

Dec. 11, 1997

Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear members of the Board:

As representatives of conservation and both commercial and recreational fishing interests, we support listing changes to the Clean Water Act sections 305(b) --listed Pollutants--and 303(d)--listed Impaired Waterbodies.

Specifically, we urge listing the following pollutants and affected streams: temperature loading for the Garcia, Ten Mile, South Fork-Trinity Rivers; nutrient loading for the Klamath River.


The pollutant loads named above are a direct result of inappropriate land use practices. In particular, mismanaged logging is widely recognized as having a negative effect on beneficial uses of water. National Marine Fisheries Service and state agencies have acknowledged that the Forest Practice Rules fail to offer the controls necessary to protect the listed coho salmon and Beneficial Uses of Water and to meet Basin Plan Guidelines.

The TMDL system allows a practice that will assess pollution sources and set limits on those sources by creating rules for inclusion in California's regional Basin Plan. Temperature loading, which has yet to be listed under CWA sections 305(b) or 303(d), is a serious problem and a major limiting factor. Coho and Steelhead fisheries have experienced severe declines due to the lack of cold, clear water.

The TMDL process to date has recognized the interdependent nature of all the desired future conditions and their effects. Consideration of temperature and nutrients in the overall strategy is essential to the TMDL project's success.

We urge you to adapt sections 303(d) and 305(b) to reflect temperature and nutrient loading on the watercourses listed above; to consider all stressors comprehensively into the overall strategy; and to provide specific numerical standards for beneficial use of water, land use policy, and monitoring.

Sincerely,

 (for the following -)

Elyssa Rosen, Sierra Club, California, Nevada, Hawaii Field Office

John Gaffin, Environmental Protection Information Center

Michael Bowen, California Trout

Tim McKay, Northcoast Environmental Center

Judd Ellinwood, Salmonid Restoration Federation



To: State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

10 December 1997

From: Jon Ambrose
Georgia-Pacific Corporation
90 W Redwood Avenue
Fort Bragg, CA 93457

Re: Adoption of the 1998 Water Quality Assessment and Revisions to the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Waterbodies for the North Coast Region.

In the November 10, 1997 preliminary draft of proposed revisions to the 303(d) List for North Coast waterbodies the Ten Mile River was included for consideration as temperature impaired. Two alternatives were provided in the recommendation column: (1) defer listing until EPA initiates TMDL effort or *supporting data are provided* and (2) list as temperature impaired. Alternative #1 indicated *no supporting data were provided* for the nomination and I doubt they will be. However, a large body of data not supporting listing is available. The mere consideration of Ten Mile by Water Quality staff without supportive data reveals a serious flaw in the entire process of listing waterbodies. I have been before the Board before when a similar lack of supporting data resulted in a 303(d) nomination and non-supporting data was ignored.

As head biologist for Georgia-Pacific (GP), the principal land owner within the Ten Mile River Watershed, I have been responsible for monitoring conditions within the watershed for five years. To date, GP has committed to annual monitoring of instream temperature, sediment, and aquatic vertebrate populations. In addition, my staff and I have completed an extensive macroinvertebrate study and conducted a complete habitat typing inventory on all streams within the Ten Mile. This monitoring has resulted in proactive and focused enhancement activities designed to enhance the quality of habitat for salmonids within the watershed.

Site specific data is annually collected to assess instream conditions throughout the watershed and ultimately direct enhancement activities. As mentioned, temperature is one of the variables measured in our monitoring. Instream temperatures in 1997, for example, were sampled at 35 different locations. Monitoring results for 1997 will be provided to staff in February of 1998, as GP has done for the past four years.

Coho salmon are being used by EPA as a TMDL surrogate in the development of instream targets and GP's monitoring may aid in this process. A general lack of

agreement exists concerning the best method for correctly interpreting instream temperatures and subsequent effects on fish under field conditions. My staff and I are attempting to assess instream temperatures' effects on juvenile coho salmon distribution. We are developing an index of temperatures which may limit coho salmon distribution based on actual field observations. We are able to do this due to the intensive nature of our monitoring scheme. These results will be presented in a poster at the Stream Temperature Monitoring and Assessment Workshop in January of 1998.

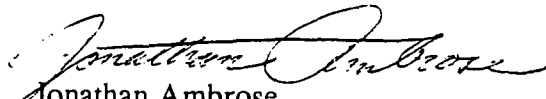
However, to date there are currently no widely accepted threshold targets, although this has obviously not constrained the nomination of some watersheds under the 303(d) process. In the Ten Mile River monitoring plans I established a maximum weekly average* target of 18.3 C based on what I determined as applicable in the literature. Seven stream segments exceed this temperature threshold and 22 did not. Does the fact some segments exceed a threshold, while the majority do not, constitute a 303(d) listing? It is my opinion, based on five years of intensive instream monitoring, temperature is not limiting cold water fish habitat in the Ten Mile River.

Again, results of aforementioned monitoring are on file in the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Santa Rosa office. These results contain a narrative of methods and metrics utilized. Staff should be encouraged to develop listing criteria *a priori*, before consideration is given to listing, and thoroughly encouraged to investigate available data for a nominated watershed. If available data is reviewed it should be acknowledged and listing criteria must be provided.

Additionally, GP has submitted a draft HCP and provided copies to the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Dept. of Fish & Game. A major component of this document addresses the retention of increased stream side buffers, far in exceedance of current California Forest Practice Rules. While final retention guidelines have not been agreed upon, the end result will focus on overstory canopy retention standards sufficient to alleviate concerns (e.g., water temperature) signatory agencies have for various sensitive semi-aquatic and aquatic species, such as coho salmon.

Finally, I have chosen not to provide the Board with a data-dump of Ten Mile's instream temperatures. This information is quite accessible and I assume Staff has reviewed them. These data strongly indicate temperatures are not limiting to anadromous fisheries within the Ten Mile River watershed and therefore a 303(d) listing is not warranted. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Ambrose
Wildlife Biologist 2

* Seven day moving average of the maximum temperatures.