

# Stream and Wetland Systems Protection Policy Project Update



WETLANDS

STREAMS

RIPARIAN AREAS

# Presentation Outline

- Project Background
- Project Status
- Summary of Proposed Policy
- State Water Board Coordination

# Project Background

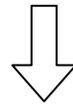
- Identified as a high priority during 2004 and 2007 Triennial Reviews
- Linked to North Coast TMDLs (Scott & Shasta)
- Funded by U.S. EPA (joint project between North Coast and San Francisco Bay Regions)
- Supported by State Water Board (Scott Resolution, State Wetland and Riparian Policy)

# Project Status

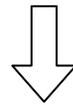
- Scientific Research, Outreach, and Policy Development (late 2005-present)
- External Scientific Peer Review (summer 2008)
- Public Review and Comment of Draft Policy and Staff Report (fall 2008)
- Regional Water Board Adoption Hearing (fall-winter 2008)

# Summary of Proposed Policy

Protect Current Beneficial Uses



New Narrative Water Quality Objectives

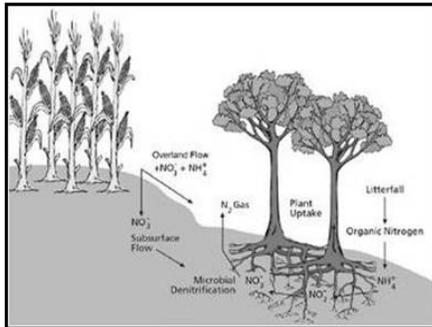


New Implementation Plan

# Current Beneficial Uses

Protect beneficial uses associated with stream and wetland systems, including:

Water Quality Enhancement



Flood Peak Attenuation/  
Flood Water Storage

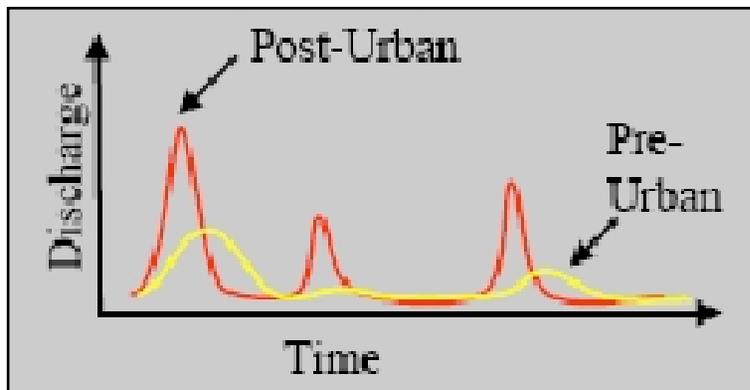


Stream and  
Wetland Habitats



# Water Quality Objective: Hydrologic Connectivity

Protect and maintain upstream-downstream, channel-floodplain, and surface water-groundwater connectivity to produce the seasonal pattern and range of flows necessary to support beneficial uses.



# Water Quality Objective: Stream Equilibrium

Protect and maintain the dynamic balance, or equilibrium, between sediment loads and surface water discharges to prevent excessive erosion or deposition of sediment in streams.



# Water Quality Objective: Wetland and Riparian Area Integrity

Protect and maintain wetland and riparian vegetation and floodplain areas to support stream and wetland systems and their associated water quality functions and beneficial uses.



