

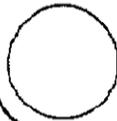
FAX

To: Samke Mastrup From: Joe Falcone
Fax: 916-653-5040 Pages: 2
Phone: 916-653-4899 Date: 2-8-15
Re: Klamath River CC:

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

Comments:

Please review attached letter Thanks, *Joe Falcone*



California Fish & Game Commission
Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

February 8, 2015

Dear Members,

This is to inform you that I just learned of the Yurok Tribal Proposal to ban sport fishing at the mouth of Blue Creek on the Klamath River from 500 ft. above to one half mile below the mouth. As a concerned sports fisherman, I find this proposal completely out of line.

First of all, let me inform you of my qualifications to discuss this issue: I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology with a Fisheries Management Objective at San Jose State University in 1968. Moreover, I have fished the Klamath River for over 50 years and am very familiar with its history.

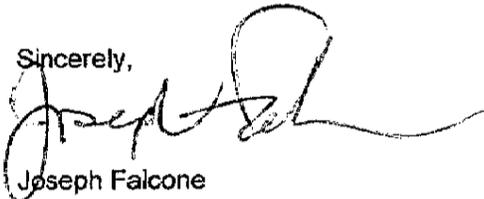
As you know, sports fishing on the Klamath River requires the use of barbless hooks and all wild steelhead must be released unharmed. It has been my experience that the mortality rate under these regulations has been extremely low. Granted the area near the mouth of Blue Creek is a "thermal refuge" for salmon and steelhead, but this fact needs to be taken in context with tribal gill net fishing. The area near the mouth of the Klamath (in the estuary) must be considered a "refuge area" where salmon and steelhead mill around in order to become accustomed to the change from salt to fresh water. Yet this is where a multitude of tribal gill nets are concentrated. If we are talking about mortality rate, it is basically 100% for the nets – with no survivors. If the tribe is concerned with the survival of the fishery, then why do they elect to kill thousands of fish in their nets yet choose to target sports fishermen with their relatively minor impact on the viability of the fishery?

Allow me to remind you of Title 14 of the Fish and Game Commission Code which includes the matter of sports fishing, which is an extremely important issue, but does not seem to have been taken into consideration with regard to this proposal.

Moreover, despite your analysis of this issue, the economic impact to the area would be disastrous (as history has demonstrated). Decades ago, before tribal commercial gill netting became allowed (Judge Boldt decision), the Klamath River was a vibrant sports fishery with thousands of fishermen coming from all parts of the world to enjoy the wonders of this great river. Hotels, restaurants, RV parks, gas stations, markets, tackle shops, river guides, canning facilities and other businesses flourished. Then as the fish population (particularly salmon) declined due to the netting, the number of fishermen continued to decline as well. The few businesses that remain are now hanging on by a thread primarily due to the miraculous success of the Blue Creek area. In my opinion, to take that away would put the final nail in the coffin with regard to sport fishing on the lower Klamath. I beg you not to let that happen to this great river.

With regard to your position that sports fishing is a major cause of the decline of a fishery, allow me to remind you of the prolific steelhead and salmon fish runs on the Chetco and Rogue Rivers immediately to the north, which have sustained tremendous sports fishing pressure for a number of years *without* having any measurable detrimental effect to the fishery. The main difference is that these rivers DO NOT allow any gill netting.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Falcone