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    San Francisco, CA 94104
    Telephone: (415) 627-6700
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   Attorney for Complainants
   and Petitioners
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   BEFORE THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
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   FRIENDS OF THE NAVARRO WATERSHED,
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    SIERRA CLUB, CALIFORNIA
                                           ) COMPLAINT AND PETITION TO
                                          ) RESTRAIN ILLEGAL
    SPORTFISHING PROTECTION ALLIANCE,
   FRIENDS OF THE RIVER, PACIFIC
                                           ) DIVERSIONS OF WATER FROM,
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                                           ) AMEND WATER APPROPRIATION
    COAST FEDERATION OF FISHERMEN'S
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                                           ) LICENSES AND PERMITS TO
   ASSOCIATIONS, UNITED ANGLERS,
    CALIFORNIA TROUT, TROUT UNLIMITED
                                           ) ASSURE BYPASS FLOWS
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                                           ) SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT
    and MENDOCINO ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER,
                                           ) INSTREAM FISH AND WILDLIFE
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        Complainants and Petitioners,
                                           ) BENEFICIAL USES WITHIN,
                                            RESTRAIN UNREASONABLE
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        v.
                                            RIPARIAN USES AND
                                            APPROPRIATIONS OF, AND
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                                            DECLARE FULLY
    UNNAMED ILLEGAL DIVERTERS OF WATER
                                            APPROPRIATED, THE NAVARRO
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   FROM NAVARRO RIVER AND ITS
                                            RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES
    TRIBUTARIES AND NAVARRO BASIN
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   WATER RIGHTS OWNERS WHOSE LICENSES
   AND PERMITS DO NOT REQUIRE BYPASS
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    FLOWS SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT INSTREAM
   BENEFICIAL USES,
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                       Respondents.
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   I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT
   Friends of the Navarro Watershed, Sierra Club, California
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   Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Pacific Coast Federation of
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   Fishermen's Associations, Friends of the River, United Anglers,
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    California Trout, Trout Unlimited and Mendocino Environmental
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   Center (hereinafter, collectively "Friends of the Navarro")
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   hereby complain and petition this Board to take immediate action
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   to restrain illegal diversions of water from, amend water
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appropriation licenses and permits to assure bypass flows sufficient to protect instream fish and wildlife beneficial uses within, restrain unreasonable riparian uses and appropriations of, and declare fully appropriated, the Navarro River and its tributaries. Complainants petition this Board to take these actions in order to protect the Navarro River system's instream beneficial uses as designated in the California Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan for the North Coast Region, and to protect instream public trust resources, all as required by California Constitution Article X, sections 2, 4 and 5 and California Water Code sections 100, 101, 102, 105, 1052, 1205, 1206, 1243, 1243.5, 1253, 1257, 1258, 1381, 1394, 1410, 1611 and 1831.

Friends of the Navarro request the foregoing enforcement action by this Board because illegal and unreasonable water diversions from the Navarro River and its tributaries, primarily for agricultural purposes, have significantly impaired instream fish and wildlife beneficial uses, to the point where the river was literally pumped dry during August and September of 1992. Such illegal and unreasonable diversions threaten again this fall to eliminate the natural flow of the river and its tributaries necessary to sustain constitutionally and statutorily protected instream fish and wildlife beneficial uses.

Historically, the Navarro River and its tributaries have provided essential habitat for Coho salmon, steelhead trout,

Navarro Roach and other important fish stocks. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board for the North Coast Region has identified in its Basin Plan the following beneficial uses

for the Navarro River and its tributaries: contact recreation, non-contact water recreation, cold fresh water habitat, wildlife habitat, fish migration and fish spawning.

The recent severe reductions and complete losses of flow in the Navarro River due to illegal and unreasonable diversions of water destroy these designated uses. This Board is required by the foregoing constitutional and statutory provisions to regulate riparian and appropriative water diversions from the Navarro River and its tributaries as necessary to protect and maintain designated instream fish and wildlife beneficial uses of these waters.

According to this Board's staff files, there are fifty-two existing water rights licenses or permits, and fifteen pending applications, within the Navarro River watershed. Most of the existing licenses and permits allow direct diversion during the summer months. Because this river system is undammed and precipitation occurs primarily in the winter months, late summer (August and September) flows averaged only about 1% (10 cfs) of winter (January and February) flows (1000 cfs) during the forty years of record for this watershed. Consequently, summer diversions pose an extreme threat to instream beneficial uses. Yet it is undisputed, as the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has noted in its protests against all the pending water rights applications, that the Navarro River provides essential habitat for important fishery resources.

