



# Friends of the Gualala River

PO Box 1543 Gualala CA 95445 707-785-3431 [www.gualalariver.org](http://www.gualalariver.org)

October 2003

Dear Friend of the Gualala River,

When we joined together to stop the waterbags, we knew there were other threats to the beauty and health of the Gualala River. Abusive logging practices in the past mean the river is now listed as sediment and temperature impaired. The once abundant coho salmon and steelhead are almost gone, because sediment run-off from poorly constructed logging roads and clearcuts smother the spawning grounds and fill in cool, deep pools. Moreover, the cutting of too many trees has raised the ambient temperature, which has brought in-stream temperature to levels fatal for salmonids.

The river is vital to our area. It is a major source of recreation and provides drinking water for most of the residents of Gualala and Sea Ranch. Steelhead and the occasional coho are still swimming upstream to spawn – so there is hope that the previous damage can be reversed. But we must prevent further degradation, and for this we need your financial help.

So far this year, Friends of the Gualala River has paid thousands of dollars to hydrologists, fish biologists, forestry consultants and other experts for scientific comments on timber harvest plans and vineyard conversions. These are large expenses for a small grass-roots organization. We need your financial help to continue these efforts.

Together have had some significant successes (see Progress Report on the reverse side), but our efforts to protect the watershed must continue. We are especially concerned about the impact of the accelerating conversion of forestland to vineyards in the Annapolis area. We are committed to protecting water quality for all species that depend on the river. Pesticide run-off from logging and vineyard operations, as well as toxic run-off from the uncapped County dumps, must not be permitted to threaten the health of any species.

You have helped the Gualala River in the past. Your generous, tax-deductible contribution will help support our ongoing work to protect and restore the river.

Sincerely,

Tom Cochrane, President  
Friends of the Gualala River

PS: Please visit our website for detailed information and to sign up for our weekly email alerts:  
<http://www.gualalariver.org>

(Over)

# Friends of the Gualala River

## Progress Report

**2002:** Friends of the Gualala River (FoGR) took a leading role in opposing the **waterbag scheme** -- a plan to export water from the Gualala & Albion Rivers to southern California in giant polyfiber bags. We recruited scientific, engineering and legal experts to provide detailed analyses, organized dozens of informational meetings and workshops, and created a website with extensive information on the waterbag campaign and the regulatory process.

Thousands of people signed our petitions and sent protests to the State Water Resources Control Board. The legislature passed a bill requiring extensive study before any water diversion scheme could be permitted. After hearing testimony from FoGR and other organizations, the Coastal Commission voted to oppose the waterbags. In the face of massive and well-organized opposition, the plan was withdrawn.

**2003, January:** FoGR organized public meetings and a letter-writing campaign to oppose an investment by Premiere Pacific Vineyards (PPV) in a proposed 5,000 acre **forest-to-vineyard conversion**. PPV withdrew their support for the plan, citing public opposition.

**February:** We helped organize a coalition of environmental groups to oppose a **waterbag scheme** targeting the Mad River in Humboldt County. Our coalition successfully convinced the local water agency not to approve the plan, pending further research.

**June:** The Citizens Advisory Committee on the Sonoma County General Plan Update voted to **protect forest land** from conversion to other uses after hearing from many groups, including FoGR.

**July:** Governor Davis signed Assemblymember Patty Berg's bill, which we supported, protecting the lower reaches of the Gualala River under the State **Wild & Scenic Rivers Act**.

**September:** FoGR opposed a plan to log the **old growth redwood forest** on Haupt Creek, in the Gualala River watershed. We organized public meetings and a letter-writing campaign, contacted elected officials and the press, paid for experts to prepare detailed commentary on the deficiencies of the plan, and provided extensive information to the public via our weekly bulletins and website. To the surprise of many, the California Department of Forestry officially rejected the Haupt Creek plan.

**The future:** The Gualala River watershed is healthier today as a result of our efforts. To continue our work, we need your support. Please contribute to protecting the Gualala River.