you to give this application your full and careful consideration. If you have any questions or comments, please contact my grants coordinator, George Haralambopoulos, in my Santa Rosa office at (707) 542-7182.

Sincerely,



Lynn Woolsey  
Member of Congress

COMMITTEES

NATURAL RESOURCES, CHAIR  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON DISABILITIES, CHAIR  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINE, CHAIR  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND  
AQUACULTURE, CHAIR

BUDGET  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #1  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET  
ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND  
TOXIC MATERIALS  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Assembly  
California Legislature



WESLEY CHESBRO  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIRST DISTRICT

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001  
(916) 319-2001  
FAX (916) 319-2101

DISTRICT OFFICES  
710 E. STREET, SUITE 150  
EUREKA, CA 95501  
(707) 445-7014  
FAX (707) 445-6607

50 "D" STREET, SUITE 450  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404  
(707) 576-2526  
FAX (707) 576-2297

200 SOUTH SCHOOL STREET, SUITE D  
UKIAH, CA 95482  
(707) 463-5770  
FAX (707) 463-5773

March 15, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and  
Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I write this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other terrace pits along the Russian and other rivers with similar conditions. An upstream property owner is in the process of amending its reclamation plan. The information developed by this project could link synergistically with this upstream project, multiplying the benefits to fish, wildlife, and the river.

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

The project will also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to begin addressing floodplain terrace restoration, restore riverine ecological functions as well as provide public access along this reach of the Russian River.

Respectfully,



WESLEY CHESBRO  
Assemblyman, 1<sup>st</sup> District

cc: Michael Beck, President Endangered Habitats Conservancy  
Nancy Schaefer, Land Conservation Services



State of California – The Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
Bay Delta Region  
7329 Silverado Trail  
Napa, CA 94558  
(707) 944-5500  
[www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov)

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



May 18, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attention: Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco:

Subject: Letter of Support for Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's (EHC) grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River, just west of the Town of Windsor in Sonoma County.

Historic gravel mining, encroachment from agricultural development and flood control levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish, including chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead. Loss of habitat is a major cause of the population declines that have led to these species being federally- and state-listed as threatened and endangered.

Traditionally, state-mandated reclamation plans have required that the ponds left behind by terrace gravel mining activities throughout the Middle Reach of the Russian River remain separate and isolated from the river. Under this mandate, potentially diverse and functional floodplains are separated from the river system in perpetuity. Recently, within the scientific and resource management community, there has been a growing recognition that these off channel pits could be modified to re-create productive habitats for salmon and steelhead, as well as waterfowl, terrestrial and other aquatic species.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmonids and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
May 18, 2012  
Page 2

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other terrace pits along the Russian River and other rivers with similar conditions. Many other former terrace gravel mining sites along the Russian River are also entering the reclamation phase in their lifecycle and may provide additional opportunities for restoration in the near future. The information developed by EHC's Hanson project could link synergistically with these projects, multiplying the benefits to fish, wildlife, and the river.

In recent years, DFG, as a Trustee Agency responsible for the conservation, protection, and management of the State's biological resources, has worked closely with stakeholders throughout the Middle Reach of the Russian River in seeking solutions for the long-term management and restoration of former terrace gravel mining sites. DFG is committed to continuing work with EHC and other stakeholder groups in the project's design, planning and implementation phases.

DFG encourages you to take this opportunity to begin the process of addressing floodplain restoration within the Russian River watershed and restoring habitat essential for fish and wildlife as well as increasing recreational opportunities for fishing and wildlife viewing. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Adam McKannay, Environmental Scientist, at (707) 944-5534; or Mr. Ryan Watanabe, District Fisheries Biologist, at (707) 576-2815.

Sincerely,



Scott Wilson  
Acting Regional Manager  
Bay Delta Region

cc: Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats Conservancy – [beckehl@cox.net](mailto:beckehl@cox.net)  
Nancy Schaefer – [nschaefer1@comcast.net](mailto:nschaefer1@comcast.net)

Department of Fish and Game  
Adam McKannay – Bay Delta Region, Napa  
Ryan Watanabe – Bay Delta Region, Santa Rosa



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Region  
777 Sonoma Ave., Room 325  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404-4731

May 18, 2012

In response, refer to:  
SWR/F/SWR:JMCK

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attention: Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is submitting this letter in support of a grant request by the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC) to fund advanced study of the feasibility of recreating a natural floodplain ecosystem within the historic Middle Reach Valley of the Russian River. The project feasibility analysis involves a 358-acre property of former 'terrace' aggregate mining ponds currently owned by Lehigh-Hanson on the east bank of the Russian River, west of the town of Windsor and just north of the Sonoma County Regional River Front Park.