For this reason on February 3, 1992 DFG filed a Complaint with your Division of Water Rights requesting that it "review water usage from the Navarro River and its tributaries to

determine if there are illegal diversions and take the necessary actions to insure they comply with the laws related to water appropriation." Friends of the Navarro joins in this request, but petitions this Board additionally either to conduct a statutory adjudication of Navarro Basin water rights pursuant to Water Code section 2501 et seq., or to exercise its continuing authority under Article X of the Constitution to modify existing water rights, as necessary to protect instream beneficial uses and assure that all riparian and appropriative rights are exercised in a "reasonable" manner.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

From its headwaters in Rancheria Creek northwest of Cloverdale, the Navarro River flows northwesterly through southern Mendocino County for a distance of about sixty miles into the Pacific Ocean about ten miles south of the City of Mendocino. It drains a watershed of approximately 300 square miles and includes among its principal tributaries, in addition to Rancheria Creek, Anderson Creek, Indian Creek, Mill Creek, and the south and north branches of the North Fork Navarro River. According to DFG, the Navarro River supports significant populations of Coho salmon and steelhead trout. The population of these salmonids has declined precipitously during the last three decades, due to water diversions, timber harvest and road construction. These developments impair their spawning and rearing habitat by decreasing summer flows, increasing water temperatures and sediment, and disrupting natural transport of sediment downstream to the ocean. During years of low flows, sediment transport of sands and gravels has become so impaired

that rearing pools that provide protection from summer heat have become filled with sediment, exposing these salmonids to lethal water temperatures. Even below the confluence with the relatively clear and cold North Fork, the Navarro River's <u>average</u> daily maximum temperature during the months of June, July and August exceeds the lethal temperature threshold for salmonids of 70 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>1</sup>

Excessive summer diversions for agricultural irrigation have reduced stream flows so significantly as to strand salmon and steelhead in small pools where they are vulnerable to predators, elevated water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen. In drought years, these diversions have actually dried up portions of the Navarro River, most notably in 1992, resulting in substantial fish mortality as well as loss of recreational uses. Impairment of these beneficial uses contravenes the North Coast Basin Plan, which designates fish and wildlife habitat and contact recreation as beneficial uses of this river.

At present, thirty-three landowners have water appropriation licenses, and nineteen own water appropriation permits, allowing diversions from the Navarro River and its tributaries. Twenty-nine of these diverters secured their water rights since 1972, after salmonid population declines had begun and this Board clearly had a duty to prevent further habitat loss. All but four

See Exhibit 1 hereto, a July 28, 1994 report by the Mendocino County Water Agency enclosing graphs of temperature studies conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers.

See Exhibit 2 hereto, a table prepared by State Water Board staff that summarizes these appropriative rights and the pending water rights applications.

of these diverters apply the water to agricultural uses, primarily orchard and vineyard irrigation and frost protection. The balance are for recreational or domestic use. There are fifteen pending water rights applications, primarily for winter irrigation storage and spring frost protection. Existing diversions range in size from 0.01 to 9.00 cfs; existing storage capacities range in volume from 0.01 to 122.00 acre feet. The proposed diversions are all less than 3.00 cfs and, with one notable exception, proposed storage volumes are all less than 200 acre feet. The exception is a proposal to construct a reservoir for storing 1500 acre feet for irrigation purposes on Robinson Creek two miles south of Boonville.

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Widespread public concern that the Navarro River is already overappropriated has delayed this Board's approval of the pending water appropriation applications. Recently Water Rights Division staff have recommended informally that the pending water rights applications for winter diversions be subject to a 200 cfs bypass requirement. This requirement would do nothing, however, to alleviate the severe overappropriation which exists during the summer. This Complaint and Petition is thus directed primarily at the absence of adequate regulation by this Board to prevent excessive summer diversions, resulting in significant fish mortality and loss of recreational uses during that season. Despite repeated requests by agencies and concerned citizens for more than three years that the Board take action to protect the Navarro River, the Board has failed to do so. On May 22, 1991, the Mendocino County Water Agency informed the State Board that the Navarro River had experienced a statistically

significant decline in annual minimum flows and asked the Board to find that the river was fully appropriated during the summer months. This Board took no action to declare the river fully appropriated or to curtail the excessive agricultural diversions.

