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**UPPER SACRAMENTO RIVER ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**BOB BOSWORTH, CHAIRMAN**  
**2440 MAIN STREET**  
**RED BLUFF, CALIFORNIA 96080**

May 16, 1997

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Mr. Lester A. Snow, Executive Director  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan - Sacramento River Ecological Zone draft. The Sacramento River Advisory Council's Riparian Habitat Committee supports the ecosystem approach embraced by CALFED. However, because the community is a central element to ecosystem restoration it is important to emphasize the voluntary nature of programs and assurance of public safety. To reiterate from my previous letter, public information, outreach, and education are vital in this regard.

The following comments are provided within the context of developing a Sacramento River restoration plan that provides a foundation for the recovery of the Bay-Delta estuary.

Although restoration of anadromous fish populations is an important goal, it is still species centered restoration. This is too narrow a focus on which to base a vision for the Sacramento River Ecological Zone. The vision statement should encompass the long-term recovery of sustainable fish and wildlife populations and should therefore stress the restoration and maintenance of ecosystem process and function. The following language is suggested for a revised vision statement:

"The vision for the Sacramento River Ecological Zone is to improve, restore and maintain the health and integrity of the Sacramento River riverine-riparian ecosystem and tributary ecosystems to provide healthy conditions for sustainable native fish and wildlife populations and the plant communities on which they depend."

The following pathway statement would complement the suggested revision:

"The pathway to this vision is through preservation and restoration of natural fluvial processes such as erosion, deposition, and sediment transport. This includes the protection and restoration of riparian and wetland habitats, managing streamflow and flow regime in ways that benefit ecosystem health, as well as reducing the extent and influence of stressors.

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Restoring the health and integrity of the Sacramento River ecosystem will provide a productive and resilient foundation for the recovery of the Bay-Delta estuary and associated fish and wildlife populations.

The location of the following editorial comments are included on the enclosed copy of the draft document.

### Ecological Processes

page 1.

Consider replacing: "...capture much of the winter-spring flows in dry and below normal rainfall year types."

with: "...reduce flood peaks during the winter and spring, releasing the stored water during the summer and fall."

page 2.

Spawning habitat of salmon and steelhead is controlled by the quality of substrate as well as the amount of gravel.

Consider replacing: "Stream meander corridors - A natural stream meander process in . . ."

with: "Meandering river system - The meandering river process in the Sacramento river provides . . ."

### Habitats

The term "riverine-riparian ecosystem" commonly used in the literature would work here in place of "riparian and riverine habitats" Suggested language: "A healthy riverine-riparian ecosystem suitable to sustain anadromous fish production will result from the interaction of natural fluvial processes such as erosion and deposition, within the context of an appropriate flow and flooding regime."

### Stressors

Most of the productivity in large river ecosystems occurs in the floodplain. Levees tend to sever the river from its floodplain and thereby reduce productivity. Bridges and bank protection are stressors in that they may limit the lateral migration of the river channel.

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Agricultural return flows at Knights Landing should also be considered a potential source of containments.

Riparian and Riverine Aquatic Habitats

page 6.

The reach between Chico Landing and Colusa is missing from the text and should be inserted at the indicated locations.

The text should read: "Between Colusa and Red Bluff, natural riparian . . ."

Keswick Dam to Red Bluff Diversion Dam Ecological Unit

The timing of supplemental dry year releases may require focused research and monitoring. It is not clear that releases for 10 days in March would be optimal for both fish and the establishment of riparian habitat. Modeling should evaluate the potential benefit of releases into late April.

Red Bluff Diversion Dam to Chico Landing Ecological Unit

Consider adding: ". . . and wildlife". To the end of the first paragraph under Vision.

Consider adding: ". . . transport, deposition, and establishment and growth of riparian vegetation" to the end of the second paragraph under Vision.

Dr. Paul Maslin's, CSU, Chico, research on non-natal rearing in secondary and ephemeral tributaries indicates that these streams are important rearing habitat and refugia for out-migrating salmonids in the Sacramento River system.

Linkages to Other Restoration Programs

page 13.

Significant areas of the Sacramento River between Red Bluff and Colusa actively meander. Management actions should aim to protect this functioning process where it presently occurs, in addition to restoring channel migration within a managed meander belt.

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Central Valley Streamflows - Programatic Action 1A:

Basis for flow quantities is not clear. Supplemental flows may be of value for the establishment of riparian vegetation as late as May.

Stream Meander Corridor

Target 1 should be expanded to include the reach between Chico Landing and Colusa. This would effectively double the identified target acreages.

Riparian and Riverine Aquatic Habitats

The following Programmatic Action should be added under Target 1.  
"Programatic Action 1c: Reduce and systematically control populations of invasive and undesirable exotic plant species that compete with the establishment and growth of native riparian vegetation."

Water Diversions

The following should be added to Programmatic Action 1A: (or as a new Programmatic Action).

"Promote and support relocating and consolidating water diversions and developing alternate methodologies of supplying water from the Sacramento River that protect fish but also minimize conflict with maintaining dynamic fluvial river processes."

This echos the guiding CALFED principle that near-term actions will not preclude future restoration.

On behalf of the Riparian Habitat Committee we look forward to working with CALFED to develop a comprehensive restoration program for the Sacramento River Ecological Zone.

Sincerely,



Bob Bosworth, Chairman  
Upper Sacramento River Advisory Council

cc: Diana Jacobs  
Douglas Wheeler