

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
October 17, 2019

RED CAP CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT: DESIGN

Project No. 19-025-01
Project Manager: Michael Bowen

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and possible authorization to disburse up to \$99,102 to the Mid Klamath Watershed Council to develop design and environmental compliance documents for a habitat restoration project at Red Cap Creek, near the community of Orleans, Humboldt County.

LOCATION: Orleans, Humboldt County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Marine and Coastal Resource Protection

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Support Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed ninety nine thousand one hundred and two dollars (\$99,102) to the Mid Klamath Watershed Council (“the grantee”) to develop design and environmental compliance documents for the Red Cap Creek Restoration Project near Orleans, Humboldt County.

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
 2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
 3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.”
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Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding integrated coastal and marine resources protection.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The Mid Klamath Watershed Council is a nonprofit organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$99,102 to the Mid Klamath Watershed Council (“the Council”) to design and prepare environmental compliance documents for a floodplain restoration project on two reaches of Red Cap Creek, a tributary to the Klamath River (see Exhibit 1). The proposed design project will create a plan to restore natural, in-stream processes by: 1) increasing channel complexity; 2) improving storage and metering of spawning gravels; 3) improving wood recruitment and storage mechanisms; 4) providing off-channel habitat by reconnecting and expanding the area of floodplain inundation; and 5) potentially increasing summer base flow by improving groundwater recharge and storage mechanisms. The Council will also develop environmental documents integral to the design process.

Lack of floodplain connectivity and channel structure are limiting the viability of coho salmon within Red Cap Creek, as identified in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Recovery Plan for the Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho Salmon (September 2014). Additionally, the Middle Klamath Restoration Partnership Instream Working Group, which includes fisheries biologists from state, federal and tribal authorities, listed the following limiting factors for Red Cap Creek in the **Middle Klamath Instream Restoration Candidate Actions Table** (on file), in order of importance: 1) Channelization/Lack of Floodplain Connectivity, 2) Lack of off-channel rearing (winter refugia), and 3) Lack of large woody debris. The proposed project seeks to reverse each of these limiting factors.

Working with the Council, a design team consisting of licensed engineers, geologists and biologists will prepare a set of design reports for two reaches of Red Cap Creek. These reports

will include all design features for the installation of engineered log jams, main channel reconfiguration, side channel construction, off-channel ponds, and artificially constructed features known as “beaver dam analogues” (BDA), a simulated natural structure which is intended to improve instream habitat conditions in the absence of actual beavers which were extirpated in the nineteenth century, but are returning to the region. A diverse replanting plan will be designed by the Council’s botanist to encourage biodiversity and beaver re-colonization. The design team will work with the USFS Orleans District Ranger to prepare an environmental compliance checklist suitable for CEQA/NEPA coverage. NEPA consistency will be evaluated later under the recently SCC-funded programmatic NEPA document for the Six Rivers National Forest.

Site Description: Red Cap Creek, tributary to the Klamath River, is in remote Humboldt County in the Orleans Ranger District. The project involves two separate sites: 1) Schnabble Diggings, and; 2) Larsen’s Place (Exhibit 1).

Schnabble Diggings is an old placer mine running along approximately 0.8 miles of Red Cap Creek. The creek channel throughout this site is extremely incised and cut off from its traditional floodplain. Much of the site is open and exposed river bar with no vegetation due to prior mining operations. Nevertheless, the creek throughout this stretch sees consistent spawning of fall run Chinook and winter Steelhead, and the USFS has documented sizeable numbers of juvenile coho within this reach during summer snorkel counts.

The Larsen’s Place reach is approximately 0.8 miles long and is located approximately two miles upstream from the mouth of Red Cap Creek. Several old homestead sites are located along this reach. There are several active beaver lodges located along this stretch.

Instream tributary habitat near the confluence with the Klamath provides an important refugia of cold, oxygenated water for rearing juvenile salmonids that hatch and rear within the tributary. These streams also provide valuable rearing habitat for juveniles originating elsewhere when conditions along the mainstem Klamath deteriorate due to warming and often eutrophic (overly phosphorous or nitrogen laden) condition. This habitat is enhanced with the existence of beaver dams and lodges that slow velocity, promote growth of macroinvertebrates and provide cover for young fish. Furthermore, Klamath dam removal is scheduled for 2020, and will cause significant sediment deposition along the mainstem Klamath. The availability of high-quality tributary habitat is crucial for refugia during this period.