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Friends of the Navarro Watershed wrote this Board on April 2 and August 12, 1992, likewise requesting that the Board investigate and take action to correct harmful diversion levels on the river, and offering assistance in bringing illegal diverters into compliance with state law. Again this Board made no response. After the river completely dried up in the summer of 1992, an aggrieved citizen and member of Friends of the Navarro Watershed informed this Board's Division of Water Rights by letter dated September 1, 1992 of the situation and again requested corrective action. Because it had received no Board response to any of these letters, nor to numerous phone calls from members of Friends of the Navarro Watershed reiterating the letter requests, on October 14, 1992 Friends of the Navarro Watershed requested in writing that the State Board send a staff person to inspect the river with them and a Department of Fish and Game biologist.

The Division Chief responded on October 15, 1992 to the

September 1 letter which had documented zero flows, stating that

"[i]t is not legal for farmers ... to dry up the River," and

"it is not reasonable to divert water in a manner that dries up a

stream and impacts fish and wildlife." However, despite its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> May 22, 1991 letter from Dennis Jackson of the Mendocino County Water Agency to Ross Swenerton of the State Water Resources Control Board.

recognition of applicable law, this Board again failed to take action to enforce these laws. Friends of the Navarro Watershed therefore wrote yet again on August 12, 1993, to again document the fact that existing diversions, both permitted and illegal, had literally sucked the Navarro River dry the previous summer and threatened to do so in the future. Again this Board failed to take action.

Therefore on August 24, 1993 the undersigned counsel for the Friends of the Navarro Watershed transmitted to this Board's Division of Water Rights a formal request for Board action to evaluate the reasonableness of appropriations and riparian uses of Navarro River water and to schedule an evidentiary hearing on the matter. On August 30, 1993, Friends of the Navarro Watershed reiterated its 1992 inquiry concerning when and how the State Board would take action, and noted in particular that several illegal dams had been constructed recently by people who "are aware that complaints about illegal diversion are being ignored by the State Water Resources Control Board."

The Board responded to the August 12 letter on September 24, 1993, stating that it would "initiate an investigation relating

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> August 12, 1993 letter from Tom Wodetzki, Friends of the Navarro Watershed, to Edward Anton, Chief, Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> August 24, 1993 letter from Stephan C. Volker of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund to Edward Anton, Chief, Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> August 30, 1993 letter from Diane Paget, Friends of the Navarro Watershed to Ed Dito, State Water Resources Control Board.

to water right issues on the Navarro River." Also on September 1 24, 1993, the Board responded to the undersigned's August 24 2 letter by indicating that further action to protect the Navarro 3 River would be delayed due to this "investigation," on the 4 grounds "we do not intend to schedule a water right hearing on 5 this matter until we complete our complaint investigation."8 To 6 7 date the Board's "investigation" has produced no water rights hearing, much less any corrective Board action. 8 9 Yet another year later, on April 25, 1994, Friends of the Navarro Watershed again wrote to the Division of Water Rights to 10 warn that the river may be pumped dry again this year and 11 requesting again that the State Board take action.9 With little 12 sign that the Board plans timely action, Friends of the Navarro 13 Watershed is now impelled to file this formal Complaint and 14 Petition. 15

III. APPLICABLE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

"The State has an affirmative duty to take the public trust into account in the planning and allocation of water resources, and to protect public trust uses whenever feasible." <a href="National">National</a>
Audubon Society v. Superior Court (1983) 33 Cal.3d 419, 446 [189 Cal.Rptr. 346, 364]. "The use of all water now appropriated, or

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September 24, 1993 Letter from Ed Dito, State Water Resources Control Board, to Tom Wodetzki, Friends of the Navarro Watershed.

September 24, 1993 letter from Ed Dito, State Water Resources Control Board, to Stephan C. Volker, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> April 25, 1994 letter from Tom Wodetzki, Friends of the Navarro Watershed, to Edward Anton, Chief, Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board.