# Implementation Plan

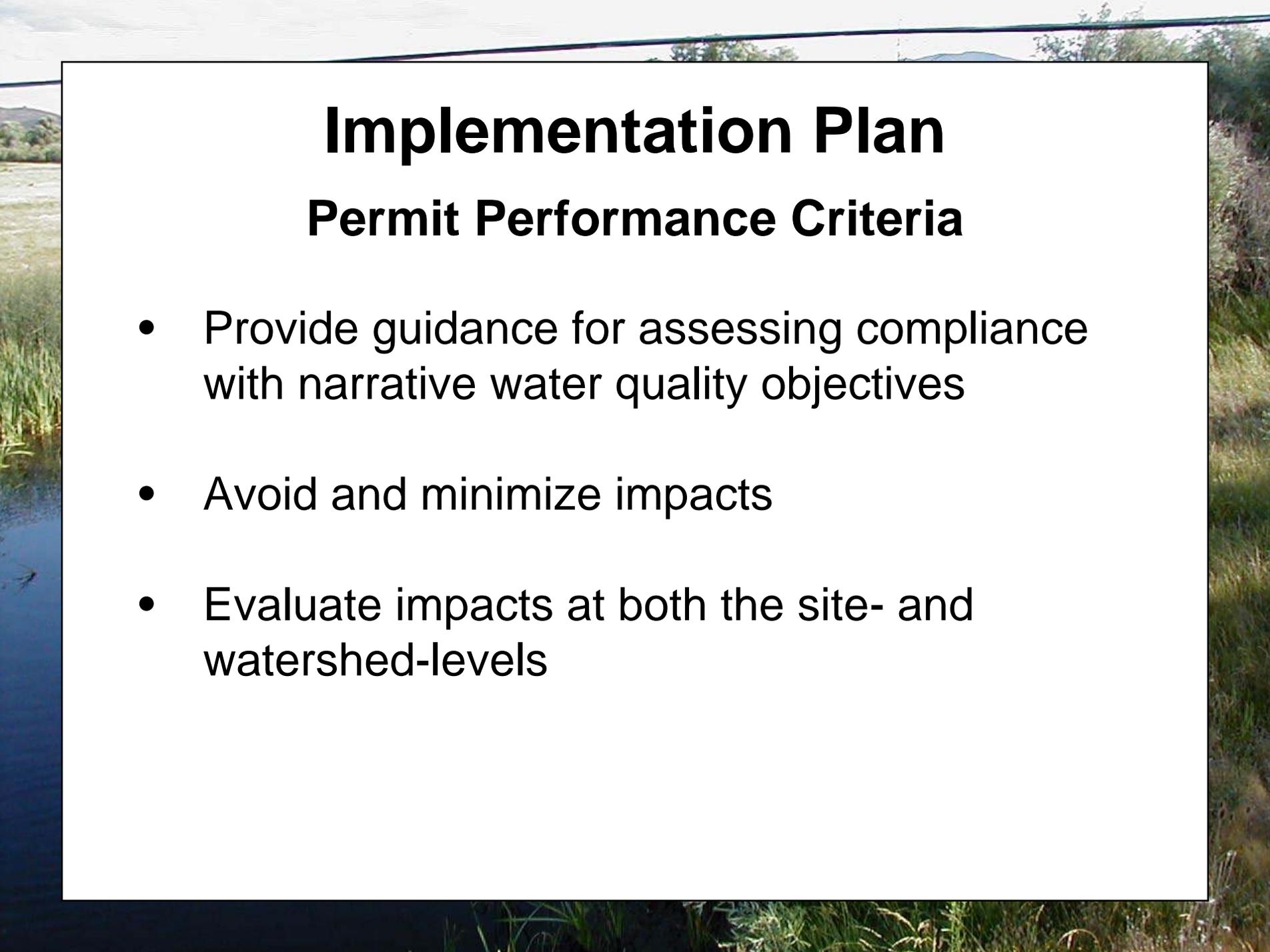
## Avoid, Minimize, and Mitigate Impacts

- Achieve the state and federal “no net loss” goals for wetlands
- Ensure protection of stream and wetland system beneficial uses
- Similar to federal approach in permitting of dredged and fill material discharges to federal waters

# Implementation Plan

## Identification Methodology

- Protect perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams
- Protect “connected” and “isolated” wetlands
- Protect riparian areas (e.g., floodplains, riparian vegetation)



# Implementation Plan

## Permit Performance Criteria

- Provide guidance for assessing compliance with narrative water quality objectives
- Avoid and minimize impacts
- Evaluate impacts at both the site- and watershed-levels

# Implementation Plan

## Other Implementation Elements

- Require mitigation for impacts that cannot be further avoided or minimized
- Require monitoring and adaptive management
- Encourage local watershed planning consistent with the Basin Plan

# **State Water Board Coordination**

## **State Wetland and Riparian Protection Policy Resolution (Adopted April 15, 2008)**

- Creates a State/Regional Water Board Policy Development Team
- Recognizes critical role of Regional Water Boards in informing and implementing State policy (including through the Stream and Wetland Systems Protection Policy)
- Phased policy development will begin in 2009