

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
8:30 A.M., Thursday, January 24, 2013
Santa Rosa

- ITEM: 7
- SUBJECT: Update on the Elements of a **Nonpoint Source Program Strategy and Five Year Plan**
- BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.
- BACKGROUND: The Nonpoint Source Program Plan, developed by the State Water Resource Control Board (State Water Board), the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) and the California Coastal Commission (CCC), is a comprehensive statewide program that represents a significant commitment by the State to focus its efforts over a 15-year period to reduce and prevent nonpoint source (NPS) pollution.
- The existing requirements of the NPS Program Plans were issued by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and are contained in the 2004 CWA § 319 Guidelines (2004 Guidelines.) However, the USEPA is recommending significant changes in the proposed revised 2012 CWA § 319 Guidelines (Guidelines), which reinforces a focus on updating state NPS management programs on a five-year basis. The State NPS Program is currently updating the NPS Program Strategy, which is based on a 15-year planning horizon for 2013-2028, while the Regional Water Boards will be updating their NPS Program Five-Year Implementation Plans for 2013-2018 to meet this requirement. The Guidelines emphasize the use of measureable milestones and performance measures. One of the Key Elements required under § 319 is as follows: "The State periodically reviews and evaluates its nonpoint source management program using environmental and functional measures of success, and revises its nonpoint source assessment and management program at least every five years."
- DISCUSSION: Our Region last went through this planning process in 2006-2008, with the result being the Five Year Plan to guide NPS regulation for the period of 2008-13. The State Board is seeking an extension of time for completion of the Program Plans, due to the complexity of the

task. In developing the Five Year Plan for 2013-2018, staff will hold Board and/or staff workshops, target our outreach efforts, and will focus on determining which NPS issues the Board and staff want to focus on in the period 2013-2018, and will focus on the measurement of restoration, improvement and protection efforts. In addition, the plan must include “Numerical Performance Measurements” and commitments. Easily reportable measurable milestones need to be developed for each of our commitments.

A significant component of the § 319 program is the funding of grants for water quality improvement. Although the five year planning process does not strictly cover 319(h) grants, the USEPA is issuing revised guidelines to states for the award of § 319 grants under the Clean Water Act for the implementation of NPS management programs. When finalized, these revised guidelines will spell out requirements that apply to grants made with funds appropriated by Congress under § 319 of the Clean Water Act. States and EPA regions will begin to implement these guidelines in fiscal year 2013 and will fully implement these guidelines in fiscal year 2014 and in subsequent years. The new guidelines replace the Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories that have been in effect since the 2004 Guidelines. These revised guidelines provide updated program direction, an increased emphasis on watershed project implementation in watersheds with impaired waters, and increased accountability measures. These guidelines also emphasize the importance of states updating their nonpoint source management programs to ensure that § 319 funds are targeted to highest priority activities.