that may hereafter be appropriated ... is ... subject to the 1 regulation and control of the state, in the manner to be 2 prescribed by law. " California Constitution, Article X, Section 3 4 5. "The agency entrusted with the 'orderly and efficient 5 6 administration of the waters of the state' is [the state Water 7 Resources Control] Board." Imperial Irrigation District v. State Water Resources Control Board (1990) 225 Cal.App.3d 548, 569 [275] 8 Cal.Rptr. 250, 265], emphasis retained. "Once [this Board] has 9 approved an appropriation, the public trust imposes a duty of 10 continuing supervision over the taking and use of the 11 appropriated water." National Audubon Society, supra, 33 Cal.3d 12 at 447 [189 Cal.Rptr. at 365]. 13 These duties emanate from a 1928 constitutional amendment 14 15 which abolished the right of a riparian to devote water to unreasonable uses, and "established the doctrine of reasonable 16 17 use as an overriding feature of California water law." Id., 33 Cal.3d at 442 [189 Cal.Rptr. at 362]. Subsequently renumbered 18 Article X, section 2, this constitutional amendment requires that 19 20 "[a]ll uses of water, including public trust uses, must now conform to the standard of reasonable use." Id., 33 Cal.3d at 21 443 [189 Cal.Rptr. at 362]. This duty is also codified in Water 22 23 Code sections 100 and 101, which command that the "unreasonable use or unreasonable method of use of water by appropriations and 24 riparians alike "be prevented," and in Water Code section 1253, 25

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(continued...)

 $<sup>^{10}</sup>$   $\,$  To underscore this Board's ultimate responsibility for and control over private water usage, the Legislature provided in Water Code section 102 that "[a]ll water within the State is the

which directs this Board to allow appropriation of water "under such terms and conditions as in its judgment will best develop, conserve, and utilize in the public interest the water sought to be appropriated."

Since 1936 it has been clear that instream uses to maintain recreational values are considered reasonable and beneficial uses protected by the public trust doctrine. County of Los Angeles v. Aitken (1936) 10 Cal.App.2d 460. 468-469 [52 P.2d 585]. California Legislature codified this point by directing that "[t]he use of water for recreation and preservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources is a beneficial use of water." Water Code S 1243; see also. California Trout, Inc. v. State Water Resources Control Board (1979) 90 Cal.App.3d 816, 821 [153 Cal.Rptr. 672]. The Legislature also directed that this Board, in acting on applications for appropriative water rights, "shall consider the relative benefits to be derived from . . . all beneficial uses of the water concerned including, but not limited to ... preservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife [and] recreational . . . purposes. Water Code § 1257. This statute vests this Board with broad discretion to "subject such appropriations to such terms and conditions as in its judgment will best develop, conserve, and utilize in the public interest,

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property of the people of the State," and in section 105 that "protection of the public interest in the development of the water resources of the State is of vital concern to the people of the State and . . . the State shall determine in what way the water of the State, both surface and underground, should be developed for the greatest public benefit."

the water sought to be appropriated." Id. In 1969 the Legislature specifically directed that "[i]n determining the amount of water available for appropriation, [this Board] shall take into account, whenever it is in the public interest, the amounts of water needed to remain in the source for protection of beneficial uses." Water Code § 1243.5. To assure that the foregoing state policies are implemented, the Legislature empowered and directed this Board to institute court proceedings to enjoin any diversion or use of water "other than as authorized" under the Water Code. Water Code section 11 1052. The Legislature also empowered and directed this Board to 12 adopt declarations that a stream system is fully appropriated 13 "where the [B]oard finds that previous water rights decisions have determined that no water remains available for 14 15 appropriation, " or where this Board finds, based on evidence presented at a noticed hearing, "that a stream system is fully 16 17 appropriated." Water Code sections 1205(b) and (a), 18 respectively. "From and after the date of adoption of a declaration that a stream system is fully appropriated [except 19 20 upon specified conditions] the [B]oard shall not accept for filing any application for a permit to appropriate water from a 21 22 stream system described in that declaration, and the [B]oard may cancel any application pending on that date. " Water Code section 23 1206(a). Consistent with Water Code sections 1205 and 1206, this 24 Board "must not accept for filing" any further applications to 25

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The Legislature provided further that in acting upon applications to appropriate water, this Board "shall" consider

appropriate water from the Navarro Basin.

water quality control plans applicable to the waters in question, and empowers this Board to "subject such appropriations to such terms and conditions as it finds are necessary to carry out such plans." Water Code section 1258. Accordingly, in considering the pending water rights applications, this Board must consider the beneficial uses of the Navarro River that are designated in the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan. As noted previously, those designated beneficial uses include "fish and wildlife habitat" and "contact recreation." Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Basin at II-5. This Board may not, consistent with its duty to "consider" the Basin Plan, approve further appropriations from the Navarro Basin that would exacerbate the declining habitat conditions and further jeopardize the survival of fish populations within this stream system.

