



Friends of Gualala River needs your financial support. Here are two reasons why...

1. FoGR, along with Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club, has just filed a suit against Sonoma County to stop a major regulatory loophole. Sonoma County is still recklessly giving permits to water demanding land developers in our watershed without any public review or environmental analysis of impacts to stream flows or fish populations – even during extreme droughts like the one we’re now suffering. We urgently need your financial support to put in place sound, sustainable limits on agricultural water demands placed on our river and its vital groundwater. See our website for details.

2. After over 12 years of relentless crises and conflicts with politically and financially formidable opponents, we continue our hard work to protect the Gualala River and its watershed by hiring scientific consultants to help challenge damaging proposals. But it comes at a tremendous cost to FoGR’s budget and to the lives of its dedicated volunteers and allies.

Our Watershed – its forests and creatures – is threatened by water-demanding vineyard sprawl.



Our Recent Major Successes

In 2013 FoGR made another historic stride against the vineyard sprawl in coastal forestlands across the Gualala River Watershed. **We stopped Artesa Winery’s Annapolis vineyard deforestation project.** This spring the Spanish owned Artesa Winery put the project site up for sale, ending a 13 year saga. The Press Democrat quoted a neighboring vineyard owner saying the chances of another forest conversion project on the site are “slim to none.”

In 2012, we saved 20,000 coastal forestland acres from development on “Preservation Ranch” This former juggernaut mega-vineyard was considered unstoppable. FoGR spearheaded the innovative media and social media campaign that reversed its political fortunes. Now called “Buckeye Forest,” it will be managed sustainably into the future by the Conservation Fund.

We Need Your Help Again:

We have started a new LEGAL DEFENSE FUND to enable FoGR to take on these new legal and scientific challenges in the watershed. Our goal is to raise \$35,000 to stop this glaring regulatory oversight. We cannot let well-financed corporate industrial timber and agricultural interests do end runs around proper environmental science and regulations, and we cannot allow them to manipulate the regulatory agencies put in place to protect our public interest.

Please show your generous support and make a donation to FoGR based on our hard-earned recent successes and on our continued vigilance on your behalf for the river.

Donate online: at www.gualalariver.org
or
send a check to:
Friends of Gualala River
P.O. Box 1543, Gualala, CA 95445

Streamflows and steelhead habitat survival during droughts are critical for river and fish.

What will happen to the river's summer flows if more vineyards and unregulated wells are developed without environmental analysis? FoGR fights to protect streamflows, groundwater, and healthy watersheds that support the Gualala River, its fish and wildlife, and your right to enjoy them.

In the drought years of 2008 and 2013, reaches of the river below forestland and ranchland did not draw down deeply or dry out. But we saw existing vineyard reservoirs inexplicably full of water in rainless late summer months, and the **steelhead-spawning river reaches below vineyards bone-dry in August 2008 and 2013** (drought years). Our alarm about having new vineyards approved without CEQA soared. We promptly took action this year to **end the evasion of CEQA by new vineyard developments.**

The aim of our lawsuit is to ensure that all new vineyard development project impacts are thoroughly analyzed and disclosed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA allows the public and resource agencies to participate fully in the environmental review and permit decision process so the government is held accountable for facts, evidence, science, and their decisions.



Upstream of the Annapolis Road bridge at Skaggs Springs Road, August 17, 2013 (left) and Sept. 7, 2013 (right). These dewatered pools are located near the largest vineyards in Annapolis.



Downstream and away from large vineyards, September 7, 2013. Steelhead pool water levels and flows are resilient despite the drought, thanks to still-abundant groundwater seeps from the surrounding forested watershed.

FoGR fights to protect ample streamflows, groundwater, and healthy watersheds that support the Gualala River, its fish and wildlife, and your right to enjoy them.

Sincerely,

Chris Poehlmann
President, Friends of the Gualala River

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