

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE
in the Development of the Implementation Plan
For the
Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL

Notice is hereby given that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) will hold a public meeting to provide the public an opportunity to participate in the development of implementation actions for the Pathogen Indicator Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Russian River Watershed.

When: August 28, 2014, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

Where: Regional Water Board Office
David C. Joseph Meeting Room
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Who Should Attend:

- Owners of individual septic systems in the unincorporated areas in Sonoma and Mendocino counties
- Homeless and farmworker housing advocates
- Owners of ranches and farms with large domesticated animals
- Managers of publicly-owned treatment works
- Managers of municipal separate storm sewer systems
- Recreational users of the Russian River and its tributaries

Meeting Overview & Objective

During the public meeting, Regional Water Board staff will present an introduction to the TMDL, explain the evidence of impairment of the water contact recreation beneficial use of the Russian River and its tributaries, identify the probable sources of bacteria believed to be contributing to the impairment, and discuss the proposed TMDL and load allocations. The primary objective of the workshop is to solicit public suggestions on possible implementation actions that can be taken by the Regional Water Board and other responsible entities. Regional Water Board staff will also explain the next steps for completing the Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL.

Background

The Russian River Watershed encompasses almost 950,000 acres and extends from Redwood Valley in Mendocino County to Jenner at the mouth of the Russian River in Sonoma County. Several surface waters in the watersheds are identified on the 2010

Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters as impaired due to fecal indicator bacteria concentrations that do not support the REC-1 beneficial use or do not attain the Bacteria Water Quality Objective. These waterbodies were first placed on the impaired waters list in 2002 and are listed below:

1. Russian River from the railroad bridge upstream of Healdsburg Memorial Beach to the Highway 101 crossing;
2. Russian River from Fife Creek to Dutch Bill Creek (i.e., Monte Rio reach)
3. An unnamed tributary (Stream 1) near Healdsburg at Fitch Mountain
4. Santa Rosa Creek (mainstem)
5. Atascadero Creek (mainstem)
6. Dutch Bill Creek (mainstem)

In accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, Regional Water Board staff are developing a TMDL and an *Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Indicator Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (Action Plan)*. The primary objective of the Action Plan is to improve the bacteriological quality of the surface waters in the Russian River Watershed so that water quality standards are attained and the beneficial use of water contact recreation is fully supported. It is anticipated that the Action Plan will be presented as an amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region*, which is also known as the Basin Plan, in 2015.

All surface streams and river reaches in the Russian River Watershed are impaired by pathogen indicator bacteria, which are found in concentrations that exceed the Bacteria Water Quality Objective and impact water contact recreational uses. The impairment is based on several lines of evidence.

- The 2010 Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters identifies several reaches of the mainstem Russian River and several tributaries as impaired.
- Public health advisories warning of potential risk of illness from recreational water contact have been posted at mainstem Russian River beaches and along Santa Rosa Creek.
- Concentrations of *E. coli* bacteria measured in several streams in the watershed exceed the numeric evaluation thresholds and indicate a potential risk of illness.
- Quantifiable levels of human-host and bovine-host *Bacteroides* bacteria indicate that human and bovine fecal material is present in almost all sampling locations in the watershed.
- Bacteria species that have the potential to be human pathogens and cause illness were detected at numerous locations in the watershed.

Regional Water Board staff identified the major sources of pathogenic indicator bacteria found in surface waters in the Russian River Watershed. Sources of *E. coli* and *Bacteroides* bacteria vary based on types of land use. Fecal waste from humans, grazing mammals, and shorebirds also varies in distribution throughout the watershed. The primary point and non-point sources include municipal wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary sewer systems, municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), septic systems, homeless and itinerant farmworker encampments, non-dairy livestock operations, and recreational water users. Sources identified as probable contributors of pathogenic indicator bacteria

to surface waters will be required under conditions of the Action Plan to meet the proposed concentration-based load allocations by taking specific actions to reduce their contribution.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. An allocation of that load is then split among the various sources of that pollutant plus the natural background. Pollutant sources are characterized as either point sources that receive a wasteload allocation or nonpoint (diffuse) sources that receive a load allocation. For the Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL, Regional Water Board staff have calculated a proposed TMDL and allocations for the watershed that are expressed in terms of the concentration of two fecal indicator bacteria: *E. coli* and *Bacteroides*. Compliance with these allocations will ensure compliance with the Bacteria Water Quality Objective.

Public participation is critical to the success of any TMDL. This public meeting provides an opportunity for the public to ask questions about the TMDL process and findings, and to contribute information and recommendations toward the development of the TMDL Implementation Plan.

Document Availability

Information on the Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL can be found at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river

Persons wishing to receive notices related to the Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL should subscribe to the email list, under Resources, Email Subscription on the left side of the Regional Water Board's main web page at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast>.

Accessibility

Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the public meeting should contact Patti Corsie at 707-576-2220 at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 800-735-2929 or voice line at 800-735-2922.

Staff Contact

Questions regarding this meeting or general questions regarding the Russian River Pathogen Indicator Bacteria TMDL should be directed to Charles Reed, by phone at 707-576-2752 or email at Charles.Reed@waterboards.ca.gov or Rebecca Fitzgerald, by phone at 707-576-2650 or email at Rebecca.Fitzgerald@waterboards.ca.gov.