Finally, the Legislature has invested this Board with broad authority to enforce permit terms, such as minimum bypass flows, under Water Code section 1381, and to reserve jurisdiction under Water Code section 1394 to amend water appropriation permits where the Board finds that additional study is necessary to prevent unreasonable water use, contrary to the public interest. Where this Board has failed to reserve jurisdiction in approving an appropriation, nonetheless "the public trust imposes a duty of continuing supervision over the taking and use of the appropriated water." National Audubon Society v. Superior Court, supra, 33 Cal.3d at 447 [189 Cal.Rptr. at 365]. In particular, this Board "is not confined by past allocation decisions which may be incorrect in light of current knowledge or inconsistent

with current needs." Id. This Board "accordingly has the power to reconsider allocation decisions even though those decisions were made after due consideration of their affect on the public trust. The case for reconsidering a particular decision ... is even stronger when that decision failed to weigh and consider public trust uses." Id. This Board also has broad authority under Water Code section 1410 to revoke water rights permits where the permittee fails to apply water to the beneficial use as contemplated, and under Water Code section 1611 where the permittee's use of water is "not in conformity with the law, the rules and regulations of the board, or the terms of the permit." This Board may, following notice and an opportunity for hearing, issue an administrative order directing any person holding a water appropriation permit or license to cease and desist any water use in violation of any term or condition of the permit or license. Water Code section

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## IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, it is the law of the State that "no one has a vested right to use water in a manner harmful to the state's waters." <u>United States v. State Water Resources Control Board</u> (1986) 182 Cal.App.3d 82, 106 [227 Cal.Rptr. 161, 171). This Board, "as trustee, has a duty to preserve [public] trust property from harmful diversions by water rights holders." <u>Id.</u> This Board must exercise its continuing supervisory jurisdiction over Navarro Basin water rights consistently with the North Coast Basin Plan's designation of fish and wildlife and contact recreation beneficial uses for this river system, and consistent

with its duty to protect instream public trust uses protected under Article X, sections 2, 4 and 5 of the California Constitution.

It is undisputed that the fish and wildlife resources, and recreational uses, of the Navarro River have been severely compromised by low summer flows due to excessive diversions, primarily for agriculture. Unless this Board takes prompt action to protect those resources and uses by restraining illegal diversions and modifying existing water rights permits that fail to provide for adequate bypass flows, the instream public trust uses of the Navarro River will be destroyed, contrary to applicable law.

Therefore this Board must take immediate action, in accordance with the constitutional and statutory authorities and requirements outlined above, to (1) restrain illegal diversions of water from, (2) amend water appropriation licenses and permits to assure bypass flows sufficient to protect instream fish and wildlife beneficial uses within, (3) restrain unreasonable riparian uses and appropriations of, and (4) declare fully appropriated, the Navarro River and its tributaries.

Dated: August 25, 1994

Atrala C Voll

STEPHAN C. VOLKER

Attorney for Friends of the Navarro Watershed, Sierra Club, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Friends of the River, United Anglers, California Trout, Trout Unlimited and Mendocino Environmental Center

Respectfully submitted,



## MENDOCINO COUNTY WATER AGENCY

COURTHOUSE
UKIAH, CALIFORNIA 95482
(707)463-4589

AUG 1 2 193.

BIEBRA GLUB LEGAL DEPENSE

July 28, 1994

Robert: Klamt North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board 5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Bob:

Enclosed is the graph of the Navarro River water temperature data I collecting using your HOBO temperature logger. The HOBO was deployed about 120 feet upstream of the USGS staff gage at the bottom of a pool on the left (south) bank. The pool is shaded by overhanging vegetation and was about 3 feet deep on June 1.

The water temperature data was collected in degrees C and converted to degrees F in a spreadsheet. The lethal and preferred temperature ranges shown on the graph are those quoted by Roger A. Barnhart's 1986 report on steelhead and from Thomas J. Hassler's 1987 report on Coho. Both reports were prepared as a part of a series of joint studies by US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers.

I have also enclosed a copy of a graph summarizing the daily maximum water temperature record collected by the USGS at their Navarro gaging station between 1966 and 1979. The summary graph shows the greatest maximum daily temperature for each day of the year the period of record, the average maximum daily temperature for each day of the year, and the lowest maximum temperature for each day of the year.

