



State of California – The Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Bay Delta Region
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



April 8, 2015

Dear Landowner:

Subject: Voluntary Drought Initiative and New Program Information, Green Valley Creek, Tributary to the Russian River, Sonoma County

On January 17, 2014, Governor Brown declared a State of Emergency due to the ongoing drought. On April 25, 2014, the Governor issued an Executive Order continuing the State of Emergency and strengthening the state's ability to manage water and habitat effectively in drought conditions. In response to continuing drought conditions, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order on December 22, 2014 which extended certain aspects identified in the January 2014 and April 2014 Executive Orders until May 31, 2016. On April 1, 2015, Governor Brown issued yet another Executive Order indicating the distinct possibility that the current drought will stretch into 2016 and beyond. The Executive Orders, among other things, direct the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to work with landowners and other state and federal agencies in priority watersheds to protect threatened and endangered species and species of special concern.

Winter rains have not been sufficient to alleviate drought conditions and as such, you are receiving this letter to ask for your assistance in actions may be important to protecting the sensitive aquatic ecosystem of Green Valley Creek. On September 2, 2014, a letter was sent notifying you that CDFW had partnered with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to develop the California Voluntary Drought Initiative (Drought Initiative) which identified Green Valley Creek and its' tributaries as a priority watershed. The Drought Initiative encourages the development of voluntary agreements between CDFW and other parties to provide instream flows for fish, associated monitoring and potential fish rescue actions. CDFW has worked with several landowners under the Drought Initiative to provide enhanced flows to support summer rearing habitat critical to the survival of coho salmon and steelhead.

Recognizing that drought conditions may well persist into the future, CDFW strongly encourages landowners with diversions to find ways to limit the amount of water directly diverted from Green Valley Creek during critical summer periods. In response to this, several programs have been developed over the last year to assist landowners in better managing scarce water supplies.

- In March of 2014, CDFW and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) announced expedited approval for the installation of storage tanks by landowners who

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currently divert water from important rivers and streams for domestic use. This program is available in your watershed.

- In January 2014, the SWRCB began the Small Irrigation Use registration program which allows for expedited processing of diversions of up to 20-acre feet of water to offstream storage for the purpose of irrigation, frost protection, or heat control of currently cultivated lands within your area.

Information on these Programs can currently be found at
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/registrations/index.shtml.

CDFW is also continuing to encourage voluntary actions that could be taken to protect threatened and endangered species and species of special concern and maximize the beneficial uses of scarce water supplies. Such actions could include:

- Use of alternative water sources that will not directly or indirectly affect instream flow.
- Coordination of diversions among adjacent landowners to reduce instantaneous withdrawal rates so that instantaneous diversion rates can be limited by withdrawing water at different times where possible.
- Coordinated releases to enhance downstream flow where there is reservoir storage that may not be needed for irrigation or other uses. CDFW staff are available to discuss this option.
- Installing water conservation measures and forgoing irrigation of landscaping and lawns.
- Installation low-flow devices such as toilets, washing machines, etc.

Any actions taken on your part could be instrumental in protecting instream resources of Green Valley Creek. Additional information on the Drought Initiative Program can be found at:
http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/salmon_steelhead/voluntary_drought_initiative.html.

If you are interested in participating in the Drought Initiative Program, installing a tank or in receiving more information regarding potential conservation and management actions, please contact the Bay Delta Region's Drought Hotline at (707) 944-5555 or via email at BDRDrought@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Scott Wilson
Regional Manager
Bay Delta Region