NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING MEETING

WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR NONPOINT SOURCE DISCHARGES RELATED TO CERTAIN ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE ON FEDERAL LANDS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) will conduct a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to solicit input regarding the scope and content of information to be included in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that will be prepared to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, Waste Discharge Requirements for Nonpoint Source Discharges Related to Certain Activities Conducted by the Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service on Federal Lands (Federal NPS Permit). The Central Valley Water Board is the Lead Agency for the project.

The scoping meeting will consist of a presentation of the proposed Federal NPS Permit concepts and a comment period. Agencies and the public will have the opportunity to provide oral comments during the CEQA scoping meeting and/or by submitting written comments any time during the 45-day scoping period. Information about the scoping meeting is located on the Central Valley Water Board Website at: (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/)

The scoping meeting will be conducted virtually, using online video and audio broadcast software, on:

Tuesday 13 April 2021, 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

Meeting Website:

(https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/94312508221)

Meeting ID: 943 1250 8221

Call-in Number:

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 943 1250 8221

Agencies and the public will be able to provide oral comments directly through the online platform or by calling the number listed above.

A recorded video and audio broadcast of the scoping meeting will be available on the Water Board Website five business days after the scoping meeting at: (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov)

ACCESSIBILTY AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Individuals requiring special accommodations, including language interpretation services, are requested to call (916) 322-4265 **by 29 March 2021.** Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) users may contact the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or voice line at (800) 735-2922.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

TO: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

FROM LEAD AGENCY: Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
364 Knollcrest Drive #205
Redding, CA 96002

SUBJECT: CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR NONPOINT SOURCE DISCHARGES RELATED TO CERTAIN ACTIVITES CONDUCTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE ON FEDERAL LANDS

INTRODUCTION

The Central Valley Water Board proposes to develop the Federal NPS Permit to regulate real and threatened Nonpoint Source (NPS) discharges of waste originating from certain land management activities conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) on federal lands. Pursuant to CEQA, the Central Valley Water Board will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an EIR for the proposed Federal NPS Permit. The Central Valley Water Board is developing the EIR in coordination with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, which will also prepare an EIR for the adoption of similar Waste Discharge Requirements.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Federal NPS Permit involves the proposed development of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) for discharges and threatened discharges of NPS pollution from certain activities conducted by the BLM and the USFS on federal lands. The purpose of the proposed Federal NPS Permit is to ensure the maintenance, protection, and restoration of the quality and beneficial uses of water on federally managed lands and to

facilitate federal agency compliance with water quality requirements. The Central Valley Water Board will consider the inclusion of a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification in conjunction with the Waste Discharge Requirements in effort to provide comprehensive coverage for those activities proposed for regulation under the Federal NPS Permit.

The Federal NPS Permit proposes to require the BLM and USFS to implement federal agency guidance and Best Management Practices; identify and prioritize treatment of sediment discharge sites; comply with general and category-specific permit conditions; and to comply with a water quality performance framework. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate discharges from certain activities conducted by, or on behalf, of the USFS and BLM and does not propose to regulate discharges from activities conducted by third parties on USFS or BLM land through special use authorizations, or other similar agreements.

The Federal NPS Permit and environmental analysis conducted pursuant to CEQA will not supersede existing federal requirements, including, but not limited to, the National Environmental Policy Act or the National Historic Preservation Act.

Five land management activity types are proposed for regulation under the Federal NPS Permit. Potential NPS pollution associated with the five management activity types include the discharge of sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and chemicals to watercourses. A description of the land management activities proposed for regulation under the Federal NPS Permit are as follows:

1. **Vegetation Management**: The BLM and USFS manage vegetation on federal lands to improve forest health, reduce fuel loading, and to commercially harvest timber. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate potential waste discharges from such vegetation management activities. These activities may include ground-based equipment operation and the use of roads, skid trails, landings, and cable yarding corridors. The Federal NPS Permit also proposes to regulate certain applications of pesticides used to minimize and control competing vegetation, noxious and invasive plants, or other pests.

