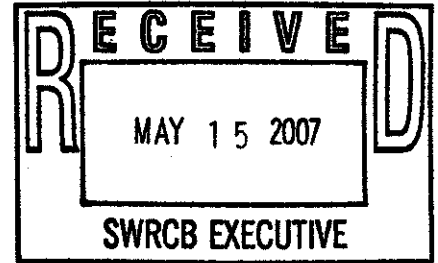


Song Her, Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



Dear Song Her, Clerk of the Board,

Los Padres ForestWatch is a community-based nonprofit organization working to protect and restore the Los Padres National Forest and other public lands along California's Central Coast. One of our main priorities is ensuring that land use activities in and around these lands afford the greatest protection to streams and riparian habitat. We understand that the State Water Resources Control Board is seeking input on a Statewide Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy to protect these critical resources. We urge the Board to proceed with Alternative 4 outlined in the informational notice.

We urge the board to develop a policy that will provide the greatest protection for California's remaining native wetlands and riparian areas and promote the restoration of degraded wetlands and riparian areas throughout the state. To that end, 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 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. These essential areas support a disproportionate share of the state's biodiversity and preservation of these areas is critical to the survival of rare, sensitive, threatened and endangered plants and wildlife. We 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. 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 we would ask the board to thoroughly explore in the CEQA process for the development of this policy include the impacts of off-road vehicle use in and near wetlands and riparian areas; the impacts of livestock

grazing on wetlands and riparian areas; the impacts of logging, mining, oil drilling, groundwater extraction, and other extractive industries on wetlands and riparian areas; and impacts from landscape level projects such as utility lines and pipelines.

We 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,
JEFF KUYPER
PO Box 831
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93102