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Salmon advocates petition Gov. Brown

Advocates for the restoration of wild salmon have a message for Gov. Jerry Brown: “Fish don’t drive; Yuba salmon deserve better.”

Salmon advocates are dismayed by what they describe as a short-sighted plan to save wild Yuba salmon from extinction by trapping and trucking these threatened fish around dams, both to and from the North Yuba River.

The so-called “trap and haul” plan endorsed by state and federal fish protection agencies has an estimated price tag of \$700 million. Critics of the plan argue that trucking salmon is a highly questionable and unsustainable solution, which would do nothing to benefit steelhead trout who are also threatened.

The South Yuba River Citizens League has launched a letter-writing campaign to Gov. Jerry Brown and U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker urging them to look for a long-term sustainable plan for volitional fish passage on the Yuba and immediately support large-scale salmon habitat improvement projects on the lower Yuba River. Brown oversees the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Pritzker oversees the National Marine Fisheries Service; both agencies are currently backing the “trap and haul” plan.

“We’re advocating strongly that decision-makers examine the best available science to develop a fish passage plan that allows salmon and steelhead to get by the dams on their own – one that benefits the health of the entire Yuba River watershed,” said Caleb Dardick, SYRCL’s Executive Director. “It is premature to endorse ‘trap and haul’ when there are still so many unanswered questions about alternative ways to restore a self-sustaining wild salmon population in the Yuba River watershed.”

The campaign launch coincides with the start of SYRCL’s 14th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival. Dardick urges supporters to visit www.FishDontDrive.org to register their opinion with state and federal decision-makers. Festival attendees can also sign petitions that will be circulated throughout the festival. SYRCL will host a free panel-discussion on “trap and haul” at 4 p.m. on Sunday at Nevada City’s City Hall (317 Broad St.).