

March 20, 2010

Stream Flow Restoration Strategies Workshop

The rivers in Northern California used to carry a lot of water and supported fishing, boating and swimming throughout the summer. Salmon were plentiful in the Eel River. Not any more. These days, the Eel is almost uncomfortably warm by Fourth of July and algae in the form of green, slimy growth drives swimmers out of the river by mid August. Standing on the bridge in Dos Rios looking down at the main stem of the Eel in late fall, an observer can easily give the few salmon trying to swim upriver to spawn individual names.

Of course, we cannot do much about a lack of rainfall. But that is only a small part of the story. The California Water Codes and Fish and Game Codes designed to protect streamflow are not being enforced. Illegal ponds and water diversions have a huge impact on recreational activities, the fish, and the stream and river ecosystems.

Anyone interested in how to get water back into the local streams and rivers should come to a workshop at Little Lake Grange at 291 School Street in Willits on March 20, 2010 from 10AM to 2PM, which is sponsored by Willits/Outlet Creek Watershed Group, Willits Environmental Center, North Coast Stream Flow Coalition, and Little Lake Grange. The workshop will cover topics such as salmon in the Eel River, potential effects of groundwater withdrawal on stream flows, and how citizens can get involved in monitoring stream flows and water quality and how to protest illegal water use. Donations are gladly accepted and a buffet lunch is provided. For more information, call 459-7054 or visit www.willitswaterwisdom.org