



Protecting Marin Since 1934

March 21, 2018

Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
Attn: Charlton Bonham, Chairman

Re: Support of San Geronimo Flow Enhancement Project, Marin County. March 22, 2018: Stream Flow Enhancement Program—Agenda Item #24

Dear Mr. Bonham and Members of the Board:

For more than 80 years, Marin Conservation League has been at the forefront of protecting Marin County's open spaces, watersheds, and national and state park lands for the benefit of the fish and wildlife habitats contained therein as well as the many scenic benefits that the public can enjoy. In the spirit of that legacy, we wholeheartedly support the acquisition of the 157-acre San Geronimo Golf Course by Marin County Parks, in association with State Coastal Conservancy and Trust for Public Lands.

The public acquisition of San Geronimo Golf Course and associated water rights in the Lagunitas Creek Watershed is entirely consistent with the goals of the WCB's Strategic Plan and the Stream Flow Enhancement Program, as detailed in the problem statement in your agenda. As owner, the county will be able to fully restore flows between Larsen Creek, a salmonid spawning stream that has been long confined in an underground pipe, and San Geronimo Creek. This action will enhance connectivity and other habitat resources for fish and wildlife in general and specifically support the recovery of listed coho salmon and steelhead. By reducing water withdrawals from these creeks for irrigation (the golf course has been among the ten largest water users in all of Marin County) and by eliminating chemical inputs to maintain the golf course, the county will have the opportunity not only to enhance flows in San Geronimo, Larsen, and the mainstem Lagunitas Creeks, but also improve the quality of water in these streams. By investing in habitat improvement projects within the stream corridors, the county will be able to improve spawning and rearing habitat for threatened and endangered species, providing resilience for these species in the face of climate change.

In brief, the purchase provides an almost unheard-of opportunity for the county to comprehensively restore an ecosystem that connects creek and riparian floodplain to seasonal wetlands, grasslands, and woodlands. The acquisition also will allow broad public enjoyment of the landscape, not limited to a single visitor group. The county's open process will engage the public in planning for uses that are compatible with restoring the ecosystem. That process also will include environmental analysis of the eventual plan in accordance with the California Environmental

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Quality Act.

We urge the Board to approve staff's recommendation to award the grant of \$3,420,000 that will make this possible!

Respectfully,



Kate Powers
President