

**Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region**

**Executive Officer's Summary Report  
February 2, 2023**

**ITEM: 3**

**SUBJECT:** A Vision for North Coast Resilience: Priorities for Enhancing Watershed, Forest and Community Resilience in the North Coast Region (*Karen Gaffney and Sherri Norris, North Coast Resource Partnership*)

**BOARD ACTION:** This is an informational item. No action will be taken by the Board.

**BACKGROUND:** The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) is a coalition of Tribes and counties working together on integrated regional planning and project implementation to enhance working and natural lands, built infrastructure, local economies and community health in the north coast of California. The NCRP – initially known as the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan – has been in existence since 2004, and has focused on ensuring clean and reliable drinking water supplies, watershed health, energy independence, climate adaptation and economic vitality – especially in economically disadvantaged communities.

The NCRP is an inclusive, transparent, stakeholder driven coalition – one of the few regional integrated planning programs in California which is led by locally elected Tribal and county government officials. The partnership is led by a Leadership Council comprised of elected officials from Tribes and counties, relies on scientific and technical review from staff and a Technical Peer Review Committee, and is informed by a broad and diverse stakeholder community. NCRP leaders, staff, project proponents and stakeholders work collaboratively on water, natural resource, and energy challenges to reduce conflicts, integrate federal, state, regional and local priorities and identify and seek funding for the region's highest priority multi-benefit projects. The NCRP places a strong emphasis on local autonomy and knowledge – recognizing the diverse perspectives in the region, focusing on common ground and shared interests, while planning and implementing projects prioritized by local communities.

With direction from the NCRP Leadership Council, and guidance from an Ad Hoc Committee, Department of Conservation, the CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and many agency partners including the North Coast Regional Water Board, NCRP staff and consultants completed a regional priority plan funded by the Department of Conservation Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program entitled [\*A VISION FOR NORTH COAST RESILIENCE - Priorities For Enhancing Watershed, Forest, and Community Resilience in the North Coast Region\*](#) (North Coast Resilience Plan).

At today's meeting NCRP Director of Strategic Planning and Communication/CEO of West Coast Watershed, Karen Gaffney, and Sherri Norris, NCRP Director of Tribal

Engagement/Executive Director of California Indian Environmental Alliance will provide an overview of the North Coast Resilience Plan, identifying key areas of potential collaboration with the North Coast Regional Water Board.

**DISCUSSION:** The web-based Plan represents a shared vision for watershed, fireshed, forest, and community resilience in the North Coast region of California. Resilience includes the capacity of communities and ecosystems to recover from and adapt to extreme events such as wildfire, flooding, and drought, as well as impacts from climate change, economic, and health disruptions. Development of the Plan was funded with California Climate Investments funding granted by the California Natural Resources Agency, Department of Conservation to the North Coast Resource Partnership as part of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program. The Plan reflects significant local and regional research, data gathering, assessments, spatial analysis and includes input and review from hundreds of groups and individuals from throughout the North Coast Region and beyond – including Tribes, NGOs, agencies, RCDs, local governments, landowner groups, universities, and expert consultants including Tribal consultants, RPFs, ecologists, planners, spatial analysis experts and others. Regional Water Board staff provided informal input and met with NCRP staff to discuss the draft Plan and to brainstorm opportunities for collaboration in implementing the Plan.

The Plan includes a comprehensive list of Strategies that articulate a shared regional vision, and Solutions and Projects to implement this vision. The Plan is intended to guide capacity investments and the implementation of projects, actions, and initiatives focused on community and watershed resilience in the North Coast region. The Plan contains four core elements. The **Prioritization** section outlines the process by which NCRP applies a diversity of data and information to evaluate and refine the highest-priority projects and activities at the regional and local scales. The **Strategies** section contains the actions that NCRP and its regional partners have identified to achieve outcomes on the ground and in communities. The **Demonstration Projects** section describes projects that pilot measurable innovations to help the region expand the pace, scope, and scale of watershed, community, and forest resilience via a “test bed” approach. The Plan **Implementation** section describes how NCRP works with regional partners to implement the shared vision described in the Plan.

Expected outcomes of the Plan include:

- A shared, adaptive vision of desired future conditions in the region.
- Increased capacity for NCRP partners to identify, prioritize, and plan for watershed, forest, and community resilience.
- Increased coordination of wildfire planning and watershed stewardship efforts across jurisdictional and ownership boundaries.
- Implementation and monitoring of a set of priority watershed and community resilience strategies, actions, and projects that contribute to the economic, social, and ecological sustainability of the North Coast region.
- A living library of resources for current and future projects.
- Short-term and long-term funding attracted to the strategies, actions, and projects in the Plan.

- Increased state, federal, and philanthropic funder understanding of the need for investment in the North Coast region.

Regional Water Board staff have identified numerous opportunities for collaboration with NCRP staff, partners, and contractors in implementing the Plan. In particular, staff look forward to coordinating with NRCP staff and contractors in advancing the Conservation Planning solution to develop and adaptively update a regional ecosystem conservation and restoration plan, which aligns with a key element of Regional Water Board staff's vision for a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION:** NA

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

[A VISION FOR NORTH COAST RESILIENCE - Priorities For Enhancing Watershed, Fireshed, Forest, and Community Resilience in the North Coast Region](#)