

Sent via email on Sunday January 11, 2015 at 8:24 pm

Dear Alydda-

Please accept these comments on the 2014 triennial review of the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region* draft proposed Basin Plan amendment project priorities and editorial revisions to Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5.

I live in Oregon off of highway 199 just 5 miles over the California-Oregon border in O'Brien. As such I have a special interest in the Smith River watershed and its protection because it is close by and I often visit for recreational activities.

I ask that under Task 11 that the three forks of the Smith River and their tributaries be designate as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) as a high priority.

The Smith River has been recommended by numerous environmental organizations, and your staff, as deserving of the highest water quality designation as an ONRW. However, to date this recommendation has not been selected as a high priority. It is now urgent to obtain this protective status, because the Smith River is under an immediate threat of a proposed nickel strip mine by a foreign company (interloper). Your own staff has recently responded to the current proposal for water extraction to enable exploratory drilling adjacent to the North Fork Smith River, stating that the Smith River is the crown jewel of California, and that strip mining along the North Fork in Oregon would not be in the public's best interest (letter dated July 8, 2014 to OWRD Acting Director Tom J. Paul). Currently the Oregon Water Resources Department has rejected the proposal for water extraction (Limited License 1533).

I ask that the California Water Quality Board and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Commission work in concert, to fully protect the three forks of the Smith River, the North, Middle and South, which wholly traverse Federal Lands, and terminate at the main stem within Jedediah Redwood State Park, a world heritage site.

Designation as an ONRW would safeguard the outstanding national values that include protection of critical habitat for California's endangered coho salmon, enjoyment of a recreational treasure, the longest stretch of National and State Wild and Scenic Rivers (over 300 miles), and an aesthetic focal point for both the Redwood National and State Park (a UNESCO world heritage site), as well as Smith River National Recreation Area. Also included in a long list of beneficial use is supplying most of Del Norte County residents with the highest quality drinking water, and an important cultural heritage resource of the Tolowa Native American Tribes.

Please elevate to a high priority the ONRW designation of the three forks of the Smith River. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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