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October 27, 2017

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni
Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive,
Suite 329 San Rafael, CA 94903

MANAGEMENT BOARD:

*Bay Area Audubon Council
Bay Area Open Space Council
Bay Planning Coalition
Citizens Committee to
Complete the Refuge
Ducks Unlimited
National Audubon Society
Point Blue Conservation Science
Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Save the Bay
The Bay Institute*

SUBJECT: Purchase of San Geronimo Golf Course - Support

Dear Supervisor Rodoni:

I am writing on behalf of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV) regarding Marin County's plans to acquire the San Geronimo Valley Golf Course for habitat restoration and open space.

The SFBJV is a partnership of non-governmental organizations, utilities, landowners, and non-voting agencies with a goal to acquire, restore and enhance wetlands and riparian habitats and associated uplands, and sub-tidal habitats to benefit birds, fish, and other wildlife in the San Francisco Bay Area. The SFBJV is one of the eighteen federally-sponsored habitat Joint Ventures to implement the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and federal bird conservation plans. The SFBJV Implementation Plan, *Restoring the Estuary* is based on the goals established in the Baylands Habitat Goals and, targets nearly 200,000 acres of wetlands and riparian habitats for protection, restoration, or enhancement through our partners' funding and expertise. The SFVJV Management Board consists of 27 agencies and private organizations whose members agree to support and promote the goal and objectives of the Joint Venture and who represent the diversity of wetlands interests found in the San Francisco Bay Region.

The acquisition and restoration of the floodplain at the San Geronimo golf course has been identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as a high priority acquisition that can help with the recovery of the critically endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout. Some important reasons to move forward with this purchase and acquisition include the following.

- San Geronimo Creek is the headwaters tributary to Lagunitas Creek where approximately 50% of the Lagunitas Creek coho spawn annually and provides nursery habitat for one-third of the coho smolts.
- The golf course has been known to support almost 10% of the coho spawning activity on the Lagunitas Watershed (excluding Olema Creek). Its restoration has the potential to increase coho spawning.
- Acquisition will lead to reconnection and restoration of natural floodplains, increasing high-flow juvenile refuge. Lack of high-flow refuge is a limiting factor to recovery of the Lagunitas coho population.

Ex-Officio Members:

*Bay Conservation &
Development Commission
California Department
of Fish and Wildlife
California Resources Agency
Coastal Region, Mosquito &
Vector Control Districts
National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation
National Marine Fisheries
Service
Natural Resources
Conservation Service
San Francisco Estuary Project
SF Bay Regional Water Quality
Control Board
State Coastal Conservancy
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey
Wildlife Conservation Board*

SFBJV partners will seek funding for restoration. Our partner, CDFW, shared with us the following information. "CDFW strongly supports the purchase of the San Geronimo Valley Golf Course by the County of Marin. The County confirmed in writing that they support and will grant right-of-way for creek restoration work including the remediation of Roy's Pools and in-stream enhancement for salmon, steelhead, and other native aquatic life. We should know if those projects will be funded by CDFW/FRGP by February. "

The acquisition of the property by Marin County will also expand the opportunity for stream habitat restoration and watershed enhancement actions that can provide extraordinary benefit to the recovery of other wildlife. Other benefits include:

- saving millions of gallons (>\$200,000) of municipal water each year,
- eliminating the use of fertilizers and pesticides adjacent to water sources,
- re-creating floodplains that can help improve water quality and reduce flooding of homes downstream,
- restoring riparian systems and upland habitats that provide habitat for wide host of wildlife species, and
- providing for a safe and healthy walking connector between San Geronimo Valley villages while maintaining the rural character of the San Geronimo Valley community.

We thank the County of Marin for taking this far-reaching action on behalf of the habitat that is important to endangered salmonids and other wildlife. If you have any questions about the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture and how important this purchase is to our mission and goals, please contact our Coordinator, Beth Huning.

Sincerely,



Korie Schaeffer
Chair

cc: Supervisor Damon Connolly
Supervisor Katie Rice
Supervisor Kate Sears
Supervisor Judy Arnold