



The Honorable Sam Farr
U.S. House of Representatives
100 West Alisal Street
Salinas, CA 93901

ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER
39171 Tassajara Road Carmel Valley, CA 93924

Re: Support for Wild & Scenic River Protection for Tassajara Creek

Dear Representative Farr:

Tassajara Zen Mountain Center supports Wild & Scenic River protection for Tassajara Creek. We believe that Wild & Scenic designation will protect the creek's outstanding cultural, environmental and fishery values.

Zen Mountain Center is located on Tassajara Creek and includes the Tassajara Hot Springs. The native Esselen people were the first to soak in the natural hot springs of Tassajara and to believe in the healing and restorative properties of the water. The hot springs later became the site of a rustic resort. In 1966, the first Soto Zen monastery outside of Asia was established at Tassajara to provide a place where students of Buddhism could withdraw from the busy world for a period of intensive meditation and study. During the summer, guests are welcome to come and enjoy the beauty unique to this secluded valley.

Tassajara Creek also supports a run of native steelhead trout. These endangered fish migrate all the way from the Pacific Ocean, up the Salinas and Arroyo Seco Rivers to spawn in Tassajara Creek downstream from the Zen Center.

The proposed Recreational segment of Tassajara Creek includes the Zen Center's property. Recreational classification is compatible for the level of development that exists on the property adjacent to the creek (buildings, bridges, pathways, swimming pool, and a road). The Zen Center has no plans for the kind of development that would be inappropriate for a protected river.

In summary, we believe that federal protection as proposed by Friends of the River and the Ventana Wilderness Alliance is both appropriate and desirable for Tassajara Creek. Please count Tassajara Zen Mountain Center as a supporter of including the creek in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Keith Meyerhoff, for Zen Mountain Center