

The Santa Cruz Sierra Club submitted the following letter to the Santa Cruz City Council in response to public notice of a new advisory group to "develop the framework for a pilot paddling program on the lower San Lorenzo River." We are concerned that a proper environmental review has not yet taken place. Read the letter, as well as a letter we wrote from September 2014 below, for more information.

March 9, 2015

To: Santa Cruz City Council & Mayor Don Lane

Dear Mayor and Council members,

The [letter from the Sierra Club copied below](#) was sent to the city council on September 10th, 2014. The letter urged the council to conduct an environmental review consistent with CEQA before any deliberations were undertaken to consider amending Ordinance 9.66.040 to allow recreational watercraft on the lower stretches of the San Lorenzo river. We did not receive an acknowledgement of the letter nor any follow-up regarding progress on this issue.

We now learn from public notices that your agenda for Tuesday March 10th. 2015 includes consideration of the formation of an advisory group whose task is, as quoted in the staff report: " To Approve the creation of an advisory group, consisting of biologists, paddling and birding enthusiasts and City staff, to develop the framework for a pilot paddling program on the lower San Lorenzo River and return with findings and recommendations for City Council consideration by May 2015."

This expressed task would seem to be putting the cart before the horse. A framework for a pilot paddling program should properly follow an environmental review to determine whether or not such a program is environmentally feasible. There has already been a pilot program of paddling events and much data was gathered in that process. It is also unclear whether or not the advisory group is intended to substitute for a proper environmental review of this activity. We would appreciate clarification on this question.

If approval for such an advisory group is passed by council we urge that its meetings be open to the public, that members are carefully selected to represent the full diversity of positions and expertise and that the time frame of 2 months be extended to allow for careful deliberation and examination of available data on impact to habitat, especially avian species.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gillian Greensite
Chair, Conservation Committee
Sierra Club, Santa Cruz Group

September 10, 2014

ATTN:
Santa Cruz City Council
Santa Cruz City Manager
Director of Parks and Recreation
Director of Public Works
CA Coastal Commission

Comments on proposed changes to San Lorenzo River Watercraft Ordinance

Dear Council Members and Staff –

The Conservation Committee of the Santa Cruz Group recently invited Coastal Watershed Council and Friends of San Lorenzo River Wildlife to present their perspectives on the proposed introduction of recreational watercraft on the San Lorenzo River.

After hearing from both groups and reviewing evidence of potential adverse impacts to avian wildlife on the river, we voted unanimously to urge the City of Santa Cruz to conduct an environmental review consistent with CEQA before allowing any further watercraft events on the river and before any deliberations to consider amending Ordinance 9.66.040 to allow recreational watercraft on the San Lorenzo River.

We would appreciate being kept informed of progress with respect to the environmental review of this proposed project.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Sincerely,

Santa Cruz Group of the Sierra Club