

Wetland/Riparian Policy

Deadline: 5/15/07 12 noon

From: Andy & Sasha Honig <andym5@cox.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Mon, May 14, 2007 10:30 AM
Subject: Comment Letter -Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy

To: State Water Resources Control Board

Re: Wetland & Riparian Area Protection Policy

I advocate Alternative 4 which is the alternative that includes the most comprehensive framework for protecting wetlands. It includes protecting wetlands from discharges of pollutants including nutrients, hydromodification, land and vegetation clearing activities and invasive species.

I am involved with the Panorama Vista Preserve which runs for over 2 miles on both sides of the Kern River in Bakersfield. One of the best old growth populations of California Sycamore is found in our preserve along with a good representation of cottonwood, elderberry, and red, arroyo and black willow. These species all depend upon being able to reach the water table the level of which relates to the amount of water flowing in the river.

Aerial photos from 1937 show a large riparian forest within this preserve. After the construction of Isabella Dam and the diversion of Kern River Waters into canals most of this riparian forest died. In recent years water has been allowed to flow the year around through this section of the Kern River supporting a smaller, but healthy riparian forest. There is now additional competition for Kern River Water with booming development on the east side of Bakersfield near the Kern River.

Alternative 4 is necessary to insure that there is water sufficient to maintain the health of the remaining riparian forest along the Kern as it flows through Bakersfield.

Maintaining a wildlife migration corridor along the Kern from the southern Sierra to Buena Vista Lake is also an important goal. Alternative 4 best insures the attainment of this goal.

Vegetation clearing along the banks of the Kern also must be dealt with. A common practice among property owners upstream from the Panorama Vista Preserve is to clear all riparian vegetation and plant lawn up to the river. This practice makes the introduction of pollutants, including herbicides and fertilizer into the river likely.

Yours truly,

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