



May 22, 2023

Amy Hutzel, Executive Officer  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-1401

**Subject: Letter of Support for Elk River Estuary Restoration: Acquisition, Engineering and Design Phase I**

Ha'wa'lou (Greetings) Amy and the Conservancy Board Review Committee,

The Wiyot Natural Resources Department is writing in support of the California Trout (CalTrout) grant proposal for the Elk River Estuary Restoration: Acquisition, Engineering and Design Phase I (Project). The purpose of the Project within the lower valley and tidal reaches of Elk River is: to acquire and conserve ecologically valuable lands under the management of CDFW and the Wiyot Tribe, and develop engineering designs and regulatory authorizations to restore tidal and estuarine habitat and floodplain connectivity, and protect productive agricultural lands from the impacts of sea level rise.

The Elk River estuary historically consisted of over 400 acres of salt marsh and brackish water habitats that supported a diversity of wildlife including avian species, marine life, and endangered salmonid species. Much of this habitat was lost when the area was diked and drained starting in the late 1800's. Restoration of the Elk River estuary is essential to support recovery of ESA-listed salmonid species, federally endangered tidewater goby and other marine species. The project will also benefit water quality, increase resilience of residential and agricultural lands from degradation from flooding and sea level rise, and enhance wildlife and riparian habitats.

The Project will also augment two other major restoration projects in the Elk River Estuary: (1) the Martin Slough Enhancement Project on the north side of Elk River Road, and (2) the City of Eureka's Elk River Estuary and Intertidal Wetlands Enhancement and Coastal Access Project (114 acres) on the west side of US 101 (under construction in summer 2022), both of which will enhance CalTrout's Elk River Project benefits.

I urge you to support this project. If our office can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Rra'dutwas (respectfully),

Adam Canter, Natural Resources Director  
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