

**(Received via e-mail)**

**From:** Ken Hower  
**To:** <smcconnell@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Date:** 3/15/2009 10:00 PM  
**Subject:** Rubicon Comments - Water Board

First of all, thank you for taking an interest in the well-being of our forest and water. It is appreciated.

While I appreciate the work the water board does to ensure our drinking water is available and safe, this isn't about safe drinking water. This is about the agenda of a VERY SMALL....extremely small number of people who dislike people using our public forest other than how THEY see it should be. That's what this is about.

I have been using the Rubicon Trail for responsible recreating since I was a teenager in 1978. Before that, my father and grandfather were on the trail enjoying it with their family. I now spend it with my son...and I will work very hard to ensure that it is available for him as he grows older and for his children.

I have seen this trail improve year after year, since it's all-time low in 2003-2004. Even back in the 1970's....while the amount of users that were there were less....they were FAR more irresponsible than the users of today.

This is about science.....and there is no scientific evidence that any traffic on the Rubicon is more harmful or threatening to water quality than the cars driving on every day on I80, or the people that careless pour harmful chemicals. I am confident that the human impact to water quality on the Rubicon is thousands and thousands of times less than the impact of car oils, dust and fluids on Interstate 80. None of these people are suggesting closing interstate 80 or 50. Why? They need it! It's all about them.

Organizations like Friends Of the Rubicon (FOTR), Rubicon Trail Foundation (RTF), Rubicon Trail Patrol (RTP) and Rubicon Oversight Committee(ROC) are really out there doing it to make this better. I volunteer over 100 hours per year on trail patrol...picking up misc trash, talking to users and handing out free trash bags. I put my money and time where my mouth is....I have NEVER EVER seen one of these people that advocate closure doing anything to improve the trail and make positive changes other than complain and beg any organization they can find an ear to close a trail that has been in use for nearly 100 years. This trail is the crown jewel of California, it's the crown jewel of El Dorado and Placer County. Millions of dollars in groceries, gasoline, drinks, camping gear, GPS units, radios and countless other equipment are spent in El Dorado County.

I will continue to support the trail, work on key projects, pick up trash, carry around my PETT toilet system on my ATV....because using our public lands RESPONSIBLY is what recreation means to people. MANAGE the problems and issues.....blanket closure orders are EASY and convenient...and in the end....everyone who pays taxes and uses public lands loses....and that's far more beneficial to our society than the 5 people that want it closed....because they don't like how we recreate.

Follow the science.....the science says the issues and problems are nearly non-existent...but let's work on the few areas...such as Ellis Creek. Get the bridge built. 99% of the trail is DIRT and ROCK. Minimizing impact on 1% is relatively easy to do. We have the labor, we have desire and we have means.

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Ken