

# Friends of the Gualala River

O Box 1543 Gualala, CA 95445 (707) 886-5355 [www.gualalariver.org](http://www.gualalariver.org)

June 22, 2006

To:

Mary Burns, Superintendent, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Santa Rosa  
Robert Floerke, Superintendent, California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento

cc:

Jim McCray, Gualala Point Regional Park, Manager  
Bill Cox, CDFG  
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
Mendocino Co. Board of Supervisors  
GMAC  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
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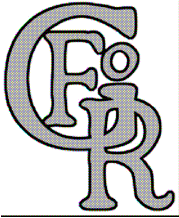
Subject: Proposed Fireworks over coastal lagoon, Gualala Point Regional Park, July 2, 2006

Dear Superintendents Burns and Floerke:

Friends of the Gualala River are inquiring whether your agencies regulate the impacts of a commercial fireworks display aimed over the coastal lagoon formed by the mouth of the Gualala River, at Gualala Point Regional Park, Sonoma County. The seasonal lagoon (closed to tidal flows in summer by the barrier beach) supports river otters, harbor seals, brown pelicans, cormorants, migratory shorebirds and waterfowl, and steelhead. The Gualala River estuary is protected as part of the California Wild and Scenic River system.

Attached for your information is our letter written March 25, 2005 regarding proposed fireworks at Gualala Point Regional Park in 2005. Concerns raised in the letter include the potential for adverse impacts upon the natural environment (Gualala River estuary), including its resident birds and marine life. Also mentioned were public safety concerns due to crowds at the Regional Park and along Highway One, which lacks shoulders throughout much of the potential viewing area. The required permits were not issued, and consequently the 2005 fireworks display did not occur.

Recently, the community has been informed that fireworks will occur this year ([www.gualalafestivals.org](http://www.gualalafestivals.org)). It appears that the proposed launching point behind Surf Supermarket in Gualala has no other feasible launch direction except the river and lagoon. The launch site is located on the bluff directly above the estuary. No alternative launch locations were evaluated, to our knowledge. Because the proposed launching point is on private property, the organizers assert that no permits (other than from the local fire chief) are required.



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In order to assist our discussion of this matter, we would appreciate your responses to the following:

1. Were you notified of the proposed fireworks, and if so, by whom?
2. Does your agency have jurisdiction over the activities or impacts affecting the natural resources or public trust values (wildlife, water quality, public recreational uses, safety) of the Gualala River lagoon? If so would you be coordinating regulation of this activity with other agencies with jurisdiction?
3. Based on the results of this year's fireworks displays, would the current proposal serve as a precedent affecting future requests to launch fireworks into Regional or State Parks or coastal lagoons (e.g. Russian River, Jenner, Big River, Mendocino) from adjacent private lands, or from within the Regional Park Boundary?
4. What baseline information do you have, if any, regarding estuary water quality and breeding bird or mammal populations that might be of value in evaluating possible impacts of fireworks?
5. Does the cumulative extent of your regulatory jurisdiction over the lagoon, if any, meet the criterion of a CEQA lead agency for the proposed action? If not, can you identify the appropriate CEQA lead agency to which you may provide expert opinion with regard to resources within your jurisdiction?

Thank you very much for your assistance in overseeing compatible public and private uses of the public lands and waters of the Gualala River.

John Holland  
President  
Friends of the Gualala River  
(707)886-5355  
[info@gualalariver.org](mailto:info@gualalariver.org)

Attachment: FoGR Letter March 25, 2005