

**Minutes of Meeting**

8:30 A.M., Thursday, February 6, 2020  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
David C. Joseph Room  
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**Video recordings of Board meetings (since 2/2019) are available at:**

[Prior Board Meeting Video recordings.](#)

**Audio recordings of Board meetings (11/2018 and before) are available at:**

[Prior Board Meeting Audio recordings](#)

- i. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Board member Bedolla led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ii. **Roll Call and Introductions:**  
  
**Board Members present:** Hector Bedolla, Kelli Gant, Gregory Giusti, and Valerie Quinto.  
  
**Regional Water Board staff present:** Jim Burke, Katharine Carter, Patti Corsie, Josh Curtis, Rich Fadness, Nathan Jacobsen, Matt St. John, and Claudia Villacorta.
- iii. **Board Member Reports and Ex Parte Communication Disclosure:** No Board member reports or Ex Parte Communication disclosures.
- iv. **State Board Liaison's, and Executive Officer's Reports:** State Board Liaison Dorene D'Adamo updated the Board on the status of pending legislation at the State and Federal level regarding the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, Water Resilience Portfolio, Dredge and Fill Policy, Compost General Order, Winery Order, and Construction Stormwater Permit.
- v. **Public Forum:**  
**Comments were taken from:**
  - Madison Green, LACO Associates
1. **Election of Board Officers.**  
  
**Motion:** Kelli Gant moved to elect Valerie Minton Quinto as Board Chair.  
**Motion:** Hector Bedolla moved to elect Gregory Giusti as Vice Chair.

**Motion:** Chairwoman Quinto initiated a roll-call vote:

Bedolla aye

Quinto aye

Gant aye

Giusti aye

Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Presentation of Executive Officer's 2019 Water Quality Stewardship Award.**

Matt St. John presented the 2019 Water Quality Stewardship Awards to the following individuals and teams:

- **Dr. Deanne Meyer**, University California-Davis Department of Animal Science, for her effective leadership in advancing the science and practice of pasture-based dairy operations in the North Coast Region.
- **Pat Higgins, Eel River Recovery Project** for his effective leadership of the Eel River Recovery Project and the advancement of community-led monitoring, assessment, and restoration of the Eel River Watershed.
- **Trout Unlimited North Coast Coho Project, Christopher Blencowe, Blencowe Watershed Resource Management, and Ken Smith, Pacific Inland Incorporated** for their leadership in implementing fisheries habitat and stream restoration projects, including accelerated wood recruitment, in the North Coast Region.

3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 19, 2019.**

**Motion:** Board member Bedolla moved to adopt October 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes, Board member Gant seconded the motion; Chairwoman Quinto initiated a roll-call vote:

Bedolla aye

Minton aye

Gant aye

Giusti aye

Motion passed unanimously

## Action Item

4. **Public Hearing to consider adoption of Proposed Order No. R1-2020-0001, Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges Related to Green Diamond Resource Company's Forest Management Activities Conducted Within the Upper Elk River Watershed Humboldt County.** Jim Burke, Senior Engineering Geologist, Southern Nonpoint Source & Forestry Unit, gave an overview and history of Green Diamond Resource Company's (GDRC) ownership within the Upper Elk River Watershed, watershed impairments and regulatory requirements that were implemented through Order No. R1-2010-0044 - *Ownership-wide Road Management Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)*; Order No. R1-2012-0087 - *Ownership-wide Forest Management WDRs*; and the Action Plan for the Upper Elk River Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load Action Plan (TMDL Action Plan). Mr. Burke outlined the provisions of the Elk River Management Plan (ERMP) which was prepared by GDRC. Mr. Burke also described the new requirements of the proposed WDR including expanded riparian management zone (RMZ) protection measures, modified annual harvest limits, and yarding prescriptions. With the ERMP and additional protection measures for riparian zones targets included as requirements in the Proposed Order, Regional Water Board staff determined that GDRC's timber harvest and related management activities in the Elk River Watershed will be consistent with the TMDL Action Plan. Gary Ryneanson, GDRC's Forest Policy and Communications Manager, and Matt House, GDRC's Forest Hydrologist and Aquatic Biologist gave a presentation and requested modifications to the RMZ protection measures.

### Comments were taken from:

- Alan Levine, Coast Action Group
- Tom Wheeler, Environmental Protection Information Center
- Vivian Helliwell, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
- Jesse Noell, Elk River Resident
- Kristy Wrigley, Elk River Resident

Following Board member questions to staff and deliberations, Board member Bedolla introduced a motion.

**Motion:** Board member Bedolla moved to adopt Order R1-2020-0001, Board Chair Quinto seconded the motion; Chairwoman Quinto initiated a roll-call vote:

Bedolla aye

Minton aye

Gant nay

Giusti nay

Motion failed

Matt St. John, Executive Officer requested a short break to confer with Staff Counsel, Nathan Jacobsen, to discuss the options with a failed motion. Following the break Mr. St.