Historically the Russian River Middle Reach Valley has undergone many human geomorphic alterations such as channel dredging and straightening, agricultural encroachment, and channel levee construction. These historic alterations have caused the Russian River channel through the valley to be disconnected from its historic floodplain. The historic floodplain ecosystem of the valley once provided nursery and rearing habitat for five species of salmon including Chinook, coho, and steelhead, and also green sturgeon. These four named anadromous species of fish are federally-listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as threatened or endangered due to loss of habitat resulting from disruption of the natural seasonal hydrology and historic geomorphology of river ecosystems.

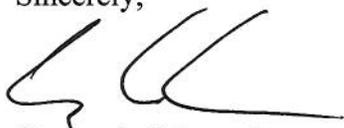
The EHC, NMFS, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), along with local partners, are proposing to use state-of-the-art, advanced modeling methods to develop a viable, stable restoration alternative that allows the river to be reconnected with the aggregate mining ponds of the Lehigh-Hanson property. The landscape evolution modeling proposed by the USGS will address areas of concern regarding the proposed restoration project such as flooding downstream, in-stream erosion, and channel stability. A multidisciplinary project team will analyze water quality and the biological and ecological benefits for ESA-listed salmonids and a suite of other native aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna.



The proposed modeling exercise and successful restoration of the Lehigh-Hanson property will serve as a template for other 'isolated' terrace aggregate mining ponds that are disconnected from natural floodplain processes. The development of this method of landscape analysis will have benefits to other locations locally and abroad. Another aggregate pit mining property owner in the Middle Valley Reach is currently amending their pit mining reclamation plans. The information developed by the project proposed by EHC will be extremely useful for NMFS and CDFG when making recommendations for that reclamation plan amendment.

NMFS encourages you to take this opportunity to address the critical issue of re-integrating the floodplain ecosystem of the Middle Reach Valley of the Russian River in order to recreate, and restore the natural riverine ecological functions of the valley for the benefit of ESA-listed species and the broader community of native flora, fauna, and human society.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Edmondson  
Acting Assistant Regional Administrator  
For Habitat Conservation



Dick Butler  
North Central Coast Office Supervisor  
Protected Resources Division



March 5, 2012

SONOMA  
COUNTY  
REGIONAL  
PARKS

CARYL HART, Ph.D  
DIRECTOR

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other terrace pits along the Russian and other rivers with similar conditions. An upstream property owner is in the process of amending its reclamation plan. The information developed by this project could link synergistically with this upstream project, multiplying the benefits to fish, wildlife, and the river.

The project will also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for

2300

County Center Drive

Suite 120A

Santa Rosa

CA 95403

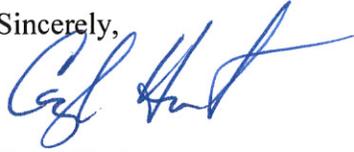
Tel: 707 565-2041

Fax: 707 579-8247

kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to begin addressing floodplain terrace restoration, restore riverine ecological functions as well as provide public access along this reach of the Russian River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Caryl Hart", written in a cursive style.

Caryl Hart  
Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks



March 5, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems. The project will also define potential recreational opportunities along the Russian River.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to support this very important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Keerie". The signature is written in a cursive style.

William J. Keerie  
General Manager

May 10, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Brown  
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco,

I am submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 258 acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the Town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural activities, levees, and other human activities along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish - chinook, coho, and steelhead. These species are federally listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds to remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality, and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with this river system.

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other gravel ponds along the Russian and other rivers with similar conditions. An upstream property owner is in the process of amending the reclamation plan for their mined lands. The information developed by

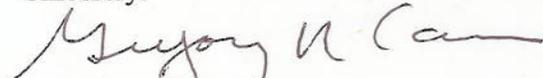
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MAY 14 2012  
COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

this project could link synergistically with this upstream project, multiplying the benefits to fish, wildlife, and the river.