2. **Transportation Management**: The BLM and USFS manage extensive road and trail networks serving multiple uses across federal lands. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate potential waste discharges, primarily in the form of sediment, from transportation management activities. The activities may include road construction, maintenance, reconstruction, and decommissioning.

3. **Recreation Facilities Management**: The BLM and USFS manage a diverse system of recreation facilities for a variety of user groups across federal lands. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate potential waste discharges from certain recreation facility management activities. These activities may include the construction, maintenance, reconstruction, and decommissioning of

campgrounds, trail heads and staging areas, high use recreation sites, and recreation event locations.

4. **Fire Management and Recovery**: The BLM and USFS undertake various land management actions in response to active and controlled fires. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate potential waste discharges from certain post-fire management activities conducted as part of fire suppression, repair, emergency post-fire recovery, and long-term post-fire recovery. These activities may include erosion control, timber salvage, hazard tree removal, revegetation, and pesticide application.
5. **Restoration Activities**: The BLM and USFS implement projects to improve habitat, prevent degradation, and reduce long-term erosion and sedimentation. The Federal NPS Permit proposes to regulate potential waste discharges, primarily in the form of sediment and earthen material, from certain restoration activities. Restoration activities may include watercourse crossing improvement, channel and bank stabilization, stream channel and floodplain habitat enhancement, and meadow restoration.

The Central Valley Water Board is developing the proposed Federal NPS Permit in coordination with the Lahontan Water Board with the goal of adopting similar but separate permits for each Water Board region. The coordinated approach is intended to maximize consistency and facilitate implementation across Water Board regional boundaries.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is shown in Figure 1 as the federal land management areas within the Central Valley Water Board Regional Boundary. Lands managed by the USFS and BLM in the Central Valley Water Board region include parts of Modoc, Siskiyou, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Glenn, Butte, Sierra, Colusa, Sutter, Yuba, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Yolo, Solano, Sacramento, Amador, Calaveras, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Alameda, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Fresno, San Benito, Kings, Tulare, San Luis Obispo, and Kern counties.

USFS National Forests managing lands within the Central Valley Water Board region include the Modoc, Shasta-Trinity, Lassen, Plumas, Mendocino, Tahoe, El Dorado, Inyo, Stanislaus, Sierra, Sequoia, and Los Padres.

BLM Field Office managing lands within the Central Valley Water Board region include Applegate, Eagle Lake, Redding, Central Coast, Mother Lode, Bakersfield, Ukiah, and Ridgecrest.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will analyze the following potential environmental effects of the proposed Federal NPS Permit:Aesthetics

- Agriculture / Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use / Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population / Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities / Service Systems
- Wildfire

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

A reasonable range of potentially feasible project alternatives, in addition to the no project alternative, will be developed and evaluated in the EIR. The Central Valley Water Board will consider comments of responsible and trustee agencies and the public provided during the scoping period in the development of project alternatives.

COMMENT PERIOD

The Central Valley Water Board will accept comments regarding the proposed content and scope of the EIR.This NOP will be circulated for a 45-day review period beginning **12 March 2021 and ending 27 April 2021**. Comments can be provided during the online scoping meeting or directly to Central Valley Water Board *no later than 12:00 p.m. on 27 April 2021.*

Written comments may be submitted electronically to the Federal Nonpoint Source Project inbox at WB-RB5R-Fed.NPS.permit@waterboards.ca.gov. Please include "Comment letter – Proposed Federal NPS Permit" in the subject line of comments sent electronically.

Written comments sent by mail must be addressed to:

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Attention: Angela Wilson
364 Knollcrest Drive #205
Redding, CA 96002

All comments will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available for public review.

FUTURE NOTICES

Any change in the date or time of the scoping meeting will be publicly noticed on the Central Valley Water Board website and through Lyris email list. Any persons desiring to receive future notices concerning the proposed Federal NPS Permit must sign up for the Lyris email list. Please note, the Central Valley Water Board will provide future notification through a Lyris email list and website shared with the Lahontan Water Board.

To sign up for the Federal NPS Permit Lyris email list, access the email subscription Form at the web address listed below, check the box for "Federal NPS Activities – Central Valley Water Board."

