



May 9, 2023

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors  
825 5th Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

TO: Members of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors  
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[narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us), [mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us), Clerk of the Board via email [cob@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:cob@co.humboldt.ca.us).

**RE: Supporting Public Access on Fisher Road**

Dear Chair Madrone and Supervisors,

On April 18<sup>th</sup> the Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission approved a letter to send to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors advising the board of their concern about the recent attempt to vacate the southern portion of Fisher Road in Hydesville. The commission points out that the Van Duzen River is both navigable and designated as “Wild and Scenic.”

The proposed vacation would have eliminated the public’s right to access and use the Van Duzen River from Fisher Road. Established historical use of this public road to access the river dates back to at least the 1930s. Because the Van Duzen River is a navigable waterway, the public has the right to use the river and the river bed up to the high-water mark for navigational, fishing, recreational, and other purposes. As established by the County’s defense of public access rights in the 1992 case *Bess v. County of Humboldt* (3 Cal. App. 4th 1547), “a right-of-way to a river extends to the river throughout any changes in the river’s course”.

The undersigned organizations appreciate the efforts of the Humboldt Fish and Game Commission and strongly support maintaining public access to the Van Duzen via Fisher Road. Fisher Road has been in the public domain for nearly a century, and is a rare point of public access to both the Van Duzen river and the future Great Redwood Trail.

Thirty years ago Humboldt County fought and won in court to protect public river access at Odd Fellows Park Road, about a mile east of Fisher Road. We hope that today your board will make a similar decision.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Underwood  
Advocacy Committee Chair  
Humboldt Trails Council

Alicia Hamann  
Executive Director  
Friends of the Eel River

Colin Fiske  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Carole Polasek  
Public Lands Chair  
Back Country Horsemen – Redwood Unit

Adam Canter  
Director  
Wiyot Tribe Natural Resources Department

Kenny Priest  
Owner  
Fishing the North Coast

James Stone  
Executive Board President  
Nor-Cal Guides and Sportsmen's Association

Tom Wheeler  
Executive Director  
Environmental Protection Information Center

Leslie Castellano

Ruthie Maloney  
Director

North Coast Native Protectors Tribal Marine Collaborative

Scott Harding  
Stewardship Associate  
American Whitewater