



## **Sonoma County Water Agency PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 14, 2010**

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### **Three Meetings Scheduled in Jenner, Santa Rosa on Estuary Management Plans**

**Jenner, CA** – The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) will hold two meetings on Wednesday, May 19 at the Jenner Community Center to discuss proposed changes to the Russian River estuary. A third meeting will be held in Santa Rosa on Thursday, May 20.

The Biological Opinion, issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in September 2008, requires SCWA to change the way the estuary – where the Russian River flows into the ocean – is managed in the summer. The purpose of the estuary adaptive management plan is to create a more productive environment for young steelhead, which live in the estuary before they enter the ocean.

The purpose of the first meeting, scheduled for 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., is to provide Jenner residents an opportunity to learn about SCWA’s work plan in the estuary this summer. The meeting will be hosted by Sonoma County Water Agency Director Efren Carrillo. SCWA and NMFS staff will be available to answer questions.

“The Jenner community cares deeply about the estuary,” Carrillo said. “This meeting will give folks an opportunity to hear directly from Agency staff and NMFS on this summer’s monitoring activities and plans for sandbar management.”

The second meeting, which will immediately follow the community event at 7:30 p.m., is a scoping session for the Notice of Preparation of the Russian River Estuary Management Project. The Agency will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to provide an analysis of the potential impacts associated with changed estuary management on recreation, wildlife, fisheries and water quality. A scoping meeting will also be held in Santa Rosa, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Thursday, May 20 at the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department Meeting Room, 2550 Ventura Avenue.

Since the mid-1990s, SCWA has artificially breached the sandbar when it closes in the summer and water levels in the estuary threaten low-lying properties. In the future when the sandbar closes, the Biological Opinion calls for SCWA to sculpt the sandbar to allow river water to flow over the top (to prevent flooding) but keep ocean water from entering. The freshwater lagoon that will be created is intended to provide an enhanced environment for young steelhead.

“The Biological Opinion is focused on saving threatened steelhead and coho salmon,” said SCWA Director Efren Carrillo. “The EIR will determine whether the changes required by the Biological Opinion in the estuary will impact other species or recreation.”

During the scoping meetings, Environmental Science Associates, the environmental consulting firm which is preparing the EIR, will provide an overview of the project and describe the requirements for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. An Open House will follow the formal presentation, where people can speak directly to staff to ask questions about and provide comments on the proposed scope of the EIR. The Notice of Preparation is available at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org) (go to “What’s New” link). Comments can be emailed to [estuaryproject@esassoc.com](mailto:estuaryproject@esassoc.com).

**Meeting Schedule:**

**Wednesday May 19**

Community Meeting, Summary of 2010 Estuary activities: 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Open House Scoping Meeting: 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Jenner Community Center, 10398 Highway 1, Jenner CA 95450

**Thursday May 20**

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department Meeting Room

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

For additional information, please contact Ann DuBay, (707) 524-8378 or [ann.dubay@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:ann.dubay@scwa.ca.gov).

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*Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).*