Grantee Qualifications: The Council is a California nonprofit corporation, qualified under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) as a charitable organization. It has been actively planning, coordinating and implementing restoration projects in the Mid Klamath sub-basin since 2001. Focusing on projects that directly benefit anadromous fisheries, the Council utilizes grant funding combined with community and stakeholder volunteers to implement practical, hands-on restoration projects while educating participants on restoration techniques and stewardship principles. The Council is uniquely qualified to assess and restore habitat in this region because of its familiarity with regional fishery resources.

The Council recently completed the Conservancy funded Mid Klamath Floodplain Enhancement Plan. As discussed below, this conceptual design level technical report significantly expanded the Council’s efforts to remediate the legacy impacts of mining along the Klamath River.

Project History: The condition of the Klamath River is strongly linked to the destructive history of mining in the region. The Conservancy authorized a \$65,582 grant to the Council in April 2017 to prepare a restoration plan for floodplain habitat along a 70-mile reach of the Klamath River heavily impacted by historic mining. That report was completed April 2019. Although the Red Cap Creek Project site is not addressed in that earlier report, the land use impacts from mining activities are in many cases identical. Therefore, the earlier report and information gathering exercise was helpful in the development of this project.

Simultaneously, the Council had worked with partners including the Forest Service, the Karuk Tribe and others to extend efforts beyond those focal areas identified in the April 2019 Report, and to develop the Middle Klamath Instream Restoration Candidate Actions Table (Exhibit 2). The Table specifically prioritizes enhancement activities throughout the mid-Klamath watershed, in both Humboldt and Siskiyou counties, including Red Cap Creek. The Table ranks restoration actions on nearly 70 anadromous tributaries in the Middle Klamath sub basin. The proposed Red Cap Creek project is identified as a priority on the Table.

In order to advance priority actions identified in the Table, the Council sought funds through the Conservancy’s Proposition 1 Round 11 grant solicitation.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$99,102
Project Total	\$99,102

The expected source of Conservancy funds for this project is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1, Water Code § 79700 et seq.). Funds appropriated to the Conservancy derive from Chapter 6 (commencing with § 79730) and may be used “for multi benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state” (Section 79731). Section 79732 identifies specific purposes of Chapter 6. The proposed project will achieve several of these purposes, including: protect and restore aquatic, wetland and migratory bird ecosystems (section 79732(a)(4)), protect and restore coastal watersheds (§ 79732(a)(10)), and assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage and coastal or inland wetland restoration (§ 79732(a)(12)). The proposed project will lead to the restoration of stream function, which will enhance ecosystem function of Red Cap Creek and the Klamath River benefitting each of these goals.

As required by Proposition 1, the proposed project provides multiple benefits. By preparing to restore habitat complexity and restore hydrologic connectivity between the river and its floodplain, the project, when implemented, will restore historic access to juvenile salmonid

rearing habitat, and help restore a healthy riparian forest that benefits many aquatic and terrestrial species. The project would also improve water quality in a coastal watershed by creating the important shading and filtering function that healthy riparian zones provide.

The proposed project was selected through a competitive grant process under the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines adopted in September 2016 ("Prop 1 Guidelines"). (See § 79706(a)). The proposed project meets each of the evaluation criteria in the Prop 1 Guidelines as described in further detail in this "Project Financing" section, the "Project Summary" section and in the "Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines" section of this report.

In accordance with Section 79707(b) which requires agencies to prioritize "projects that leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit", the proposed project leverages local in-kind contributions and knowledge. The grantee will provide \$54,325 of in-kind value in biological/technical services from the Karuk Tribe, the Council and the U.S. Forest Service to the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The project is authorized pursuant to Chapter 5.5 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Public Resource Code section 31220. Pursuant to section 31220(b), the Conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations in order to improve and protect coastal, coastal watershed and marine water quality and habitat, including projects that restore fish habitat within coastal watersheds (31220(b)(2)), and projects that protect and restore floodplains and other sensitive watershed lands, especially watershed lands draining to sensitive coastal or marine areas (31220(b)(6)). As discussed above, the project will benefit juvenile coho salmon and will improve water quality in a coastal watershed by creating healthy riparian zones.