John outlined three options available to the Board: 1) Close the hearing, Order fails and the existing Orders for GDRC remain in effect, and staff would bring back a revised WDR Order at a future Board meeting; 2) Staff recesses and comes back with proposed amendments to the Order for the Board's consideration today; or 3) Board members continue to deliberate with more questions of staff, GDRC, or commenters, as applicable, and considers any additional motions from Board members. The Board opted for option 3 and requested that staff provide responses to issues raised during the Board's deliberations up to that point in the hearing.

Following a break, staff addressed the following issues: clarifications regarding incorporation of the TMDL Action Plan's zero load allocation, hillslope indicators and numeric targets into the Proposed Order; clarification regarding options for including specific findings in the Proposed Order about why any omitted hillslope indicators or numeric targets are not appropriate or feasible; and further explanation about the proposed RMZ protection measures and their applicability to the "characteristics of riparian zones" hillslope indicator. The Board Chair allowed Mr. Rynearson to provide additional comment on a late submitted photograph from Mrs. Wrigley. Following further Board deliberations, Board member Gant made a motion.

**Motion:** Board member Gant moved to reconsider adoption of the Proposed Order and to initiate another motion for the Board to vote on Order R1-2020-0001, Board member Bedolla seconded the motion; Chairwoman Quinto initiated a roll-call vote:

Bedolla aye

Minton aye

Gant aye

Giusti aye

Motion passed unanimously

**Motion:** Board member Bedolla moved to adopt Order R1-2020-0001 as proposed, Board Chair Quinto seconded the motion; Chairwoman Quinto initiated a roll-call vote:

Bedolla aye

Minton aye

Gant aye

Giusti nay

Motion passed 3 ayes, 1 nay

## Information Items

5. **Opportunities for Regional Water Board Collaboration with Sonoma State University's Center for Environmental Inquiry.** Dr. Claudia Luke, Director of the

Center for Environmental Inquiry, Sonoma State University, gave a presentation on the background and history of the Watershed Academics to Enhance Regional Sustainability (WATERS) Collaborative (<http://cei.sonoma.edu/waters>), which is a 7-year partnership between Sonoma State University's Center for Environmental Inquiry and Sonoma Water, that has engaged 3,164 students and 50 faculty to work with more than 30 community partners on social, economic and environmental aspects of water and announced the new WATERS Collaborative Initiative called "Rising Waters". The Rising Waters Working Group, that will be composed of Water Agencies, Organizations, and Universities will meet in March 2020 to jointly identify complex priority issues, recruit multi-disciplinary faculty-student teams to tackle the issues, gather data and ideas to flesh out a range of solutions for unprecedentedly complex challenges that society will face over the next decade requiring new ways of identifying and implementing water solutions. University-Agency partnerships have a unique role to play in finding new ways forward. They bring the resources of academia — diverse expertise of faculty, new perspectives and energy of students, laboratories and research libraries — to help tackle the challenges faced by local communities.

Though the Board was not expected to provide any specific direction or guidance to staff in response to the information item, Board members voiced support for the Regional Water Board's engagement, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Officer, with the WATERS Collaborative Initiative.

6. **Overview of the State and Regional Freshwater Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Response Programs.** Katharine Carter, Senior Environmental Scientist, Adaptive Management Unit, introduced Rich Fadness, Engineering Geologist, Adaptive Management Unit, Keith Bouma-Gregson and Marisa VanDyke, Environmental Scientists, State Water Board, Office of Information Management and Analysis. Mr. Bouma-Gregson presented an overview of the State and Regional Freshwater Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom (CyanoHABs) Monitoring and Response Programs formally established in 2016. Ms. VanDyke presented an overview of AB834 – *Freshwater and Estuarine Harmful Algal Bloom Program* approved by Governor Newsom in September 2019, mandating a formal freshwater and estuarine HABs program at the State Water Board to protect water quality and public health from harmful algal blooms, and requiring that the State and Regional Water Boards continue their current efforts along with additional monitoring, risk assessment, research, and tool development. Mr. Fadness gave an update on the Regional Board's Freshwater Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Program to facilitate collaboration and partnerships on monitoring, assessment, response, and outreach in the North Coast Region.
7. **Update on North Coast Regional Water Board Staffing.** Matt St. John, Executive Officer, gave an update on Region 1's staffing (filled and vacant positions), including statistics on staff length of employment with the Regional Water Board, and highlighting the exceptional qualifications of the North Coast Regional Water Board staff.

**Comments were taken from:**

- Brenda Adelman, Russian River Watershed Protection Committee

8. **Executive Officer's Report.** See written report.
9. **Board Member Requests for Future Agenda Items and Other Items of Interest.** Board Member Greg Giusti requested information on hemp cultivation and production, and the waste materials generated, and the potential impacts to water quality. Mr. Giusti also requested a workshop on homelessness in the North Coast Region, the potential impacts to water quality, and the role of the Regional Water Board to mitigate the impacts.
10. **Closed Session:** The Board did not meet in closed session.
11. **Arrangements for Next Meeting and Adjournment**  
9:00 a.m., Thursday April 16/17, 2020

**Meeting adjourned at:** 4:45 p.m.

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_