

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

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Executive Officer's Report

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Pescadero-Butano Watershed Large Wood Monitoring Protocol Training by the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (Setenay Bozkurt Frucht)

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board (Water Board) funded the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), with assistance from the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD), to develop a protocol to survey large wood in stream channels in the Pescadero-Butano Watershed. The protocol will be used to establish baseline conditions for large wood loading to streams as required by the Pescadero-Butano Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and the Habitat Enhancement Plan. The protocol will also be used to resurvey the stream channels in the watershed every five years to evaluate progress towards meeting the large wood targets established by the TMDL.

Large wood refers to pieces of timber within a channel or floodplain large enough to have hydrologic and geomorphic impacts on the system. Large wood provides numerous beneficial effects on rivers and river health including the development of deep pools for fish habitat, refuge during seasonal high flows, trapping of sediment, and stabilizing channel banks (Bryant, 1983; Lisle, 1986; Montgomery, 2002). Large wood inputs can also impact nutrient cycling and provide consistent sources of dissolved organic carbon (Richardson, Bilby, and Bondar, 2007). Large wood pieces may form into log jams, immobile features that can arrest future incision and reverse adverse effects downstream by slowly releasing trapped sediment over time. Quantifying large wood is crucial to understanding how river systems function as a whole. The Pescadero-Butano Watershed Sediment TMDL and the Habitat Enhancement Plan established the linkages between excessive erosion and sediment in stream channels and loss of large wood with the decline of steelhead and salmon and the degradation of aquatic habitat in the watershed. Moreover, in addition to sediment-related targets, the TMDL also set numeric targets for large wood loading given the important role it plays in channel morphology and sediment sorting in the channel.

SFEI and San Mateo RCD staff hosted a two-day training on the protocol on October 24 and 25 at the San Mateo County Memorial Park and Butano State Park. Staff from the Water Board, San Mateo RCD, Santa Cruz RCD, and SFEI attended the training, which provided an opportunity to learn about the significance of large wood in streams, to apply the protocol in the field, and to collaborate with watershed partners. The first day of training provided the background for the TMDL, the numeric targets, and the protocol, and presented the methods for delineating the aerial extent of channels and qualifying the pieces of large wood to measure. The second day of the training focused on defining survey reaches, measuring large wood and logjams, and discussing other information related to wood and sediment processes that are important to record in the field.

Large wood surveys are time and labor intensive. They involve making a lot of professional judgements in the field on bankfull channel and length, width and depth dimensions, active channel processes, and the interaction of water, wood, and sediment to create and maintain aquatic habitats. This protocol draws from other published protocols and guidance from outside the region to provide a rapid assessment that

maximizes the potential number of sites and the length of streams surveyed. Since it was tailored for the Pescadero-Butano watershed and incorporates existing information on channel dimensions and reach characteristics, the protocol will be more time efficient and will streamline the discussions and decisions made in the field.



Figure 1: Day 1 of training starting in the chilly redwood forest of Memorial County Park. Training attendees include from the San Francisco Water Board: Setenay Bozkurt Frucht, Kristina Yoshida, Rebecca Nordenholt, Nicole Fairley, Lisa Hunt, Andie Terman, and our current Watershed Steward Program members Olivia Hockley-Rodes and Charlotte Diamant. From the San Mateo RCD, Jim Robins and Amy Kaeser, and from the Santa Cruz RCD, Sara Sternberg



Figure 2: Discussion on how to measure a large spanner with branches in bankfull channel.

Aluminum Sulfate Clean Up at Calaveras Road (Demir Worthington)

Over the last several months, we have been overseeing the cleanup of an aluminum sulfate spill that included winterization measures to protect State waters. Aluminum sulfate, also called "alum," is an acidic salt used as a coagulating agent in water treatment. On September 13, 2023, a tanker truck traveling to the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant overturned landing in a ravine where it released approximately 2,000 gallons of aluminum sulfate to a dry, unnamed stream that flows into the Calaveras Reservoir. Unfortunately, all the affected soil could not be removed given the steep terrain. To minimize or prevent residual alum from harming the stream, we approved an emergency permit for slope stabilization. Based on monitoring and sampling of the stream when the flow resumed, we verified cleanup efforts successfully prevented acidic and turbid impacts to the water. After the wet season, we will further evaluate damage to the stream channel and its riparian zone and will oversee any restoration that may be needed.