The project could also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

As you know, I've had the opportunity to work as a County planner for many years on mining and reclamation issues and other land uses along this stretch of the river. I am offering my experience to the study and eventual project as it proceeds. Please feel free to contact me if I can help at all. My phone is 707-996-5510 and my email is [g\\_carr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:g_carr@sbcglobal.net). Thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,



Greg Carr, Glen Ellen

*RUSSIAN RIVER WILD STEELHEAD SOCIETY*



May 8, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Russian River Wild Steelhead Society is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

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R.R.W.S.S PMB # 211 16129 Main Street Unit B Guerneville, CA. 95446  
E-mail: [rrwildsteelheadsociety@gmail.com](mailto:rrwildsteelheadsociety@gmail.com)

*RUSSIAN RIVER WILD STEELHEAD SOCIETY*



We encourage you to take this opportunity to address floodplain terrace restoration, restore riverine ecological functions and provide public access along this reach of the Russian River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Torre'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and 'T'.

Robert Torre

Director -- Russian River Wild Steelhead Society



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR



MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ  
SECRETARY FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**

May 14, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RECEIVED**  
MAY 15 2012  
COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

Dear Chairman Bosco:

**Subject: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is the responsible agency for protection of waters of the State within our region. As such, we review and issue permits for projects or activities that may impact waters in the region.

Regional Water Board staff has been attending meetings with other state and local regulatory agencies and Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC) staff, regarding the proposed restoration project on the Hanson property. Regional Water Board staff supports the proposal to restore these off-channel ponds to a system that is reconnected to the Russian River, and EHC's grant request with your agency.

Currently the off-channel ponds provide some habitat; however, by connecting them to the river and conducting extensive habitat restoration, the project would provide much more value to the endangered and threatened salmonids that inhabit the watershed. Additionally, the project will increase the floodplain area, and thus reduce flooding impacts downstream. Connecting the river to these ponds will increase habitat complexity for a majority of the species within the area, and is a far better alternative to the mining reclamation that has traditionally been done and that would require regular maintenance to keep the ponds separate from the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery

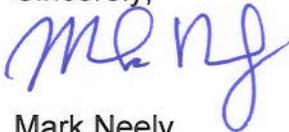
and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

The project will also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

There are other gravel ponds within this reach of the Russian River that, if this effort is successful, could also be reclaimed in a similar manner and create additional benefits to the river, rather than the current functionality of the ponds. Beneficial uses of waters of the state would increase through implementation of this proposal. We support projects such as this that increase the quality of our waters and sustain their beneficial uses.

If you have any questions or comments, please call me at (707) 576-2689 or Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653.

Sincerely,



Mark Neely  
Senior Engineering Geologist

120514\_SKB\_HansenPonds\_SupportLetter

cc: Messrs. John McKeon and Brian Cluer, NOAA Fisheries, 777 Sonoma Avenue,  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
Ms. Nancy Schaefer, Land Conservation Services, 623 Sherree Drive,  
Martinez, CA 94553



May 15, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and  
Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA

The Redwood Empire Chapter of Trout Unlimited supports efforts by the Endangered Habitats Conservancy to develop conceptual designs for a floodplain restoration project for the Hanson property on the middle reach of the Russian River. The project could ultimately lead to the restoration of more than 350 acres of riparian and off-channel habitat for salmon and steelhead, as well as provide low impact public access. Research by TU staff and numerous scientists has demonstrated that reconnecting floodplains and off-channel high water habitat provides vital habitat for federally-listed anadromous fish and other wildlife. Restoration efforts should emphasize reconnecting flood plain, riparian forest and wetland while avoiding creating habitat for warm water predators of juvenile salmonids.

We should note that our support for the feasibility study that seeks to develop conceptual designs should not be considered support for the final project, since by definition that project is not yet known. Nevertheless, the Redwood Empire Chapter of TU believes the concept is promising, including the potential for providing important information that could lead to further restoration efforts on the Russian River and other rivers with similar conditions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Jorgensen", is written over a circular stamp or seal.

Rick Jorgensen  
Vice President  
Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited  
Box 3237  
Santa Rosa CA 95402  
Rick.Jorgensen@ghd.com

SOTOYOME



RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

www.sotoyomercd.org

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Dennis Murphy  
Director

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Matt Greene  
Ray Krauss  
Julie Collins

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May 21, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District (RCD) is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other terrace pits along the Russian and other rivers with similar conditions.

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

The project will also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

The RCD looks forward to serving as an important outreach entity for this project to nearby landowners and the general public. With a long, positive history working with landowners in the area on habitat and natural resource conservation, the RCD can provide critical liaison work with neighboring landowners and other groups interested in conservation and fisheries restoration in the area.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to begin addressing floodplain terrace restoration, restore riverine ecological functions as well as provide public access along this reach of the Russian River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kara Huker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.



