



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southwest Region
777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325
Santa Rosa, California 95404

December 22, 2003

Tom Furrer
Casa Grande High School
333 Casa Grande Road
Petaluma, California 94954

Dear Tom,

In light of the recent events concerning flood control and restoration projects in Adobe Creek, and the question of liability associated with the United Anglers of Casa Grande High School anadromous fish and restoration program, I would like to reaffirm NOAA Fisheries support and partnership with the school. In addition, I would like to commend the students for the continuing work they do, and to acknowledge their dedication and contribution to recover listed steelhead.

The issue of vegetation management and flood control is a topic I deal with throughout Central California. There are many creeks where conflicts arise between protection of property and the conservation of salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The responsibility of maintaining waterways and conserving listed salmonids falls on the landowners. To that end, I want to reassure the students that they are not liable for the restoration activities they conduct in Adobe Creek.

NOAA Fisheries is sensitive to the issue of protecting private property from flooding. However, the protection of private property does not have to put landowners in conflict with the ESA. Recovery and restoration of salmon and steelhead will only result when we all have a common long-term vision, balance needs and acknowledge that we all have a part to play in recovery planning. There is no doubt in my mind that United Anglers, the City of Petaluma, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and NOAA Fisheries can establish a partnership which utilizes and compounds our resources and calls for a common goal.

The United Anglers of Casa Grande High School program is an essential and key element to the restoration of watersheds in Petaluma. The Program has already demonstrated many successes and leaves a legacy of environmental conservation for the next generation of students to follow. More than anything, I am encouraged that the students are developing an environmental awareness and leadership skills for the future. I want every student in your classroom to know how much NOAA Fisheries values their work ethics, and the work they do.



At any time my staff, or I can be of assistance to your program please let me know. I would also be pleased to address your class on this, or any ESA issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patrick J. Rutten".

Patrick J. Rutten, Supervisor
Protected Resources Division

cc: Rod McInnis, NOAA Fisheries
Petaluma School Board