As required by Section 31220(a), staff has consulted with the Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board about the project and established that the project will help enhance the beneficial uses, such as cold-water fisheries, identified in the basin plan for the Klamath River. Finally, consistent with section 31220(c), the plan produced under the proposed project will identify criteria to be used to monitor and evaluate the restoration, once implemented.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)
GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective C** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will complete a plan to improve floodplain habitat and anadromous fish passage in a coastal watershed.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** The proposed project will promote and expedite implementation of many local, state and federal plans and policies concerning restoration of riparian habitat and increasing natural production of the coastal salmon populations that depend upon that habitat for certain life history stages. The project promotes and implements the following state plans and policies concerning restoration of riparian habitat and increasing natural production of the coastal salmon populations that depend upon that habitat for certain life history stages:
 - a. The project carries out the recommendations prescribed in the **Mid Klamath Sub basin Fisheries Resource Recovery Plan** (MKSFRRP, 2014). That plan is the collaborative work product of the Council, the Karuk Tribe and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is often used in concert with a "Candidate Action Table" that was created in 2012. Its recommendations were also incorporated into State and federal recovery plans for anadromous fish species. The documents together identify and rank restoration actions for each Middle Klamath Tributary, and can offer guidance on how to prioritize restoration actions. The MKSFRRP analyzes watershed impacts not only by influential tributary but also on the scale of eight sub-watershed regions "based on landscape/ watershed contiguity, biogeography, and the specific land management circumstances distinct to each." The Elk-Grider, Siskiyou and Western Marble Mountain Sub-basin sections of the MKSFRRP identify one or more of the following habitat issues: legacy mining impacts, thermal refugia and stream connectivity. Section 4.C.3 of the MKSFRRP identifies "mine tailing reclamation and revegetation" as a riparian and streambank restoration priority for the Mid Klamath. Likewise, the Candidate Action Table lists historic mining impacts to channel structure and riparian function as a limiting factor for threatened salmon.
 - b. The **Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California**, (CDFG, 1996) describes the extensive perturbation to the watershed due to extractive industries such as logging and mining, and notes the loss of riparian vegetation has resulted in elevated stream temperatures and the potential for large-scale mobilization of sediment destabilized by storm events. Restoring the floodplain and riparian vegetation stands would reverse this degradation of the watershed and improve water quality in the region.
 - c. More recently, the Project promotes the policies and objectives of the **Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon** (CDFG, 2004) in that most sections pertaining to

the Mid-Klamath recommend that restorationists “revegetate flood plain areas using native species.” (KR-UK04, KR-HC-04, KR-SV-04), an activity only achievable in most cases by restoring the river to its natural floodplain.

d. The project serves to implement the **Final Recovery Plan for the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)** (National Marine Fisheries Service 2014). Although a federal plan, the State of California is required under federal policy and federal funding requirements to assist in the implementation of the plan. The first passage describing “stresses” to the coho population of the Mid-Klamath states that “(t)he The key limiting stresses for this population are impaired water quality and lack of floodplain and channel structure, as they have the greatest impact on the population’s ability to produce sufficient spawners to support recovery....” (pg. 33-9). The report goes on to state that “(w)inter rearing occurs primarily in mainstem, confluence, and tributary habitats where backwaters, alcoves, off-channel ponds and wetlands have formed. Winter rearing habitat has been primarily impacted by past mining activities and construction of flood control levees in the mainstem and in many tributaries, which has led to the loss and degradation of floodplain and channel structure. The majority of winter habitat that does exist is small, has poor quality, and is poorly connected.” (pp. 33-9).

The report prescribes the following recovery strategies and actions for the Middle Klamath:

- SONCC-MKR.2.2.4 Floodplain and Channel Structure, Reconnect the channel to the floodplain and to existing off-channel ponds, wetlands, side channels in any area that could benefit coho salmon;
- SONCC-MKR.2.2.4.1 Assess instream flow conditions and side channel connectivity and develop a plan to obtain adequate flows for channel connectivity
- SONCC-MKR.2.2.4.2 Mechanically alter side channels, off channel ponds and wetlands to achieve connectivity
- SONCC-MKR.10.2.13 Water Quality: reduce pollutants, remove pollutants
- SONCC-MKR.10.2.13.1 Assess contamination from tailing piles and develop mining activities remediation plan
- SONCC-MKR.10.2.13.2 Take necessary actions to ensure responsible parties remediate mine tailing piles, guided by the plan

