7. MAD RIVER

The Mad River flows through the rugged coastal mountains south of the Klamath and Trinity River basins. The environmental characteristics of the Mad River basin are similar to its northern neighbors. About 85 percent of the Mad's waters are free-flowing, and approximately 8 percent of the river flows through protected lands, most notably the Six Rivers National Forest.[22] The Mad has one dam—the Robert W. Matthews—owned by the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District.[23]

Public Access and Recreation

The Mad River has seasonal steelhead fishing and is a popular region for hunting. The river basin, one of six in the area that comprise the Six Rivers National Forest, has a variety of challenging hiking, horseback riding, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobile trails. Tours of medicinal, culinary, and floral herb farms are available in the national forest.[24]

Restoration and Protection Efforts

The Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA), along with a number of government agencies and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Humboldt Bay watershed, is leading restoration efforts.[25] A key goal is to reduce the sediment loads that negatively impact habitat for salmonids, especially coho salmon. Excess sedimentation caused by the cumulative impacts of timber harvesting, road construction, removal of riparian vegetation, and urbanization is a significant factor in the degradation of water quality in the basin and the Humboldt Bay watershed. RCAA and the government agencies it partners with have undertaken revegetation projects, and landowner outreach and education to mitigate and control future runoff.

Fish Species of Interest

Chum salmon, coho salmon, and cutthroat trout.

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