(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg5_subscribe.html)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions about the Federal NPS Permit or this notice to Angela.wilson@waterboards.ca.gov

Clint E. Snyder, P.G.
Assistant Executive Officer

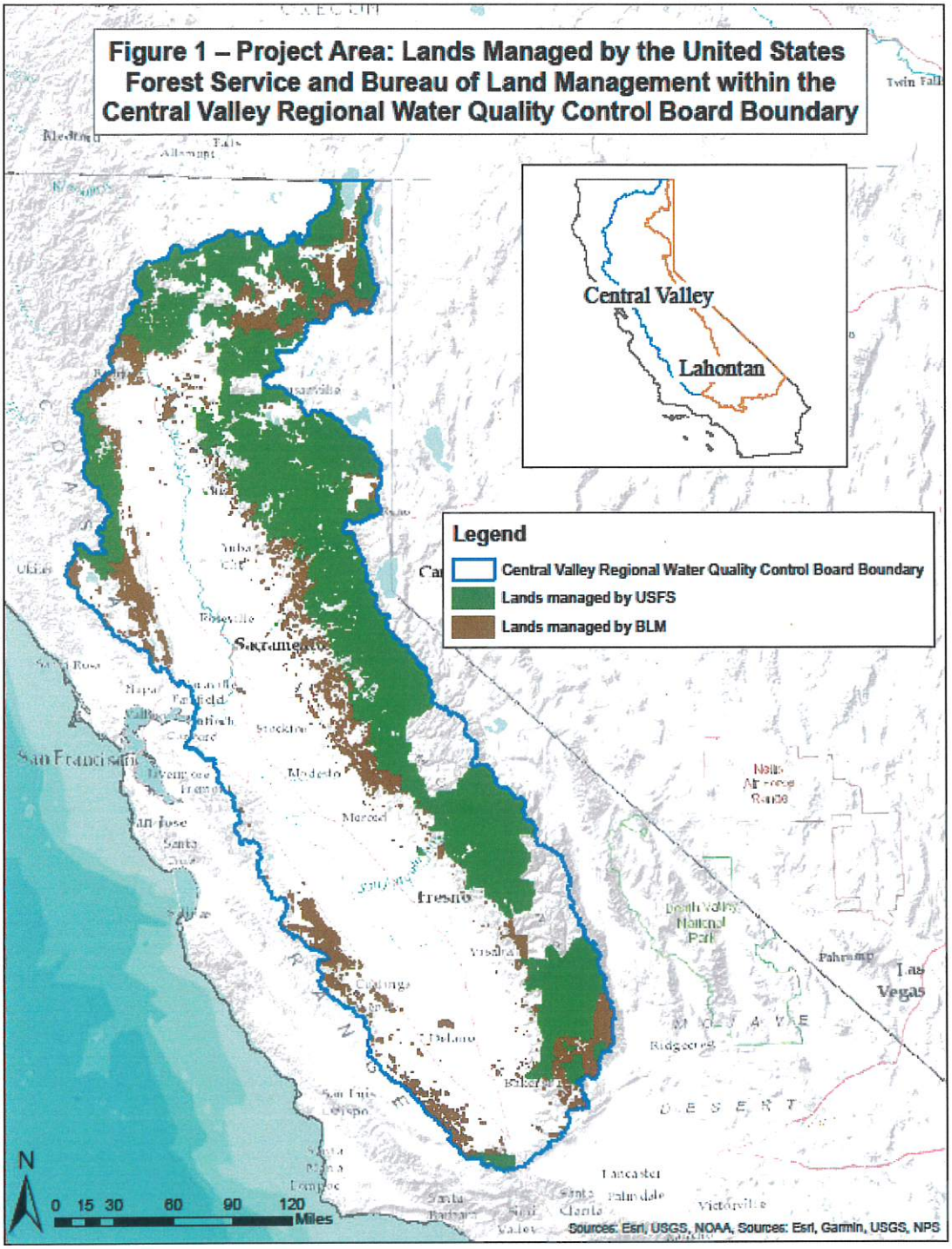

Figure 1. Lands Managed by the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management within the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Boundary