e. The project carries out the objectives of the **California Water Action Plan**, (California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2014) which was developed to meet three broad objectives: more reliable water supplies, the restoration of species and habitat, and a

more resilient, sustainably managed water resources system. It lays out the state's challenges, goals and actions needed to put California's water resources on a safer, more sustainable path. The plan identifies ten overarching strategies to protect our resources, include two particular to this project that the Conservancy funding will help implement: 4) Protect and restore important ecosystems (restore coastal watersheds and strategic coastal estuaries to restore ecological health and nature system connectivity to benefit local water systems and help defend against sea level rise, eliminate barriers to fish migration) and 7) Increase flood protection (encourage flood projects that plan for climate change and achieve multiple benefits).

f. The **California State Wildlife Action Plan** (CDFW, 2015 Update) points out that the North Coast Klamath Mountain Province is known for its extensive river systems and the anadromous fish populations they support. These rivers, according to CDFW, support one-third of the state's Chinook salmon, most of the state's coho salmon and steelhead, and all of the State's coastal cutthroat trout. These populations have suffered significant declines. That is why one of the fourteen conservation targets for the Province is the "native aquatic species assemblages/communities of coastal watersheds." The project will benefit anadromous fish species including Chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead by addressing the habitat fragmentation that resulted from mining cited as a cause of major ecosystem degradation in this plan. This project can help achieve the conservation target pertaining to desired channel pattern and natural floodplain, established in 5.1-79 and repeated in 5.1-38 of the North Coast and Klamath Province Chapter of the California Wildlife Action plan. Specifically, Conservation Strategy 7 in this plan speaks to this outcome and calls for cooperation with watershed councils to achieve it.

g. Finally, **California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report** (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2013) Key Action #3 for the "Preserve and Steward State Lands and Natural Resources" section calls for building resilience in natural systems and specifically points out that wetlands "provide important carbon sequestration opportunities for the state." Riparian forests provide excellent opportunities to increase carbon sequestration levels.

4. **Support of the public:** The project is supported by the U.S. Forest Service, the Karuk Tribe, the Yurok Tribe, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA, and others. (Exhibit 2).
5. **Location:** The project is located along Red Cap Creek, a tributary to the Klamath River near Orleans in Humboldt County, and the project will serve to protect and restore coastal and coastal watershed resources.
6. **Need:** The salmon runs of the Klamath-Trinity River sustain three native American tribes (Yurok, Hoopa and Karuk) as well as important sport and commercial fisheries. Salmon recovery on the Klamath River is an established priority, and the restoration of floodplain habitat provides an extensive benefit for aquatic and terrestrial species in addition to

salmon. However, limited funding is available to remediate the extensive mining damage of the past. Conservancy funding is necessary to implement the project and take advantage of in-kind services offered by the Karuk Tribe, the Council and the U.S. Forest Service.

7. **Greater-than-local interest:** This project is the continuation of the grantee's comprehensive effort to restore connectivity between streams and rivers and their floodplains lost due to extensive mining activities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By re-connecting and enhancing floodplain habitat and off-channel features, the Council will improve riparian habitat, enhance salmon rearing and refuge habitat, and remediate abandoned mine sites and improve thermal conditions for aquatic resources of the Klamath River and its tributaries. The Council seeks to ensure the Klamath River basin will be a long-term salmon stronghold for California.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The project planning area is located more than thirty miles inland from the coast and therefore is not vulnerable to sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** Tribal, commercial and sport salmon fisheries for Klamath River salmon are predictable only in their general decline due to low numbers of returning adults (escapement). These low returns are a likely result of low survival in the river during the prior several drought years, compounded by inhospitable water quality, particularly warm water conditions, as well as deteriorating ocean conditions. Floodplain restoration in the mid-Klamath is one of the most important things that can be done to increase juvenile and adult survival in the Klamath in all years. Moreover, as the states of Oregon and California prepare for removal of four Klamath dams in 2020, it is vital that immediate steps be taken to assure the availability of high-quality habitat for salmonids in the Middle and Lower Klamath Rivers. These reaches will be needed to sustain fish populations while the upper watershed is recovering from the after-effects of dam removal. Of greatest concern will be the release of high sediment loads detrimental to fish populations, and the need for aquatic species to have ready access to tributaries and floodplains that provide a haven from water and sediment releases.
10. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The communities of the Middle Klamath span the Humboldt-Siskiyou County border, two of the State's most impoverished and underemployed places, according to 2013 US Census Bureau statistics. The California Department of Water Resources mapping tool confirms this bleak assessment, labelling this geographic block as severely disadvantaged. The Council has diligently built a restoration economy in the small town of Orleans, California. The non-profit organization employs 60-75 people and brings more than \$557,000 in watershed restoration contracts to the area annually. This project complements that model for economic revitalization by planning mine tailing remediation and riparian revegetation that could employ a dozen or more people in the future. Additionally, this project aims to restore salmon, a natural and cultural resource

