

From: <billw@snowcrest.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Tue, May 15, 2007 4:16 PM
Subject: Wetland & Riparian Area Protection Policy

Wetland/Riparian Policy
Deadline: 5/15/07 12 noon

Song Her, Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

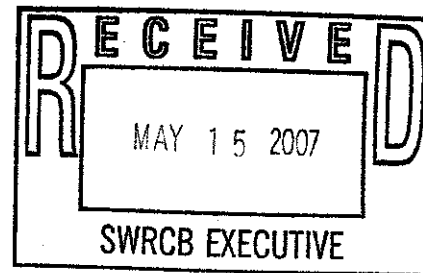
Dear Song Her, Clerk of the Board,

Wetlands are crucial to the entire environment and deserve protection from degradation at the greatest level possible, along with enforcement of laws to force compliance when necessary for all of California's native wetlands and riparian areas.

All discharges into these systems should be closely monitored, and practices that are often carried out in or near such protected areas, such as off road vehicles, logging, golf courses, grazing, mining etc. The board should develop a broad-based policy to regulate all discharges and activities that impact wetlands and riparian areas as described in Alternative 4. I ask the board to take into account both present and future threats to wetlands and riparian areas, including global warming and climate change, when considering how to best protect California's few remaining native wetlands and riparian areas.

Wetlands and riparian habitats are truly among the rarest and most sensitive ecosystem types in California and should have the greatest protection. Wetlands are essential areas and deserve as they are critical to the survival of rare, sensitive, threatened and endangered plants and wildlife. I ask the board to prioritize the preservation and restoration of all remaining native wetlands and riparian areas in the California, which is believed to represent far less than ten percent of the historic riparian habitat statewide. In the California deserts, the percentage of remaining native wetlands and riparian areas is estimated to be as low as two to five percent of the historic habitat. Wetlands and riparian areas are not only critical for biodiversity and aquatic dependent species, but also to provide clean water for all Californians.

Some of the many issues that I would ask the board to thoroughly explore in the CEQA process for the development of this policy include the cumulative impacts of climate change on wetlands and riparian areas; the impacts of off-road vehicle use in and near wetlands and riparian areas; the impacts of grazing on wetlands and riparian areas; the impacts of pesticides and fungicides from golf courses, the impacts of logging, mining, groundwater extraction, and other extractive industries on wetlands and riparian areas; impacts from landscape level projects such as



utility lines and pipelines; and impacts to coastal wetlands.

I hope and expect that the Board will thoroughly examine all these critical issues and act to preserve these critical wetlands and riparian resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California.

Sincerely,
BILL WELSCH
PO BOX 246
LEWISTON, CA 96052