

Notice of Public Workshop and CEQA Scoping Meeting

Development of the Elk River Sediment
Total Maximum Daily Load

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) staff will hold a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting and public workshop on May 20, 2009 to seek input on the environmental information that should be considered in the development and consideration of a proposed amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region* (Basin Plan) to add an “*Action Plan for the Elk River Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load* (TMDL).”

BACKGROUND

The Elk River watershed in Northern California is impaired by excessive amounts of sediment. The impairments are impacting several beneficial uses, including the cold water fishery, domestic and agricultural water supplies as well as resulting in nuisance flooding conditions. The purpose of the TMDL is to establish loading capacities for sediment while meeting water quality standards and restoring beneficial uses of water. The Elk River TMDL must be accompanied by an implementation program pursuant to Water Code section 13242. The implementation program will describe the nature of actions necessary to achieve water quality objectives, a time schedule for the actions to be taken, and monitoring to determine compliance with objectives. The implementation plan translates the information in the technical TMDL into discrete and identifiable actions that will bring the waterbody into compliance. It must redress all violations of water quality standards if possible and may use any combination of existing regulatory tools to do so. The implementation program (Implementation Plan) will require the implementation of approved management measures designed to: prevent the creation of new sediment sources; establish a program to abate existing sources of sediment discharge; and require a monitoring program designed to document compliance with TMDL requirements and help inform adaptive management decisions. The Implementation Plan will identify and investigate in-channel restoration activities as a potential action to bring the Elk River into conformance with water quality standards and abate nuisance conditions.

AVAILABILITY OF CEQA SCOPING DOCUMENTS

Regional Water Board staff have developed preliminary drafts of the Watershed Overview and the Problem Statement sections of the proposed Elk River Sediment TMDL. A summary of the sources and the Implementation Plan framework will also be made available as preliminary drafts prior to the workshop. Together, these serve as the CEQA Scoping Documents and will be available for review by May 6, 2009 at:

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/elk_river/.

Copies of these documents can also be obtained by contacting the Regional Water Board's office (contact information provided below).

PURPOSE OF CEQA SCOPING

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to provide a forum for early public consultation on the development of the Basin Plan Amendment. This consultation will assist the Regional Water Board in determining what environmental information responsible and trustee agencies, as well as other interested parties, may require to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed amendment.

Scoping is helpful to the Regional Water Board in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant environmental effects to be analyzed prior to the decision making process. Scoping has been found to be an effective way to bring together and resolve

the concerns of affected federal, State, and local agencies, the proponent of the actions, and other interested persons including those who might not be in accord with the proposed actions on environmental grounds. A quorum of Regional Water Board members may be present at the scoping meeting; however, no action will be taken by the Regional Water Board at the scoping meeting.

CEQA SCOPING MEETING AND PUBLIC WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

This meeting and workshop will provide participants with: (1) an opportunity to comment on the appropriate scope and content of the proposed amendment and environmental documents to be prepared pursuant to CEQA (Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.) and the Regional Water Board’s certified regulatory program for basin planning (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15251, subdivision (g); and Title 23, section 3775 et seq.); (2) provide an overview of the conditions in the project area: and (3) present staff’s preliminary summary of sources and potential implementation frameworks.

During the public workshop, Regional Water Board staff will provide a brief summary of the initial approach to and scope of the Elk River TMDL. The presentation will include a brief overview of the impairments in the Elk River, the analytical approaches being used by staff to quantify the sources of the impairments, and identify potential implementation measures. Members of the public and interested parties will be provided the opportunity to present oral and/or written comments. The public meeting will serve to identify and discuss the scope of potential environmental impacts of the proposed TMDL in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Following the workshop, staff will review written and oral comments and prepare a summary of scoping comments. **Written comments should be submitted to Adona White no later than June 22, 2009** (contact information provided below). Comments should be limited to identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and potential significant environmental effects to be analyzed in-depth in the development of this project. Comments provided at the workshop will be reviewed and considered prior to Regional Water Board’s consideration of the proposed amendment in December 2009. All comments will be included in the final administrative record.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| CEQA Scoping Meeting Location: | Agricultural Services Building 5630 South Broadway Eureka, CA 95503 |
| Date: | May 20, 2009 |
| Time: | 6:30 pm |
| Contact information: | Adona White 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A Santa Rosa, CA 95403 (707) 576-2672 AWhite@waterboards.ca.gov |

FUTURE NOTIFICATIONS

Interested parties who would like to receive email notifications for various North Coast Regional Water Board issues, including the Elk River TMDL, can sign up on the Email List Subscription Form located at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.shtml

If you would like to be removed from the Elk River TMDL email notification list altogether please send an email indicating your request to be removed to: AWhite@waterboards.ca.gov.

If you have already signed up on the Elk River TMDL email notification list, and wish to continue to receive notifications, there is no need to contact Regional Water Board Staff.