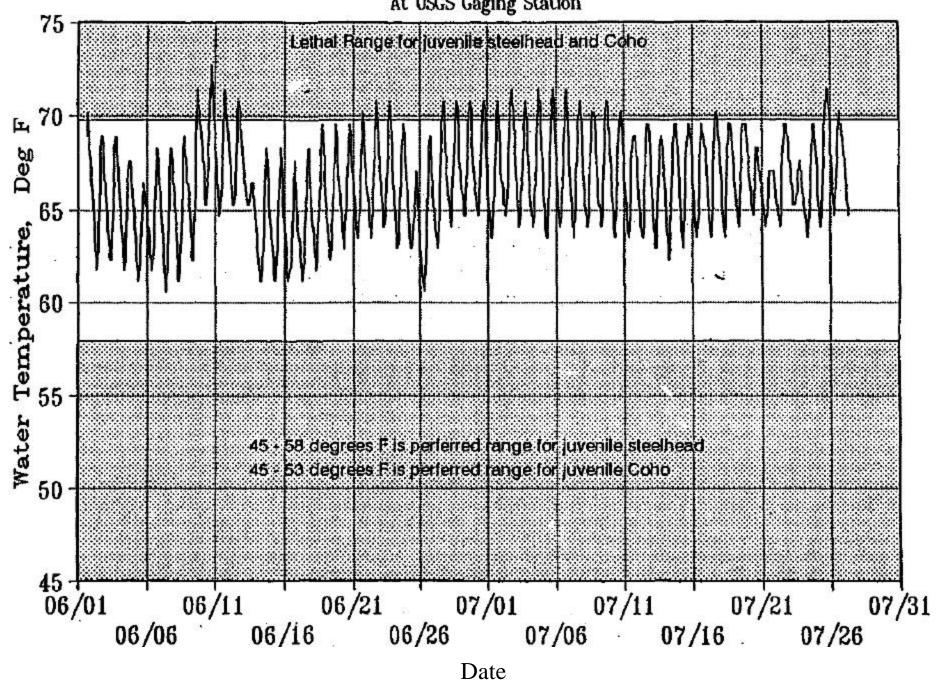
The graph of the 1994 data shows that water temperature is still a serious problem on/the mainstem of the Navarro River. If you have additional units available, I would like to deploy them on Indian Creek, Anderson Creek, Rancheria Creek and the North Fork which are the major tributaries of the Navarro River.

Thanks for your assistance on this issue. If you wish to discuss this please call me at 463-4589 or CALNET 553-4589.

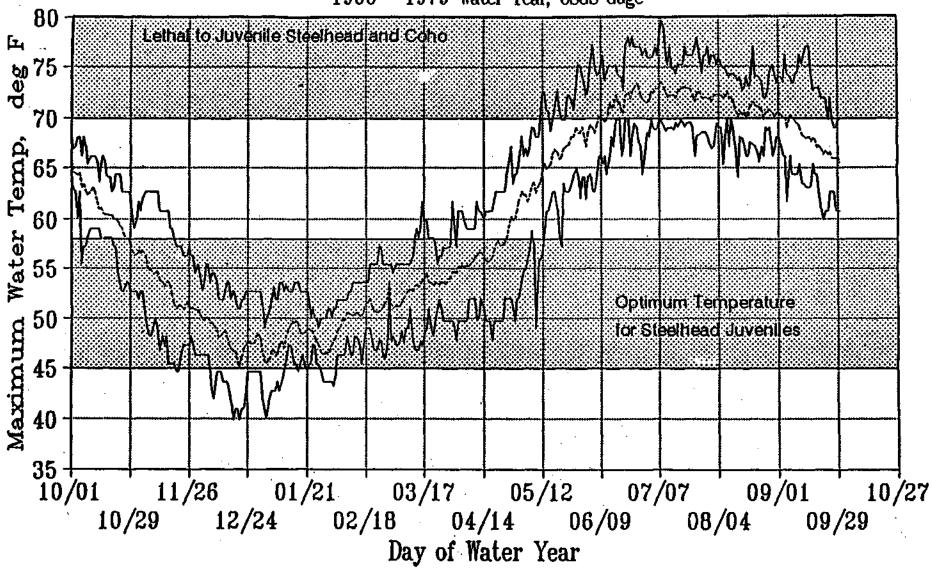
Sincerely,

Dennis Jackson Hydrologist

1994 Navarro River Water Temperature At USGS Gaging Station



## Navarro River Maximum Water Temperature 1966 – 1979 Water Year, USGS Gage



---- 'Greatest Max Temp ----- Average Max Temp --- Lowest Max Temp