

Marine Mammal Protection Act Incidental Harassment Authorization additional conditions to the Russian River Estuary Pinniped Monitoring Plan (July 2009)

1. *Pupping Season (March 15- June 30): The following mitigation measures apply only during the pupping season:*

(a) If a pup less than one week old is on the beach where heavy machinery would be used or on the path used to access the work location, the breaching event will be delayed until the pup has left the site or the latest day possible to prevent flooding while still maintaining suitable fish rearing habitat. Pups less than one week old should be characterized by being up to 15 kg, thin for their body length, or an umbilicus or natal pelage is present. The Agency shall coordinate with the local seal monitoring network's established seal monitoring program to determine if pups less than one week old are on the beach (e.g., a pup was sighted being born) prior to a water level management event.

(b) A water level management event may not occur for more than two consecutive days unless flooding threats cannot be controlled.

(c) The Agency must maintain a one week (7 day) "no work" period between water level management events (unless flooding is a threat to the low-lying residential community) to allow for adequate disturbance recovery period. During the "no-work" period, equipment must be removed from the beach.

(e) If, during monitoring, observers sight any pup which may be abandoned, the Agency must contact the NMFS stranding response network [Marine Mammal Center, 415-289-7350] immediately and report the incident to NMFS' Southwest Regional Office and NMFS Headquarters within 48 hours. Observers are not to approach or move the pup.

2. *Year-Round: The following mitigation measures apply to all water level management events.*

a) During the pupping season (March 15- June 30), the Agency will conduct a one-day pre-lagoon outlet channel survey 1 to 3 days prior to determine the number of animals on the beach and if any pups are present. The Agency will scan the beach for pups the morning of the event one hour prior to crews or equipment accessing the beach.

b) Monitoring will continue for the duration of the event to determine how many animals have been taken as a result of management activities and end one hour after equipment leaves the beach. Pinnipeds will be monitored from the overlook on the bluff along Highway 1 adjacent to the Jenner haulout with high powered spotting scopes. The method of disturbance and behavioral response of pinnipeds would be recorded following Mortenson (2006).

c) In addition to event days, seal counts will also be conducted twice monthly when no machinery is on the beach to determine if any long term impacts are occurring at the haulout. On these days, seals will be counted in ½ hour increments starting early in the morning (e.g., dawn) and ending eight hours later, weather permitting. Census days will be scheduled to capture a low and high tide each in the morning and afternoon.