**COUNTY OF SONOMA**  
**PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

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May 22, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn: Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design, Sonoma County, CA

Dear Chairman Bosco,

The Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department is submitting this letter in support of the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's (EHC) grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River, just west of the Town of Windsor.

Historic gravel mining, agricultural development and levees along the Russian River have disconnected the river from its historic floodplain. The floodplains used to provide off-channel nursery habitat for anadromous fish – Chinook, coho and steelhead. These species are federally-listed as threatened and endangered due to loss of habitat and disruption of the hydromorphology of the river system. These formerly diverse and functional floodplains are now isolated from the river by virtue of state-mandated reclamation plans requiring the ponds created by the mining activities remain separated from the river. A new school of thought is emerging among scientists that would have these floodplain areas reintegrated as a functional component of the river system.

EHC and its partners are proposing to conduct a feasibility study to develop a viable, stable and permanent restoration alternative that allows the river to be reintegrated with the gravel ponds. The study will address the issues of flooding, erosion, channel stability, water quality and the biological benefits for salmonids and other listed aquatic and terrestrial species. Reconnecting the river and restoring the floodplain to accommodate high flows during the winter months will provide vital off-channel nursery and refuge habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and other native species. Upland, emergent wetland and riparian habitat will be restored to benefit the suite of plants and animals naturally associated with healthy river systems.

The successful restoration of the Hanson property can serve as a template for other terrace pits along the Russian and other rivers with similar conditions. An upstream property owner is in the process of amending its reclamation plan. The information developed by this project could link synergistically with this upstream project, multiplying the benefits to fish, wildlife, and the river.

The project will also provide compatible, low impact recreational opportunities including trails for hiking and wildlife observation along with the possibility of a river takeout for kayakers and canoeists. The County's General Plan describes a riverfront trail through the Middle Reach of the Russian River from Healdsburg to Steelhead Beach where much of the property is already in public ownership.

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

We encourage you to take this opportunity to begin addressing floodplain terrace restoration, restore riverine ecological functions as well as provide public access along this reach of the Russian River.

If you have any questions about this letter, feel free to contact Amy Lyle by phone at 565-7389, or by email at [amy.lyle@sonoma-county.org](mailto:amy.lyle@sonoma-county.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Parkinson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pete Parkinson, AICP  
PRMD Director



May 21, 2012

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Attn. Michael Bowen  
1330 Broadway, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Russian River Floodplain Restoration: SUPPORT Hanson Windsor Ponds Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design Proposal, Sonoma County, CA**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

Russian Riverkeeper is pleased to support the Endangered Habitats Conservancy's grant request for a feasibility study evaluating restoration options for the 358-acre Hanson property along the Middle Reach of the Russian River just west of the town of Windsor.

Past practices of gravel mining in open pits such as the Hanson Property, agricultural encroachment, channelization for flood control and other development has eliminated all off-channel habitat in the majority of the Russian River. The loss of former channel meanders and other lowland habitat has greatly reduced food sources available to juvenile salmon and this loss is a major limiting factor today for salmon populations. The state of science informs us that increasing forage productivity for juvenile salmon is possible through re-creation of off-channel low elevation habitat features. The project also seeks to provide new low-impact public river access in addition to salmon habitat restoration.

Due to high value vineyard development in the world famous Russian River middle reach securing land to accomplish off-channel habitat restoration is cost prohibitive. Restoring and reconnecting floodplain gravel pits offer a lower cost opportunity to create off-channel habitat and could provide a far greater benefit to the Russian River compared to current reclamation plans. We are however concerned about the large number of unknowns in restoring and reconnecting the former gravel pits and possibility for unintended consequences. We have thoroughly reviewed EHC's proposed work plan and feasibility study and believe the study will provide critical information and guidance that could ultimately address our concerns and avoid unintended consequences as much as possible. For this reason we offer our support for the proposed feasibility study grant request. It is our belief that this study will provide needed information to design an implementation project that is deserving of our support in the future.

We appreciate the efforts of Michael Beck of EHC and Mike McGuire, local Sonoma County Supervisor, to engage local partners for this project to ensure an optimal outcome. Russian Riverkeeper will be working with Sotoyome Resource Conservation District to serve as local partners to solicit input from landowners, local environmental groups and local scientists and experts in order to ensure concerns are addressed and all relevant information is considered. This type of inclusive process results in the best possible outcome for the project and river.

In summary, we encourage you to support EHC's Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design Proposal to provide critical information to guide the efforts to re-create missing off-channel salmonid habitat at the Hanson Property and the other hundreds of acres of former gravel pits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don McEnhill".

Don McEnhill  
Executive Director