



COUNTY OF MARIN

NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY IS PROACTIVELY TAKING STEPS TO PRESERVE SALMON HABITAT

On September 14, the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) filed a lawsuit claiming that the County of Marin is not fulfilling its responsibility under the Endangered Species Act to protect Coho Salmon. On the contrary, over the past decade, the County has committed significant staff focus and resources to restore our fishery. County Administrator Matthew Hymel notes, "Even with our significant budget challenges this year, we have allocated over \$1.1 million in staff time and resources to these efforts. We are also working successfully with other agencies and local organizations on the recovery effort. In defending the County against this lawsuit, we lose valuable time and money that would be better spent enhancing salmon habitat."

For over a decade, the County of Marin has been proactively working to protect and restore Salmon in our coastal watersheds. We have added zoning restrictions, changed road maintenance practices, removed fish passage barriers under roads, reduced

erosion on Open Space and agricultural lands, and helped local communities address widespread septic system challenges.

In 2007, responding to concerns raised by the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) during the Board of Supervisors consideration of the County's General Plan update, the County agreed to a good faith effort to plan and implement increased habitat protections in the San Geronimo Valley watershed. The County imposed a two year moratorium on new building in the community and held over a dozen community workshops and forums to assist with the creation of a planning document, the *San Geronimo Valley Salmon Enhancement Plan* (SEP) before it was accepted by the Board of Supervisors in February 2010.

Since that time, County staff have been steadily working with diverse community interests and the Planning Commission to propose increased native vegetation protections near creeks. At a well-attended public meeting last month, the Board gave direction to staff regarding steps toward completion and adoption of a revised ordinance.

It is unfortunate that one stakeholder in this process – SPAWN – has chosen to file a lawsuit at this time. This decision not only diverts already scarce financial resources, it exacerbates community tensions. "SPAWN's lawsuit immediately undercut the progress we've made in the community to develop a shared strategy toward a very complex issue; Salmon recovery in built neighborhoods," said Supervisor Steve Kinsey.

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