



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
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AREA CODE 707

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May 26, 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**

Dear Proposal Review Committee:

On behalf of the County of Humboldt, I am writing in support of the grant proposal submitted by California Trout (CalTrout) for the **Elk River Estuary Restoration: Acquisition, Engineering and Design Phase I**. This project will acquire ecologically important lands, develop engineering designs, and secure all required regulatory authorizations for a subsequent implementation project to restore tidal and estuarine habitat, re-establishing floodplain connectivity, and protecting productive agricultural lands within the lower Elk River valley and tidal reaches.

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. In addition, the Project will augment two other major restoration projects in the Elk River Estuary: the Martin Slough Enhancement Project on the north side of Elk River Road, led by the Redwood Community Action Agency; and the Elk River Estuary and Intertidal Wetlands Enhancement and Coastal Access Project (114 acres) on the west side of Highway 101, recently constructed by the City of Eureka.

My department has been involved in the Elk River for many years in support of aquatic habitat restoration, improved water quality, reduced flooding of public infrastructure and private property, and improved drainage on agricultural land. We strongly support CalTrout's proposed project and the efforts to work cooperatively with private landowners to achieve the project goals.

Sincerely,

Hank Seemann
Public Work Deputy-Director (Environmental Services)
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