

1/19/10 Bd Mtg/Wrkshp Item 7  
Russian River  
Deadline: 1/13/10 by 12 noon

**From:** John Milovina <milovinavineyards@wildblue.net>  
**To:** <choppin@waterboards.ca.gov>, <fweber@waterboards.ca.gov>, <tdoduc@water...>  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 12, 2010 11:03 AM  
**Subject:** Russian River Frost Water Draft Regulation

To Chairman Hoppin and board members

My name is John Milovina of Milovina Vineyards, and I am a grape grower in Mendocino County. We depend on the Russian River for frost protection and have been doing so for 40 years. In the past we have always tried to conserve our use of river water by protecting only blocks that need to be protected by use of valves that can leave off specific blocks not ready for protection. We wait as long as we can to pump water from the Russian River depending on conditions. Temperatures get as low as 32 degrees in some cases before we start sprinklers but that is not the norm. There is discussion of us having to pay for monitoring water flows and maybe losing our water right uses. We now have to pay license fees for our water rights which we didn't have to do in the past. We had to pay to have fish screens put on our pumping stations. Growers are building ponds for water storage if there are matching funds available. The growers of Mendocino County have done more in a short amount of time to solve the problems at hand and nobody seems to want to acknowledge what we have done and will continue to do to make things better.

What happened in April of 2008 was unfortunate with the finding of 3 dead fish one night. A lot of us still wonder if this event really happened when it was disclosed at the November workshop that fish and game received a tip from an anonymous phone call. The circumstances were out of the ordinary, because it was one of the coldest nights on record and because of our routine of trying to wait and save water we suffered damage to our vineyards and to our income.

I attended the workshop in November 18, 2009. Mendocino County presented a plan that was put into action for the 2009 frost season and it worked. Less water was used for frost protection. I was part of a committee that decided when water would be released from Lake Mendocino for frost and it worked very well. After Mendocino County was done, Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries spoke and it was as if Mendocino County did nothing to try to prevent another April night of 2008 from happening again. I wonder if these people really are willing to work with us.

I cannot afford not to frost protect my vineyards. If we cannot frost protect this year I will be bankrupt. We have (Mendocino County) shown that we can all work together to limit the use of Russian River water use, but everyone else involved (Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries, and State Water Resources) must be flexible to work with us. Unfortunately we have all become dependent on Lake Mendocino from agriculture to domestic use to recreation use and for the fish.

If more water was diverted from Lake Pillsbury during the winter season when it is full, that would help put more water in Lake Mendocino especially during low rainfall seasons.

Sincerely,

John Milovina  
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