

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF RIVER GUIDES

April 2, 1997

To Whom it may Concern,

On behalf of the Northern California Association of River Guides (NCARG) I would like to commend all the people of the Mattole who are working to: enhance habitat, rescue the southern most short run King Salmon stock and restore healthy function of the whole watershed. We refer to the Mattole River as *sacred water* and consider its steelhead to be a unique exceptionally pure wild strain. Mattole River steelhead are famous for overpowering fishing tackle that has proven adequate on other rivers.

We would like to bring to your attention increasing amounts of sediment and turbidity that are totally disrupting sportfishing on the Mattole River. While the Mattole has long had a reputation for clearing slower than other rivers of its size and larger, the storms of 1995 and 1997 produced extreme sediment and long lasting turbidity levels. In 1997 the Mattole has been virtually unfishable the entire steelhead season due to turbidity. The upper North Fork just 1 mile below the closed fishing area is pumping more sediment and resulting turbidity than the main Mattole! High sediment levels scour riparian vegetation and reduce habitat values for fish and wildlife. It should be noted that the nearby South Fork Eel (a river known for its high sediment and turbidity) is clearing (fishable) far more rapidly than the Mattole. While sportfishermen throughout the state can choose to visit other rivers it is a shame to not be able to fish the Mattole. The loss of wintertime sportfishing tourist dollars surely strains an already fragile Mattole Valley economy.

We hope that our concerns are carried forward to whatever agency or grant source that can provide assistance in reducing upslope inputs of sediment. Our organization (NCARG) is working on the ground in restoring habitat in the Eel, Garcia and Gualala Rivers. If we can be of assistance on the Mattole please contact me.

Sincerely,



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