

March 7, 1949

Captain Arthur L. Benedict  
The Ranch  
Sonoma, California

Dear Captain Benedict:

Thank you for your letter of February 18, calling our attention to conditions affecting stealhead in Sonoma Creek. As you note in your letter, Mr. Frank J. Kersnar, Sanitary Engineer with our Pollution Control Unit, investigated the pollution of Sonoma Creek on October 25, in accordance with your request. At that time he discussed the situation with you and also inspected the Krobels Gravel Pit. Following his inspection Mr. Kersnar prepared a report to us in which he recognized and emphasized the fact that the water in Sonoma Creek below the gravel pit was very turbid and that the stream flowing past your ranch was in extremely bad condition, with the bottom of the creek covered with a fine clay deposit, preventing the development of aquatic life, while the stream above the gravel pit was quite clear. You will see, therefore, that we recognize that the situation is not a satisfactory one. Our problem is that it is extremely difficult to take action against this type of pollution under existing fish and game laws.

Insofar as the gravel pits being a barrier to fish is concerned, following receipt of your letter, I requested our field representatives to report on the situation and they informed me that at all times when there is sufficient water in Sonoma Creek to attract stealhead into the lower portion of the stream such fish are able to get past the gravel pits without difficulty and ascend to the to their spawning grounds. They reported that with the recent rains stealhead ascended the stream past the gravel pits and were now were now on their spawning grounds.

Once again, we appreciate your calling our attention to the conditions existing in the stream and you may rest assured that we will exploit every possibility of improving conditions. As I have pointed out above, this will not be an easy matter under the existing pollution laws.

Yours very truly,

B. L. MACAULAY  
Executive Officer

LS:lg

cc: Captain Shea  
Garth Murphy  
Frank Kersnar