

Westside

www.westsidercd.org

Resource Conservation District

PO Box 6079 Fresno, California 93703-6079

February 18, 2010

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: CCMA RMP/EIS
20 Hamilton Court
Hollister, CA 95023

Dear Sir:

The death and destruction caused by the 1995 Arroyo Pasajero flood was due largely because of the abnormally high sediment load in-stream at the time of the flood. Since 1996 the Westside Resource Conservation District has supported the efforts of the Stewards of the Arroyo Pasajero to stabilize soils in the upper watersheds of Clear Creek and Los Gatos Creek. Livestock ranchers have developed ranch plans that include distributing water to areas far from streams to minimize the trampling of stream banks, which causes soil erosion.

The soils in the upper Los Gatos Canyon watershed are extremely erodible. The construction and use of new dirt roads in the upper Los Gatos Canyon watershed would cause a huge increase in soil erosion and sediment loads in Los Gatos Creek. This is precisely the environmental degradation the Stewards of the Arroyo Pasajero have sought to reduce. Any activity that increases soil erosion and sediment loads in Los Gatos Creek categorically contradicts long standing Westside Resource Conservation District policy of stabilizing upper watershed soils in the Arroyo Pasajero catchment basin.

The Westside Resource Conservation District has also supported the closure of the Hazardous Asbestos Area for public health reasons. Any new or renewed off-road vehicle activity in that area will cause human respiratory illness and is opposed by the Westside RCD.

The Westside Resource Conservation District also opposes a shift away from grass-fed beef production to accommodate recreational uses of Bureau of Land Management properties in the upper Clear Creek watershed. Range fed beef is the low carbon sector of our domestic beef production in the United States. Replacing natural forage-based meat production with carbon-intensive ORV activity denies the reality of the carbon restricted economy of the twenty-first century.

For the above reasons, the Westside Resource Conservation District opposes any new or renewed use of off-road vehicles in the Clear Creek Management Area. Of the seven alternatives set out in the Clear Creek Management Area Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Alternative G comes the closest to restricting ORV use sufficiently. Any off-road vehicle activity would cause increased sediment in area streams and larger flood flows than if ORV use were

banned altogether. The Westside Resource Conservation District supports the complete closure of the Clear Creek Management Area to off-road vehicle use.

Yours truly,


Philip Erro, President