

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
8:30 A.M., Thursday, December 6, 2012
Santa Rosa

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: Update on Implementation of the Nutrient Offset Program for the City of Santa Rosa (*Charles Reed*)

BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item. No action will be taken by the Regional Board.

BACKGROUND: On July 24, 2008, The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) adopted Resolution No. R1-2008-0061 *Approving the Nutrient Offset Program for the Santa Rosa Subregional Water Reclamation System*. The Nutrient Offset Program established a framework for the review and approval of projects proposed by the City of Santa Rosa (City) that are designed to reduce the nutrient load discharged to the Laguna de Santa Rosa from sources other than the City's wastewater treatment facility. It also establishes a procedure for granting nutrient reduction credits to the City that will offset nutrient discharges from the City's wastewater treatment facility to the Laguna.

The City is regulated under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0022764, Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R1-2006-0045 for the Santa Rosa Subregional Water Reclamation System (Permit). The Permit imposes the following final effluent limitations for total nitrogen and total phosphorus that go into effect in 2012:

“The Regional Board plans to develop and adopt total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for nitrogen and phosphorus which specify wasteload allocations (WLAs) for point sources and load allocations (LAs) for non-point sources, as appropriate. Following the adoption of these TMDLs by the Regional Water Board, this Order will be issued with final WQBELs based on applicable WLAs. Alternatively, in the absence of a TMDL, at the end of the compliance schedule authorized by this Order, the final effluent limitations for nitrogen and phosphorus will be zero, or no net loading.”

The Permit also states:

“A ‘no net loading’ effluent limit may be met by: 1) reducing the effluent concentration below detectable levels through source control and/or treatment; 2) reducing loads through recycling/reclamation; and/or 3) reducing loads elsewhere in the watershed by an amount at least equal to the amount discharged (and of equivalent bioavailability) through an approved offset program.”

The Nutrient Offset Program is designed to encourage the City to undertake nutrient reduction projects that improve habitat and ecosystem conditions and projects that reduce or eliminate nonpoint source or other waste discharges not currently subject to waste discharge requirements, waiver, or other permits. The Nutrient Offset Program also prohibits the City from receiving nutrient offset credits for projects that later become subject to additional regulatory controls imposed by the Regional Water Board.

To date, Regional Water Board staff has approved two projects proposed by the City that meet the requirements of the Nutrient Offset Program. The first approved project involves the installation and maintenance of best management practices at the Beretta Dairy in Santa Rosa. The second approved project consists of road repair and stream crossing stabilization projects at the Pepperwood Preserve, located at the headwaters of Mark West Creek, a tributary of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. A third nutrient offset project, a proposed manure removal and management project at the Nunes Oceanview Dairy, located adjacent to Windsor Creek, is currently under review by staff and pending approval.

DISCUSSION:

Staff will provide an overview of the offset program and describe some of the challenges and successes in implementing this program.