that, more than any other, determines the wealth and well-being of these rural communities.

11. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
12. **Innovation:** The Project provides an excellent opportunity to restore habitat in a highly degraded yet readily accessible area. The ecological benefits of floodplain ecology are becoming better recognized and appreciated in the pursuit of salmon recovery.
13. **Readiness:** The grantee has indicated that they are prepared to begin the project immediately upon award of funds.
14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** The project builds on the Conservancy’s development of feasibility and cost estimate studies pertaining to the proposed Klamath dam removal effort, as well as more localized plans to remediate former mining sites in the Mid Klamath region. Ensuring quality habitat downstream of the dams to accommodate aquatic species during the decommissioning of the dams is an essential part of dam removal.
15. **Cooperation:** As described under “Resolution of More Than One Issue,” above, the Council has been an integral part of rural Humboldt and Siskiyou County since the Council’s inception. Their partners include the Karuk and Yurok tribes, State and federal agencies, local government and private citizens.
16. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** A literature review by Pete Bisson of the U.S. Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station (2011) determined that climate change is one of the most important long-term threats to fish habitat resilience, that “most climate change models project long-term increases in winter precipitation and decreases in summer precipitation.” Measures that will reduce vulnerability to climate change include conservation ownership and associated active stewardship of forests to reduce threat of fire as well as adjacent floodplain enhancement and groundwater recharge projects that will provide habitat and drought resilience. In planning to improve headwaters habitat in the high elevation Mid Klamath where instream flow tends to be coolest, the grantee will promote the resilience of the Klamath River, buffering it from climate change impacts other than sea level rise. In addition, improving habitat in tributaries to the Klamath will promote refugia for populations remaining instream in anticipation of sediment releases associated with Klamath Dam removal.
17. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The project involves only planning and design activities and will not result in significant emissions of greenhouse gas.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The proposed project includes planning for sites located outside of the coastal zone but will directly affect resources in at least three northern California counties, two of which have

certified Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), and one of which lies outside of the coastal zone. When implemented, these projects will enhance anadromous fish habitat and potentially lead to further enhancement of water quality in the Klamath River basin. The aquatic resources and habitat quality of stream channels within and outside of the coastal zone boundaries are inextricably linked. For example, the anadromous fish populations that spend part of their life history within the coastal zone reside for extended periods outside of the coastal zone, and therefore depend upon clean fresh water to survive and propagate upstream. The proposed authorization is consistent with the two certified LCPs as follows:

Del Norte County

This authorization is consistent with the relevant portions of the Del Norte County Local Coastal Program (LCP), which was certified by the Coastal Commission on October 12, 1983. Due to the life history patterns of anadromous fish, the Del Norte LCP acknowledges coastal streams and riparian vegetation systems as Sensitive Coastal Habitat. Under the LCP, Chapter VI, the following provisions are made: “The County shall maintain all existing species of fish, wildlife, and vegetation for their economic, intrinsic and ecological values as well as providing adequate protection of rare and endangered species.” (App., p. 55)

“The County should establish riparian corridors along local streams, creeks, and sloughs to maintain their aesthetic appeal, wildlife habitat, control of erosion.” (App., p. 56).

“The County encourages programs (e.g., fish hatcheries, habitat rehabilitation) designed to improve the quality of coastal fisheries and other marine resources.” (App., p. 57). “All surface and subsurface waters shall be maintained at the highest level of quality to ensure the safety of public health and the biological productivity of coastal waters.” (App., p. 58)

Therefore, this project’s goal of improving anadromous fish habitat by improving water quality in the Klamath River, and ultimately providing access to historic habitat, thereby maintaining and enhancing the aquatic resources of the county, is consistent with the LCP.

