

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

June 16, 2020

In the Matter of

Notice of Approval,

Channel Restoration: Sediment Removal, Low-Flow Channel Creation, Bank Grading, and Riparian Planting Pre-Qualified Practice

RECEIVING WATER: Laguna de Santa Rosa
HYDROLOGIC AREA: 114.21 Laguna Hydrologic Subarea, 114.22 Santa Rosa
Hydrologic Subarea, 114.23 Mark West Hydrologic Subarea
COUNTY: Sonoma County
FILE NAME: Water Quality Trading Framework for the Laguna de Santa Rosa

BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

1. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) approved the Water Quality Trading Framework for the Laguna de Santa Rosa (WQTF) in 2018 through Resolution No. R1-2018-0025. The WQTF gives dischargers that participate the option to offset their discharge of Phosphorus by using credits that represent the reduction or removal of Phosphorus from unregulated sources of discharge elsewhere in the Laguna watershed.
2. The WQTF provides for Phosphorus reduction or removal practices to be pre-qualified for use in credit generating projects. Practices proposed for pre-qualification undergo an initial Regional Water Board staff (Staff) review and recommendation, a 30-day public comment period, and a final Staff recommendation for approval or denial by the Executive Officer (EO). Once approved, pre-qualified practices (PQPs) may be used in credit-generating projects in the future without the need for additional review.

VALERIE L. QUINTO, CHAIR | MATTHIAS ST. JOHN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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3. The *Channel Restoration: Sediment Removal, Low-Flow Channel Creation, Bank Grading, and Riparian Planting PQP* (hereinafter the PQP) entails two methods for reduction and removal of Phosphorus: direct removal and reduced internal loading (Attachment A). The first is accomplished through the excavation of sediment, sediment-bound Phosphorus, and organic matter from the channel. The second is accomplished through the removal of the invasive macrophyte *Ludwigia sp.* and the reduction of the contact surface between water and sediment, resulting in reduced sediment biological oxygen demand and reduced Phosphorus flux.
4. The PQP may be appropriate for flood control channels, natural channels confined by levees, modified channels, and degraded natural channels as defined by the most current version of the [Sonoma Water Stream Maintenance Program Manual](#).
5. The PQP is explicitly designed to enhance environmental values. The PQP requires the creation of a low flow channel with or without sinuosity, grading of the channel's floodplain to drain into the low flow channel, riparian planting with native species, and the removal of *Ludwigia sp.*
6. Because the PQP is explicitly designed to enhance environmental values, credits generated from both methods of phosphorus reduction and removal may be awarded a reduced Retirement Ratio. The PQP also calls for direct measurement of directly removed (excavated) Phosphorus. Therefore, credits generated through direct removal may be awarded a reduced Uncertainty Ratio. In the direct removal case, this means the number of credits generated from the practice will be equal to the mass of removed Phosphorus divided by 1.5. In the indirect removal case (reduced Phosphorus flux), the number of credits generated will be equal to the mass of removed Phosphorus divided by 2.0.
7. The PQP describes monitoring procedures which include but are not limited to documentation of pre- and post-project site conditions, vegetation monitoring, monitoring the extent of *Ludwigia sp.* coverage, and monitoring the degree of sedimentation in the excavated low-flow channel. Data collected per the PQP include but are not limited to water quality data (turbidity, temperature, pH); before, during, and after photos; cross section or topographic surveys after sediment removal is conducted; quantification of material removed or placed; length of stream channel maintained; sensitive species or other resources encountered at the site; quantity, characteristics, and location of any debris disposed of off-site; and any additional information important for project monitoring and verification.
8. The PQP underwent a 30-day public comment period from April 3 to May 2, 2020. Staff received no public comment letters during that time. Following review of the PQP, Staff finds the PQP consistent with the requirements of the WQTF.

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Accordingly, based on an independent review of the record, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer approves the Channel Restoration: Sediment Removal, Low-Flow Channel Creation, Bank Grading, and Riparian Planting Pre-Qualified Practice for inclusion in the PQP library in accordance with Order No. R1-2018-0025, provided that the PQP complies with the following terms and conditions:

1. Except as may be modified by any preceding conditions, all actions subject to this approval are contingent on: (a) all proposed activities and actions to mitigate potential water quality impacts being completed in strict compliance with the PQP, (b) compliance with all applicable requirements of the Basin Plan, and (c) compliance with all applicable permits, certifications, and orders issued by the Regional Water Board.
2. Any change to the contents of the PQP that would have a significant or material effect on the findings, conclusions, or conditions of this Notice of Approval must be submitted to the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board for prior review and written approval.
3. The *Channel Restoration: Sediment Removal, Low-Flow Channel Creation, Bank Grading, and Riparian Planting* PQP is approved for use in the PQP library as allowed by the WQTF.

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer

Attachment A: Channel Restoration: Sediment Removal, Low-Flow Channel Creation, Bank Grading, and Riparian Planting