

Vineyards and Water

Water Demands on the Russian River
Watershed-Frost Protection

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Water Year 2008

Low rainfall coupled with the coldest frost year since the early 1970's set the stage for the perfect environmental storm

- **Quick drop in water level kills coho**
- **Frost protection measures to save crops stranded fish in Russian River tributary**
- JEFF KAN LEE / The Press Democrat
- Coho salmon such as these fingerlings are raised at the Don Clausen hatchery at Warm Springs Dam and released into the Russian River.
- By GLEND A ANDERSON
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT
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- Coho salmon migrating toward the ocean this week were killed by a sudden water-level drop in a Russian River tributary near Healdsburg, the result of efforts to protect crops from frost, officials said.

The reaction from AG

- In late 2008: Mendocino County grower community and NMFS formed the “Frost Task Force“
- January 2009: Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Sonoma County Winegrape Commission, The Russian River Property Owners Association and The Salmon Coalition collectively prepared for the State Water Boards Frost Protection Workshop

State Board Hearing on Frost Protection

- I delivered a joint statement from the working groups.
- The board ruled on March 11 2009 that it would not in rule to stop diversions for frost protections.
- Their reason: Primarily it was too late for growers to make any adjustments. The board made it very clear they did not want to see this group back without making significant efforts to protect the fish habitat!
- The group requested at the hearing to participate in the NMFS Frost Task Force.

Ag Responds

- Sonoma and Mendocino collaborating on Frost Task Force
- Sub groups of the Tack Force are making some progress: BMP's, Regulatory and Grower Outreach
- MNFS 4D efforts in Sonoma