Support of Voluntary Drought Initiative Program

• State Water Board strongly supports the NMFS-CDFW Voluntary Drought Initiative Program
  • Current projects demonstrate how local cooperative solutions can be achieved that provide flows for fish and water diverters
  • North Coast Regional Board has established a reduced National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit fee ($250) for flow enhancement projects
  • Water Rights will prioritize 1707 instream flow dedications or any change petitions filed by a VDI participant
Recap of Russian River Curtailment Activities

- Presentation in October 2020 demonstrating need for local solutions or curtailments in Upper Russian
- Started more intensive outreach in April 2021
- Board adopted emergency regulation on June 15 to authorize curtailments
- Curtailments issued in early August once triggers reached
- Curtailments temporarily suspended starting October 23
- Staff continue to monitor conditions

Emergency Regulation Explained
(Lower Russian River Watershed)

**Regulation Section 877.2:** Division of Water Rights may issue curtailment orders in the Lower Russian River watershed when flows are insufficient to support all water right priorities.

**Regulation Section 877.2 (d)(e)(f):** Board established email subscription list and website for announcements. Recission of curtailment orders shall be announced using the email distribution list and web page described in subdivision (e).

**Regulation Section 878.1:** Authorizes that diversions may continue after issuance of a curtailment order for specific minimum health and safety needs.
Looking ahead…

- Staff continue to monitor conditions
- Preparing to readopt regulation in early May
- Building upon regulation adopted last year
  - Clarifications of administrative processes
  - Considering opportunities for local voluntary agreements and how to support VDI flow augmentation projects
  - Evaluating feedback from water right holders and the local community on additional improvements

State Water Board Russian River Drought Resources

- **Russian River Drought Website**
  - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/

- **Subscribe to the Russian River Drought Email List or Contact Us**
  - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#stay_informed

- **Check your Curtailment Status**
  - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/#tableau