Humboldt County

The authorization is consistent with the relevant portions of the Humboldt County General Plan Volume II, North Coast Area Plan of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program (LCP), which was partially certified by the Coastal Commission on January 12, 1982 and amended thereafter on various occasions. It states:

“Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas.” (LCP, 3-40 (a))

“Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.” (LCP, 3-40(b))

“Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and, where feasible, restored. Special consideration shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance.” (LCP, Chap. 3, p. 27, Section G)

“The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, and wetlands...appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms...shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of wastewater discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff...and minimizing alteration of natural streams.” (LCP, Chap. 3, p. 27, Section G)

Because the proposed authorization will help prepare projects designed to restore natural geomorphologic processes and open previously unavailable habitat, the proposed authorization is entirely consistent with the LCP policies stated above.

**CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/
STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:**

In 1996, the Klamath River mainstem was listed as impaired for organic enrichment/low dissolved oxygen (DO) from Iron Gate Reservoir to the Scott River, and for nutrient and temperature impairment in the remainder of the basin pursuant to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. In 1998, the Klamath River watershed was listed for nutrient and temperature impairment from Iron Gate Reservoir to the Scott River. The Klamath River mainstem was listed for organic enrichment/low dissolved oxygen in the reaches upstream of Iron Gate Reservoir and downstream of the Scott River. Iron Gate and Copco Reservoirs and the intervening reach of the Klamath River were listed for the blue-green algae toxin microcystin impairment in 2006. The 303(d) listings were confirmed in the Klamath River TMDL analysis. Dissolved oxygen concentrations are regularly too low to comply with the Basin Plan dissolved oxygen objectives.

Water temperature conditions regularly exceed temperature thresholds protective of salmonids. Low dissolved oxygen concentrations and elevated water temperatures in the Klamath River, its tributaries, Copco1 and Copco 2, and Iron Gate Reservoirs, and seasonal algae blooms have resulted in degraded water quality conditions that do not meet applicable water quality objectives and that impair designated beneficial uses. The designated beneficial uses that are not fully supported include: cold freshwater habitat (COLD); rare, threatened, and endangered species (RARE); migration of aquatic organisms (MIGR); spawning, reproduction, and/or early development of fish (SPWN); commercial and sport fishing (COMM); Native American cultural use (CUL); subsistence fishing (FISH); and contact and non-contact water recreation (REC-1 and REC-2).

The designated beneficial uses associated with the cold freshwater salmonid fishery (COMM, COLD, RARE, MIGR, and SPWN) and Native American cultural use and subsistence fishing (CUL and FISH) are interrelated and are the designated beneficial uses most sensitive to the water quality impairments of the Klamath River. Important species in the Klamath

River watershed include coho and Chinook salmon, trout, green sturgeon, eulachon, and Pacific lamprey.

Throughout the Klamath River watershed in California, many individuals, groups, and agencies, including the Council, have been working to enhance and restore fish habitat and water quality. These groups include, but are not limited to the USFS, USFWS, the Klamath Tribes, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Karuk Tribe, and Yurok Tribe, the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, the Resighini Rancheria, the Five Counties Salmonid Conservation Program, and The Council. Their past and present efforts have improved water quality conditions in the Klamath River and its tributaries. Their continued efforts in general, and the proposed project, are consistent with and support the objectives of the Basin Plan and Action Plan for the Klamath River Total Maximum Daily Loads. By restoring an improved riparian corridor with functioning floodplain, the proposed project will substantially reduce water temperatures, increase habitat availability, provide deposition areas for sediment transport and otherwise improve overall water quality in the basin.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The project involves only information collection, planning and resource evaluation for possible future action. The projects will not result in disturbance to an environmental resource. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306. The project is also statutorily exempt from preparation of a CEQA document under section 15262, which exempts feasibility and planning studies, because it involves only preparation of the project designs and environmental review documents for restoration projects that the Conservancy has not approved, adopted, or funded and will include consideration of environmental factors.

The proposed project is entirely within the Six Rivers National Forest and was analyzed under the recently completed programmatic National Environmental Policy Act environmental analysis. For this project, the grantee will work with the US Forest Service to draft the necessary CEQA/NEPA environmental documents utilizing information from the programmatic NEPA document and ensure that the project is evaluated under both CEQA and NEPA.

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemption.