



SIERRA CLUB MARIN GROUP

COASTAL SECTION C/O GORDON BENNETT

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Dear Parties interested in Pine Gulch Creek's newly established coho run:

The Sierra Club, representing its 7,000 Marin County members, is interested in protecting Pine Gulch coho, which may be impacted by grazing activities in this creek.

These coho are reportedly spawning in the section of Pine Gulch Creek that runs through land owned by the Bolinas Public Utility District (BPUD). That BPUD land contains an easement which conveys its grazing rights to the adjacent agricultural parcel. We understand that cattle from this parcel have been congregating in the creek, stirring up sediment and impacting habitat for these endangered coho.

BPUD, as property owner, has the right (and obligation) to fence the creek, which they can do without cost, since we understand that CDFG and NOAA are willing to provide grants. But the property owner has raised a concern that, depending on its location, the fence may cut into the property rights and income stream derived from the easement.

If this were residential property, the Marin County Streamside Conservation Area (SCA) policy would apply, which requires a minimum 100-foot setback from the creekbank. But this is agricultural property, which is not subject the SCA under current zoning, although the Countywide Plan, now undergoing an update process, may include stream protection policies for agricultural parcels in the future. Although the County's current SCA policies do not apply here, other protections for these endangered coho do. However, these other protections can take time to implement

Nevertheless, the Sierra Club would like to see the minimum 100-foot setback applied to Pine Gulch. However, we acknowledge that Point Reyes National Seashore has extensive experience balancing the habitat needs of coho with the operational needs of ranching. Consequently, we encourage PRNS to provide data or literature references showing that a setback of any proposed width would still provide a secure buffer for sediment and coliforms expected from normal grazing operations. The Sierra Club's interest in Pine Gulch is not to win points in a debate about what policies and setbacks SHOULD apply, but rather to get a practical solution agreeable to all on a functioning streamside buffer to protect these coho as soon as possible. We hope others who may be party to these discussions share this goal.

I look forward to meeting with you December 3, 2003 at Pine Gulch.

Sincerely,

Gordon Bennett, Conservation Co-Chair Sierra Club - Marin Group