7 Public Participation Plan

This section of the staff report describes the efforts of the Regional Water Board to have successful, effective, and efficient public participation in the development of the proposed WQO Update Amendment. The efforts identified in this chapter have been, carried out to identify interested stakeholders and to inform the public on development of the proposed WQO Update Amendment. Regional Water Board staff worked to solicit early public comments on this proposal. Stakeholders have included landowners, residents, business owners, special interest groups, governmental officials and staff, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties.

The primary goals of stakeholder outreach efforts are as follows:

- To communicate and inform stakeholders about the proposed Basin Plan amendment, including the status of the development of the amendment, alternatives considered, implementation program options, potential environmental impacts, and other components of the Basin Plan amendment process.
- To solicit and receive relevant and timely input from stakeholders.

7.1 Stakeholder Involvement

Regional Water Board staff used a number of avenues to provide information and opportunities for continued public involvement in the proposed WQO Update Amendment. Whenever requested, staff meets with interested stakeholders to provide updates and receive comments on the proposed WQO Update Amendment. Regional Water Board staff meet with many of the stakeholder groups that are involved with water quality issues in the region in order to seek input and communicate the status of proposed amendments, including the WQO Update Amendment. When feasible, staff attends regular meetings of established stakeholder groups, or staff organizes separate ad hoc meetings. In the case of the proposed WQO Update Amendment, a number of cities and wastewater treatment consortiums have provided input. Staff has held individual meetings with these groups to discuss the changes to the proposed amendment that have resulted from public input on the draft.

An informational webpage is maintained with contact information, status updates, links to available documents, public notices of meetings and comment periods, and other opportunities for stakeholder involvement. A full chronological list of the documents related to the proposed Basin Plan amendment can be viewed and downloaded from the following location:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/water_quality_objectives_update_amendment.shtml

A CEQA scoping meeting introducing the goals of the proposed WQO Update Amendment was held in Santa Rosa, California on July 8, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to present the goals of the project and receive input from the public on the possible

environmental impacts of the project. In August 2011, a notice was sent to interested stakeholders (subscribers of the Basin Plan amendment email list) announcing the posting of the public participation plan on the Regional Water Board's website. Separate CEQA Scoping meetings were held on the proposed DO objective amendment in October 2008, including meetings in Santa Rosa and Weaverville. Further, the Regional Water Board adopted Site Specific Objectives (SSO) for DO in the Klamath River mainstem in March 2010, based on the approach proposed in the proposed DO objectives described in this report. The State Water Board, Office of Adminstrative Law, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the SSO in 2010. Staff conducted public workshops in Santa Rosa and Weaverville (November 3 and 8, 2011, respectively) to update the Regional Water Board and the public on the status of the proposed WQO Update Amendment (absent the proposed DO objectives). An additional public workshop was held during the Regional Water Board's March 15, 2012 meeting.

Following an initial 45-day public comment period in February and March 2012, appropriate revisions to the staff report, including the proposed WQO Update Amendment language and the environmental checklist and analyses (referred to as the substitute environmental documentation were made. A second public comment period for the revised documents was held in February and March of 2013. Again staff reviewed comments, held stakeholder meetings and provided an informational update to the Regional Water Board is June 2013. After lengthy consideration of public comments, Regional Water Board member comments and internal deliberation staff made significant revisions to the proposed WQO Update Amendment and associated Staff Report. Now in its third iteration and public comment period staff plan to respond to all written comments received during the comment period. Regional Water Board staff conducted a public workshop in March 2015 and plan to present the proposed WQO Update Amendment to the Regional Water Board for consideration of adoption in June 2015.

The Response to Comments document will be posted on the Regional Water Board website, and made available to the public and Board members prior to the adoption hearing. Notices of public meetings, document availability, public comment periods, and other opportunities for stakeholder involvement are sent via e-mail to interested parties that have provided their e-mail address or signed up via the web-based email list subscription form. Available at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.shtml

Hard copies are provided if requested by interested parties. As required by law, public notice of the Regional Water Board hearing to consider adoption of the proposed WQO Update Amendment will be printed in a newspaper of general circulation within the region.[1]

[1] 40 C.F.R. part 35.