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February 12, 2016

California Regional Water Quality Control Board - North Coast Region
ATTN: Alydda Mangelsdorf
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, California 95403

Subject: Draft Sediment TMDL for the Upper Elk River Watershed

Dear Ms. Mangelsdorf:

In January 2015, Humboldt County applied to the State Water Resources Control Board for funding to support the proposed Elk River Stewardship Program. The purpose of the Stewardship Program is to create opportunities for collaboration between residents and stakeholders to implement projects that improve watershed conditions. The County and the State Water Board are in the final stages of developing a grant agreement and I expect to forward this agreement to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors for review and approval within the next few months. If approved by our Board, the County would serve as the contract manager for the Stewardship Program through June 2018.

Recognizing the importance of the proposed Elk River Stewardship Program as a key element in addressing longstanding issues in Elk River, County staff have been meeting regularly with the University of California-Cooperative Extension, CalTrout, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the North Coast Regional Water Board for preliminary planning and coordination discussions since late 2014. If the grant agreement is approved by the Board of Supervisors, we hope to formally initiate the Stewardship Program with the public in late spring or early summer.

The purpose of this letter is to express support for the general framework of the Draft Action Plan for the Upper Elk River Sediment TMDL and the inclusion of the proposed Elk River Stewardship Program as a non-regulatory component of the Program of Implementation. I look forward to working collaboratively to implement the Stewardship Program and achieve on-the-ground projects that deliver improvements for the Elk River and its community.

Sincerely,

Hank Seemann
Deputy Director - Environmental Services