

January 17, 2016

Re: Elk River Watershed Discharge Requirement permit

To: Water Quality Board Members

We write to you again regarding the conditions of the North and South forks of Elk River. For over 20 years we have been adversely affected by the logging in the Elk River watershed. We have been to 30 or more meetings with residents, water quality staff and your board over those years. What has it accomplished? There have been numerous orders to put restrictions on the logging operations with supposedly new and better practices but the conditions have worsened. The river gets choked with sediment and floods after a day or two of heavy rain. Silt covers the road and tracks into our cars and homes. The anticipation of a flood changes the way we must plan our trips into town. We hesitate to leave our home when the river is rising fearing we cannot make it back before the road is flooded. We are both now retired senior citizens and have concerns about getting medical attention when needed if the river floods. The most recent meeting (Jan. 12, 2015) was with Matt St John and Fred Blatt from WQ. They deserve combat pay for fielding of all the vociferous concerns of our Elk River community present. They remained professional and we appreciated their sharing the information about the draft logging permit. However, the new WDR is more of the same (for 20 years) and does not go far enough to restore the health of our river. A few paltry restrictions were added. The "no wet weather logging" is warranted. However, we feel that the draft permit does not go far enough to achieve the WQ goal of zero discharge (unclear what zero discharge means). More restrictions need to be added to make a positive impact on our river and our lives.

The bottom line is the river is getting worse, flooding is more frequent and our lives are being further impaired. What has been done to make it better has made it worse. The only good news was the 1998-2002 logging moratoriums which showed a marked decrease in the sediment discharge. Let's start there; stop the logging for 10 years, let the river heal, let the trees grow and then slowly introduce their "best practices" logging.

Without a doubt, if I sent my waste to my neighbor's property, the regulators would fine me and force me to stop and make me be responsible for the cleanup. How can the logging industry be exempt from responsibility?

As we write this letter, we are flooded in once again. Elk River Road is impassible at Dead Woman's curve up to our driveway at 8080 Elk River Road. The cement bridge below our property is completely under water.

With deep concerns

Scott and Susan Keele

707-442-1825

Elk River residents since 1990