Community Engagement (Eileen White)

On December 18th, the Water Board and the Department of Toxics Substances (DTSC) staff met with the Bayview Hunters Point Community. The purpose of the meeting was to listen to their concerns and provide an update on the status and schedule of the Draft Fifth Five-Year Review Report for the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and to discuss ways for the community to provide input on the draft report. The objective of the Five-Year Review Report prepared by the U.S. Navy is to evaluate the selected remedies at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard sites and determine whether the remedies remain protective of human health and the environment in accordance with the requirements set forth in each of the decision documents. The Water Board and DTSC staff will continue to meet with the Bayview Hunters Point community to hear their concerns and to solicit their input on the Five-Year Review Report.

State Water Board Recognition (Eileen White)

At our December 2023 Board meeting I presented two awards that I wanted to highlight in this report. These awards represent the quality and commitment from some of our many talented team members and I am so proud of the work they have done and the recognition they have each received at the highest level of the State Water Board.

First, Ross Steenson was recognized for achieving the Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award. This award is given once a year to an individual who demonstrates outstanding accomplishments over a sustained period of time.

Ross is recognized for his ongoing technical support to the various divisions in the Water Board and especially to the staff in the Groundwater Protection and Toxics Cleanup Divisions. Ross has also made significant contributions on matters of statewide importance, going above and beyond the call of duty in his efforts to lead and participate in multiple statewide work groups, develop regional and statewide guidance, and provide training to internal and external stakeholders. Ross has established effective working relationships throughout the region, including with members of the public and the regulated community that contribute to program outcomes within our organization and statewide.

Next, the Enforcement Team including Brian Thompson, Agnes Farres, Cleet Carlton, and Demir Worthington received the Superior Accomplishment Award. This award is given to individuals or teams who have contributed significant results for water quality in California. This team is being recognized for their work to enforce the Clean Water Act and restore protected tidal wetlands within the East Lagoon portion of the White Slough in Vallejo. The settlement that the Superior Court in Solano County approved between the Water Board, Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and Amandeep and Param Dhillon to restore and mitigate the destroyed wetlands, imposed \$1.7 million in penalties, represents an outstanding achievement only made possible because Brian, Agnes, Cleet and Demir documented a solid case, knew what outcomes they wanted to achieve, and prioritized swift, decisive action. This was a phenomenal accomplishment for the mission of the Water Board and the health of our wetlands and water quality throughout California.



Photo: The San Francisco Water Board and State Water Board award recipients with Executive Officer Eileen White, Demir Worthington, Cleet Carlton, Ross Steenson, Brain Thompson, Board Member Mark Ransom, Board Vice Chair Alexis Strauss Hacker, Board Member Donald Young, Board Member Andy Gunther, Board Member Letty Belin, Board Chair Jayne Battey

Staff Introductions (Eileen White)



Welcome Lester Lee to the Water Board. Lester will be joining the North Bay Section of the Toxics Cleanup Division as a Scientific Aid. He received his PhD in Civil Engineering from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. During his years at Purdue, he worked on various projects related to volatile disinfection by-products in indoor swimming pool facilities, specifically chlorinated compounds. Lester will be helping Regional Water Board staff managing Cleanup Program projects as well as administrative tasks. Outside of work, Lester enjoys cooking and hiking with his dog GiGi and recently, Lester picked up gardening as new hobby.

401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Abigail Smith)

The table below lists those applications received for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification from November 16 through December 13, 2023. A check mark in the right-hand column indicates a project with work that may be in Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) jurisdiction.

Project Name	City/Location	County	May have BCDC Jurisdiction
Ruby Street Apartments	Castro Valley	Alameda	
San Leandro Marina Emergency Demolition	San Leandro	Alameda	✓
2022-23 Winter Storm Emergency Creek Bank Stabilization	Diablo	Contra Costa	
752 St. Mary's Road Lafayette	Lafayette	Contra Costa	
Lagunitas Creek Watershed Enhancement	Unincorporated	Marin	
MRN37 PM14.47 Petaluma Emergency Bridge Fender Repair	Unincorporated	Marin	✓
Stafford Lake Park Culvert Replacement	Unincorporated	Marin	
Guenoc Ranch Vineyard Development in WB-Approved POU Blocks 13 and 14 in Napa	Middletown	Napa	
Far Niente Winery	Oakville	Napa	
Myrtle Street Ditch Emergency Culvert Replacement	Half Moon Bay	San Mateo	
Lakeville Ignacio IG01-004 Emergency Repairs	Unincorporated	Sonoma	✓